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Research Day

The department of English presents current research areas and projects to the public

Date: 14 November 2011, 9 a.m. – 6 p.m.

Location: Aula (Main building)

Introduction

The Department of English is happy to present its research activities to colleagues and students. The brief illustrations that follow give a bird's eye view of the achievements, current projects, and future plans as concerns research activities in the various areas of interest of the Department. These summaries are the follow-up of the Research-Day presentations, in which a wide range of research activities were reported on, with the aim not only to "take stock" of what has been recently produced, in accordance with the Department's research programme established in 2002, but also to launch new perspectives and to explore their potential to create new groups, units, projects.

The Research Day was a collective effort, and we would like to thank all participants, our audience, as well as the organising committee, for their enthusiasm. This encourages the Department to hope for further intra- and interdepartmental cooperation, and for an increasing involvement of our students in research processes, which form such a significant part of our profession. We gratefully acknowledge the financial support of the Vizerektorat für Forschung.

Gabriella Mazzon
Wolfgang Zach

"Slavery and Literature 1770 - 1834", "Indigenous Australian Writing", "Ireland and the Irish in 18th Century Literature", "(Non)Racist Terminology in Literary Criticism" *Wolfgang Zach*

Rationale of research activities:

English has become the *lingua franca* of the modern world. Corresponding with this development, literature in English is now produced around the globe. Also the change in the geopolitical situation and the intense international cultural and commercial interaction in our 'global village' should prevent us, I believe, from perpetuating the old Anglo-/Americo-centric paradigm of English Studies and adopt a truly global perspective. In doing so, English fulfils its role in the globalization of our culture, but it also allows us access to the most diverse literatures and cultures world-wide. Studying texts from the various literatures in English enables us to fully explore the experience of (wo)man in our modern world, and it can greatly contribute to a better understanding of foreign cultures, of intercultural relations, and of global social and political problems, e.g. ethnocentricity, racism, First and Third World relations, etc. The Eurocentric colonial perspective in regard to other nations and cultures will be counteracted, stereotyped notions will be broken up, and respect will be inspired for people of different creed and colour as well as for their diverse aesthetic norms and literary achievements. As students of literatures in English we are in the privileged position to serve not only as cultural but also as intercultural mediators and to make people think - and hopefully to act - as responsible citizens of the world they live in, and to make a contribution, be it ever so small, to a better understanding not only of texts and their contexts but also to a better understanding between individuals, national groups and nations.

Present research projects:

Literatures in English: New Ethical, Cultural and Transnational Perspectives (edition of a volume of essays by scholars from all the world as the product of a conference held at Concordia University Montreal co-hosted by CISLE)

Slavery and Literature 1770 - 1834 (studies of texts and speeches about slavery by important writers and politicians)

Indigenous Australian Writing (book on Jack Davis, diverse essays on indigenous Australian literature, culture, and politics)

Ireland and the Irish in 18th century literature (essays on the image of Ireland and the Irish in England, and in the work of important Anglo-Irish writers like Jonathan Swift or Oliver Goldsmith)

Naming 'the Other': From Ethnocentricity to Cultural Relativism (a study of the paradigm shift from a Eurocentric to a culturally relativistic, non-evaluative terminology in naming different ethnic groups, especially in literary criticism)

Wolfgang Zach is Professor of English Literature and Director of CISLE, Centre for the International Study of Literatures in English. Research: Focus on British and Irish literature of the 18th century as well as on modern Literatures in English. In recent years emphasis on Postcolonial Studies, esp. Irish and Indigenous Australian literatures and cultures. Main themes: Issues of globalization, national images and stereotypes, racism, and slavery.

The Rhetoric of the Nation: Cultivating Images of African Slaves in the Drama of the Abolition Period, 1772-1838 *Ulrich Pallua*

My talk will encompass a brief overview of the history of the slave trade and slavery in the British Empire from the late 18th to the early 19th centuries to convey an impression of the massive scale of the trade in human beings in the Transatlantic Triangular Trade. I will then present some of my latest publications that feature the rhetorical parameters used by both sides, the abolitionists and the pro-slave trade faction, in their argumentation for and/or against the enslavement of Africans. Lastly, I will briefly talk about my current research work on images of Africa(ns) in late 18th and early 19th-century British plays featuring African characters, which also makes up the major part of my teaching in proseminars with special emphasis laid on the image of the 'Other' in the imperial context.

Ulrich Pallua is Assistant Professor. His main research area is 18th and early 19th-century literature dealing with the issue of the slave trade/slavery in the British Empire, including poems, novels, plays, and periodicals.

