

Ling Letter

The newsletter of the Department of Applied Linguistics at Brock University



MESSAGE FROM FACULTY

By Dr. MICHAEL KARAS

Welcome to the 2026 winter issue of the Department of Applied Linguistics (DALs) newsletter.

I have always found the winter semester to start a bit sluggishly. We are all getting back from our holidays. It's cold. It's dark. It's, well, January in Canada! So it goes! However, once back in the classroom and interacting with students and colleagues, I find my energy and enthusiasm returning. I hope everyone has a great start to the semester and is able to find their energy and enthusiasm as well.

This edition of the newsletter has exciting updates about our current graduate students, goings-on in the Department, and updates from faculty in terms of current research and publications. For graduate students, it's a busy time of year. Full-thesis students begin to focus on their research projects as their coursework is now done. Major Research Paper (MRP) students have the double duty of completing more coursework throughout the semester AND narrowing down a topic for their MRP projects once the semester is over. It's a lot! For faculty, we continue with our full year courses and/or start new courses. The coming months are often busy with conferences as well and many of our colleagues will be presenting at top-tier conferences throughout the winter and into the spring.

Whatever you are doing this semester, I hope it all goes well. It's worth reminding ourselves that, day by day, it gets warmer! It gets lighter! Spring is coming, eventually!

Thank you to our amazing editors for another great issue of the DALs newsletter. Wishing you all a warm and productive semester.

Department News

Recent Faculty Publications

1- High variability phonetic training (HVPT): A meta-analysis of L2 perceptual training studies

Prof. Michael Karas and Prof. Ron I. Thomson | Studies in Second Language Acquisition (Published online June 4, 2025) | DOI: 10.1017/S0272263125100879

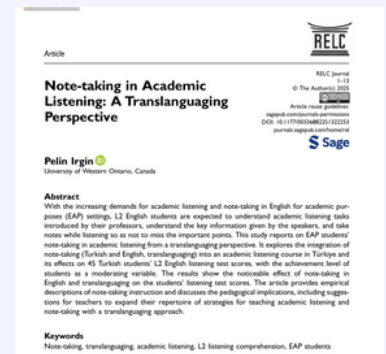


2-Test-Taking Processes and Strategies

Prof. Pelin Irgin and Prof. Ruslan Suvorov | The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics (2nd ed., Wiley), December 2025 | DOI: 10.1002/9781405198431.wbeal20791

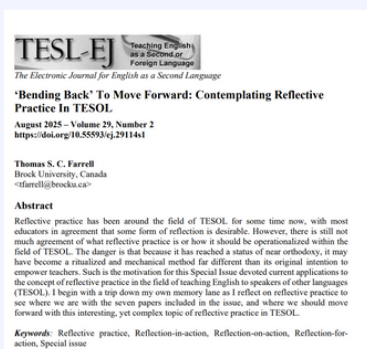
3- Note-taking in Academic Listening: A Translanguaging Perspective

Prof. Pelin Irgin | RELC Journal (OnlineFirst, 2025) | DOI: 10.1177/00336882251322253



4- “Bending Back” To Move Forward: Contemplating Reflective Practice in TESOL

Prof. Thomas S. C. Farrell | TESL-EJ, 29(2) | August 2025 | DOI: 10.55593/ej.29114s1



Department News

Recent Faculty Presentation

Dr. Farrell in Malta: Plenary Address, ELT Malta 14th Conference (Oct. 2025)



G. Folinazzo and P. Irgin presented “Mediation practices of plurilingual teacher-researchers: A multimodal collaborative autoethnography” at the CAAL/ACLA Conference (June 2–3, 2025) in Toronto, Canada.



Dr. Pelin Irgin presented “Understanding emotional well-being and self-directed professional development of language teachers in a private school: An ecological perspective” at the 6th Symposium of Southern Ontario Universities (Oct. 24–25, 2025) in Niagara, Ontario.



