

Presenters and Poster Titles at the Linguistics Symposium on 09/30/2016

	Name	Past Affiliation with NU	Current Affiliation	Title	Abstract
1	Jennifer A. Alexander (with Yue Wang, Simon Fraser University)	Graduate	Simon Fraser University and Northwestern University.	Cross-language Lexical- tone Identification	We examine how native-language (L1) lexical-tone experience influences identification of novel tone. Cantonese, Thai, Mandarin, and Yoruba listeners identified CV syllables bearing the six phonemic Cantonese tones. Overall tone accuracy scores and tone-error patterns were assessed. Consistent with previous reports, native listeners' perception reflected effects of ongoing tonal mergers and acoustic similarities incurred by a crowded lower tone space (Qin & Mok, 2011). Non-native listeners' perception appeared to be influenced by L1 auditory experience, as they attended to acoustic and phonetic cues relevant to the phonological and phonetic properties of L1 tone categories. [Support: NSF grant 0965227 to J.A.A.]
2	Catherine Anderson	Graduate	Teaching Professor McMaster University Department of Linguistics & Languages, Hamilton, Ontario, Canada	Learning to Think Like a Linguist	A key learning outcome for undergraduate linguistics courses is for students to learn to reason scientifically about language. Our Think-Aloud study investigated novice students' mental representations as they approached the threshold to thinking scientifically about language. We asked students to report their thoughts while attempting phonology exercises. The resulting data revealed novice habits of mind that differ from expert-like thinking. This poster describes the learners' developing concepts and makes recommendations for instructors to help students develop fully-formed linguistics concepts and the ability to think scientifically about language.
3	Melissa Baese-Berk	Graduate	Assistant Professor Department of Linguistics University of Oregon	Factors influencing perceptual learning of novel speech sounds	Learners face many challenges when acquiring a second language, including learning novel speech sounds. Recent studies have suggested that producing sounds can, under some circumstances, disrupt perceptual learning of novel speech sounds. In this poster, we investigate whether this

					disruption is caused by production per se, or whether other factors may also influence this disruption. Specifically, we investigate the role of cognitive load during the task by manipulating what tasks are performed during training. Results suggest that production of the target token plays a role in disruption, but that other factors also influence the disruption of perceptual learning.
4	Tessa Bent	Graduate	Associate professor Department of Speech and Hearing Sciences, Indiana University	The influence of nonnative accents and unfamiliar dialects on children's word recognition	During language acquisition, children must learn to recognize acoustic-phonetic variants of known words, which result from pronunciation variability both within and across talkers. My work has investigated this topic by testing children's perception of nonnative accents and unfamiliar regional dialects. Results have shown that school-aged children do not have fully adult-like abilities to perceive nonnative-accented speech. In fact, fully mature word identification abilities may not emerge until adolescence. Further, the combination of an unfamiliar accent or dialect and noise causes children substantial difficulty and suggests that their representations of unfamiliar accents and dialect are quite fragile.
5	Ann Bunker	Graduate	Lecturer, Department of Linguistics, Indiana University	Beyond CHILDES: Engaging undergraduate child language students through experiential learning	Undergraduate Linguistics courses commonly incorporate active learning methods that engage students in discipline-specific modes of thinking. However, this approach can be challenging for child language courses: it is often not practical for students to interact with children, and videos and CHILDES transcripts provide a limited view. I describe a classroom adaptation of the Human Simulations Paradigm (HSP; Gillette et al., 1999) that bridges the gap between students and the population they are studying. The HSP was designed to create learning conditions that turn adults into children; in the classroom, it provides opportunities for hands-on research, cooperative learning, and critical thinking.
6	Angela Cooper	Graduate	University of Toronto	Perceptual learning of accented speech by first	This study examined the impact of linguistic experience on adaptation to a novel English

