

Michigan State University

The Ling Lang Letter

Department of Linguistics & Germanic, Slavic, Asian and African Languages

Yoko Tawada Visits Campus



Linguistics and Languages hosted Yoko Tawada on October 24th. Her performance of a collage of poetic texts in English, German and Japanese was titled "Adventures of Foreign Languages".

Born in Tokyo in 1960, Yoko Tawada has lived in Germany since 1982. She is a scholar of poetics, creative writing, and linguistic, philosophical, and cultural encounters with languages. Tawada writes and publishes in both German and Japanese, and she is the recipient of numerous literary awards, including the Adelbert von Chamisso Prize (1996), the Tanizaki-Jun'ichirō Prize (2003), the Goethe Medal (2005), and the Tsubouchi Shōyō Taishō Award (2009).

The event was supported by the Department, the College of Arts & Letters, The Asian Studies Center, Global Studies in the Arts & Humanities and the The Center for European, Russian and Eurasian Studies.

Pictured: Nathan Bynum, Japanese and German senior, with Yoko Tawada. Nathan read a text of Yoko Tawada's in English at her performance.

Letter from the Chair



Dear Friends of Linguistics and Languages at MSU,

It is still November 30 as I write this and we are experiencing our first significant snowfall of the year. While almost everybody loves the first snowfall, many of the new students and faculty to Michigan from around the world marvel at their first exposure to snow.

This past summer saw many students from our department participating in some of the very study abroad programs that made MSU the leader again in study abroad. In this issue you can read about our students in China, Germany and Morocco this past summer. Because of the strength of these study abroad programs, students continue to come to MSU for these programs. Check out german@msu on Facebook for information about the 40th anniversary of the Mayen Study Abroad Program in 2012-2013.

One of the highlights of this past semester and profiled on the first page was the visit by Yoko Tawada to MSU

in October. Her creativity with Japanese, German and English provided a made-to-order literary adventure for students and faculty of the programs offered through our department.

The pictures of the new Wells Hall addition, including that of the new Starbucks on the back page, are proof that our new offices will soon be a reality. We are all eagerly anticipating our move at the end of Spring Semester 2012.

Very soon we anticipate launching a new departmental web page and we invite everybody to stay in touch (www.linglang.msu.edu). Please continue to email me with news and comments at Lovik@msu.edu. Happy Holidays!

Individuals interested in supporting department programs are encouraged to make donations through the College website at www.givingto.msu.edu/gift/

Gifts to a special scholarship fund for students of German from Huron High School in Ann Arbor may

Student Spotlights

Marissa Perry

A one-week trip to Austria through Holt High School inspired Marissa Perry to major in German. She chose MSU after hearing Professor George Peters speak to her high school German class about MSU's study abroad programs.

Marissa, now a senior with an additional major in German, was recently nominated by MSU for the prestigious Rhodes



Marissa in front of Neuschwanstein in Füssen

Scholarship to study at Oxford University. Marissa's research interest's are Modern European History and Global Governance and Diplomacy.

Marissa spent the spring 2011 semester studying at Friedrich Schiller University in Jena, Germany. As the only MSU student on the program that semester, Marissa felt she had more of an immersion experience in the German language.

During the program, Marissa was a recipient of the DAAD undergraduate scholarship. As one of the scholarship awardees, Marissa was invited to attend a four-day workshop in Berlin to study cultural diplomacy.

Another enriching academic experience for Marissa was the opportunity to participate in a seminar in Washington, D.C. at the United States Holocaust Memorial Museum. During the seminar she had access to research documents at the International Tracing Service Inventory. The seminar motivated Marissa to travel to Bad-Arolsen during her semester abroad to continue her research in their archives.

In addition to German, Marissa is also earning a degree in International Relations through the James Madison College as well as specializations in Jewish Studies and Western European Studies.

Chris Heffner

Although he grew up in Minnesota, Chris Heffner always knew he would probably attend MSU as several family members are proud Spartan alumni. MSU's Linguistics and Cognitive Science programs as well as a strong Honors College and a great scholarship sealed the deal.

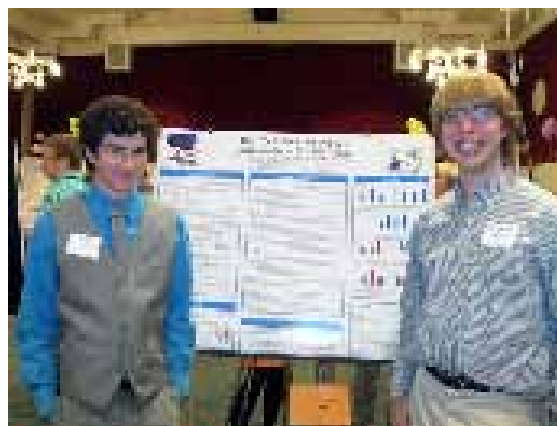
Chris was recently nominated by MSU for the highly selective Marshall Scholarship. This selection was based on Chris's extensive research activities as well as his active involvement in the department.

