



PEOPLE: NEW ARRIVALS

Linguistics @ BU

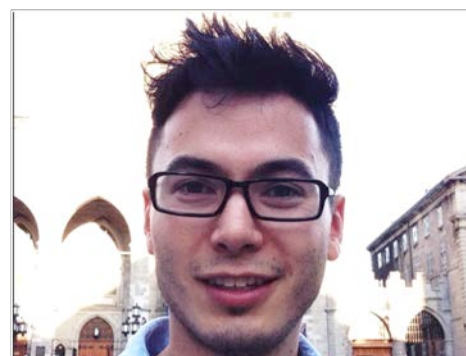
<https://www.facebook.com/BUlinguistics>

In fall of 2013, we welcomed Assistant Professor of Classical Studies, **Sasha Nikolaev**, to BU. He gave a presentation on writing systems last fall, and this fall he is teaching a new course on the same subject. We were also fortunate to have **Keith Plaster** visiting last spring. He taught a great course on Language, Linguistics, and the Law.

During academic year 2013-14, we conducted several national searches, resulting in exciting new hires. This year, we welcome our newest Assistant Professor of Linguistics, **Neil Myler**. Having studied previously at the University of Cambridge, Dr. Myler received his PhD from NYU, with a dissertation entitled *Building and Interpreting Possessive Sentences*. Dr. Myler's dissertation investigates the syntax and semantics of possession across languages, proposing solutions to several longstanding puzzles. His findings will have important consequences for understanding the architecture and interaction of components of linguistic models. Much of his linguistic research relies on very careful study of dialectal differences.

He has studied syntactic variation in dialects of English (which forms the basis of a course being offered for the first time in fall 2014), and he has conducted extensive fieldwork on varieties of Quechua—in Argentina, Bolivia, and Peru—with particular attention to interesting properties and differences in possessive constructions.

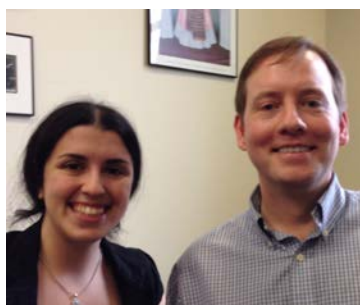
We are also delighted to have Visiting Assistant Professor, **Byron Ahn**, with us for this academic year. Coming to us from UCLA, where he wrote a dissertation on reflexive anaphora, he works on theoretical syntax as well as its interactions with prosody. In addition to teaching courses on syntax for us this year, in the spring he will be teaching a course on "Melodies of English," which will compare the intonational system of English with systems of other languages of the world. Students will have the opportunity to gather and analyze prosodic data (intonation, grouping, and prominence).



Byron Ahn, Visiting Assistant Professor



Assistant Prof. Sasha Nikolaev



Sarah Bauch with Keith Plaster



Neil Myler, new Assistant Professor

We also hired Dr. **Charles Chang** to fill a new position focusing on language acquisition. He describes his interests as follows:

My research is concerned with how linguistic experience influences phonological knowledge throughout life. I approach this question primarily by examining the phonology of second language learning, multilingualism, and language contact. As such, my work is strongly cross-linguistic in nature, and I use a variety of experimental methods to investigate the ways in which production and perception of speech sounds continue to develop in adulthood through both canonical and non-canonical experiences with sounds in multiple languages.

Dr. Chang will start at BU in the fall of 2015, after spending a year as a lecturer at SOAS in London <<http://www.soas.ac.uk>>.

Below is a picture of Charles Bond Chang. (He is the one on the left.)



Charles Bond Chang, Assistant Professor (starting in September 2015)

Linguistics
@ BU

<http://ling.bu.edu>

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With new faculty comes a wide range of new course offerings !

Courses to be introduced in 2014-15 and 2015-16

CAS LX 500 Topics in Linguistics: Melodies of English (and some other languages).

Exploration and analysis of English melodic patterns. Students transcribe and even gather prosodic data (intonation, grouping, and prominence), using computer software and the ToBI framework. Comparisons of the English intonational system to systems of other languages of the world. [Byron Ahn]

CAS LX 517 "Having" and "Being" across Languages.

Languages differ startlingly in how they express the apparently basic concepts of "possession" and "essence". Students explore this variety and its implications, addressing fundamental questions about linguistic relativism, language universals, and the relationship between structure and meaning. [Neil Myler]

CAS LX 530 Variation in English Dialects.

Exploration of how dialects of English differ from each other, focusing on grammatical variation in the US, with occasional forays into British dialects. Students come to appreciate how linguists investigate grammatical diversity scientifically, revealing the complex structure of non-standard dialects. [Neil Myler]

CAS LX 532 Romance Linguistics.

Covers sound and morphosyntactic change since Latin, plus various topics in the comparative grammar of modern Romance languages. Students deepen their linguistic knowledge and analytic skills by applying what they have learned in other Linguistics courses to this language family. [Neil Myler]

CAS LX 541 Phonological Development.

