

Annual report of the English Institute at Neuchâtel University – 2015/2016

Martin Hilpert
Institute director



From left to right:

Anindita Basu Sempere, Suzana Zink, Anne-Claire Michoux, Gregorio Lucena Scarpella, Pauline Bachofner, Martin Hilpert, Samuel Bourgeois, François Spangenberg, Katrin Rupp, Patrick Vincent, David Correia Saavedra, Margaret Tudeau-Clayton, Alice Leonard, Sabrina Tschanz

This document is a short summary of the activities that have taken place at the English Institute during the academic year of 2015/2016. The paragraphs below highlight some aspects of our teaching, our research, and the social life at the institute. As usual, our year has been busy and eventful. The fall semester 2015 started with the enrolment of 64 new students, bringing our total number of students to 212 (156 BA; 49 MA; 7 PhD). During the two semesters, we offered the following courses:

Introduction to English Literature (+ workshop)
Introduction to English Linguistics (+ workshop)
Practical Language
Phonetics and Phonology
Talking point
Early Modern English Literature (16th-18th century)
Modern and Contemporary Literature (19th - 21st century)
Modern and Contemporary Literature (20th century fiction)
20th century drama
Introduction to the Victorian Novel
Early Modern English comedy
Shakespeare and the purpose of playing
The "Haunted Summer" of 1816
English women writers and the place of reading
Questions of Travel
Research colloquium

Medieval English
Medieval lovers
Change in contemporary English
Language and culture
Language contact
Cognitive linguistics
Corpus linguistics
Introduction to bilingualism
Introduction to psycholinguistics
Research methods in psycholinguistics

The teaching evaluations that we received show that the general quality of the classes is very much appreciated by our students. Conversely, we are happy to note that the performance of our students is generally very good and continues to improve. Our introductory courses show us that the incoming class of 2015 will in fact sustain this positive trend. We continue to monitor what works well and what can be improved, and we have lots of ideas for the future. The sections below highlight individual activities of the members of our institute.

Prof. Margaret Tudeau-Clayton

In 2015 Margaret Tudeau-Clayton was awarded a grant for a project for pedagogical innovation which combined her Master's seminar on Shakespeare with a theatrical workshop led by Sandro De Feo, a former student turned professional actor and director. As the students commented in their evaluations, this workshop transformed the experience of the plays for them and nourished both their self-awareness and confidence. We hope that such workshops will become a more or less permanent feature of the teaching of drama, especially of Shakespeare, in the Institute.

MTC's other activities were severely curtailed by four months of sick leave. She nevertheless managed to participate from a (very long) distance in a seminar on 'Shakespeare, religion and language' at the meeting of the SAA (Shakespeare Association of America) in New Orleans in April 2016. A chapter on 'Shakespeare and the S/Pace of Blank Verse', which has already been cited by several distinguished Shakespeare scholars prior to publication, saw the light of day in a collection entitled *Shakespeare and Space* (in the Palgrave/MacMillan series on Shakespeare). A chapter on a very different aspect of Shakespeare entitled "'The King's English" "our English"?: Shakespeare and linguistic ownership' will appear in another collection in the same series: *Shakespeare and Authority*. Her reputation as a Shakespearean was given a local boost by an article in 'L'Express' 28 January 2016, 'Le bal de la shakespearemanie est ouvert'.

The major administrative hurdle of the first months of 2016 was the formal evaluation of the CUSO doctoral programme in English language and literature which MTC currently directs. The evaluation confirmed the evident success of the programme. In particular her concept of a 'travelling seminar' introduced in 2014-2015 has proved to work very well and will be developed further in the coming years.

Prof. Patrick Vincent

Patrick Vincent served as Scientific Expert (Commissaire Scientifique) for the “Byron is Back!” Exhibit, Chillon Castle, Veytaux, from 29.4.2016 to 21.8.2016. Seven MA students collaborated on the project as part of their MA seminar on Byron and the summer of 1816: Jessica Beuchat, Elizabeth Brown Bovet, Macha Burkhalter, Christian Hauser, Aïcha Kottman, Sandrine Grandjean, and Guillaume Pellaton.