Currently, Chris is an "Undergraduate Research Ambassador", a new program with the MSU Office of the Provost. In this role he promotes undergraduate research to MSU student organizations. In Chris's opinion, "The undergraduate research opportunities at MSU are the best in the country!" He is now working on his third research project in the area of word segmentation with Laura Dilley from the Communicative Sciences and Disorders Department.

Chris is also the founder of qUALMS ("q Undergraduate Association for Linguistics at Michigan State"), MSU's first undergraduate linguistics society. Through qUALMS, which is advised by Associate Professor Cristina Schmitt, Chris organizes the annual Great Lakes Expo for Experimental and Formal Undergraduate Linguistics (GLEEFUL).

To round out his college experience, Chris also serves as the undergraduate representative on the Departmental Advisory Committee (DAC) and is vice president of MSU's Academic Competition Club.

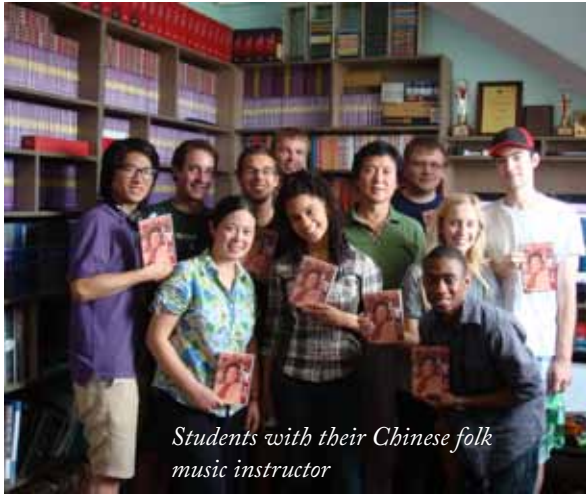
Graduating Spring 2012 with degrees in Linguistics and Psychology, as well as a Cognitive Science specialization, Chris is applying to graduate schools with programs in neuroscience and neurobiology.



Chris, on right, with his poster presentation, "Dogs Not Put in Boxes by Boys: Learning a Novel Number System" at the 2011 University Undergraduate Research and Arts Form (UURAF). He presented with fellow student, Adam Liter.

Study Abroad Summer 2011 Highlights

Harbin, China



Students with their Chinese folk music instructor

Ten MSU students participated in the study abroad program in Chinese Language and Culture at Harbin Institute of Technology in China directed by Assistant Professor, Dr. Xiaoshi Li. This ten-week program runs every odd year and includes eight-week language learning and cultural workshops from which the students gain intensive language training and cultural knowledge. The students interact with the faculty members and other international students at the host university.

During the 2011 program, each student had a Chinese partner with whom they worked regularly and explored the local city and area. In addition, the two-week field trips and cultural excursions to local and national sites such as Siberian Tiger Park in Harbin, the Forbidden City and the Temple of Heaven in Beijing, the Bund in Shanghai provided the students with opportunities to enrich their cultural knowledge and understanding of Chinese culture as well.

Mayen, Germany



Mayen students on an outing to Schloss Buerresheim. Eva Lacour, the program's local instructor, is second from right in red.

First time director, Associate Professor Liz Mittman, guided twenty students on the six-week study abroad program to Mayen, Germany this past summer. The program consists of five weeks of German language studies and one week of culture excursions to local, regional and national sites. The popular tradition of living with local host families continued this summer.

Once again the program was able to award two scholarships. The recipients were Patrick Kindig and Mark Phillips.

A 40th anniversary celebration of the Mayen Program is being planned with a reception at Homecoming in 2012 and a reunion in Mayen in the summer of 2013. Contact Tom Lovik at lovik@msu.edu for more details.

Rabat, Morocco



Students with their Moroccan friends and Adil Elkhiyari, director and coordinator (far right) at the Qalam wa Larab Center.

In July 2011, Assistant Professor Brahim Chakrani led the first ever three-week, intensive, Arabic program to Morocco. Students learned Moroccan Arabic, practiced Standard Arabic, and experienced Arab culture.

