



University  
of Southampton

# Modern Languages

at Southampton

School of Humanities

October 2007

## In our time...

You might associate this phrase with people definitely older than undergraduates!

It is also the title of a Radio 4 series chaired by Melvyn Bragg where three guest academic specialists discuss a topic and its importance for today's audience. In the last programme of the pre-summer series on 12th July when 1.8 million listeners tuned in, Mary Orr, Professor of French and Flaubert expert (as fourth year students know), was invited to join the panel to discuss the Trial of Madame Bovary. You can hear the programme and what she said by accessing the link on her home page ([www.lang.soton.ac.uk/profiles/orr.html](http://www.lang.soton.ac.uk/profiles/orr.html)) or find out more from her if you are thinking of taking this option in your final year.

Back from sabbatical leave in 06-07 to write another book about Flaubert - this one is about his fictionalisation of nineteenth-century French science - Mary is not only teaching on BA and MA courses, but also taking over from Prof. Patrick Stevenson as Director of Postgraduate Research Students in the School of Humanities.

She will be holding a couple of sessions later in the academic year for Southampton undergraduates in Avenue Campus curious to find out more about further study at Southampton and how to proceed. So look out for the publicity for these events, and come along to find out more.

Mary Orr

## Another excellent year for Modern Languages at Southampton

In our newsletter this time last year we spoke of looking forward to 2006-7 with optimism and now, reflecting on the year's successes, it is clear that this optimism was not misplaced.

First of all we must pay tribute to the academic achievements of our final year students, 14% of whom graduated with first class honours and 78% with an upper second or better, 3% up on 2005-6, results of which all concerned are justifiably proud, particularly as we had considered the 2005-6 results themselves outstanding.

Clearly such academic success is a result of a real team effort and we were again delighted to see that the work of Southampton's Modern Languages staff was recognised in the Guardian Higher Education League table, which, for the second year running, rated Southampton in the top five Modern Languages departments nationally.

In the light of these achievements, it is perhaps no surprise that our student numbers continue to rise despite the gloomy picture painted of modern languages recruitment nationally. This year's intake again exceeded expectations and allowed Southampton, unusually amongst Modern Languages departments in the current climate, the luxury of not recruiting via clearing.

Our new first year is also one of our best qualified ever, having achieved top quality results in A levels, IB and EB, as well as in French, German, Polish, Spanish and Slovakian school leaving examinations. It is a real pleasure to be working with such a well qualified, cosmopolitan cohort and we are sure they will enjoy great success with us.

James Minney



Cherry blossom, Avenue Campus

## The loss of a first language

Have you ever wondered whether people could forget their mother tongue?

This is the question I am investigating in a research project entitled "Losing your tongue: first language attrition in monolingual and bilingual settings" funded by a British Academy grant.

I want to explore whether adults who move to another country can modify their first language (perhaps forgetting the vocabulary or modifying the syntactic structures) influenced by the new linguistic environment. In this study I chose two different groups of subjects: Cuban exiles who have settled in Miami and still use Spanish as the dominant

language, and Spaniards who moved to the UK and have replaced their Spanish with English almost entirely.

By comparing these two different groups I can analyse the role that the community (monolingual or bilingual) has on the linguistic competence of those who move abroad. I hope to have the results of the study by May next year but the data in Miami was collected last July and, as expected, the amount of contact with English appears to affect language loss.

Laura Domínguez

## Portuguese-speaking diaspora in the UK

Conference to take place in Southampton, June 2008.

In June of this year, colleagues from Portuguese section were part of the committee that organised a very successful interdisciplinary mini conference/workshop entitled *The Portuguese-Speaking Diaspora in the UK*, hosted by Manchester Metropolitan University.

The second in the series will be held at Southampton in June 2008, and it is envisaged that an edited volume of selected papers will be published in 2009, when it is intended to take the

third conference in the series to Portugal or Brazil.

