From the First-Years
By First-Years

Safet Beriša:

“I’m Safet Beriša and I’m from Novi Sad, Serbia. I received my B.A. in English language and literature (with a specialization in linguistics) from the University of Novi Sad. I also spent a year at the University of Mississippi as a FORECAST exchange student. I’m interested in syntax, semantics and the syntax-semantics interface; currently I’m most interested in case (esp. quirky case), clitics, existentials and theta roles. I like traveling, reading outdoors, basketball, spring, and stand-up comedy. I don’t like rain that doesn’t know when it’s enough, most things that come from the sea (including their freshwater cousins), and roads without sidewalks.”

Soyoung Eom

“I came here to UConn after completing my BA and MA work in Linguistics at Korea University. I like listening to music, watching movies, and exercising, especially skating. I am also interested in protecting the environment. I was born and raised in Seoul, the capital city of South Korea. Compared to Seoul, Storrs is calm and has a clear view. The trees are thick and high and the air is fresher, which makes me feel refreshed. While enjoying the wonderful environment, I want to proceed to my PhD degree and form lifelong friendships. Lastly, I would like to thank those who have helped me to get here.”
Gísli Rúnar Harðarson

"Hi, everybody. My name is Gísli Rúnar. I'm from Ísafjörður, a tiny, remote fishing village in Iceland, which, contrary to its name, has quite a mild climate. Not too hot or too cold. I'm glad to be here in Connecticut and look forward to studying linguistics with all of you. I have an MA in linguistics from the University of Iceland (go owls!) and my focus is on syntax. When I'm not drawing syntactic trees, I enjoy B-movies, stew-making and ice cream."

Peter Smith

"My name is Peter Smith and I'm from London, England, a huge city somewhat different to Storrs. I did my undergraduate studies in Linguistics at University College London. My interest is primarily syntax. I generally spend my leisure time listening to music and reading. I also enjoy sports, in particular running and tennis."

Aida Talić

"I am Aida Talić from Bosnia and Herzegovina. I have lived all of my life in a beautiful village near Zenica, a town in central Bosnia and Herzegovina. My home town is the place where I have finished my high school and college. I studied the English language and literature at the University of Zenica to become a teacher of English as a second language. This is where I was introduced to linguistics and where my interest for it emerged and expanded. My favorite core field of linguistics is syntax. I finished my undergraduate studies in October 2009, and soon after I was offered to work as a teaching assistant during one semester in three linguistic courses at the English Department of the University of Zenica.

In the meantime I applied for the PhD program at the Linguistics Department at UConn and I am very grateful for being given the opportunity to come here to study."

From the first-years continued from page 1
What I did During My Sabbatical

By Diane Lillo-Martin

I was fortunate enough to enjoy a sabbatical for 2009-2010. Any academic will tell you that sabbatical is a special time; that it is never long enough; and that you never accomplish all that you set out to do. Let me tell you a bit about what I did do, and I’m sure you’ll all be looking forward to your next sabbatical.

First, to have a sabbatical, in most cases it’s necessary to put in (at least) six years of teaching at a particular university. At UConn, this qualifies you to apply for a one-semester sabbatical at full pay, or a one year sabbatical at half pay. After several attempts, I was able to obtain a grant from the National Institutes of Health to pay for the other half of my salary, and I took the full year.

The project funded by the NIH is called The Development of Bimodal Bilingualism, and it’s a collaborative project with two other investigators at two other institutions: Ronice Müller de Quadros, from the Universidade Federal de Santa Catarina in Florianópolis, Brazil, and Deborah Chen Pichler, from Gallaudet University in Washington, DC. Ronice and I managed to arrange our sabbaticals at the same time, so we went to DC in order to work closely with Deb, to have access to Gallaudet University, where we have other colleagues, and to be near potential research participants.

We rented apartments and an office in Maryland, near the DC line. Our office was right above a Safeway grocery store, and a 5-minute walk from home. The building people even gave us a fancy sign:

With an office and a sign, all that was left was to do the work.

The project (which will continue for 4 more years at least), looks at language development in children who are becoming bilingual with languages in two modalities: i.e., one sign language and one spoken language. The first population we have been examining are children with normal hearing who are being raised in households with at least one Deaf, signing parent. They are becoming bilingual in American Sign Language (ASL) and English (US), or Brazilian Sign Language (Libras) and Brazilian Portuguese (Brazil). We’re testing and developing theories of bilingual language acquisition, arguing for a particular view of bilingualism which attempts to explain facts about cross-language influence, code-switching, and code-blending without adding any special bilingual mechanisms to what is needed for explaining monolingual language acquisition. In September, we (Quadros, Lillo-Martin, Koulidobrova, & Chen Pichler, left to right in picture) gave a presentation at the GALA conference in Lisbon about this work.

See What I did During My Sabbatical page 4
This year, we will continue our analysis of kodas (kids of deaf adults), and extend our project to look at the development of bimodal bilingualism in deaf children who are acquiring a sign language and also, through the use of a cochlear implant (CI), a spoken language. We’re interested in seeing whether their development is different, due to the differences in perceiving language through a CI.

Over the period of the sabbatical, we worked on data collection and data analysis, and we also did a great deal of preparing for the work to be done on the project over the next four years. We also worked on several other collaborative studies, such as a paper on the development of the syntax-discourse interface phenomenon known as constructed action, and a proposal about the role of non-manual marking in WH-question formation in ASL and Libras syntax.

Being near Washington, DC gave the sabbatical a few other extra perks. You might have heard of ‘snowmageddon’?

We’ve been known to get some snow here in Connecticut, but this was a pretty impressive week of storms for which the DC area was not prepared. I actually missed the initial attack (being in CT for one of my roughly once-a-month visits), but I saw the after-effects and the subsequent days of additional snow. Do you feel the air getting a bit chilly?

DC has other interesting points, of course. There’s the beltway, and the traffic, and all the cars and people. Did I mention the traffic? And of course, there are museums and restaurants and all the rest. But I didn’t get to fulfill my ambition to visit every building of the Smithsonian at least once. Gonna need another sabbatical.
Student Accomplishments (Jan-Aug, 2010)

By whoever submitted

PUBLICATIONS


PUBLICATIONS TO APPEAR


CONFERENCE PRESENTATIONS


Student Accomplishments (Jan-Aug, 2010)

Continued from page 5


Koulidobrova, Elena. 2010. Pro and lack thereof: What ASL reveals about Spanish... or, what Spanish reveals about ASL. Penn Linguistics Colloquium (PLC) 34, UPenn, PA.


Student Accomplishments (Jan-Aug, 2010)

DEPARTMENTAL PRESENTATIONS

Bastos-Gee, Ana. 2010. Swear Words in Brazilian Portuguese. Poster at the UConn Language Fest, April 23.


AWARDS & GRANTS

Goodrich, Mary E. 2009-2010. Outstanding Scholar Program Fellowship. UConn.

Otaki, Koichi. 2010. David Michaels Award for Outstanding Work as a Teaching Assistant. Department of Linguistics, University of Connecticut, Storrs, USA.

Takahashi, Masahiko. 2010. David Michaels Award for Outstanding Work as a Teaching Assistant. Department of Linguistics, University of Connecticut, Storrs, USA.


INVITED TALKS/GUEST LECTURES


SERVICE


Acknowledgements

I am grateful to Safet Beriša, Marie Coppola, Soyoung Eom, Diane Lillo-Martin, Gísli Rúnar Harðarson, Peter Smith, Aida Talić and Lyn Tieu for their contributions. I would also like to thank Corina Goodwin for helping me with the proofreading.