Based in Rabat, MSU students were partnered with Moroccan university language students who helped them practice Arabic and exposed them to Moroccan culture. There were bi-weekly, educational excursions into Rabat's old town, museums, historical monuments and local markets, led by a Qalam Center Arabic teacher. During a visit to the imperial city of Marrakech (south), they experienced first-hand the famed Djmaa El Fna square, a world heritage site protected by UNESCO, practiced bargaining in the souk, and listened to the snake charmer's stories, as well as visited the Menara gardens. On the second weekend, they visited Fez, Morocco's oldest imperial city, and the Jamiat al Qarawiyn, the oldest university in the world. They then travelled to Chefchaouen (north), the blue city, and hiked to a nearby, magnificent waterfall in Aqshur.

CeLTA Language & Culture Summer Programs

This summer, the Center for Language Teaching Advancement (CeLTA) was involved in a variety of programs. In addition to co-organizing the Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistant Summer Orientation (see article below). The language camp offerings were expanded to include Arabic, Hindi, and Italian in addition to Chinese, French, German, Japanese, and Spanish. The day camps for children ages 6-13 included 100 children. Campers learned basic phrases in the languages, different cultural traditions, and played language games. The camps also provided valuable service-learning opportunities for 38 MSU undergraduate student volunteers who assisted the lead instructors.

CeLTA also continued the Teaching Internships in Germany program. Six visiting elementary school teachers from Germany were placed in Lansing area schools last spring and three undergraduate MSU students interned at elementary schools in Germany during the summer.

For Sophia Cheng, a German and Chemistry major, the internship was a life-changing experience: "By the end of my three weeks, I felt as if I was more mature, knowledgeable, and confident... I had proven to myself



Sophia Cheng was placed at Mörikeschule in Nürtingen as part of the Teaching Internship in Germany program.

that... I am capable of handling myself in a foreign country all by myself, and that I am sure of the career path as a teacher".

The internship program will be redesigned for 2012 and will place MSU students at high schools in Germany in order to allow participants to work with the age groups they will be teaching upon graduation.

Hosting Fulbright FLTAs



FLTAs 2011-12 (left to right): Nasiba Abralova (Uzbek), Aline Franceschini (Portuguese), Ala'a Mahfouz (Arabic), Marina Lychaeva (Russian), Abubakar Bala (Hausa), and Sara Bano Mirza (Urdu)

We are pleased to have Fulbright Foreign Language Teaching Assistants (FLTAs) for the fourth consecutive year. Our department continues to benefit from these six energetic, highly-qualified native speakers in the classrooms (see photo). The FLTAs are also engaged in a number of community outreach programs.

The Less Commonly Taught Languages (LCTL) program and the CeLTA were again awarded a grant to host one of eight national Fulbright FLTA Orientations in August. Fifty-eight FLTAs from all over the world attended the introduction to US academic and social culture. Faculty, staff, and students from nine departments and centers across campus worked together to make the orientation insightful, exciting, and fun for the FLTAs.



Dr. Jason Merrill, Russian coordinator, and Danielle Steider, LCTL Coordinator were awarded a renewal for Project GO (Global Officer), a Department of Defense funded initiative to help ROTC students learn critical languages and study abroad. In the first two years of the award, MSU sent eight Army ROTC cadets and seven Air Force ROTC cadets to programs at Arizona State

University and San Diego State University to study Russian, Uzbek, Persian and Arabic. Seven of these cadets also went on to study overseas to Kazan (Russia), Dushanbe (Tajikistan) and various locations in Uzbekistan. In this third year of funding the goal is to grant scholarships to four to eight other ROTC cadets.

Department News & Notes

Linked BA/MA Program Approved

The MA program in TESOL (Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages) announces a new linked program of interest to undergraduate majors in Linguistics in the Department of LGSAAL starting Fall 2012.

Linked BA/MA programs across campus are becoming very popular and allow qualified students to apply 9 undergraduate credits at the 400-level toward completion of the MA degree. Graduates of the TESOL program at MSU, which is well recognized internationally, have gone on to positions in the U.S. and abroad involving teaching, teacher training, materials development, and program direction.

Cognitive Science Speaker Visits

On October 3rd, MSU welcomed Dr William Labov of the University of Pennsylvania to its Distinguished

Speakers in Cognitive Science series.

Labov pioneered the practice of using present-day linguistic variation to understand historical language change, and is still the acknowledged leader in this field almost 50 years later. His talk, titled "What is to be learned?" discussed children's ability to acquire variable language features.

Labov addressed a packed lecture hall, with dozens of audience members sitting in the aisles and standing in the doorway.

