

SIGS AND REGIONS SPOTLIGHT: LONG ISLAND REGION

New Inspiration: A Linguistics Conference at Molloy College*by Jackie Nenchin*

From August 4 through August 7, 2015, Molloy College in Rockville Centre hosted the 42nd Annual Conference of the Linguistics Association of Canada and the United States (*Association de Linguistique du Canada et des États-Unis*). LACUS, a branch of the International Linguistics Association, was founded to create a forum for the free flow of ideas and discussion on human behaviors of communicating from all possible points of view, going beyond grammatical studies in the various traditional modes. The theme of the conference, “Language and Society,” drew linguists, ESOL teachers, and teacher trainers from as far away as Portugal, Costa Rica, Hong Kong, and China; teachers from Nassau Community College, Stony Brook University, and local school districts also participated. NYS TESOL members Sister Alexandria Wolochuk, Long Island regional chair, and Jackie Nenchin co-hosted the event, which was sponsored by the Division of Education and the Department of English at Molloy.

The schedule for the conference was full, including virtual sessions and three plenary sessions devoted to this vital theme:

Language and Culture—Dr. Mark Aronoff, Stony Brook University

Endangered Languages—Dr. K. David Harrison, National Geographic Fellow, Swarthmore College

Between Two Worlds: Language Attrition and Identity Shift Among Immigrant Children, and Implications for Pedagogical Approaches—Dr. Dorit Kaufmann, Stony Brook University

There were papers from various areas of linguistics, including:

Historical linguistics and history of linguistics

Issues in graphology, phonology, grammar, lexis, discourse, modality, ontology, geolinguistics, sociolinguistics

Cognitive and neurolinguistic approaches to language

Computational and corpus approaches to language

Language in the media

Multilingualism and genre

Teaching second and foreign languages

Systemic-functional approaches to language

Of particular interest to ESOL teachers were such presentations as “Original Teaching Content and Student Motivation in the EFL Classroom” by Koji Uenishi (Hiroshima University), “How to Teach Grammar Effectively: The Perceptions of Student Teachers,” by Jackie F. K. Lee (The Hong Kong Institute of Education), and “Learning Foreign Languages through Digital Media for Young Children” by Seung-Hyun Son (Lancaster University).

The conference concluded with an excursion to Sagamore Hill and an awards banquet that honored outstanding papers. As participants dispersed, they took with them memories of new friends and colleagues, and fresh perspectives on language and society. Thus supported, they can begin the coming academic year refreshed and inspired by what they learned at the conference.

Jacqueline Nenchin received an M.S. in TESOL from Molloy College and a Ph.D. in linguistics from Macquarie University in Sydney, Australia. She is an associate professor at Molloy College in the graduate TESOL program and the English department. Her research interests include systemic functional linguistics and its application to pedagogy and translation, the role of technology in language teaching and learning, and second language writing.

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