Speaking the Unspeakable: Representations of the African Holocaust in Afro-British Slave Narratives *Cynthia Rauth*

This PhD-project scrutinises the life-writing of former slaves. Afro-British slave

narrators had been at the intersection point of colonial subjugation – they had been torn from their homes and their families, had been deprived of their identities, had been (discursively) constructed into chattels — and they had seen the oppressor right in the eye. Slave narratives testify to these disruptive experiences. By means of their literary testimonies, slave narrators wrote themselves into being and put the Afro-Briton on the map of the world. In their life-stories, former slaves made the attempt to reveal the true nature of slavery in the Americas, to tear down the facade of plantocratic paternalism and to contest the images of benevolent planters and happy slaves. These texts can be read as acts of literary insubordination and resistance. Slave narratives aimed at healing the wounds of the past while simultaneously promoting the abolition of the Transatlantic Slave Trade and encouraging the liberation of African slaves. Slave accounts did not only play a crucial role in the eventual downfall of the colonial slave system but also proved instrumental in re-defining Afro-British identity – an identity that had been shattered by a system based on the victimisation and dehumanisation of millions of Africans.

Cynthia Rauth is a university assistant at the English Department. She is currently writing her PhD-thesis on slave narratives. Her research interests include diaspora and holocaust studies as well as postcolonial literatures.

Ethnic Dimensions in the Discourse on Slavery: European Views on Africa(ns) During the Period of Abolition, 1770-1835 *Helmuth Meier*

The British debate about the abolition of the Trans-Atlantic Slave Trade has widely been recognized as crucial in the process of globalisation not only distinguished modern and pre-modern societies via the existence of slavery but also aimed at establishing a European value system as a universal norm. The focus of my PhD thesis is an ideological and literary analysis of non-fictional, British texts on the slave-trade and slavery from the period of roughly 1770 to the 1833. The central research interest is the representation of Africans in both pro- and anti-slavery texts. The choice of this topic, as well as many of the questions that guide my work, such as in how far authors ascribe colonial and metropolitan identities and whether their texts allow for any real agency of Africans, are very much informed by post-colonial literary studies. In practical terms my approach is indebted to critical discourse analysis as well as methods adapted from corpus linguistics.

Helmut Meier has studied English and History at the Universities of Innsbruck (AUT) and Nottingham (UK) and published his master thesis Thomas Clarkson: Moral Steam Engine or False Prophet in 2007. Since then he has been working as a high school teacher and doing research for his PhD thesis with the working title "Ethnic Dimensions in the Discourse on Slavery: European Views on Africa(ns) During the Period of Abolition (1770 - 1835)".

The EDD Online Project *Manfred Markus*

Joseph Wright's *English Dialect Dictionary* (1898-1905) is the most comprehensive dictionary of its kind ever produced. Within a government-funded first project called SPEED (*Spoken English in Early Dialects*), Wright's 5000 pages of dialect words used between 1700 and 1900 allow for the retrieval and analysis of many linguistic aspects in Late Modern English to be associated with dialect words, both in Britain overseas, and ranging from pronunciation and word formation to idioms and cultural habits.

SPEED (2006-2009) was succeeded by a follow-up TRP project *EDD Online* (2011-2014). With its now six team members, this is concerned with the further improvement of the EDD database and of its interface. Much of the expertise acquired in our present work refers less to English dialectology than to lexicography and computer studies, database design and geographical map construction in general. This general relevance gives it its interdisciplinary potential (TRP = Transfer Research Programme). To increase our output we have several international partnerships, in particular, with the "Kompetenzzentrum für Digitalisierung" of the University of Trier.

My own interest in English dialects refers less to the individual features of dialect (too many and to complex to be grasped, particularly by a non-native speaker), but to typical patterns of dialect as a spoken and the most natural and most important variety of language.

Manfred Markus is Professor Emeritus of English Linguistics. His interests and publications are fairly heterogeneous (including Old English, Chaucer, Shakespeare and Modern English syntax), with a focus on historical and corpus linguistics. For the last 20 years, I have mainly worked with electronic corpora and compiled, among others, the MIDDLE ENGLISH INNSBRUCK PROSE CORPUS and the INNSBRUCK LETTER CORPUS.