In the meantime, both Jaime Beswick and Mark Dinneen are continuing their research with Portuguese-speaking migrants. Jaime in Bournemouth, Southampton and Jersey, and Mark in Venezuela. They will also set up a formal research cluster with UK- and Europe-based colleagues specifically working on Portuguese, Brazilian, Mozambican and Angolan migration.

Jaime Beswick

## Hot off the press

New publications by staff in Modern Languages.

*Writing Shame and Desire: the Work of Annie Ernaux*, (Peter Lang, 2007)

Dr. Loraine Day

*Regional Nationalisms in Spain. Language Use and Ethnic Identity in Galicia* (Multilingual Matters, 2007)

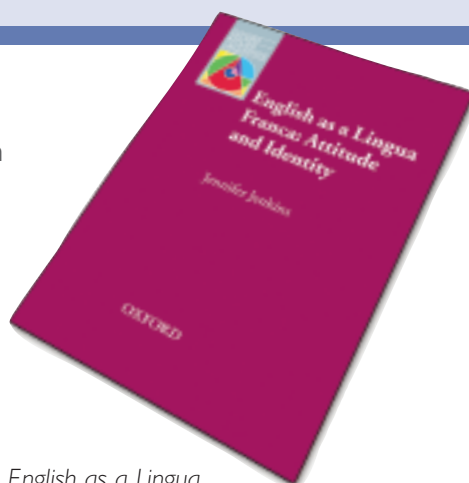
Dr. Jaime Beswick

*Individuals in Time. Tense, aspect and the individual/stage distinction*, (John Benjamins, 2006)

Dr. María J. Arche

*Ángeles Mastretta: Textual Multiplicity, Monografías A, Tamesis*, (London, 2005)

Dr. Jane Elizabeth Lavery



*English as a Lingua Franca: Attitude and Identity*, (Oxford University Press, 2007)

Prof. Jenny Jenkins

*Jose Soares - an anthology by a Brazilian popular poet with an introductory study* (Hedra, 2007)

Dr. Mark Dinneen (ed)

## Spanish Learner Oral Corpus (SPLLOC)



Left to right: Dr. María Arche, Prof. Ros Mitchell, Antonia Pérez, Dr. Laura Domínguez

The SPLLOC team will be running a one day workshop on 25 January 2008 at Avenue Campus.

The program will include the presentation of this new corpus of L2 Spanish and the results of the associated research conducted by the team (acquisition of word order, clitic pronouns and lexical development), followed by discussion by Professor Amaya Mendikoetxea (Autonomous University of Madrid).

In the afternoon, a training session on software employed for language analysis (CHILDES) will be offered.

This event will be of great value to students and scholars interested in language acquisition from any perspective.

### Registration

Registration is free, but limited to 30 people, so save your seat! For further details contact Antonia Pérez in [ap1u06@soton.ac.uk](mailto:ap1u06@soton.ac.uk)

### The team

The SPLLOC team are Professor R. Mitchell, Dr. L. Domínguez, Dr. M. Arche, Antonia Pérez (University of Southampton), Professor F. Myles (Newcastle University) and Dr. E. Marsden (University of York). Further information is available on the SPLLOC website [www.splloc.soton.ac.uk](http://www.splloc.soton.ac.uk)

María J. Arche

## EUROVOLT Language teacher training course



EUROVOLT is a virtual learning environment (VLE) course where tutors become learners and have "hands on" experience on what it is like to learn on line and plan their own VLE course.

The course explores different aspects of teaching and learning online:

1. teaching on line
2. learning on line
3. planning and evaluating

The aim is to acquire the skills and knowledge to be able to use ready-made ICT materials and resources and also to design blended and distance learning courses for specific work-related purposes.

Being a student again has been a challenge, considering I did it on top of my full time job, but I have enjoyed every single moment.

The insight you get whenever you put yourself in a student's shoes is invaluable and being an e-teaching enthusiastic the skills and knowledge I acquired so far have strengthened my determination and belief that this is definitely the future of learning and teaching.

