# UW LINGUISTICS DEPARTMENT

Volume 3, Issue 1 October, 2004

# LETTER FROM THE SABBATIC CHAIR

This autumn 2004 quarter-while Fritz Newmeyer is acting as Chair—I'm pleased to have time to work on my research projects, mainly a book on the Critical Period for Ianguage acquisition. I'm also continuing my joint work with Deborah Arteaga on expletives (that's there, it, not four letter words), for which we've been invited to a conference on that topic in Konstanz, Germany in November.

I'm glad to contribute this update on activities of the Department during the last half year. You can also visit http://depts. washington. edu/lingweb/ for the latest information on programs, faculty and grad students. If you have not done so, please take a moment to add yourself to our database by sending your email and postal addresses to phoneme@u.washington. edu. If you know of other friends of Linquistics with



whom we may have fallen out of touch (i.e. not mailing them the semi-annual newsletter), please include their addresses as well.

See *LETTER*, p. 5

## Inside this issue:

Nostrand professorship	2
Compling MA program	2
Student news	3
Faculty Focus	4
Commentary	6
Celebration photo	7

# FUNDING NEWS

Affirming that gifts for endowments to support faculty and students are among the University's most precious resources, UW has announced a major fund raising effort. The Department is very enthusiastic about the possibility of establishing a permanent endowment dedicated to graduate student support. Here are the key points:

- A group of donors has made funds available to match new endowments of \$100,000 or more at fifty cents on the dollar.
- Matching funds are reserved when a pledge is received.
- Pledges can be fulfilled over a period of five years.
- To receive the matching funds, the Department must raise a minimum of \$100,000 in pledges by the end of December.

A \$150,000 endowment would provide for the recruitment and retention of the very best applicants, so this is a great opportunity for alumni and friends to make a significant impact on the continued health of the Department. Linguistics Advisory Board chair Jim Hoard has stated, "I am determined to do everything I can to reach this audacious goal." We hope our readers are similarly motivated to act for the benefit of the Department.

See FUNDING, p. 7

### Editor's note

We hope readers will enjoy "Faculty Focus," a new occasional feature inaugurated by Michael Brame in this issue.

As always, your feedback on any aspect of the newsletter is very much appreciated. The Department address is given in the Chair's letter above. Mine is mvarmagost @earthlink.net.

Jim Armagost

# NOSTRAND PROFESSORSHIP CELEBRATION

The Department, the College and Nostrand contributors enthusiastically celebrated the naming of Frederick Newmeyer as the first Nostrand Professor at a lecture and reception in the Henry Art Gallery in early June.

Howard Nostrand came to the University in 1939 as professor and chair of the Department of Romance Languages, a position he held for 25 years. Frances Nostrand taught French here from 1962 to 1979. Over their careers they developed a conviction that language study is incomplete without a thorough understanding of the culture surrounding that language.

The Nostrands had two purposes in mind when they committed to establishing a \$500,000 endowed professorship. They wanted to encourage research and teaching in language and cultural competence at the University of Washington, and they wanted to stimulate public awareness of the need for cultural competence by creating a prominent example through research, teaching, lectures and grants to young scholars.

The Nostrand Endowed Professorship in language and cultural competence was initiated this year to further their vision while funding the research of Professor Newmeyer. Frances made an additional donation of \$30,000 on the occasion of the celebration as a



memorial to Howard. Numerous individuals and groups such as the Washington Association of Foreign Language Teachers and the Seattle-Nantes Sister City Organization have also contributed to the fund.

After introductions by Divisional Dean Michael Halleran and Chair Julia Herschensohn, Fritz Newmeyer delivered a lecture titled "Language similarities and language differences." He stressed that both he and the Nostrands have shared a common

goal—to understand the interplay of the particular and the universal in language as well as the interplay between language structure and language use. Newmeyer gave a number of examples illustrating that not everything in grammar is necessarily 'useful' to the speaker and that, interestingly, one can think of any number of things that it would be 'useful' for grammars to do, but are nevertheless not found in any language.

Following a lively question period Laurel Preston, president of the Linguistics Society at UW, expressed the gratitude of the graduate students for the Nostrands' generosity and presented a copy of the current UW Working Papers in Linguistics, which is dedicated to the Nostrands. She also gave Frances a book on the University of Washington.