A Clump of Crinkled Cookies. **The Dutch/Low German Heritage in Late Modern English Dialects** *Emil Chamson*

Dialect words tend to be poorly documented and subject to great regional variability. Consequently, tracing their origins can be especially challenging; our knowledge of English dialect etymology is, in fact, quite limited. The *English Dialect Dictionary* (*EDD*, 1898-1905) includes etymological comments at the end of some of its entries. Preliminary analysis suggests that these comments, despite their limitations, provide valuable and reliable information. The *EDD* thus offers the potential to greatly enhance our understanding of the origins of Late Modern English (1700–1900) dialects.

The presentation looks at the question of the lexical influence of those languages genetically closest to English: Dutch, Frisian and the Low German dialects. Despite clear historical records of continual and intense migrations from the Low Country regions to Britain, the linguistic consequences of this contact have been explored to a far lesser extent than those resulting from contact with other languages. Evidence from the *EDD* provides insights into the nature of this contact, and helps explain its linguistic legacy, in both historical dialects and Present-day English.

Emil Chamson teaches English and linguistics at the University of Innsbruck's Department of English. His academic background is in Germanic Studies and English, with a doctorate in English linguistics. His research interests include historical linguistics, dialectology and English-German contrasts.

Historical Corpus Linguistics - A Window to the Past of a Language *Stephan Giuliani*

Thanks to the technological advances of the past few decades, corpus linguistics has experienced a significant boom as computers facilitate the evaluation of corpora. This development has also had a fundamental impact on historical linguistics.

Corpora, i.e. large collections of linguistic data, can also be used to reconstruct and explore languages of the past. Therefore, Rissanen aptly describes corpora as "windows to the past" (2008: 53). In particular, corpora offer historical pragmatics the possibility to investigate on authentic language use of the past as well as on the patterns of human interaction and their development in time. Research is based on written material (e.g. trial records, private letters) and other evidence of speech-like constructed language (e.g. drama, fictional dialogues). Current historical pragmatic

research includes studies ranging from analyses of Shakespeare's oeuvre to address terms and discourse markers. This field of research requires due attention to external factors such as social, political and economic circumstances, as the context of a text directly influences its interpretation.

In my dissertation project, the pragmatic functions of discourse markers in Late Modern English dialects will be explored.

Stephan Giuliani is a doctoral assistant and specialises in historical linguistics (especially historical pragmatics) and dialectology. His research interests also include Politeness Theory, the linguistics of humour and intercultural communication.

Of Mice and Meaning**: Introducing Ecolinguistics and EFL Lexicography** *Reinhard Heuberger*

Ecolinguistics: Human perception is not objective but filtered, with language being one of the most important filters. Linguistic devices like grammar, vocabulary and discourse can reinforce our views about sameness, difference or importance. This belief in the interdependency of language and world necessarily leads to a critique of language. Ecolinguistics, a fairly new branch of linguistics, investigates language on the levels of lexis and discourse and points out 'unecological' language uses. One of the most important research areas concerns anthropocentrisms, which represent nature from the point of view of its usefulness for humans. This presentation gives a short overview of anthropocentric usage in the English language.

EFL lexicography: The second part of the presentation aims to sketch the remarkable history and development of monolingual English learners' dictionaries (MLDs), focusing on a few selected salient features as well as some current issues. The foreign learners' demands on a dictionary differ fundamentally from those of native speakers; MLDs thus show a number of peculiarities. Among their most striking features is the use of a restricted and simplified language for the definitions, so-called 'defining vocabularies'. In contrast to dictionaries aimed at native speakers, MLDs provide detailed guidance on grammar and usage, e.g. syntactic patterns and usage notes. Only learners' dictionaries include a vast number of example sentences and collocations, which also increases their usefulness for encoding, i.e. for language production. These categories of information will be illustrated briefly.

Reinhard Heuberger is an assistant professor in the Department of English at the

University of Innsbruck. Having studied in Innsbruck and Birmingham, he received his doctorate from the University of Innsbruck in 2000. He was the co-director of the FWF project SPEED (2006 – 2010) and now co-directs its follow-up project EDD Online. Heuberger's research focuses on lexicography, ecolinguistics and English dialect.

Statistical analysis of the Awareness I SS11 final examination and how these results can be used to improve the course content of Awareness I *Dianne Davies*

This talk will present a small scale case study conducted at Innsbruck University over the summer semester 2011. The goal of the presentation is to examine the effect of blended learning on students' performance in their end-of-semester achievement test.

The presentation will consist of three sections.   First, a course description will be given, followed by a description of the final examination, an explanation of the extent of the 'blend' and why and how the study was structured. This will be then followed by a classical test theory analysis of the quantitative data from the final examination test scores to determine if there were significant differences between results of students who took the course as a blended learning course and those who took it as a conventional course.