There is such an abundance of tasks, resources and possible activities in EUROVOLT to suit a variety of interests: from collaborative tasks where the success depends on everybody contributing and doing his/her share of work, to individual ones where you will develop materials for a language course of your own.

The most interesting thing about the course has been exchanging opinions and discuss about current trends/issues of on line teaching with colleagues from such a varied spectrum of disciplines and backgrounds.

I am looking forward to finishing the course by May/June 2007 with a personal EUROVOLT/EUROLTA VOLL Certificate.

**Alessia Plutino**

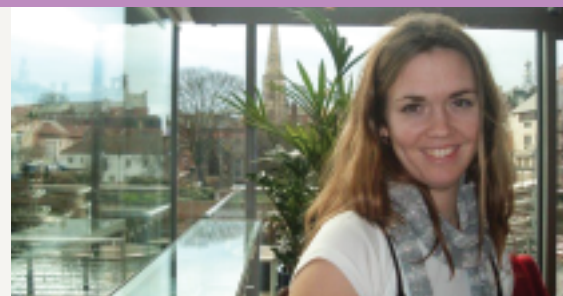
## Diary of a lectrice

Rhiannon studied BA Hons French and German. She graduated in July.

Returning from a year as an ERASMUS student in Aix-en-Provence in the South of France to exam preparation and the British climate wasn't exactly fun! So imagine my delight to be able to start this academic year in sunny Bordeaux as a lectrice! For those who don't know, a 'lecteur', or the feminine version, 'lectrice', is effectively a native language assistant who works at a French university.

The University of Southampton currently offers such 'lecteurships' to their finalists in French to come and work here in Bordeaux, or Rouen, after graduation. We only teach English speaking classes and the principle is to teach in English.

Today I gave my first class which took place in the language lab. It went surprisingly well and I found I enjoyed myself! I live in the city centre and I have started to familiarize myself with my surroundings and get used to the hussle and bussle! Also, just when you think you



Rhiannon

know a bit of French, toujours la surprise! A 'pain au chocolat' is called a 'chocolatine' here! Oh la la!

In short, I have 'crossed over' and instead of being a student, I am now a member of staff at a French university and I love it! These positions are very appealing for many different reasons. The amazing teaching experience coupled with an attractive but fair wage and the opportunity to live and work in France for a year is very tempting! Indeed, a burning desire to teach helps but is certainly not mandatory! If you're fairly laid back, open and friendly- consider applying! I will close with the words of my French flat mate who has a sporadic penchant for saying "Good job!" in the case of lecteurships, she's spot on!

**Rhiannon, Undergraduate**

## From MA to PHD

Caroline has just completed a Master's in Applied Linguistics Research Methodology.

Having just completed a BA (Hons) at the University of Oxford, a decision as to career progression lay imminent. I had been teaching EFL for the past five years, and knew that a career in academia was the right path for me.

The University of Southampton offered a selection of MAs in Applied Linguistics, and excellent staff in the field. Each MA had a wide variety of course units, which I was generally able to shape to my own research interests. I decided to study part-time for the MA Applied Linguistics Research Methodology, since it was important for me to be able to combine my studies with further teaching experience at higher education level. The MA comprises eight taught units and a final dissertation, for which the candidate can choose any topic of interest to them. Feeling daring, I undertook a Mandarin Chinese Stage 1 course, during which I kept a diary documenting my thoughts about learning a completely new second language. This diary would later form the raw data for my individual research project. As I write, I have only just submitted my hard-bound dissertation, the culmination of almost a year's worth of research.

The next step on the research ladder will be a PhD in the linguistics department at Southampton (enabled through a research scholarship), under the guidance of one of my MA tutors. This is what the Southampton ML department does best. The tutors' doors are always open, and they always have the time to sort out a linguistic crisis. The friendliness of the department resonates from every whirr of the photocopier; from the array of native tongues one hears on a trip down the corridor; from behind every office door.