A reception featured a wide range of imported cheeses, wines and soft drinks. Participants included faculty, graduate students, alumni, friends of the Nostrands, affiliates from other departments and Linguistics Department staff present and past. Frances and her daughter-in-law Patricia Nostrand were most gracious in representing the family and in conversing with the many attendees.

# NEW COMPLING MASTERS PROGRAM

The new Professional Master's in Computational Linguistics has been officially announced. Starting in autumn 2005, the program will allow students to earn their MA in 12 months of full-time study.

One of only a handful of such programs in the world, it was designed with input from industry professionals to provide a solid foundation in computational linguistics so that students will be well prepared for a variety of positions including jobs as translational technology specialists and lin-

guistic data specialists. An optional internship provides the hands-on experience that employers value, and monthly guest lectures serve as excellent networking opportunities.

Applications are accepted once a year for autumn admission. Classes start in late September and students complete their degrees by the end of the following summer.

The program draws on the resources of the Department as well as the expertise of Electrical Engineering and Computer Science & Engineering, and the Information School. The Department is currently advertising two openings for new faculty with extensive research experience and industry contacts. An advisory board that includes managers and researchers in high-tech companies like Boeing, Microsoft, Xerox and IBM helps guide the program to ensure that students will have the skills employers are looking for.

For further information go to <a href="http://www.compling.washington.edu/compling/">http://www.compling.washington.edu/compling/</a>.

# STUDENT NEWS

## **GRADUATE DEGREES EARNED**

Sixteen students have earned doctorates and masters degrees since our October, 2003 newsletter. Dissertation or thesis title and current status (of PhDs) is given following students' names.

#### **PhDs**

**Donna Andrews** The acquisition of Spanish gender by English-speaking children in a partial immersion setting. With the Microsoft Natural Language Group.

**Emily Curtis** Geminate weight: Case studies and formal models. Part-time teaching at Western Washington U.

**Susannah Levi** The representation of underlying glides: A cross-linguistic study. Post-doc at Indiana U.

**Susan McBurney** Referential morphology in signed languages. Independent

scholar.

**Bridget Yaden-Luthi** Mental representations of Spanish morphology: Rules or analogy? Teaching at Pacific Lutheran

**Yungdo Yun** Glides and high vowels in Korean syllables. Teaching at two universities (see box below).

#### MAS

**Duane Blanchard** Toward a hierarchical and unified tagset.

**Haewon Cho** Intonation transfer in second language acquisition: An analysis of English intonation by Korean speakers.

**Richard DiPrima** A generative syntactic approach to word order variation in Russian.

**Anya Dormer** On prefixation and goal

of motion construction in Russian.

**Jessica Giesler** A conflicting-cue study examining the relative strengths of consonant transition cues as affected by vowel, noise and position.

**Kelley Kilanski** Czech clitics: A syntactic analysis of the clitic cluster and the second position.

**Darik Olson** Lone nouns in Spanish / English mixed discourse: Code switches or borrowings?, a variationist analysis.

**Jessica Ring** An historical and sociolinguistic analysis of the quotative verb be+like.

**Benjamin Toronto** Improvement of word-based models for text compression

**Sylwia Tur** Perception of a non-native language contrast: Voiced and voiceless stops as perceived by Tamil speakers.

#### SIMPSON CENTER SCHOLAR NAMED

Congratulations to doctoral student **Michael Tepper** for receiving a research award based on demonstration of interest and promise in cross-disciplinary scholarship. The Simpson Center granted the award from monies generated by the Robert Bolles and Yasuko Endo endowed fund and from the Arts and Sciences pledgematch program. These awards are made available to different departments in alternate years with eligible departments designating one incoming doctoral student each.

We asked Michael to introduce himself to readers. Here is his response:

I am excited to be among the first year graduate students of the University of Washington Linguistics Department.

I just finished my undergraduate in math at the University of Texas at Austin. So, how did I arrive here? A high school Latin class sparked my interest in linguistics. During my senior year in college I found a way to combine my math and computer science interests through an introductory course in computational linguistics. In this class I learned that linguists are interested in everything from simple Markov chains to advanced maximum entropy statistical models. I also rediscovered that I enjoy thinking about linguistic structure.

