



Linguistic Society of America
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MEDIA ADVISORY

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Linguists to Gather in Baltimore for National Conference

(Washington, DC) – Hundreds of linguistic scholars from across the U.S. and around the world will convene in Baltimore for the 84th Annual Meeting of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA) this January. Members of the news media are invited to observe and report on the proceedings.

The meeting is scheduled for January 8-12, 2009, at the Hilton Baltimore. The meeting provides a forum for the presentation of cutting-edge research focused on the scientific study of language. In addition to the LSA program, the meeting also features concurrent programs sponsored by the American Dialect Society, the American Name Society, the North American Association for the History of the Language Sciences, the Society for Pidgin and Creole Languages, and the Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas.

The meeting typically attracts more than 1,000 linguists who attend various sessions and workshops. Approximately 220 papers and 80 posters have been approved for presentation at the meeting. For a detailed listing of all meeting sessions, please visit the LSA website: <http://lsadc.org/info/preliminary-program-2010.cfm>

Research Highlights

New linguistic findings by Professor Ted Supalla of the University of Rochester will be presented in a plenary session on Thursday, January 7th at 7:30pm. Dr. Supalla's research demonstrates striking similarities in the evolution of spoken and signed languages. Previous studies claimed, falsely, that sign languages must differ from speech in numerous ways, particularly because sign languages convey several visual linguistic cues simultaneously; that is, in clear contrast to the word-by-word sequence of sounds that are essential to speech. Dr. Supalla will present new findings that show how sign languages are much more like spoken languages in their emergence, maturation, and growth through time. His intricate analyses confirm that spoken

and signed languages display common properties of structure and change through time, that is, despite their use of different modalities.

New findings in the area of second language acquisition will be presented at a concurrent session on Jan. 9th at 9:00am, entitled "Language Learning." The panelists will present research exploring two main areas: the mental processes involved in acquiring a new language and how insights from linguistics can facilitate this acquisition process. The paper by Ginsberg, Honda and O'Neil, for instance, shows how students learning English as a second language can use techniques similar to what trained linguists use when analyzing a new language.

Media Highlights

In a plenary talk scheduled for Jan. 8th at 12:45pm, world-renowned linguist Professor Deborah Tannen of Georgetown University will address an audience of linguistic colleagues regarding her latest research findings, focused on the traffic rules of how we have conversations.

In a special symposium entitled "Medialingual," scheduled for Jan. 7th at 4:00pm, the distinguished presenters will demonstrate how linguists are beginning to use the visual media to reach the American public, including venues such as films, documentaries, and other media representations. These media are being used to present issues of language diversity, language endangerment, and other linguistic issues relevant to a variety of audiences. The unique presentation format of the symposium allows each speaker to present a body of illustrative vignettes from their productions as well as to discuss their rationale for the presentation format and the production process.

Awards, Honors and Related Events

In addition to the research presented, the meeting also features a number of awards, including the annual designation of the "Word of the Year" by the American Dialect Society, scheduled for Friday, January 8th. Other LSA awards to be presented at a special ceremony on January 9th at 5:30pm are the:

- Victoria A. Fromkin Lifetime Service Award: Terence Langendoen (National Science Foundation);
- Linguistics, Language and the Public Award: Walt Wolfram (North Carolina State University);
- Leonard Bloomfield Book Award: Pamela Munro (University of California, Los Angeles) and Catherine Willmond, *Let's Speak Chickasaw, Chikashshanompa' Kilanompoli'* (University of Oklahoma Press). The award committee cited the book's contribution to the difficult task of reviving indigenous languages.
- Linguistic Service Award: Ethan Poole (University of Minnesota).

The 2010 Class of LSA Fellows will be inducted during a ceremony at the Business Meeting, on Friday, January 8th at 5:00pm. Members of the Society who have made distinguished contributions to the discipline are honored with the fellow designation. Those being inducted

are: Peter Culicover (The Ohio State University), Susan Goldin-Meadow (University of Chicago), Brian Joseph (The Ohio State University), Mark Liberman (University of Pennsylvania), John Ohala (University of California, Berkeley), Stanley Peters (Stanford University), Ellen Prince (University of Pennsylvania), and John Rickford (Stanford University).

Honorary members will also be elected at the Business Meeting.

To obtain a press badge for the meeting, please contact Alyson Reed.

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The Linguistic Society of America is the largest national professional society representing the field of linguistics. Its mission is to advance the scientific study of language.