SDSU | College of Arts and Letters
Linguistics and Asian/Middle Eastern Languages

Summer 2023

Distinctive Features

MESSAGE FROM THE DEPARTMENT CHAIR

Dear friends and alumni:

The two years since the publication of our last newsletter in 2021 was a time of great transition. After learning how to teach, conduct research, and socialize remotely, we welcomed the return to in-person teaching and gradually transitioned our talks, ceremonies, and events back to campus. It has been wonderful to see so many of you in person again! This installment of our recently rebooted newsletter is chock full of news about events we held, such as the commemoration of our 50th anniversary in 2022 and our annual spring colloquia in 2022 and 2023. Students, faculty, and alumni received numerous internal and external awards for research and teaching. Two of our recent hires, Aaron Dinkin and Gabe Doyle, were promoted to Associate Professor. In addition, we received our first endowment from Professor Emerita Ann Johns, whose gift will fund the new Ann M. Johns Scholarship for Linguistics. Japanese program faculty Ryu Kitajima and Yoshiko Higurashi fully retired from SDSU. In sad news, we also learned of the passing of three emeriti faculty, Cathy Woo, Zev bar-Lev, and most recently, Charlotte Webb.

In the coming year, we are conducting searches for new faculty in Japanese and Linguistics, in addition to hosting our regular series of talks, colloquia, and so forth, which we will continue to advertise on Facebook and Instagram (please join our social media if you have not already!). Wishing you great success in the year ahead!

Gregory D. Keating

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50TH ANNIVERSARY CELEBRATION

Established in 1972, the department celebrated its 50th anniversary in academic year 2021/2022. The celebration kicked off on November 19, 2021, with a keynote address from the founder of SDSU's Arabic language program, Professor Emerita Ghada Osman. She delivered a Zoom talk titled, The Politics of Arabic in the United States: Reflections of the 20-Year Anniversary of 9/11. If you missed her talk, you can view it <u>here</u>.

On April 29, 2022, the department celebrated in person with more than 85 faculty, students, and alumni in attendance. Following opening remarks from university administrators, retired faculty Tom Donahue, Ann Johns, Yoshiko Higurashi, Rebecca Egipto, and Paul Justice shared some history and background about the department and their time in it. Joan Bybee delivered a plenary talk titled, How and why languages change: Implications for evolution and Naoko Taguchi delivered a keynote talk titled, Learning pragmatics: A perspective from Japanese speech style. The festivities concluded with a catered reception.

A highlight of the anniversary event was a video montage of testimonials provided by alumni who graduated from SDSU between 1970 and 2022. Alumni who pursued majors, minors, and certificates or who studied languages offered in our department spoke about the impact of our programs on their careers and personal lives and shared fond memories.

Ghada Osman

THE POLITICS OF ARABIC IN THE UNITED STATES: REFLECTIONS ON THE 20-YEAR ANNIVERSARY OF 9/11

Ghada Osman, Professor Emerita
San Diego State University
November 19, 2021

<u>WATCH ALUMNI VIDEO>></u>

Joan Bybee

Naoko Taguchi

DEPARTMENT TALKS & COLLOQUIA

The department continued its tradition of hosting department talks throughout the year and the spring colloquium, which was held virtually in spring 2022 and in person in spring 2023. Our engaging guest speakers delivered excellent talks on a variety of topics.

COLLOQUIA

2022

Obsolescence or diachronic change? Embracing variation in linguistic analysis
Daniel W. Heiber, Ph.D.
Chitimacha Tribe of Louisiana

Corpus Study: Evolution of Twitter Vax/Antivax Discourse, 2006-2022
Robin Melnick, Ph.D.
Pomona College

Re-examining Uto-Aztecan origins through the lens of linguistic and cultural evolution
Hannah Haynie, Ph.D.
University of Colorado Boulder

2023

Understanding Netflix Korean Drama Fandom via Online Discourse: A Topic Modeling Analysis of Reddit Posts
Harmit Chima
SDSU, Big Data Analytics

EDI Benefits of Alternative Grading Systems in Undergraduate Linguistics Courses
Maura O'Leary, Ph.D.
Swarthmore College