My first foray into linguistic research was my undergraduate thesis, in which I tested a faster algorithm for computing MaxEnt Part of Speech tag models on the definitive Wall Street Journal corpus. This last summer I worked at Palo Alto Research Center on several applications of LFG transfer rules.

Right now I am interested in learning all that I can about the current theories of computational syntax and semantics. I am also interested in learning and gaining fluency in a *spoken* language, so I am studying Turkish.

## **EXTRAORDINARY EFFORT**

People, especially those setting out on a job search with a fresh university degree in hand, must often accept what would otherwise be insuperable conditions.

Such appears to be the case with **Yungdo Yun**, who earned his doctorate in June, 2004. He writes that this semester he's teaching a whopping seven courses at two universities in South Korea—Introduction to Linguistics and Phonetics, which he taught while at UW, some English courses and a teaching methods course.

Dongguk University in Seoul and Korea Nazarene University in Chonan are about 2-1/2 hours apart and Yungdo reports that he travels back and forth between them by subway, bullet train, bus and taxi. He says he thought at first that teaching seven courses in one semester was impossible, but it's getting better. "I guess that I am now getting used to this."

Yungdo, our hats are off to you!

# FACULTY FOCUS

We're pleased to introduce a new occasional feature of brief career-spanning sketches submitted by members of the faculty. Michael Brame graciously accepted our invitation to inaugurate the series.

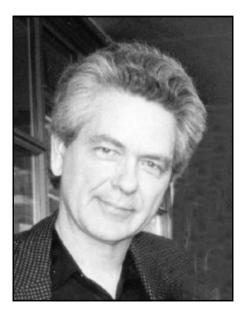
Being a lover of both music and air, I took my first breath on Mozart's birthday in San Antonio, Texas more than sixty years ago. For those who may be neither musically inclined nor adept at numerical computations, that's January 27, 1944. My desire to understand the Spanish that was widely spoken in my hometown inspired an early interest in natural language, and I proceeded to study German in high school and Russian, Chinese, Arabic and Swahili as an undergraduate.

I began studying linguistics at the University in Austin, my first teacher being Prof. Windred P. Lehmann, and I received my BA degree in 1966. Some years later I happened to bump into Prof. Lehmann on the streets of Cairo and we proceeded to a bar where we consumed many Egyptian alcoholic beverages.

During the 1963-4 academic year, I received a fellowship under the auspices of the Carnegie Foundation. It allowed me to attend and receive a degree from the Center for Middle Eastern Studies, a British Foreign Service institute nestled in the mountains of Lebanon overlooking Beirut and the Mediterranean. During that undergraduate year in the Middle East, I lived with an Arabic speaking family of six, studied Arabic intensively and traveled extensively throughout Lebanon, Syria, Jordan, Iraq and Kuwait. In 1966 I attended the American University of Cairo, where I studied Egyptian Arabic, and also managed to spend a summer at the University of Kansas with eight hours of intensive spoken Chinese daily and yet another summer at UCLA.

I studied linguistics under Morris Halle and Noam Chomsky at MIT beginning in 1966, receiving a PhD in 1970. During that timeframe I spent a summer at Princeton University and in 1970 I traveled with my family to Malta where we lived for several semesters

studying Maltese and enjoying the world's tastiest fish called lampuki. During the spring of 1971, I taught at the University of Texas and proceeded from there to the University of Washington, where being enamored of Seattle's sushi, especially its toro and uni, I have remained for thirty-four years with time off to teach a year at the Universiteit te Utrecht in Holland and La Residence in Morocco. I have also lived and traveled in the former Soviet Union and present-day Russia. Developing an interest in



Caucasian languages, I studied Georgian, Lak, and Avar, and lived among the Laks in the high Caucasus. I also studied Tamazight, Middle Atlas Berber, and have traveled to both the High Atlas and the Middle Atlas, particularly enjoying my time in Ain Il-Luh. Much later, I was to live among the Huichols and study their language in the high Sierra Madre of Nayarit state.