The second section will, via end-of-course evaluation forms, look at the students' attitudes to blended learning and determine if, from the students' point of view, the blended learning objectives were fulfilled.

The last section on critical reflection will try to find reasons to explain any anomalies and look at how the test, the 'blended' aspect and the course content could be improved.

Dianne Davies, B.A (Hons.), M.A. is a Lecturer of English. She has 8 years teaching experience in Germany and Austria at tertiary level and has attended a 4-week course on 'Language Testing at Lancaster University' by Dr. Rita Green.

The DYME Research Group *led by Ulrike Jessner-Schmid*

DYME is a research group of scholars and students who share an interest in the dynamics of multilingualism with English. It is based at the University of Innsbruck, but maintains ties to researchers at universities around the world: University of Groningen (NL), Swansea University (UK), University of Michigan (USA), among others. More information is available online at www.uibk.ac.at/anglistik/dyme.

Ulrike Jessner-Schmid is a pioneer of Dynamic Systems Theory in the field of multilingualism and has published extensively on the subject. She is president of the International Association of Multilingualism (IAM).

The Development of MLA (multilingual/metalinguistic awareness). How effective is multilingual training? *Elisabeth Allgäuer-Hackl*

Multilinguals have been found to be better at learning another language than monolinguals (Klein 1995; Ramsay1980), and better at recognising grammatical elements in an artificial language than bilinguals (Nation & McLaughlin 1986; Nayak et al. 1990). Multilinguals also seem to be faster at learning the grammar of a new language (Kemp 2001). Being multilingual means having enhanced linguistic knowledge and experience in different languages, and leads to different language processing and language maintenance strategies described as the M-factor by Herdina & Jessner (2002). MLA, or multilingual awareness, is one key component of the M-factor.

But multilinguals do not automatically behave as such. Müller-Lancé (2003) and Ender (2007), for example, found that a considerable part of multilinguals behave like monolinguals, which means that they do not use their multilingual repertoire efficiently. Above all young multilinguals need training in multilingual competencies so that they can fully activate their multilingual repertoire and make use of their knowledge of several languages.

A psycholinguistic study on the effects of multilingual training on multilingual/ metalinguistic awareness and language learning processes has been carried out at HLW Rankweil, Vorarlberg. DST theory (cf. Larsen-Freeman & Cameron 2008), the Dynamic Model of Multilingualism (Herdina & Jessner 2002), and research on metalinguistic awareness (Jessner 2006; Jessner 2008) defined as an emergent property of multilingual proficiency provide the main theoretical framework for the study.

Elisabeth Allgäuer-Hackl, Mag. MA, teaches languages at HLW Rankweil, has studied and worked in Vienna, Poitiers (France), Latin American countries, and the New York City College. Currently involved in various multilingual projects in Vorarlberg.

Early trilingualism in South Tyrol. A Psycholinguistic Perspective *Barbara Hofer*

Research on Third Language Acquisition and Trilingualism suggests that learners of three and more languages are advantaged in terms of their enhanced meta-linguistic awareness and their ability to exploit knowledge of their previously learned languages. The present research project aims to ascertain the role of bilingual education and the effects of bilinguality on language learning, in particular on third language learning, and on pupils' metalinguistic abilities and cross-linguistic sensitivity. The main purpose of this study is to investigate whether early acquisition of three languages enhances pupils' metalinguistic awareness and abilities and whether knowledge of a second language promotes the acquisition of a third language. I hypothesize that the teaching of three languages from an early age carries positive implications for children's linguistic, meta-linguistic and cross-linguistic sensitivity.

A meta-linguistic awareness test (MAT 2, Pinto et al. 1995, 2003) and a general competence test in German and in English were administered to two experimental groups and two control groups. First data obtained from the study suggest that bilingual children show higher levels of meta-linguistic awareness and that bilingualism facilitates the learning of additional languages.

Barbara Hofer teaches high school English in Bolzano (Italy). She has studied abroad at the Universities of Forli' (Italy), Westminster (London, UK) and Canterbury (Kent, UK; MA in European and Comparative Literary Studies).

