

Report on the 2013 Linguistic Institute

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The 2013 Linguistic Institute took place June 24-July 19, 2013 at the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Early funding from the Linguistic Society of America helped underwrite the planning and implementation of the Institute, student fellowships and named professorships. Additional funding from University of Michigan sources further helped with implementation. The rest of the costs of the Institute were covered by participant tuition and external sponsorships from the North American Chapter of the Association for Computational Linguistics, the American Dialect Society, and the Dictionary Society of North America.

The theme of the 2013 Linguistic Institute was Universality and Variability. Courses focused on skills and methods of data management and linguistic analysis, introductions to many of the field's subdisciplines, and specialized courses that reflected on the Institute theme. We had a particularly robust set of courses in language documentation, language contact and bilingualism. We had courses taught by faculty from many of our sister disciplines, notably psychology, anthropology, computer science and English Language Studies.

As have some recent Institutes (Stanford and MIT), we ran our courses independently of official university credit due to the tuition costs for such credit. This had both costs and benefits as detailed in the Program section below. Overall, we believe that the benefits outweighed the costs as we had both more control and more flexibility with a variety of relevant details concerning classrooms, tuition, and registration.

The 2013 Institute welcomed 83 faculty and 515 participants, a third of whom were international. These included 51 local interns, students from the University of Michigan, Wayne State University, Eastern Michigan University and Michigan State University who traded staffing the Institute for tuition. We did not distinguish different types of participants; however, using birth year as a proxy for that, roughly 70% of the participants were graduate students, 20% were post-graduate degree ("affiliates") and 10% were undergraduates.

In addition to our intern team of 51, the Institute staff consisted of two faculty Co-Directors, an Administrative Director, a graphic designer and three student RAs, one of whom worked fulltime for three semesters (Fall 2012, Winter 2013, Summer 2013); one of whom worked full-time for two semesters (Summer 2012 and Summer 2013); and one of whom, a recently graduated undergraduate major, was paid hourly for 40+ hours a week from April 2013-August 2013.

The curriculum was composed of 67 courses, which can be found here: <http://lsa2013.lsa.umich.edu/courses-and-events/courses/>. Classes were held for 110 minutes per session twice a week for a total of eight sessions, meeting on either a Monday-Wednesday or Tuesday-Thursday schedule. Fridays were reserved as class-free days for workshops and other activities. Classes were taught by 83 instructors (12 coming from outside the US and 15 from the University of Michigan). Institute Professors included: Collitz Professor Lyle Campbell, University of Hawaii Manoa; Edward Sapir Professor Janet Pierrehumbert, Northwestern University, and Ken Hale Professor Keren Rice, University of Toronto. Each gave a traditional evening plenary lecture as well as taught a course.

Campbell spoke on 'Historical Linguistics and Language Documentation.' Pierrehumbert gave a lecture entitled 'Lexical Variability,' and Rice spoke on 'Fieldwork and Community: Aspects of Variation and Change.' Two Forum Lecturers presented an evening plenary lecture. Anne Charity Hudley, College of William and Mary, gave a lecture on linguistics in the public sphere entitled 'Linguistics & Community Engagement: Keeping It Real.' Noam Chomsky, MIT, spoke on 'What is Language and Why does it Matter.' In addition, Daniel Everett, Bentley University, gave a monolingual fieldwork demonstration with a speaker of Hmong. The Institute hosted three Wednesday Pizza and a Film events. The films that were shown included "If these Knishes Could Talk: The Story of the New York Accent," "The Grammar of Happiness," and the double feature "Being Myself" and "Speaking in Tongues." "The Grammar of Happiness" included a question and answer session with Dan Everett, whom the film is about.

The Institute offered 17 co-located workshops, all of which were one- or two-day events, and three evening professional-preparation workshops run by COSIAC. There were several impromptu workshops on topics such as constructed languages, statistics, and new journals. Greg Alger from Lexicon Branding hosted an information session about the company and industry careers for linguists. The Institute contracted with a local company, Golden Limo, to provide four excursions, one of which was canceled due to lack of participation. The other three, a tour of Detroit, a tour of local wineries and a trip to Lake Michigan were popular and reasonably well attended.

The Institute maintained a vibrant website (<http://www.lsa2013.lsa.umich.edu>), Facebook page (<http://www.facebook.com/2013lsa>) and Twitter account (@lsa_2013), all of which we used initially for advertising the Institute and then for providing information during the Institute. Additionally, participants organized an unofficial Facebook page that was unusually active and served as a site for organizing various outings and activities. Several participants live tweeted different events and activities using the hashtag #lingstitute.

The Institute hosted an opening reception on June 23 and a closing reception on July 18. We also held a Fourth of July picnic (classes were not held on the 4th) and six receptions following evening events. The Ann Arbor Summer Festival, which included both free and ticketed events, occurred during the first 10 days of the Institute and the Ann Arbor Art Fairs took place during the last two days. In addition, participants enjoyed biking, hiking and kayaking excursions at local Ann Arbor parks and recreation areas.