**Caroline, Postgraduate**



Caroline

## Film season

### A visit by film director Peter Lilienthal

The German-Jewish director Peter Lilienthal has been making films for over four decades. The topics of his films are international, frequently dealing with political struggles in Latin America and other parts of the world.

Two events will mark Peter Lilienthal's visit to Southampton. *David* will be screened on **Tuesday, November 20** (Avenue Campus, Lecture Theatre A 6pm), accompanied by a Q&A session with the director in a student workshop on **Wednesday, 21 November** (Avenue Campus, Room 1093, 2pm-6pm).

The number of participants for the workshop is limited, but if you would like to take part, please contact Claudia Sandberg at [csand@soton.ac.uk](mailto:csand@soton.ac.uk).

Lilienthal's latest project, *Camilo-The Long Way to Disobedience* (2007), a



David (1979, Germany)

documentary telling the story of a Nicaragua-born former US soldier who fought in Iraq and subsequently became a deserter and anti-war activist, is showing this autumn at the International Latino Film Festival in San Francisco.

**Claudia Sandberg**

### Los Niños de Gernika

A week long festival of film, music, dance and drama at the Point in Eastleigh from 10-13 October continues to commemorate the 70th anniversary of the arrival of Basque and Spanish refugee children Southampton.

The festival, organised by Eastleigh Borough Council, opens with the documentary film *The Guernica Children*, which tells the story of the nearly 4,000 Niños evacuated to Britain after the bombing of Guernika during the Spanish Civil War.

Other performances, using traditional

Basque music and dance along with contemporary choreography, are based on the accounts and memories of the children.

For full programme visit [www.thepoint-online.co.uk](http://www.thepoint-online.co.uk) or email Alicia Pozo-Gutiérrez at [apg@soton.ac.uk](mailto:apg@soton.ac.uk)

**Alicia Pozo-Gutiérrez**

### Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American film season

A season of films has been organised by the Spanish Section, the Mexican Society and the Hispanic Society.

Screenings are every Wednesday at 6:30pm in Lecture Theatre A (Avenue Campus). All films are in Spanish / Portuguese with English subtitles. Don't miss it!

- 10 Oct *The Motorcycle Diaries* (W. Salles)
- 17 Oct *Capitães de Abril* (María de Madeiros)
- 24 Oct *The three burials of Melchisedec Estrada* (Tommy Lee Jones)
- 31 Oct *Pan's Labyrinth* (Guillermo del Toro)
- 7 Nov *El Espinazo del Diablo* (Guillermo del Toro)
- 14 Nov *Frida* (Julie Taymor)
- 21 Nov *Babel* (Alejandro González Iñárritu)
- 28 Nov *Tempestade da Terra Fernando* (D'Almeida e Silva)
- 5 Dec *Los Olvidados* (Luis Buñuel)

## English in Denmark

Since the stereotypical Scandinavian speaks fluent English, you may be surprised to learn that we have been teaching English in Denmark this summer!

This was not your typical group of students, however, but a number of academics (professors and lecturers) from the Business School of the University of Aarhus.

The Business School has decided that all of its Masters programmes (and many undergraduate courses) should now be taught through the medium of English. Some lecturers, therefore, felt the need for a "refresher" course and this is where Southampton's Centre for Language Study came in.

I spent the last two weeks of August working with these academics on their delivery, pronunciation, and vocabulary, as well as familiarising them with current usage. Lively and keen to extend their skills, the participants were a joy to work with and I'm happy to say that they gained greatly in confidence over the fortnight. In all respects the course was tremendously successful.

We have been asked to run more courses for ASB in the future. I, for one, would be happy to return, if only for more Scandinavian breakfasts!

**Mary Page**



Left to right: Prof. Paul Krüger, Dept of Law, Margit Grønberg, Iben Sønderup, Dept of Language and Business Communication, and Prof. Erik Strøjer Madsen, Dept of Economics