The MAYLL Project: Metalinguistic Abilities in Young Language Learners *Kathrin Oberhofer*

A large body of research has found that native bi/multilingual children process and store language differently from their monolingual peers; they often show a more abstract understanding of language(s) or a higher degree of control over cognitive processing; the latter even on certain non-verbal tasks (see Bialystok 2009 for overview). As more children are coming into contact with foreign languages in institutional settings (in primary school or even before), such research is expanding to include these early foreign language learners. A study conducted with preschool-age children in western Austria (all native German speakers, but also including a few native bi/trilinguals) found that those attending English-language kindergartens performed differently from the control group on several tests of metalinguistic ability (Oberhofer 2008).

The MAYLL Project (2011-2013) will examine this on a larger scale. Kindergartners from Austria and southern Germany will be given tests of metalinguistic ability and executive function to see whether learning a foreign language at a young age produces the same kinds of cognitive differences found in native bi-/multilingual preschoolers. This project is sponsored in part by a grant from the Tiroler Wissenschaftsfonds.
Kathrin Oberhofer grew up bilingual and has been interested in multilingualism ever since she realized that other children (and their toys) only spoke one. Recipient of the Würdigungspreis des Bundesministeriums für Wissenschaft und Forschung.

The LAILA Project: Linguistic Awareness in Language Attriters *Valentina Pittracher-Terek*

LAILA is a longitudinal research project at the University of Innsbruck (English department), headed by Ulrike Jessner-Schmid and funded through a grant from the Austrian Science Fund (FWF).

Anyone who has ever learnt a language and then not used it for a while will be familiar with the phenomenon of language attrition: skills that are not used become 'rusty'. Most traditional models of first/second language acquisition work with linear language growth models, and rarely account for negative or inverted growth. In their dynamic model of multilingualism (DMM) Herdina and Jessner (2002) consider attrition as an integral and normal part of language development.

Developing and maintaining any language system(s) requires effort; keeping up two or more disproportionately more so. Multilinguals can be considered as particularly vulnerable to attrition, but are also believed to develop additional (cognitive) abilities that are not found in monolinguals, or even in bilinguals. It is possible that this multilingual awareness may actually inhibit or slow language attrition, or help language users to compensate for the effects of attrition more easily.

LAILA examines the development of multilingual awareness and foreign language proficiency after formal language learning ceases when participants graduate from high school. In contrast to previous language attrition studies LAILA takes a multilingual approach, looking at attrition in not just one, but in several languages in interaction.

Valentina Pittracher-Terek is a researcher working on the LAILA project at the English department of the University of Innsbruck. She is currently working on her PhD thesis entitled "Testing the M-Factor".

Language attrition after 4 months of non-use. Crosslinguistic Interaction and Language awareness *Manon Megens/ Jeanette Betsch*

Language attrition in essence describes the non-pathological gradual decline of language skills or portion thereof in an individual. While research on language attrition has mainly focused on first language attrition or on attrition of naturalistically acquired second languages, this research project explored whether attrition of a formally acquired second language (L2) and third language (L3) emerges after four months of non-use, in order to find new perspectives for future research and to highlight the consequences for teaching. In particular the project examined whether lexical attrition occurred in the English L2 and French L3 oral production of multilingual language learners who had spent these four months of non-use in either a French (L3) or an English (L2) linguistic environment. Since this was done from a multilingual perspective, i.e. with a dynamic approach to multilingualism, the other languages these multilingual young adults were familiar with were taken into account.

Even though only little lexical attrition was found, analysis showed that crosslinguistic interaction (CLIN) was at work and that the participants' metalinguistic awareness (MLA) remained the same or even improved. It was therefore assumed that both CLIN and MLA contributed to language maintenance. The proof of this assumption would be subject for future research.

As a Dutch woman living in Austria, working for the DYME research group and as curator for communication and art education, for Manon Megens "multilingualism" is a normal way of life!

Jeanette Betsch completed her teaching degree for English and French, and is currently teaching German in Nicaragua. She is an avid learner of Spanish and Turkish.

Applying linguistic knowledge: How one thing leads to another *Philip Herdina*

Scientific research is intended to provide solutions to theoretical and practical problems. In linguistics these might relate to mediation as defined by the European framework, multilingualism as a linguistic fact and the complex issue of dynamics and change in a field that is frequently misconstrued as being subject to universal laws and universal grammars.

The projects outlined include completed ones and work in progress building on previous research results and new questions. The *Bilingual Dictionary of Philosophical Terms, Wörterbuch philosophischer Fachbegriffe, Facultas,* UTB Vienna 2012 provides a practical solution to the problem of interlingual equivalence in various fields of philosophical research. The particular lexicographic challenge here was to create a dictionary that had not been attempted since 1917 and to resolve a problem that had persistently troubled many philosophers dealing with either German or English philosophy, when trying to transfer or translate terms from one language to another.