Dimensions of morphological complexity in the Tira verb
Nina Hagen Kaldhol
UC San Diego, Linguistics

TALKS

2021

Translingualism in the L2 Writing Classroom
Brooke Schreiber, Ph.D.
Baruch College, CUNY

2023

Is there a Place for Emerging Digital Academic Genres in the EAL Writing Class? (Yes!)
Christine Tardy, Ph.D.
University of Arizona

Reading Without Sound: The Linguistic and Neural Processes of Reading in Deaf Readers
Zed Sehyr, Ph.D.
SDSU

COMMENCEMENT 2022 AND 2023

In May 2022 we held our first in-person commencement ceremony since 2019! Donned in masks and spritzed with hand sanitizer, more than 65 students, faculty, friends, and family joined the celebration of our graduates. Our 2023 ceremony was also celebrated in person. Combined, the two ceremonies recognized dozens of graduates of our three undergraduate majors—Linguistics, Japanese, and Language, Culture, and Society—and our MA program.

Each year faculty select the Outstanding Graduating Senior in each undergraduate major and the chosen students select their Most Influential Faculty. A warm congratulations to the recipients of these recognitions, and to all our graduates for their hard work and perseverance.

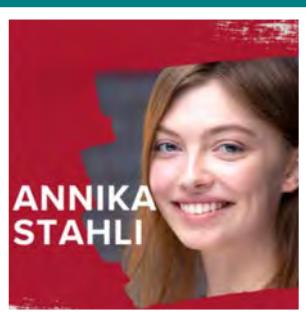**Class of 2022**

Class of 2023

2022

Linguistics
Makani Ash
Most Influential Faculty:
Rebecca Egipto

Japanese
Samuel Hitomi
Most Influential Faculty:
Yoshiko Higurashi
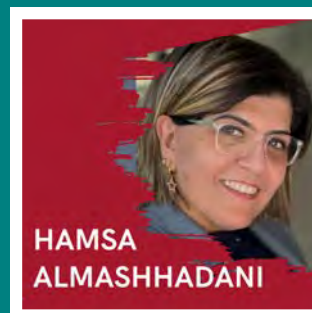

Language, Culture, and Society
Annika Stahli
Most Influential Faculty:
Naseh Shahri

2023

Linguistics
Hamsa Almashhadani
Most Influential Faculty:
Naseh Shahri

Japanese
Zackary Hollingworth
Most Influential Faculty:
Asuka Kuratani

EMMANUEL RODRIGUEZ WINS 2022 CATESOL AWARD

Second-year master's student Emmanuel Rodriguez won the CATESOL College/University Level English Language Research Award in September 2022, which he received at the CATESOL conference in Pasadena. Emmanuel received his bachelor's degree in Linguistics from SDSU and completed his master's degree in TESOL/Applied Linguistics in summer 2023. He taught in the department's composition program for multilingual students and is committed to a career in adult ESL teaching. Emmanuel was mentored by Professor Eniko Csomay.

BRIANNA O'BOYLE WINS PRESIDENT'S AWARD

First-year master's student Brianna O'Boyle presented her research at SDSU's annual Student Symposium and won a President's Award for her presentation titled, WeChat usage and emoji ratings: How usage of the social media platform WeChat influences the ratings of emojis from WeChat. Furthermore, she was invited to participate in the CSU Student Research Competition. Her research examines whether people can identify WeChat emojies based on their iconicity, regardless of whether they have used the platform before. Brianna was mentored by Professor Gabe Doyle.

WATCH VIDEO>>
Brianna and her mentor Dr. Doyle discuss their research.

DR. DINKIN PROMOTED TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR AND AWARDED THE CAL EXCELLENCE IN RESEARCH AWARD

Aaron J. Dinkin, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

We are pleased to announce that **Professor Aaron J. Dinkin** was promoted to associate professor in 2022. He was also the recipient of the College of Arts and Letters Annual Excellence in Research Award in 2022. In selecting recipients of the award, the evaluating committee looks for exceptional promise for significant research achievement; outstanding capability to publish in quality venues, and secure grants and/or awards. Professor Dinkin is a sociolinguist whose work explores the linguistic, social, and geographic factors that influence variation and change in dialects of North American English; he has published research on the dialects of New England, Philadelphia, Toronto, the Inland South, and his main area of research focus, Upstate New York. Over the past 16 years, he has documented the location and causes of regional dialect boundaries across the central and northern parts of New York State, investigating ongoing changes in the pronunciation of vowels.