Department Announcement

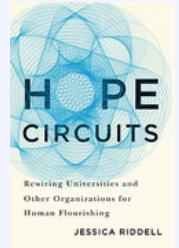
What: Master’s Thesis Defence: Bahar Forouzandeh
When: Wednesday, January 28, 2026 | 10:00- 12:00
Where: PL600F

Faculty Community Picks

Dr. Dempsey's Recommendation



I really enjoy Fredrik Backman's novels (Anxious People, A Man Called Ove, Beartown). Right now, I'm reading his latest, My Friends. Also on my desk is Hope Circuits by Jessica Riddell, which explores how to anchor a practice of hope in higher education.



"I'm always listening to an audiobook or podcast in the car. Lately I'm especially enjoying these two for their storytelling and humour: Family Trips with the Meyers Brothers and Good Hang with Amy Poehler."

Dr. Ganek's Recommendation



I'm always happy to share a podcast. Here are two Radiolab episodes from 2025 that connect to SLP and linguistics:

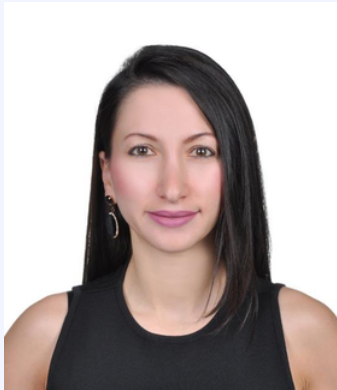
- "Voice": Explores how human voices evolved, what our voices communicate about identity, and what happens when a voice is lost. It also touches on speaking valves.
- "The Echo in the Machine": Looks at how speech-to-text became possible, and includes the story of the Deaf President Now movement.

Additionally, International Cochlear Implant Day (Feb. 25) and World Hearing Day (Mar. 3) are coming up soon.



Faculty Community Picks

Dr. Irgin's Recommendation



The Handbook of Second Language Listening, which includes a chapter co-authored by Dr. Ruslan Suvorov and me.



Robert Macmillan Symposium in Education (RMSE) in 2026, which offers graduate students an opportunity to present education-related research to the wider community. The details about RMSE 2026 have not yet been posted, but updates will appear on the following webpage:

<https://www.edu.uwo.ca/research/graduate-symposium/index.html>



Meet our Newest Professor

Dr. Pelin Irgin



Tell us about yourself.

I am a new faculty member in Applied Linguistics at Brock University. Before joining Brock, I worked as an assistant professor in the Faculty of Education at Western University, where I taught in the graduate TESOL program. I bring extensive teaching and research experience from diverse cultural and institutional contexts in the UK, Spain, and Türkiye.

Why did you choose the field of Applied Linguistics?

I have always been passionate about teaching English as a foreign language, partly because I learned English as a foreign language myself growing up in Türkiye. My fascination with different languages and cultures led me to study in a language department and learn additional languages. I am actively studying Ukrainian and Russian, which keeps me connected to the learner's perspective.

What do you find the most meaningful part of your job?

The most meaningful part of my job is the opportunity to teach, learn, and conduct research alongside my students and colleagues. I enjoy creating spaces where knowledge is shared and co-constructed with learners and researchers. Interacting with my students keeps me energized, and I appreciate the chance to observe and better understand the new generation.

What do you do outside of Brock?

I live in London and commute regularly between London and St. Catharines, which makes for a busy but rewarding routine. Outside of work, I enjoy spending time with friends and colleagues, going hiking, and attending family gatherings. I also love travelling, exploring new cultures, and caring for tropical plants such as monstera, cacti, and mother-in-law's tongues 😊.

Meet our Newest Professor

What is something most people don't know about you?

I am an active member of a book club in London. Our book club partners with the London Public Library, where we read storybooks to children and support library-based community programs. Together, we also organize cooking events to support people in developing countries; for instance, at our most recent event, an Afghan-Canadian chef taught us to prepare traditional Afghan dishes, and we raised funds to support her refugee family in Afghanistan.

What are your research interests and any current projects?