The complex issue of multilingual development was addressed through the development of a Dynamic Model of Multilingualism, challenging current theory about language acquisition and the assumptions concerning the irreversibility of language acquisition processes and the compartmentalization of individual language learning in terms of first language acquisition, second language acquisition etc., (*Dynamic Model of Multilingualism*, Multilingual Matters 2002**)**

Any research on multilingualism has to be able to specify the object of research. Obviously, language is a multifaceted human phenomenon that can be approached from different angles. The traditional approach is probably to define theory of grammar intended to provide a grammatical description and explanation of the respective language (cf. Aelfric's Grammar). Despite the long tradition in this field it is still evident that most theoretical and practical grammars of English fail to meet the criteria of descriptive and explanatory adequacy. *The Epistemic Grammar of English* is intended to overcome this problem by providing an exceptionless description of the patterns of English drawing on default logic, fuzzy set theory and matrix representation.

The second most important feature of language description is probably the semantic analysis of a language. The problem here is that most semantic theory tends to be eclectic or favour a specific approach (prototype semantics, idealized cognitive model theory etc.), paradigms that all have their limitations and prove inadequate in their theoretical foundations to cover lexical, metaphorical and metonymic aspects of language use .Dynamic Domain Semantics addresses this issue by introducing new concepts of ontology.

Historical Mulilingualism The project addresses the problem of the diachronic misconstrual of language. Past languages are seen as predecessors of present languages. Thus Old English is interpreted as a precursor to modern English, despite the fact that these two languages are essentially different. Just like present day German or French, PDE has undergone a reinterpretation as a nation language as the

property of a specific nation (British English). As Haugen suggests, prior to the rise of nationalism language was not national property and therefore languages were seen as a means of communication and not a constitutive factor of national or regional identity. The study of Anglo Saxon intends to prove that many traditional assumptions concerning the use and nature of this language are based on erroneous 19ᵗʰ and 20ᵗʰ century preconceptions about the nature of early medieval languages and that these are therefore essentially misconstrued.

Complexity Theory and Language. Philip Herdina and Diane Larsen Freeman. CUP 2012 Language theory has so far seen constant transitions from one paradigm to another. Even the most successful linguistic paradigm UG has undergone transformations from Deep Structure Theory, Standard Theory, Revised Standard Theory, Revised Extended Standard Theory Government and Binding Theory, X-bar Theory, and finally the Minimalist Program. Work on complexity theory is intended to provide a new and more effective paradigm for language studies.

Philip Herdina is Assistant Professor; he teaches and researches applied linguistics, grammar, and multilingualism. His current projects focus on cognitive semantics and complexity theory. He has academic degrees in Educational Science, Philosophy, Psychology, German and English Studies. He has also completed his Ph.D. studies in philosophy at the theological faculty of the University of Innsbruck.

When Literature Turns Concrete and Concrete Turns Into Literature *Helga Ramsey-Kurz*

The critical analysis of literary texts can yield insights into public discourse of considerable social and political relevance. To prove this claim I want to outline the gradual evolution of an idea sparked by the observation of an ecological controversy into a talk presented at an international conference titled "Under Construction: Gateways and Walls" in Istanbul this year and subsequently turned into plans for a research project to be conducted in collaboration with colleagues working at various universities all over the world, but especially at the University of New England in Armidale, Australia. The working title of this project is "Australia - Environment – Disaster – Survival." The title of the aforementioned talk is "Of Dams and Damage: Postcolonial Narratives of Dam Construction" and anticipates a comparative analysis of the novels *The Winter Vault* (2009) by the Canadian poet and novelist Anne Michaels,

The Sound of One Hand Clapping (1997) by the Australian writer Richard Flanagan, *Green Grass, Running Water* (1993) by the American-born Canadian author Thomas King and *Dragon Bones* (2003) by the French-born American writer Lisa See. All four of the novels were inspired by actual dam projects and deconstruct these as ventures not of construction but of neocolonial destruction.

More recent publications by Helga Ramsey-Kurz include the monograph The Non-Literate Other (2007) and two collections of essays, Antipodean Childhoods (2011) and Projections of Paradise: Ideal Elsewheres in Postcolonial Migrant Literature (2011).