My scholarly interests shifted early on from phonology to syntax and my former student, Yon Gon Kim, and I have developed an algebraic theory of natural language syntax within which production and recognition receive a natural resolution. I had developed an abiding interest in Shakespeare by 1952 and fell in love with the sonnets in 1963, becoming aware of the authorship controversy sometime in the sixties after learning that the consummate mathematician genius Georg Cantor believed that the orthodox commoner from Stratford was not the genuine man behind the immortal plays and transcendent sonnets. I was later to learn that Sigmund Freud, Charlie Chaplin, Sir Derek Jacobi, Henry James and on and on believed the same, including in fact three Supreme Court justices. Pursuing the authorship controversy from a purely linguistic angle, it became obvious to me and my colleague and future wife, Galina Popova, that the name 'William Shakespeare' was indeed a pseudonym and moreover, only one of several employed by the genuine figure lurking behind the renowned mask. Our research led to the publication of Shakespeare's Fingerprints, the first installment of our fingerprint trilogy, in which we frame a theory of authorship identification in terms of four C's: congruence, convergence, cumulation and cascade. In the second installment to appear shortly, Never and for Ever, we add catenation, yielding a 5C Criterion.

The place of my birth was near the Alamo, but nativity, once in the main of light, now rushes on and Time that gave does now his gift confound. I will be retiring at the end of 2004 to pursue writing and Texas Hold'Em.

[The fingerprint trilogy is being published by Adonis Editions in Seattle. Information on the trilogy as well as other Brame/Popova collaborations, along with an order form, can be found at <a href="http://www.adonis-editions.com/index.html">http://www.adonis-editions.com/index.html</a>. Editor.]

## LETTER, from p. 1

Emily Bender (PhD Stanford) accepted a permanent Assistant Professor position in May. We are also quite pleased that Richard Wright was promoted to Associate Professor with tenure, and that Karen Zagona and Sharon Hargus were promoted to "full" Professorship. In June we celebrated the naming of Fritz Newmeyer as the Howard and Frances Nostrand Professor of Linquistics. We are very pleased that the College has approved searches for a syntactician and for two computational linguists. The positions are to be filled by next September.

In the past year we made substantial progress in the development of Computational Linguistics. As a visiting professor, Emily Bender taught Introduction to Computational Linguistics, a seminar and a new course on Grammar Engineering, and also planned an entire curriculum for our new fee-based professional MA degree. The recommendations of a Program Advisory Board constituted by Associate Provost David Szatmary (head of UW Educational Outreach) from a group of professionals in the field were instrumental in working out the details of the program. The professional MA, which will be financially self-sustaining, will begin operation in Autumn 2005. Last year, in addition to Emily's computational courses, we offered a very popular evening course on Perl Programming taught by grad student Jay Waltmunson, who is now working it up as a permanent new course.

Overall our ten faculty produced 15 articles in refereed journals and 22 chapters in collections. Last year Fritz Newmeyer published numerous articles and gave two-dozen invited talks in ten countries. Mike Brame published two co-edited critical editions, one refereed journal article and one book chapter. Ellen Kaisse—who's also on sabbatic leave this year-continues her work as the principal editor of Phonology and gave talks around the country. Jurgen Klausenburger was invited to the University of Konstanz to give a series of lectures and workshops as a visiting scholar during the summer. I published a couple of journal articles and also gave some talks. Karen Zagona, who last year published both a book (Spanish Syntax) and an article, is undoubtedly pleased to have some research time on her sabbatic quarter this fall. Toshi Ogihara published two journal articles and serves on a board of the LSA. Richard Wright is participating on an NSF grant with Jeff Bilmes of Electrical Engineering, while Sharon Hargus continued her NSF grant on the Alaskan language Deg Xinaq and was awarded (with Virginia Beavert) an NEH grant. Alicia Wassink took a quarter off for maternity leave with Baby Rohan (whose language acquisition we are all fascinated by), but managed to publish a joint-authored article and continue with other projects; she has been invited to edit a special issue of the Journal of English Linguistics in 2005.

Our students continue to thrive. Since 1992 our awarding of BA degrees

has increased dramatically, nearly doubling from 37 to 63 this past year alone. The number of undergraduate majors continues to increase and is now at nearly 130, up from less than 100 in 2001. Our majors are of very high caliber, with four of the graduating BAs invited to join Phi Beta Kappa and four receiving scholarships (Greenfield, International, Mary Gates and William Henry). This year we awarded six PhDs, ten MAs and two PhCs. The superiority of our graduate students was shown in several Foreign Language Area Studies awards and in the placement of our recent PhDs. We celebrated all our graduates' achievements at a Faculty Club reception on June 7.