				and second language listeners	accent. Following accent exposure, listeners completed lexical decision and word identification tasks. While both English and Dutch-English listeners demonstrated adaptation, its magnitude was modulated by whether or not the item's sound patterns were contrastive in the listeners' native language. Dutch listeners only showed adaptation for items with Dutch contrasts, despite being able to separately identify items containing both Dutch and non-Dutch contrasts. These findings suggest divergence between phonetic identification and lexically-guided adaptation, possibly arising from heightened uncertainty about L2 lexical processing relative to phonetic processing.
7	Michele I. Feist (and Yuan Zhang)	Graduate	Associate Professor of Linguistics. University of Louisiana at Lafayette	The shape of space in English and Mandarin	Recently, the semantics of spatial terms has attracted substantial attention in the cognitive sciences, revealing both compelling similarities and striking differences across languages. Moving beyond the semantics of individual terms, we ask what spatial semantic systems may reveal about the conceptualization of locations in English and Mandarin. We elicited descriptions of 116 spatial scenes, then subjected these descriptions to separate multidimensional scaling analyses. In addition to revealing overlaps and divergences in the conceptualization of space in these languages, our results suggest a difference in complexity, whereby Mandarin terms are better accommodated than are English terms by a low-dimensional solution.
8	Midam Kim (Minyoung Kim, Midam Kim, Tailan Chi, and Ann Bradlow)	Graduate	Lecturer School of Business The University of Kansas	Global Expansion Strategies and Choice of Functional Language in MNCs	A multi-national corporation(MNC)'s choice of its functional language(s) for corporate communication is of strategic importance because this decision has strong implications for the implementation of its international expansion strategy. Drawing on psycholinguistics, we advance a conceptual framework and use lab experiments to assess the relative efficiency of different functional languages. Our results shed

					light on the trade-offs in this strategic decision and potential remedies for the communication costs of the alternative choices. The theoretical framework and empirical findings of the current study contribute to the microfoundations for both the established theory of MNCs and the emerging capability-based theory of MNCs.
9	Bozena Pajak	Postdoctoral Fellow	Learning Scientist Duolingo, Inc.	Duolingo: Improving Classroom Language Learning with Personalized Instruction	Active bilingualism, whether early or late, provides life-long advantages that go beyond the ability to communicate in more than one language. I will present a new way of motivating students to take on the language learning challenge: Duolingo. Duolingo is a free online education service with 20 different languages on offer and 150 million students worldwide. I will provide an overview of the Duolingo platform, and discuss its data-driven approach to deliver a personalized and fun learning experience. I will show examples of successful incorporation of Duolingo into language classrooms, and discuss research studies that validate the Duolingo approach.
10	Tyler K. Perrachione	Undergraduate	Assistant Professor Department of Speech, Language, and Hearing Sciences Boston University	Foreign language learning by adults: New insights from neuroscience	Why do some successfully learn a new language while others struggle? In three recent studies, we investigated how individual differences in brain structure and function relate to foreign language learning aptitude and learning outcomes. We show (1) how neural systems differentially prepare learners for real-world, classroom-based Mandarin Chinese learning, and how successful Mandarin learning changes the brain; (2) how the brain's structural connectivity predicts English-speakers' ability to learn the three-way plosive contrast in Korean, and how the brain changes after learning it; and (3) how noninvasive electrical brain stimulation may improve learning in individuals with poor foreign language learning aptitudes.
11	Andrea D. Sims	Mellon Postdoc	Ohio State University	Inflection classes are held together by paradigmatic implications... sort of	Inflection class systems are structured by paradigmatic implications of the sort 'form a for paradigm cell A implies form b for cell B'. Yet it is