"Islam is not a country". (De)constructions of Muslim space in migrant contact zones *Ulla Ratheiser*

The radical spatial relocation and habitual cultural dislocation that characterises migrant experiences ultimately necessitates negotiations of cultural and physical spaces in the new home country. In the process of these negotiations migrants might either attempt at 'finding a place' in the new social and cultural environment or, and this could even be the more productive strategy, at creating their own distinctive space. These newly occupied spaces – in the public as well as in the private sphere – are mostly demarcated by various cultural markers, be they linguistic, culinary or religious, and offer areas of (seemingly) protected existences within cultural contact zones.

In Leila Aboulela's *Minaret* (2005) and Sarah Gavron's film adaptation of Monica Ali's *Brick Lane* (2007) the negotiation of cultural and physical territory is central to the female protagonists' coming to terms with the horrifying experience of having been dislocated to hostile London. The space that both protagonists create or draw on, however, is not only delineated by their respective regional heritage, Sudanese and Bengali, but is constructed (and later deconstructed) as a specifically Muslim space. And while the protagonist's husband in *Brick Lane* can forcefully argue, "You think Islam is the place you come from? Islam is not a country," it is particularly in the creation and occupation of these public and private Muslim spaces that both women (temporarily) find a protective retreat.

Ulla Ratheiser teaches English literature and Cultural Studies. She has written her PhD thesis on childhood and child characters in Patricia Grace's novels and has presented and published several papers on Maori and diasporic literatures.

Rooms in the Works of Jean Rhys *Veronika Schuchter*

For me there was never any doubt that I wanted to specialize in literature as it is the field within English studies I feel most passionate about. I rediscovered Jean Rhys on my year abroad in London and the moment I picked up a copy of one of her earlier novels and started reading, I knew that I simply had to write about her works. The fascination I felt back then has not worn off in the slightest and I can still feel this initial excitement when I write or talk about her novels and short stories. In my dissertation I look at descriptions and perceptions of rooms in Rhys's works, a very multifaceted topic that has not yet been discussed all that extensively and therefore makes it a lot more rewarding. The reading and writing process is a very time consuming activity, I feel, however, that working on a topic I am committed to and at the same time find exciting and interesting makes it more enjoyable. Enjoying what I do is essential to me and in contrast to Jean Rhys, who once said that she would rather be happy than write, I do not see why one should exclude the other.

Veronika reads English and American Studies, as well as English and German with teaching qualification at the University of Innsbruck. Her research interests include postcolonial studies, modernist literature and women writers.

Ecoliterature *Sabine Kluibenschädl*

This presentation focused on two aspects. The first aim was to provide a general introduction into the field of *ecoliterature* by using my Phd project as an exemplary approach to the area.

For my doctoral thesis I am working in the field of *postcolonial ecocriticism*, one of the most productive and fastest growing branches of current international literary studies. It echoes the rising interest in environmental issues and, due to its highly committed functional and ideological character, demonstrates the applicability of the humanities to the so-called "real world". *Ecocriticism* is an interdisciplinary approach that does not only reflect on some of today's most burning issues, but can also serve as an intellectual tool to stimulate action.

The second part of the presentation entitled "ode to the sweet fruits of sharing" was an appeal to students to actively participate in scholarly discussions and events such as conferences. The intention was to communicate the conviction that academic work does not take place in solitude but requires interaction with like-minded people. It is through exchange with scholars and fellow students that cooperation is cultivated in order to establish a regional and international academic social network.

S. Kluibenschädl holds a degree in English and Romance studies. She researches in the domain of postcolonial studies and applies herself to a doctoral thesis in the area of ecocriticism.

"Trees standing in the water": Torontonian World Citizens in Dionne Brand's *What We All Long For* **(2005)** *Andrea Strolz*

War is what happens when language fails. (Margaret Atwood, *The Robber Bride*)

The true revolutionary [engagé artist] is guided by great feelings of love. (Che Guevara qtd. in Dionne Brand's *In Another Place, Not Here*)

There is a crack in everything. That's how the light gets in. (Leonhard Cohen, *Anthem*)

Dionne Brand's latest novel, *What We All Long For* (2005), pictures contemporary city life in globalized, multicultural Toronto: "Name a region on the planet and there's someone from there, here. All of them sit on Ojibway land" – land that was named after a place "where there are trees standing in the water [*Tkaronto*]" (4). The novel presents the city as split into 'black' and 'white' inhabitants and delineates the lives and friendships of four second-generation 'colored' immigrants of Asian or African background. It is through the subversive potential of engagé artist Tuyen Vu's installation that one can see the creation of a Thirdspace that "we all long for" to communicate differences across cultures. Tuyen's artwork invites the idea of "a global sense of place" (Doreen Massey) and characterizes the city's inhabitants as "trees standing in the water": they are rooted in the fluid urban space of Toronto and on their branches rests a new generation of Torontonian world citizens yet to come.