As for fundraising, we were very pleased that this year's \$5010 in donations to the Friends of Linguistics surpassed last year's \$3513. These donations helped us sponsor colloquia, pay for student travel to conferences and fund special events in the Department. A more significant fundraising project is the Nostrand Endowed Professorship. Howard and Frances Nostrand have already given over three-fifths of their fiveyear \$500,000 commitment. This year the endowed professorship is funding Professor Newmeyer's research. Finally, Professors Wright and Herschensohn took advantage of a College one-to-one matching proposal to make contributions that yielded \$1450 in additional funds for Linguistics graduate students.

Julia Herschensohn

# FACULTY NEWS

On her sabbatic leave this fall quarter Karen Zagona is conducting research on how tense and aspect interact. In particular, she's investigating the properties of the Reference Time in sentences that lack morphologically overt Viewpoint aspect. Her analysis will be applied to solve standing problems in accounts of interclausal temporal relations.

The Linquistics Advisory Board welcomes comments from readers.

Nancy Ackles ackles@u.washington.edu Jim Armagost mvarmagost@earthlink.net kristin.denham@wwu.edu Kristin Denham Michael Gamon mgamon@microsoft.com Phil Harrison philip.harrison@pss.boeing.com jim\_hoard@hotmail.com Jim Hoard, Chair Jeffrey Kallen jkallen@tcd.ie James Lyle jlyle@microsoft.com

James Lyle *jlyle@microsoft.com*Tatsuya Suzuki *tacchan@ic.nanzan-u.ac.jp*Alice Taff *taff@u.washington.edu*Rick Wojcik *richard.h.wojcik@boeing.com* 

# COMMENTARY by Fritz Newmeyer

We'd like to thank Fritz for offering to share his impressions of differences between academics in France and the States.

Last year I was fortunate to have a sabbatical, which I spent at three different research institutes in Europe: the École Normale Supérieure and the Institut des Sciences Cognitives in France and the Max-Planck-Institut in Germany. In one sentence, my wife Marilyn and I found it to be the most enjoyable year of our lives. As a result, we have seriously entertained the idea of emigrating to France. The lanquage, the food, the culture — it's all what it's cracked up to be. The one big negative, though, is the situation for academics there, so I thought that it might be interesting to write a little about the differences in that respect between the two countries.

The United States is a country where intellectuals are regarded with — to put it gently — suspicion. France couldn't be more different. One of the first things that an outsider living in France notices is that intellectuals are superstars, practically at the same level as movie actors and actresses. My guess is that any French person with a college education could name a half dozen living French philosophers and give a rough outline of what their ideas are. Literary critics, art historians, and the like routinely appear on mass audience TV talk shows and even as quests on game shows. The French read more books per capita than any other people and a lot of their reading is anything but light. Books make the best-seller list there that you could imagine being used only in graduate seminars in the US. In the subway on the way to work I often saw commuters (who were definitely not students) reading classical French authors like Voltaire and Racine.

So you would guess that the life of a French university professor would be pretty cushy, right? Unfortunately, things haven't worked out that way. To begin with, they earn only a little more than half of what their American counterparts do, in a country where the cost of living isn't all that

different from our own. Even senior professors often have to share offices in poorly maintained university buildings whose facilities have not kept pace with the information age. The university library holdings (at least in linguistics) are so meager that a linguist colleague at the University of Lyon (one of the major universities in France) feels that she has to make a make a trip to the Netherlands every couple months to do research.

What is going on? The short answer is lack of funding and budgets for higher education that are constantly being cut. Even conservative Republicans in the US figured out a long time ago that strong public universities are good for business, but that idea has no currency in France. But the long answer points to fundamental differences in the way that research is regarded in France compared to the United States (and, I think, most other Western countries). Here, the overriding purpose of academic research (at least in theory) is to further knowledge and understanding. But in France, a much more important goal seems to be to show what an 'independent thinker' you are. Doctoral theses, for example, are judged in part by how much they add to our knowledge about some area, but much more than in the US, I think, by how 'original' they are. I met students in Paris and Lvon who were encouraged not to do library work, not to cite previous research on their topic (that would open up the danger of lack of originality), and not to discuss their research with their fellow students. So admiration for the public intellectual whose books challenge everyday ways of looking at things doesn't translate into a felt need to maintain state-of-the-art universities where day-to-day research is carried out.