Two study trips in conjunction the exhibit were organized thanks to a Mobylettres exchange with the University of Lausanne. On 3-6 November 2015, the MA students attended the “Byron and the Regency” conference in Bath and visited several related sites in London in order to help them prepare the exhibit texts. On 23 May 2016, 65 BA and MA students as well as several faculty from the Universities of Neuchâtel, Lausanne, and Geneva participated in a seminar on Byron and Romanticism at Chillon Castle, then visited the “Frankenstein: Creation of Darkness” exhibit at the Bodmer Foundation in Geneva.

In relation with the Byron festivities, PV also participated in round table discussions aimed at the general public and gave the following talks: “Teaching the Geneva Summer of 1816: Between Reality and Romance” (University of Berne), “Byron et les Shelley en Suisse: L’ été hanté de 1816,” (U3 conference series, Couvet and Neuchâtel).

PV organized and hosted the CUSO doctoral student workshop on “Relations between England and Europe in the Long Eighteenth Century”. Guest speakers were Valéry Cossy, Allen Reddick, and Paul Hamilton. PV further co-organized and hosted the CUSO doctoral student workshop on “Tools for Digital Humanities: A Practical Workshop” at the University of Neuchâtel. PV also organized and hosted the Swiss Guestbook Project Research Day, at the University of Neuchâtel.

As part of his administrative work, PV participated in the six-person selection committee to choose the new Rector of the University of Neuchâtel.

Prof. Martin Hilpert

Together with David Correia Saavedra, Martin Hilpert continued to work on his SNF-funded project “Why is there regularity in grammatical semantic change? Reassessing the explanatory power of asymmetric priming”. MH and DCS have co-authored two articles on the basis of the project. One has been accepted for publication in the journal “Corpora”, the other one is currently under review. MH also collaborated with Prof. Hatem Ghorbel from the HE-ARC on their project “Opinion profile construction from social media”, which is funded by the Cogito Foundation.

MH gave invited lectures at the universities of Uppsala, Göteborg, Freiburg, Bamberg, Lausanne, Paris, Düsseldorf, Berlin, and Saarbrücken. He also gave workshops for PhD students at the universities of Mainz and Amsterdam and at a winter school that took place in Kandersteg.

With colleagues from the universities of Helsinki and Freiburg, MH co-edited a volume with the title “New trends in Nordic and General Linguistics” that was published by

Mouton de Gruyter. Together with Hubert Cuyckens from the university of Leuven, MH edited a special issue of the journal "Corpus Linguistics and Linguistic Theory".

MH acted as external examiner in three dissertation defenses, which took place at the universities of Uppsala, Freiburg, and Mannheim.

MH's administrative duties at the University of Neuchâtel included his work as chair of the English Institute, president of the library commission, and member of the hiring commission for the professorship in German linguistics.

From September to December 2015, MH hosted Charlotte Maekelberghe from the University of Leuven as a visiting scholar. During June and July 2016, Tamara Bouso from the University of Santiago de Compostela will be at the institute as a visiting scholar.

Dr. Alice Leonard

Alice Leonard continued to work on her monograph "Error in Shakespeare: Shakespeare In Error". She submitted two articles that are currently under review. "Metaphor as Error in *Midsummer Night's Dream*" is being reviewed by the *Cambridge Quarterly*, "Failed Actors in *Midsummer Night's Dream*" is under review with *Notes and Queries*. She is also preparing a book review of Emma Smith's "Shakespeare's First Folio" (2016), which has been commissioned by the *Cambridge Quarterly*.

AL undertook a one month research stay at the Cambridge University Library during December 2015 and January 2016. During that stay, she carried out research for a new project on Coventry Early Modern Grammar School. Together with Professor Kevin Curran from the University of Lausanne, she was involved in setting up a blog of Shakespeare activities in Switzerland.

AL's teaching duties included the following items. She is convenor of a forthcoming research-led-teaching module, 'Error and Failure in Early Modern Culture' which is planned for the Autumn Semester 2016. She was a seminar leader in the MA module 'Shakespeare and the Purpose of Playing', and convenor of the 2nd-3rd year module 'An Introduction to Revenge Tragedy'. She also set up a reading group for four revenge tragedy plays.

AL presented her work at several conferences, including a paper entitled "Metaphor: Failure or Poetry in *Midsummer Night's Dream*?" at the Renaissance Society of America conference in Boston. She will be an invited speaker at the forthcoming Geneva CUSO workshop 'Errata in Early Modern Drama', and she will read her paper 'Mists of Error: A Reformation Image' at the SAUTE conference 'What is an Image?' in September 2016. Together with Dr Derek Dunne (Fribourg), AL was a co-organiser of the CUSO-sponsored trip to the Bodmer Institute, Geneva, to view early modern artefacts.