His current major project is an exploration of dialect change in Cooperstown, New York, home of the Baseball Hall of Fame. Using linguistic data from interviews he conducted with Cooperstown locals, he is studying Cooperstown's participation in the ongoing region-wide retreat from a pattern of vowel pronunciation known as the Northern Cities Vowel Shift. He examines how pronunciation norms have changed over recent generations in Cooperstown's population, and how residents' participation in vowel changes is influenced by their attitudes toward their hometown's status as a tourist center.

His other projects include research into ongoing changes in how people respond to being thanked (e.g., you're welcome or no problem), and a collaboration with a colleague researching vowel change in New Orleans. With the assistance of his students in Linguistics 651, a research methods seminar in sociolinguistics, he is beginning to construct a corpus of data that will allow sociolinguistic analysis of the dialects of San Diego as well.

DINKIN APPEARS ON BBC PODCAST

LISTEN TO PODCAST >>

Professor Aaron J. Dinkin was interviewed for an episode of the BBC podcast "Deeply Human" about accents and dialects.

FACULTY AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

DR. DOYLE PROMOTED TO ASSOCIATE PROFESSOR

Professor Gabriel Doyle was promoted to associate professor in 2023. He is a computational psycholinguist who wants to understand why we talk the way we do. His research combines mathematical models of communication with emerging big data sources, such as Twitter conversations and e-mail databases, to create new approaches for understanding how we structure our speech and writing. His work has shown that Twitter can be used to map dialects within the United States, that the amount of information provided in a tweet trades off with how exciting and unexpected of an event it discusses, and that employees who eventually stay at or leave a company use "we" differently in their work emails. He also builds models for child language, both for analyzing the shape of parent-child conversations and determining what linguistic structure children can infer from their parents' speech.

Gabriel Doyle, Ph.D.
Associate Professor

DR. SOULAIMANI SELECTED AS FULBRIGHT SCHOLAR

Dris Soulaimani, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Arabic Language Program Director

Congratulations to **Professor Dris Soulaimani** for being selected as a Fulbright U.S. Scholar for 2023-2024. Professor Soulaimani's research will take place in Morocco and will investigate the Berber/Amazigh historical manuscripts written in the Arabic script. The study aims to analyze the content of these manuscripts and identify the different genres found, such as religious, historical, or linguistic works. He will also examine the extent to which these manuscripts reveal, if any, a distinct Berber identity.

The Fulbright Program is the U.S. government's flagship international exchange program. Building mutual understanding in a complex & changing world for 75 years. Fulbright Scholar Awards are prestigious and competitive fellowships that provide unique opportunities for scholars to teach and conduct research abroad. Fulbright scholars also play a critical role in U.S. public diplomacy, establishing long-term relationships between people and nations. Alumni include 62 Nobel Laureates, 89 Pulitzer Prize winners, 78 MacArthur Fellows, and thousands of leaders and world-renowned experts in academia and many other fields across the private, public, and non-profit sectors.

CAL EXCELLENCE AWARDS 2022-2023

Each year the College of Arts and Letters recognizes one untenured Assistant Professor for excellence in research. For two years running, the recipient of this competitive award has come from our department! Dr. Aaron Dinkin received the award in 2022 and Dr. Yuki Arita received it in 2023. Congratulations Aaron and Yuki!

The College also recognizes one lecturer each year for excellence in teaching. Arabic lecturer Ghassan Zakaria was selected for this award in 2023, his second time to win the award.

Aaron Dinkin, Ph.D
Associate Professor
Excellence in Research

Yuki Arita, Ph.D.
Assistant Professor
Excellence in Research

Ghassan Zakaria, MA
Lecturer of Arabic
Excellence in Teaching

[LEARN MORE ABOUT THE AWARDS>>](#)

Ian Ruston (right) pictured with Provost Ochoa

In spring 2021, Ian Ruston was recognized as the Faculty Advisor of the Year for his work as an advisor for Faculty Advancement and Student Success. Congratulations, Ian! Beginning Fall, 2021, Ian began a position as undergraduate advisor in our department, where he not only advises our majors in Linguistics and LCS, but also students from across the university who pursue our certificates in TESL/TEFL and TransculturalCommunication.