Workshop for Teachers of Chinese

On July 28, 2011 a free, one-day workshop for teachers of Chinese was held at the MSU International Center. The workshop, organized by Assistant Professor Chunhong Teng, focused on how grammar, reading and writing can be taught in the performance-based classroom; what interactive activities can be used to stimulate oral communication and how task-based oral proficiency assessment can be

designed. Best practices for teaching Chinese character in heritage schools were shared and discussed as well as on-line resources and materials.

The workshop was attended by teachers from the local area, graduate teaching assistants and staff from the MSU Chinese School and the Confucius Institute.

The workshop was sponsored by the Asian Studies Center.



Zu, Xiao Mei from Nankai University, presenting, "Teaching grammar, reading and writing in performance-based classrooms" She was an instructor at the University of South Florida at the time of the workshop.

Roadtrip to NWA 40

New Ways of Analyzing Variation (NWA) is the world's foremost conference on the quantitative study of language variation and change. This year, MSU brought a small army of faculty and student representatives, 24 in total. Madeline Shellgren (PhD, LIN) organized a graduate student roadtrip to the conference that was held in Washington, DC from October 27-30. Four of the attendees presented their work:

J. Daniel Hasty, Ashley Hesson, Suzanne Evans Wagner and Robert Lannon. "Finding needles in the right haystack: Double modals in medical consultations". Poster presented and winner of the NWA 40 prize for Best Student Poster. This is the second win in a row for MSU. Last year, at NWA 39, Daniel Hasty won the prize for Best Student Paper.

Gillian Sankoff, Suzanne Evans Wagner and Laura Jensen presented "The long tail of language change: Quebecois French futures in real time".

Daniel Hasty and Ashley Hesson are current Linguistics PhD students. Laura Jensen graduated with a BA in Linguistics in 2010. She's in her second year of a PhD program in Romance Linguistics at UT-Austin.



NWA 40 Conference attendees at dinner in Washington, DC

Staff Arrivals & Departures

This past summer and early fall brought many changes to the administrative staff in the Department of Linguistics and Languages. In addition to the retirement of Becky Rhodes (see story below), the following staff moved to new positions at MSU:

Cathy Fields – Asian Studies Center

Julie Delgado – the new Romance and Classical Studies Department

Alicia Rice – African Studies Center

We wish the three of them all the best in their new ventures!

We welcome the following new staff to the department:

Talisha Winston – Fiscal Officer, Office Manager and Assistant to the Chair. Talisha's previous position was in the Office of the Vice President for Research at the University of Michigan.

Roseann Bills – Undergraduate Secretary. She comes to us from the College of Nursing.

Joan Reid – Graduate and Second Language Studies (SLS)

Becky Rhodes



After 15 years of service, eight of them in the department, Becky Rhodes retired from MSU in July 2011. Becky served as a secretary and was located in the highly visible 6th floor reception area.

Camaraderie amongst the staff was the most enjoyable part of working for the department according to Becky. She says she also enjoyed talking to faculty members about their interesting experiences, especially abroad. She found working in the department made her look at the world differently and she was constantly learning in the diverse environment.

Prior to the Linguistics and Languages, Becky worked in the Agriculture and Natural Resources (ANR) Communications Department as well as the MSU Income Tax School.

Becky's plans for retirement include getting her house in order – "I have 32 years of cleaning to do!" She plans to remain in the Webberville area to be near family. Her husband, who has been at MSU 37 years, is still waiting to retire.

Tom Lovik, department chair, expressed what all of us feel in the department, "Becky's warm smile and soothing presence will be missed by faculty, staff and students alike. We wish her all the best in her well-deserved retirement."



Pictured: Jennifer Nelson, Roseann Bills, Joan Reid and Talisha Winston. Not pictured: Marianne Triponi

Secretary. Joan continues to work part-time for the CLEAR program as well.

Marianne Triponi – Administrative Assistant for the Arabic Flagship Program, CELTA and CLEAR.

In addition, **Jennifer Nelson**, was promoted to Graduate Secretary and Assistant to the Director of Global Studies in Arts & Humanities program.

Japan & Egypt Study Abroad Programs Update

Japan

Students returned to the Japan Center for Michigan Universities (JCMU) as scheduled this summer after the spring 2011 semester had been suspended due to concerns related to the massive earthquake and tsunami which struck Japan in March. JCMU offered two May Short Courses, Japanese Religions and Politics of Peace, as well as the Summer Intensive Language Program. The new Summer Internship Program also debuted with an MSU student as its first participant. Overall, 27 MSU students participated in the programs. Aside from restricting travel to disaster-affected areas northeast of Tokyo, JCMU was not directly impacted by the earthquake and tsunami's after-effects. The fall and academic year programs are progressing normally.