Dr. Katrin Rupp

Katrin Rupp taught a lecture on Medieval English and a seminar on Medieval Lovers.

KR worked as co-editor of a volume of essays on skin in the age of Chaucer, which is currently under review. She also completed an article on Osborn Bokenham's *Legendys of Hooly Wummen*, which is currently under review as well.

Dr. Dorota Smyk-Bhattacharjee

Dorota Smyk-Bhattacharjee contributed to our linguistic course offerings with a seminar on Language and culture and another one on Change in contemporary English. As of the fall of 2016, she will offer a class with the title English for teachers.

Dr. Steve Oswald

Steve Oswald taught phonetics and phonology during the fall of 2015.

Dr. Suzana Zink

Suzana Zink taught Practical Language during the spring of 2016.

Dr. Rahel Orgis

Rahel Orgis coordinated the CUSO doctoral programme in English Language and Literature and continues to do so. The programme brings together faculty and doctoral students from the CUSO universities of Fribourg, Geneva, Lausanne, and Neuchâtel, as well as the associated university of Berne. Rahel's task is to coordinate and co-organize activities that foster doctoral study by creating an active, collaborative, and lasting research community in English studies.

Divine Harrison

Divine Harrison taught Practical Language during the fall of 2015.

Anindita Basu Sempere

Anindita Basu Sempere joined the institute in 2016 and taught the Talking point class during the spring semester. She co-created and launched a digital humanities iPhone/iPad app called Summer of Darkness that retells the story of The Year Without Summer, when Byron and the Shelleys lived in Switzerland and Mary Shelley began to write *Frankenstein*. The website, which has a full description, preview video, and link to the iTunes App Store page, can be accessed at <<http://summerofdarkness.com>>.

The app was mentioned in the Washington Post two days after the launch:
<https://www.washingtonpost.com/news/worldviews/wp/2016/05/12/200-years-ago-the-sky-went-dark-and-there-was-no-summer/>

In addition to pursuing her doctoral studies on place and poetics in twentieth-century American literature this spring, ABS signed with a senior agent at a California-based literary agency for her young adult novel *Lifeline*.

Anne-Claire Michoux

Together with Patrick Vincent, Anne-Claire Michoux co-organized the Eighteenth and Nineteenth-Century Travelling Workshop (CUSO), which has resulted in two events so far, one of which was hosted by the University of Neuchâtel in the Pontet house in Colombier. The workshop brings together researchers who are working on the eighteenth and nineteenth centuries in English literature. The meeting in Colombier was on European Romanticism, with Profs. Paul Hamilton (Queen Mary, London) and Allen Reddick from Zurich as distinguished guest speakers.

ACM attended a commemorative conference in honour of Marilyn Butler, and she has been appointed as the editor of the Frances Burney UK Bulletin. She will be formally inaugurated at the next Burney conference in Durham in July 2016.

Samuel Bourgeois

Samuel Bourgeois has been a student at the Institute for the last years, and he has been involved in the social life of the institute, but as of 2015, he is a doctoral student and responsible for the linguistics workshop. Besides his teaching and his dissertation work on the emergence of oral discourse markers in written genres, he has attended a linguistics summer school in Leipzig. He will give a first presentation of his dissertation research at the ISLE conference in Poznan (Poland) in September 2016.

David Correia Saavedra

David Correia Saavedra worked with Martin Hilpert on their joint SNF project, which up to now has resulted in two co-authored articles. He continued to write his dissertation, which deals with quantitative aspects of grammaticalization. DCS presented his work at the SWELL conference and he attended the conference on Theory and data in grammaticalization at the University of Caen. He will present his dissertation research at the 2016 SLE conference in Naples and results from the SNF project at the ISLE conference in Poznan.

François Spangenberg

François Spangenberg, our institute coordinator, has been there for us and for the students during the entire year, has taken care of everything that needed to be organized, and has handled all the paperwork for us, always with a smile and a friendly word. We are very thankful for that.

I would like to end this report by thanking everybody for their input and congratulating each and every one of you on your achievements and successes. Keep up the great work! I think I speak in the name of everybody in saying that this year, we are especially happy to welcome Margaret back at the institute. The place just isn't the same without you, and we are thankful and glad to have you back!

MH

Neuchâtel, June 2016