FACULTY AWARDS AND RECOGNITIONS

The diverse curricula we offer in linguistics, languages, and composition for multilingual students positions our faculty to have an impact on students pursuing various majors outside of our department, particularly Liberal Studies and International Business. Our faculty are not only recognized by students in our department but also by those pursuing majors in other departments. This year, Arabic professor Dris Soulaimani was selected Most Influential Faculty by Amal Dawood, the 2023 Outstanding Graduating Senior in Arabic and Islamic Studies and Arabic lecturer Ghassan Zakaria was selected for the same award by Chivas Powers, the Outstanding Graduating Senior in Professional Studies and Fine Arts. In addition, linguistics lecturer Kimberly Hilanto was selected Most Influential Faculty by the 2023 Outstanding Graduating Senior in the College of Education, Jade Leyvas. Congratulations Dris, Ghassan, and Kimberly!

Dris Soulaimani
Nominated by Outstanding
Graduating Senior
Amal Dawood
Arabic and Islamic Studies

Ghassan Zakaria
Nominated by Outstanding
Graduating Senior
Chivas Powers
Professional Studies and Fine Arts

Kimberly Hilanto
Nominated by Outstanding
Graduating Senior
Jade Leyvas
College of Education

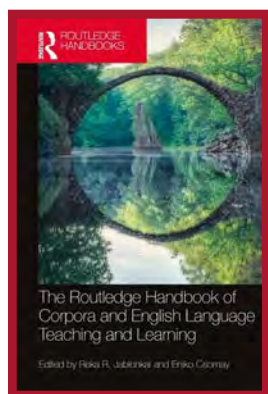# DR. ZHANG RECEIVES OUTSTANDING CONTRIBUTION AWARD

Congratulations to Professor Zhang, who received the 2022 Outstanding Contribution Award from the Chinese Language Teaching Association (CLTA) at the 2022 CLTA Annual Virtual Conference on April 9, 2022.

In celebration of CLTA's 60th anniversary, this Outstanding Contribution Award is a special recognition of CLTA members who have made great contributions to the development of Chinese education. Given Zhang's extraordinary contributions to and powerful impact on the field of teaching Chinese as a second language, the CLTA Board of Directors nominated and selected him for the award. The award recognizes Zhang for his outstanding contributions to the field of Chinese language teaching throughout his professional career, and for his great contributions to the CLTA organization.

Zheng-sheng Zhang, Ph.D.
Professor and Chinese
Language Advisor

PROFESSOR ENIKO CSOMAY CO-EDITED: *THE ROUTLEDGE HANDBOOK OF CORPORA AND ENGLISH LANGUAGE TEACHING AND LEARNING*

Series: Routledge Handbooks in Applied Linguistics

The Routledge Handbook of Corpora and English Language Teaching and Learning provides a wide-ranging and authoritative overview of the latest developments and innovations in how corpus approaches, corpus technologies, and corpus data can inform and transform English language teaching and learning. This handbook is a collection of novel contributions offering essential reading for those researching and studying English language teaching and learning through the application of corpus approaches.

STATE DEPARTMENT SELECTS CSOMAY FOR PRESTIGIOUS ENGLISH LANGUAGE SPECIALIST PROJECT

The U.S. Department of State announced the selection of **Professor Eniko Csomay** for a three-month English Language Specialist project focusing on peer mentoring skills and English Medium Instruction (EMI) teaching practice for university faculty in Taiwan at National Sun Yat-sen University. Prof. Csomay is part of a select group, as her project is one of approximately 240 that the English Language Specialist Program supports each year.

READ THE ARTICLE>>

PROFESSOR REGINA WU: ASSOCIATE EDITOR OF *PRAGMATICS*

Professor Wu currently serves as Associate Editor of *Pragmatics*, the flagship journal of the International Pragmatics Association. *Pragmatics* is the Association's peer-reviewed quarterly publication. It is available to libraries and institutions, and it reaches all of IPrA's individual members (on average 1500) directly. A major advantage is that it also reaches a significant number of non-paying members directly in countries with serious currency restrictions, as a minor remedy against the information gap.