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Change and Variation in the Use of –ing forms *Gabriella Mazzon*

The use of –ing forms has been a focus of interest in research within English linguistics for many decades. The success of this multi-functional form is unrivalled, as it has gradually spread to more and more contexts and uses all over the English-speaking world. There is, however, quite some debate about the reasons for this success, and about the diachronic path that it followed.

Even more hotly debated is the alleged "overuse" of –ing forms in Non-Native Englishes, which are often reported to allow such forms with verb types and in contexts that differ from those of standard mainstream English. Recent corpus studies, however, reveal that the "rules" usually assumed to represent standard uses are not categorical, and that the extension of –ing forms to more and more contexts is only the continuation of a trend that started centuries ago.

The pragmatic factors in this trend (also including other issues pertaining to the aspectual systems in varieties of English) are the focus of a symposium planned for April 2012 at our Department.

Gabriella Mazzon specialises in sociolinguistics of varieties of English, pragmatics (especially interactional pragmatics and historical dialogue analysis), and historical linguistics. Her work in progress, beside the strand presented here, includes research on postcolonial Englishes, discourse markers, and on the methodology of historical pragmatics.

Negated adjectives: Meaning construction between context and (inter) subjectivity *Sandra Handl*

The semantic characteristics of complementary (e.g. *true – false*) and antonymous adjectives (e.g. *good – bad*) seem to imply fairly fixed rules for the usage of such pair members and their negated forms. In natural discourse, however, speakers frequently disregard these 'rules': They treat complementary adjectives as if they were gradable (e.g. *not false* 'not entirely false') or describe something as *Not bad!* actually meaning that it is 'more than good'. Moreover, they use constructions like *it's not impossible* although structurally simpler equivalents are available and display some variation regarding the usage of negation particle plus lexical antonym and negation particle plus morphological antonym (e.g. *not sad* vs. *not unhappy*).

From a cognitive-pragmatic perspective, these phenomena raise a variety of questions, which can be summarized as follows: Why do speakers deviate from semantic norms and use negated adjectives in these possibly misleading ways? And how do addressees manage to arrive at the intended interpretations, given that the meanings conveyed by negated adjectives are so extremely variable? To approach these questions corpus-based work will be combined with psycholinguistic methods, the fundamental assumptions being that meaning is not given but constructed in context (cf. e.g. Fauconnier 1994) and that it resides on the level of *intersubjectivity* recently described by Verhagen (2005).

References:
Fauconnier, Gilles (1994), *Mental spaces: Aspects of meaning construction in natural language*, Cambridge etc.: CUP.
Verhagen, Arie (2005), *Constructions of intersubjectivity. Discourse, syntax, and cognition*, Oxford etc.: OUP.

Sandra Handl studied at Munich University, where she also earned her doctorate in 2008. Her main research interests are cognitive linguistics, pragmatics, lexical semantics, and non-literal language.

The Football Project *Gerhard Pisek*

In 2005, the interdisciplinary *Innsbruck Football Research Group* was founded by members of various departments (English Studies, Romance Studies, Slavonic Studies, Translation Studies) at the Faculty of Humanities (Language and Literature) of Innsbruck University, with the aim of analyzing communication in multilingual international football teams. Other projects include a study of the expression of emotions in television sports commentary in six languages, as well as the organization in 2007 of an international "Language and Football" workshop with more than 40 participants from all over the world. A selection of papers given at this workshop was published under the title *The Linguistics of Football* in 2008. The book was officially presented in Innsbruck, one of the host cities of UEFA Euro 2008, as part of the cultural program surrounding the European football championship. Further contributions to this program were public events staged in Vienna and Innsbruck, featuring presentations and discussions in connection with the topic of emotions in sports commentary. In 2009, a seminar on football and multilingualism was held at the Department of Romance Studies, and during the 2010 World Cup an evening of presentations, panel discussions and film viewing was organized at an Innsbruck

cinema, revolving around the question of "Do you speak football?"

Other activities connected with the football project include presentations at various conferences, radio interviews, guest lectures, football-related language tuition and a diploma thesis entitled "Il plurilinguismo nel calcio."

Gerhard Pisek's research interests: dubbing and subtitling; the language of football; translation and culture; the translation of wordplay; English loan words in German; his research projects: translation in foreign language teaching; communication strategies in miltilingual football teams.

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