					unclear whether such implications are important for all languages. I explore nine languages' inflection class systems. While these are similar in complexity, they differ significantly in the role of paradigmatic implications (representing three graph types). Also, type frequency effects depend on whether paradigmatic implications are systemically important. The data thus suggest the importance of investigating paradigmatic implications as a typological dimension that dynamically shapes and is shaped by global properties of inflectional systems.
12	Rajka Smiljanic	Mellon Postdoc	Linguistics, University of Texas at Austin	Native and non-native listeners' recognition of interrupted sentences	We examined if greater speaking clarity and semantic context can increase the intelligibility of sentences that were interrupted periodically at varying rates (0.5 – 16 Hz). Both native and nonnative American English listeners benefited from the semantic and acoustic-phonetic enhancements. Greater speech clarity enabled listeners to utilize semantic cues at slower interruption rates, with native listeners deriving larger benefit at lower gating rates. The nonnative speech-perception difficulty may be due in part to reduced ability to utilize higher-level information to compensate for loss of intelligibility at lower levels of processing, and to reduced ability to benefit from available lower-level acoustic cues.
13	Elizabeth Allyn Smith	Mellon Postdoc	Professeure Département de linguistique Université du Québec à Montréal	Probabilistic semantic change of social meanings in context	Many 'bits' of language have multiple meanings and types of meanings, including those that express/create identity. In linguistic analyses, social meanings are often treated separately from semantic models, which, even when dynamic, include only changes to interlocutors' commitments and not changes to their categorization of what these bits mean. This work seeks to change that, proposing a model of semantic change for social meanings in which uttering social variants in low-probability grammatical environments enhances certain social indices while (comparatively) blocking other

					meanings (inspired by Bender, Thomas). Comparisons with other game-theoretic (vanRooy, Jaegar) and exemplar (Wedel) models for different domains are explored.
14	Kristen Syrett	Graduate	Assistant Professor Department of Linguistics and Rutgers Center for Cognitive Science (RuCCS), Rutgers, The State University of New Jersey Director, Rutgers Laboratory for Developmental Language Studies	Insights into Language Acquisition from Comparative Constructions	Comparative constructions can range from those that are quite simple and easy to interpret (Hillary has more experience than Donald does) to those that are complex, and wreak havoc on the sentence processor, often leaving the interpreter confused as to whether the sentence is acceptable, even if it is somehow interpretable (?More reporters wanted her to talk her health issues than about Hillary's domestic policies.). Somehow we as adults manage to navigate our way through these sentences, but comparatives remain a challenge to children well through age 7, both in comprehension and production. This poses a question: what delays children's acquisition of these constructions? Lack of grammatical competence, inefficient processing, or something else? I will present data from a series of studies investigating children's understanding of comparatives, shedding light on the sources of children's surprising interpretations, and on the language acquisition process in general.
15	Sam Tilsen	Undergraduate	Cornell University	Speech and social network dynamics in a constrained vocabulary map game	The hypothesis that changes in social network structure correlate with changes in linguistic behavior was tested in a ten-week longitudinal study. Eight undergraduate students played a total of 535 map-task games. Temporal variation in player-player vowel similarity and word-class transition probability similarity was significantly correlated with variation in social distance, measured by frequently sampled teammate preference rankings. The results show that social dynamics have pervasive influences on linguistic behavior; these influences were manifested in sometimes quite abrupt and other times relatively gradual changes, both in phonetic aspects of

					speech (vowel qualities) and in syntactic patterns (word-class transition probabilities).
16	Suzanne Wertheim	Mellon Postdoc	Founder and CEO Worthwhile Research & Consulting	Bringing Linguistic Anthropology to the Intercultural Space	<p>The study of variation is central to linguistic anthropology. In university--based research and teaching, this variation is deeply contextualized and examined using a range of perspectives and frameworks, with dynamic, complex and anti--essentialist categorizations.</p> <p>However, in fields as diverse as government, computer science, and business, attempts to address variation and its role in cross--cultural issues tend to use static and oversimplified representations of language and culture.</p> <p>I draw upon a decade of applied work and interdisciplinary research to show how linguistic anthropology has facilitated NLP work on metaphor, AI for serious games, forensic investigations, and diversity & inclusion training.</p>