Most recent article: Wu, R. (2022). "Gestural Repair in Mandarin Conversation." Discourse Studies, 24, 1, 65-93.

FACULTY RETIREMENTS

Yoshiko Higurashi, Ph.D.
Professor and Japanese Language Program Director

Ryu Kitajima, Ph.D.
Associate Professor and Japanese Language Program Advisor

Professor Higurashi joined the faculty at SDSU forty years ago, in 1983, with the charge of directing SDSU's Japanese program. During her time at SDSU, she took a fledgling language program and developed it into the thriving major and minor we have today. She oversaw both the SDSU Japan Direct Exchange Programs and the internship programs for Japanese majors. She created a scholarship program that was supported through annual fundraising, which culminated in a yearly award presentation reception for outstanding students of Japanese. A dedicated and passionate scholar, Professor Higurashi enjoyed teaching Japanese language and culture and wrote textbooks for teaching beginning, intermediate, and advanced Japanese. For many years now, she has directed the Japan Studies Institute, a nationally recognized summer program that trains professors from universities across the country on how to incorporate Japanese studies into their undergraduate curricula. In 2015, Professor Higurashi received the Reischauer International Education Award by the Japan Society of San Diego and Tijuana. Our Japanese program would not be what it is today without all of Professor Higurashi's hard work and sacrifice. We wish her the happiest of retirements and will miss her presence in the department.
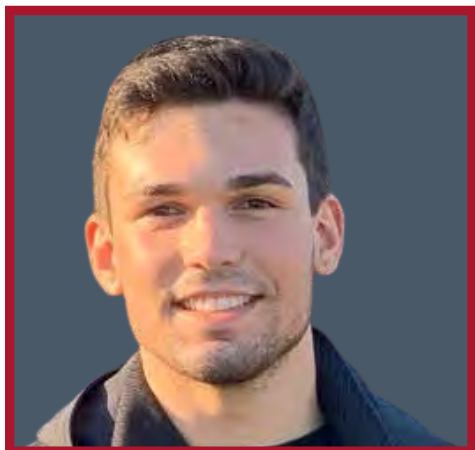
Professor Kitajima joined the faculty at SDSU in 1992 and retired 30 years later in 2022. She received her PhD in Foreign Language Education from SUNY Buffalo and conducted research on second language acquisition, language assessment, and language pedagogy, with an emphasis on Japanese. She regularly presented at the ACTFL Annual Convention and World Languages Expo—the premier North American conference on language teaching. She also worked on several language projects funded by SDSU's Language Acquisition Resource Center. She taught many upper-division courses in the Japanese major such as Advanced Japanese Discourse, Advanced Japanese Conversation, Japanese Literature, Newspaper Japanese and Advanced Composition, and Business Japanese, as well as lower-division Japanese language courses. Dr. Kitajima was one of the hardest working faculty in the department—she regularly had a line of students outside her office waiting for advising, a proficiency test, or just additional help learning Japanese. As a colleague, she was one of the most kind-hearted people you'll ever meet in academia. Our faculty and students miss her and wish her all the best in retirement.

ALUMNI SPOTLIGHT

LIFE LESSONS LEARNED THROUGH A LANGUAGE MINOR HELP CARVE NEW PATHWAYS FOR CHEMISTRY ALUMNUS

2022 alumnus Brandon Bouchett initially took Chinese 101 with the simple goal of communicating better with his girlfriend and her family. Mesmerized by the language and culture, he continued to take courses and eventually chose to pursue a Chinese minor, alongside his B.A. in chemistry. He attributes his ability to succeed in a challenging academic environment to his study of Chinese.

> "Learning Chinese made me a more well-rounded and culturally aware individual which has opened my eyes to so many opportunities in life. Pursuing Chinese at SDSU has easily become one of the best experiences I had while completing my undergraduate studies."

In Fall 2023, Brandon will begin his graduate studies at the Harvard School of Dental Medicine. Congratulations, Brandon!