Egypt

The Flagship Arabic program at the University of Alexandria in Egypt resumed their study abroad program for the fall 2011 semester with one MSU participant. The program had been relocated to Morocco in the middle of last spring semester due to the "Arab Spring" revolution activities in Egypt. The summer 2011 program was also held in Morocco and had 11 MSU participants.

New Faculty and Instructors

Tracy Graves, Visiting Instructor of German literature and culture in the department, teaches second year German as well as a German cinema course. She will receive her Ph.D. in German and Comparative Literature from Washington University in St. Louis in January 2012.

Her research emphasizes interdisciplinary approaches; she has a strong background not only in literary analysis, but also in film and photography, media theory, critical theory, aesthetic theory, and theories of intermediality and ekphrasis. Her dissertation examines Berlin's Pergamon Museum, its architecture, and its representations in literature, film, and photography in order to assess the relationship between aesthetics, politics, and modes of spectatorship from the late nineteenth century to the present.

Hala Habash received her MA in curriculum and instruction of Arabic

Language from Ain Shams University in Cairo, Egypt. As a new visiting instructor in Arabic, she is teaching first, second and third year Arabic language courses as well as an Arabic literature course. She is also the supervisor for an Arabic reading group.

Sara Hillman recently completed her Ph.D. in Second Language Studies (SLS) at MSU with a focus on Arabic language learning and teaching. She also holds an MA degree in TESOL from MSU. Throughout her graduate studies, she taught ESL, Arabic, language teaching methods, and discourse theory. She also worked as a graduate assistant for the Center for Language Education and Research (CLEAR) and the Arabic Flagship Program at MSU. She served as the Bilingual Assistant for Middlebury College's summer Arabic Language School.

In addition to teaching first-year Arabic as a Visiting Assistant Professor, Dr. Hillman also serves as acting Academic

Coordinator for the Arabic Flagship Program.

Dunya Mikhail is a Visiting Instructor and teaches first-year Arabic language classes for the department. She holds an MA in Near Eastern Studies from Wayne State University.

Ms. Mikhail is an Iraqi-American poet born in Baghdad. She has published five books in Arabic and two in English. The Arabic titles include The Psalms of Absence and Almost Music. Her first book in English, The War Works Hard (New Directions, NY, 2005) was shortlisted for the Griffin Prize, and was named one of the 25 best books of 2005 by the New York Public Library. It also won the PEN Translation Award (translated by Elizabeth Winslow). Her latest, Diary of A Wave Outside the Sea (New Directions, NY, 2009), won the Arab American Book Award. She came to the US in 1996 to pursue her writing. In 2001, she was awarded the UN Human Rights Award for Freedom of Writing.

New Coordinator Hired for African Languages Program



The department welcomed Galen Sibanda in August as the new coordinator and Assistant Professor for the African Languages Program. He earned his PhD in Linguistics at the University of California in Berkeley and grew up in Zimbabwe.

Dr. Sibanda is responsible for hiring and supervising the various African language "tutors" who provide the classroom instruction. He also teaches IsiZulu courses. One of his goals for the program is to provide more professional development, especially in teaching methods, for the tutors.

His main research and teaching interests include the use of film in teaching African languages, distance education and the phonology and morphology of Bantu languages. He has published and presented at conferences on different aspects of Nguni phonology and morphology, distance education and using film in the classroom. He has also published a book, Morphophonology: Verbal Phonology and Morphology of Ndebele, with Lambert Academic Publishing.

Prior to coming to MSU, Dr. Sibanda was part of the faculty of education at the University of Zimbabwe, where he provided teacher training for African languages and taught education classes. He has also taught the IsiNdebele, IsiXhosa and ChiShona languages.

With sufficient demand and availability of instructors, the African Languages Program offers Swahili, Hausa, Zulu, Yoruba, Kikongo and Wolof.

Nao Nakano is currently a PhD candidate in the Linguistics Program at MSU and was a Teaching Assistant in Linguistics and Japanese before being appointed Visiting Instructor. She currently teaches second-year Japanese language courses.

**COMING
SOON!**

**New Department
Website**

Visit us at:

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Stay in Touch!

Let us know what you've been up to.
Send your news to:

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The New Addition to Wells Hall - on schedule to open May 2012!

Pictures Clockwise:

- A) Front view facing the International Center*
- B) View from Red Cedar Road*
- C) Sideview of building looking north*
- D) Starbucks on 1st floor of the B-wing is now open for service.*