My research focuses on language and language teacher education in multilingual contexts, second language listening comprehension, and listening assessment. More specifically, I investigate explicit and implicit instruction of listening strategies, note-taking in academic listening, and the use of technology in listening assessment. My interests also include computer-assisted language learning (CALL) and critical reading and writing pedagogy, and I have received several internal and external grants, awards, and scholarships to support this work. Currently, I am collaborating with a colleague from the University of Toronto on a project related to note-taking in academic listening, and with another colleague from Western University on bilingual teachers' well-being and professional development.

What's your advice to current students?

Brock's undergraduate and graduate students are highly motivated and inspiring to work with. My advice is to cultivate strong critical reading habits and to consult multiple sources rather than relying on a single reference. In a time when AI-generated information is widespread, it is especially important to question, evaluate, and verify the reliability and validity of the information we encounter.



Fun Facts Corner: “Did You Know...?”

Did you know that there are more than 7000 known languages in the world?

Did you know that over 40 percent of the world’s languages are endangered?

Did you know that the language with the largest number of native speakers is Mandarin Chinese?

Did you know that the city with the most languages is New York City?

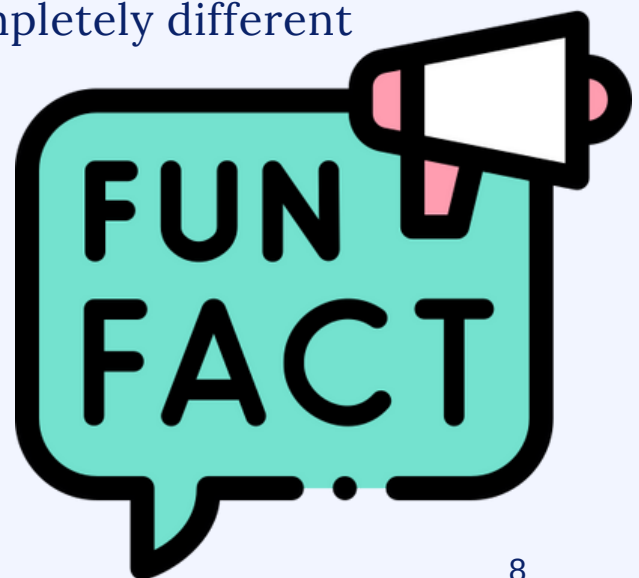
Did you know that at least half of the world is bilingual?

Did you know that some twins develop a private communication system called Cryptophasia?

Did you know that Hawaiian has at least 200 words for rain?

Did you know that English will sound completely different one thousand years from now?

Did you know that your personal way of speaking is called your idiolect?



GRADUTE FEATURES

EZEA ROSEMARY CHIAMAKA

My name is Ezea Rosemary Chiamaka, and I am proudly Nigerian. I completed my bachelor's degree in Linguistics at the University of Ibadan, where my passion for language and communication truly began to shape my academic path. After graduation, I taught English Language in a primary school in Nigeria, an experience that strengthened my desire to support language learners. My journey later led me to South Korea, where I pursued a master's in international business management and continued teaching English in various academies. These experiences across cultures deepened my commitment to helping learners acquire English as a second language.

Among my accomplishments, I am grateful for the opportunities I have had to teach in two countries, adapt to diverse learning environments, and build meaningful connections with students from different backgrounds. Each step has reinforced my belief in the power of language education to bridge cultures and open doors.

My goal is to become an effective and compassionate ESL educator who contributes to research-informed teaching practices. I aspire to design learning experiences that are inclusive, engaging, and empowering for learners worldwide. This passion guided me to pursue the MA in Applied Linguistics (TESL) at Brock University, a program I truly love. I am deeply grateful to God for providing me this opportunity to grow academically, refine my teaching skills, and meet inspiring people from around the world. A fun fact about the MA Applied Linguistics program is that it brings together students with richly diverse linguistic and cultural backgrounds, creating a unique learning environment where you can learn as much from your classmates as you do from your professors.