ALUMNUS DREW S. FAGAN AWARDED TEACHER OF THE YEAR BY TESOL

Alumnus Drew S. Fagan received the 2023 Teacher of the Year Award presented by the TESOL International Association and National Geographic Learning. Prior to receiving an Ed.D. in TESOL from Teachers College, Columbia University, Fagan earned his M.A. in applied linguistics at SDSU, where he wrote a thesis under Professor Emerit Ann Johns.

Fagan is an associate clinical professor at the University of Maryland, College Park, where he teaches applied linguistics and language education. He also coordinates the TESOL Program at the university and serves as associate director of the Multilingual Research Center.

Professor Emerit Ann Johns and former master's student Drew S. Fagan at the TESOL convention in Portland, Oregon.

PROFESSOR EMERIT ANN JOHNS ESTABLISHES TWO NEW ENDOWED SCHOLARSHIPS IN CAL

Professor Emerit Ann Johns poses with David H. Johns Memorial Endowed Scholarship winners from the International Security and Conflict Resolution program, during ISCOR's 30th Anniversary event in March.

We are delighted to announce the establishment of the Ann M. Johns Scholarship for Linguistics. The scholarship, made possible by a generous endowment provided by Professor Emerit Ann Johns, will provide scholarship support to undergraduate students majoring in Linguistics or graduate students in the Linguistics and/or TESOL/Applied Linguistics M.A. program. The first scholarship will be awarded in academic year 2024/2025. Professor Johns also provided a gift to support a parallel scholarship in the College's Department of Rhetoric and Writing Studies. Thank you, Ann, for your generous support of our students and programs!

"Dr. Johns has left an indelible mark on the hundreds of students she taught and mentored in applied linguistics courses over her long career,"

-- Betty Samraj

PROFESSOR EMERIT CHARLOTTE WEBB (2023)

Charlotte joined the Department of Linguistics in 1975. She taught courses in phonology, second language acquisition, and linguistics for prospective teachers. Her research focused on variables that contribute to second language acquisition and their interaction with biological aspects of language learning. Charlotte was one of the first women to be hired by the Department of Linguistics, helped into her role by SDSU's first female linguist, Suzette Elgin. A strong believer that women's voices belonged in academia, one of Charlotte's greatest achievements was helping other women find jobs and have successful careers at SDSU, in the community, and overseas. She also advocated strongly for a Liberal Studies curriculum that included in-depth knowledge of language structure and use to better prepare prospective teachers of California's diverse, multilingual students. She served multiple terms as department chair and as graduate advisor and chaired dozens of MA theses. A memorial in her honor will be held at Scripps Cottage on Saturday, August 19, 2023, from 4:00 - 6:00 pm.

PROFESSOR EMERIT ZEV BAR-LEV (2022)

Zev joined the faculty at SDSU in 1979 after holding teaching positions at Syracuse University and the University of the Negev in Beer-Sheva, Israel. He taught many courses including Language and Politics, History of English, Immigrant Languages, and various Hebrew language courses. Zev published research in several fields of theoretical linguistics including semantics, pragmatics, functional syntax, discourse theory, morpho-phonology, and linguistics and computers. He also published work on (and in) several languages including Hebrew and Russian, among others. His later research focused on applied linguistics, with emphasis on a method of language learning he pioneered called Sheltered Initiation Language Learning. Zev chaired numerous theses in the department and directed the department's Hebrew language program.

PROFESSOR EMERIT CATHERINE ("CATHY") WOO (2021)

Professor Woo was the founding director of the Chinese language program at SDSU and served in this capacity from 1970 until she retired in 1997. Aside from her university work, she was an accomplished painter who was known nationally and internationally. Her paintings have been shown in galleries and museums in Asia and the United States, including at the United Nations, the Sackler Museum at Harvard University, and the National Gallery in Taipei, Taiwan, among others. In her capacity as an Ambassador for the Arts and intercultural understanding, Dr. Woo was invited to give numerous lectures at universities across the United States, at the United Nations, and at the National Endowment for the Arts. She also served as the Commissioner for Arts and Culture for the City of San Diego for six years and on the National Council on the Arts for five years.