Surveys current knowledge about how children acquire phonology during the first years of life. Topics include biological foundations; perceptual and vocal development; word learning; phonological universals; implicit and explicit learning mechanisms; formalist and functionalist models; and individual variation. [Charles Chang]

CAS LX 542 Second Language Acquisition.

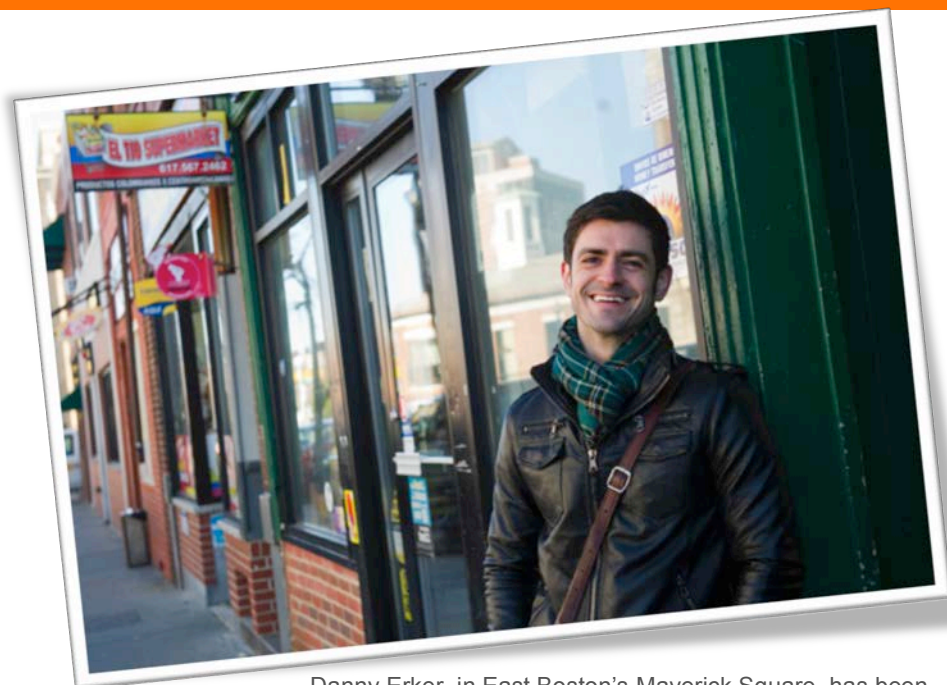
Overview of second language acquisition at all linguistic levels. Topics include the role of the native language; markedness; universals; environmental variables; cognitive and affective factors; social dimensions; individual differences among learners; and application of theory to third language acquisition. [Charles Chang]

CAS LX 545 Bilingualism.

The psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics of life with two languages. Topics include bilingual language use, processing, acquisition, organization; effects of bilingualism on cognition and development; the bilingual brain; the bilingual speech community; bilingual education; bilingualism in the media and public eye. [Charles Chang]

CAS LX 546 Incomplete Acquisition and Language Attrition.

Examines native language knowledge and change in speakers who have become dominant in another language. Topics include differences among heritage speakers, international adoptees, and adult second language learners; language change in expatriates; and environmental and affective factors conditioning language loss. [Charles Chang]



Danny Erker, in East Boston's Maverick Square, has been visiting the city's neighborhoods to recruit subjects for his linguistics research. Photo by Cydney Scott, *BU Today*.

CONGRATULATIONS !

ASSISTANT PROF. DANNY ERKER RECEIVES GRANT FROM NSF

Danny Erker was awarded a new grant from the National Science Foundation to fund a large-scale urban sociolinguistics research project in Boston. His project, "A Corpus-Based Sociolinguistic Study of Spanish in the metro-Boston Area," will investigate a number of sociolinguistics topics, including urban bilingualism, the persistence or erosion of dialect differences in situations of contact, the intergenerational maintenance of Spanish, the potential influence of English on the grammatical structure of Spanish and vice versa, and the timescale of language change.

EXCELLENT NEWS !

MAJOR INTERNATIONAL CONFERENCE ON SPEECH PROSODY TO BE HELD AT BOSTON UNIVERSITY IN 2016

The Speech Prosody 2016 conference will be held at Boston University, hosted by Prof. Jonathan Barnes and PhD candidate Alejna Brugos (both from BU); Prof. Stefanie Shattuck-Hufnagel (MIT); and Prof. Nanette Veilleux (Simmons). The theme of the conference will be "Prosody and the Individual: Unity and Difference Within and Across Speech Communities."

Congratulations to the organizers, and we look forward to the conference, May 30th - June 2nd, 2016.

For information about the annual BU Conference on Language Development, see:

<http://bu.edu/buclid/>

Speech Prosody Boston 2016





CONGRATULATIONS TO ALL OUR 2014 GRADUATES

We hope all our alumni will keep in touch!

Please take our alumni survey, and do send us updates for our Alumni webpage:
<http://ling.bu.edu/people/alumni>

Alumni Survey

<http://www.bu.edu/linguistics/UG/alum-survey.html>