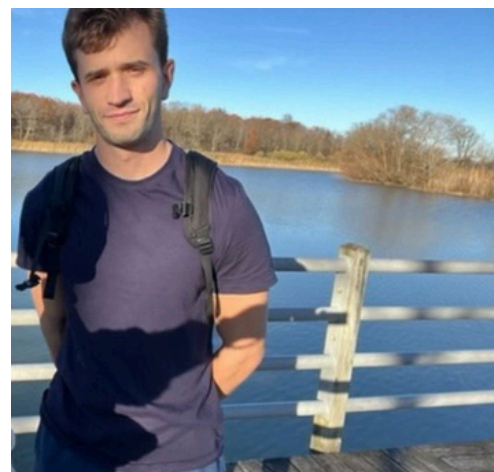


JORDAN NUZIATO

I was born and raised in the Niagara Region, Canada. I have lived here ever since. My academic background comes from linguistics, as I graduated from Brock University in 2024 with a BA in Applied Linguistics/TESL.

My accomplishments include the following: General Brock Soiree Scholarship, Harrison-Thompson Bursary Trust, Brock University Returning Scholars Award, and the Promising Choices Bursary.

My goal is to one day get my PhD and teach English at a university. One fun fact about our MA Applied Linguistics programme is there are only 6 students, quite small.



GRADUTE FEATURES

NICOLE MACKIE

My name is Nicole Mackie and I'm a graduate student in the department of Applied Linguistics. I have been working as an English language instructor for nearly a decade now. During the pandemic, I decided to start my own business teaching English online. It was really fun and I learned a lot from that experience. I also found some new interests outside the field of linguistics: graphic and UX design. I decided to take a UX Design certificate, which helped me build user-friendly and accessible digital experiences. I hope to merge my knowledge in second language acquisition and UX design skills to create engaging digital learning experiences. I also hope to publish my own writing as I have always dreamed of becoming a writer (although when I was young, I used to imagine I would write a book about dolphins, haha!).



Ugochi Mbagwu

My name is Ugochi Mbagwu. I am the graduate ambassador. I am from Imo State, Nigeria. My journey in linguistics began with a deep fascination for how language shapes human communication and identity. I hold a bachelor's degree in Linguistics and Communication Studies from the University of Port Harcourt and a Masters degree in English language from Imo State University both in Nigeria where I built a strong foundation in language studies and communication.

Over the years, I have taught in both secondary schools and at the university level, experiences that have enriched my understanding of language learning and pedagogy.

My accomplishments include teaching students from diverse linguistic backgrounds and providing academic mentoring to help them achieve their goals.

These experiences have strengthened my passion for fostering inclusive and effective learning environments.

My goal is to bridge linguistic theory and classroom practice by contributing to curriculum development and research that promote effective, inclusive language teaching.

An interesting fact about the MA Applied Linguistics Program is its diverse and collaborative community. Students from around the world bring unique perspectives, making every discussion vibrant and enriching. The faculty's dedication and the program's supportive environment make it a wonderful space for professional and personal growth.



GRADUTE FEATURES

ADELLE YAMASHITA-BALL

The certificate program has been highly impactful, helping me build confidence for future graduate training in Communication Sciences and Disorders. The foundational coursework has deepened my understanding of evidence-based practice through research analysis, strengthened my critical thinking through challenging projects and presentations, and fostered reflective learning through open and thoughtful seminar discussions. I've enjoyed and embraced the program's rigour, as I feel it's helping me grow essential skills academically and professionally. This growth has been strongly supported by the mentorship of faculty members who are consistently kind, approachable, and deeply invested in my learning. I am especially grateful for the opportunity to engage in research under Dr. Hillary Ganek, contributing to the advancement of knowledge in accessible and culturally responsive clinical care, an aspect of the program that has been both motivating and rewarding. In addition, I have been able to pursue volunteer and shadowing opportunities at the nearby Children's Centre and Hospital, which have been incredibly meaningful for my learning and professional development. With a small faculty and close-knit classes, I have been able to build genuine connections with both peers and instructors, making my experience at Brock especially supportive and enriching.



Contact Us



<https://brocku.ca/social-sciences/applied-linguistics/>



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MEET THE EDITORIAL TEAM



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