The French love of independent thinkers is probably reflected in their attitude to sports. Traditionally, the big sports heroes in France have

been those who go it alone – skiing down Mount Everest by themselves, sailing alone around the world in a tiny boat, tennis players, and, of course, Tour de France cyclists. It's true that France has become a major soccer powerhouse in recent years, but that's mainly because the best players are immigrants (or children of immigrants) from Africa or elsewhere in Europe.

French academics (maybe French people in general) also stand out from most other Europeans in their attitude toward the English language. Since the Seventeenth Century, France has had an Academy whose official goal is to purify, regulate, and protect the French language. So the Academy makes pronouncements 'banning' words that French has taken from English like 'le weekend', 'le management', etc. Hardly anybody pays any attention to their pronouncements. About 10 years ago, at the urging of the Academy, the French government passed a law requiring any talk at an international conference in France that isn't given in French to have a simultaneous translation into French. (Who could afford to do that?) The unintentional result was to increase the isolation of mainstream French academics. Internationally-minded French academics simply ignore the law, with no dire results so far. (I've never seen gendarmes storm into a seminar room, their machine guns drawn.)

Though things are changing fast among the young, many French people still have a love-hate relationship with the English language. I would say that there is considerable sentiment that speaking English well is 'giving in' to Anglo-American (especially American) hegemony. That actually had positive effects for people like me and Marilyn, who speak French fairly well. Any foreigner who speaks their language, or tries to, automatically gets a lot of

See COMMENTARY, p. 7

## Funding, from p. 1

Department and Linguistic Advisory Board members will send out letters asking for pledges to help us meet our goal of \$100,000 in support by December 31st. Remember that donors will be able to honor their pledges over a five-year period. We hope that alumni and friends will rise to the occasion and give generously. For those who want to support the Department but feel their donation might be too small, please be assured that we understand that personal circumstances vary. We value every gift equally as a sincere expression of the heartfelt concern of the giver.

## FY 2003-2004 donors

We wish to thank the following for gifts to the Howard and Frances

Nostrand Endowed Professorship, the Friends of Linguistics Fund and the Linguistics Graduate Student Fund. More recent donations will be acknowledged in the next newsletter.

Anonymous (two) Francis R. Adams Jr. James L. Armagost Tahn Chong Baskerville Janine de Saint Giles Kristin E. Denham Estate of Helen Stangeland Smith Philip Harrison Julia R. Herschensohn James E. Hoard Carol A. N. Johns Norman R. Johnson Jeffrey L. Kallen Jack Odell Lawson Joanne R. Lonay Chapa Carol E. Luthra

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Frances Nostrand (second from left) accepts a copy of the current UW Working Papers in Linguistics from LSUW President Laurel Preston as Antoinette Wills, Pat Nostrand and Michael Halleran look on during the celebration naming Fritz Newmeyer as the first Nostrand Professor, June 3, 2004.

## **COMMENTARY**, from p. 6

respect. I wasn't teaching in France, but I gave a half dozen public lectures. At first I was discouraged from giving them in French, on the grounds that any linguistics student who might attend a talk of mine would be good at English and, anyway, they need to be exposed to English linguistic jargon. The former is simply not true. A few weeks before my first talk (which I had planned to

give in English), I attended another talk which the speaker was going to give in English. Before she started, she said that if people really wanted her to, she could give it in French. In less than a second, several students shouted in unison 'French – please give it in French!' So I ended up giving my talks in French, which is something that I had been wanting to do for a long time.

Of course, all of the above was about

the *institutional* aspects of linguistics in France. At the personal level things were quite wonderful, and I enjoyed as many social contacts and good discussions about linguistics with my French colleagues as I would with anybody in the United States. That alone would have made my stay there worthwhile, even if in almost every other respect the quality of French life were not absolutely superb.

## CONTACT INFORMATION

Department of Linquistics Box 354340

Seattle WA 98195-4340

Phone 206-543-2046, Fax 206-685-7978

Email phoneme@u.washington.edu

Undergraduate advisor

Kening Li, lingadv@u.washington.edu

Graduate advisor

Ellen Kaisse, kaisse@u.washington.edu

Department Chair Julia Herschensohn

Administrator

Kathryn Speranza

Visit the Department website at http://depts.washington.edu/lingweb/

# CONTACT US

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