

Colleen Alena O'Brien
obrienca@hawaii.edu

I am a PhD student at the University of Hawai'i at Manoa and a researcher in the Faculty of Law at the Universidad Libre in Bogotá. I am writing a grammatical description of Kamëntšá, a language isolate of southern Colombia and producing a documentary about the reintegration process of ex-combatants of the FARC, a guerrilla organization in Colombia. I am interested in linguistics and anthropology, both separately and where they interface. In the past, I have worked on Western Subanon, a Philippine language, and Fataluku, a Papuan language, as well as the language of drug users.

Education

- Ph.D. Candidate in Linguistics, University of Hawai'i at Manoa. GPA: 4.0/4.0. Exp. 2018
- M.A. in Linguistics, University of Hawai'i at Manoa. GPA: 3.96. May 2013
- B.A. in Anthropology & Classical Languages, University of Miami. GPA: 3.93. May 2010

Research Interests

- Language documentation, applied anthropology, syntax.
- Dissertation (ongoing): A Grammar of Kamëntšá, a Language Isolate of Colombia.
- DDR in Colombia

Teaching Experience

- Instructor: Linguistics 102: An Introduction to the Study of Language, The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.
- Lecturer in Classics. The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa. 2015–2016
- Teaching Assistant: Classics 122: Greek and Roman Mythology, The University of Hawai'i at Mānoa.
- Tutor: SAT Prep, AP Test Prep. Excel Learning Center, Honolulu, Hawai'i.
- Tutor: English, Math, Reading, and PSAT Prep. Elite School, Honolulu, Hawai'i.
- Teacher: English as a Second Language (ESL). Inlingua Language School, Miami, Florida 2010–2011

Publications

- “Are Philippine Languages Ergative? Evidence from Western Subanon” Working Papers in Linguistics. University of Hawai'i at Manoa. 2016.
- “The Case of Og: Focusing Arguments in Western Subanon.” 20th Annual LLL Graduate Student Conference Proceedings, University of Hawai'i at Manoa. 2016.

Conference Presentations

- “From FARC to FARC: Discourse of Transformation in Colombia's Political Environment”. Paper presented at the American Anthropological Association. Nov 30, 2017.
- “Speaker Perceptions of Language Change: Contact and Endangerment of Camsá.” Paper presented at the Seventh Cambridge Conference on Language Endangerment. University of Cambridge. July 4, 2017.
- “The Mysterious Case of em: Grammaticalization of a Serial Verb Construction in Fataluku” with Yuko Otsuka. APLL 9 (Austronesian and Papuan Languages and Linguistics Conference). Paris. June, 2017.
- “No to Peace: Contextualizing the Colombian Conflict.” Society for Applied Anthropology. Santa Fe, March, 2017.
- “Creating Relevant Curricula for Endangered Languages in Colombia.” Paper presented at

the Sixth Cambridge Conference on Language Endangerment. University of Cambridge. July 6, 2016.

- “The Case of Og: Focusing Arguments in Western Subanon.” Paper presented at the 20th Annual LLL Graduate Student Conference, University of Hawai‘i at Manoa. April 2016.
- “At the Crossroads of Language Death: Displacement, Language Loss, and Identity in Colombia.” Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology, Vancouver. March 2016.
- Introduction to Praat. October 2015.
- “What We Say and What We Mean: Technical and Aesthetic Considerations of Street Slang,” with Bryan Page (University of Miami). Paper presented at the annual meeting of the Society for Applied Anthropology. March 2015.
- “Ebola: Attitudes and Rhetoric of an (Un)American Nation”, Paper presented at the annual meeting of the American Culture Association: New Orleans. March 2014.
- “Constructing the Existential Construction: L2ers and Bilinguals in English,” Paper presented at the annual meeting of GURT (Georgetown University Roundtable), Washington DC, March 2014

Scholarships, Grants, and Awards

- American Association of University Women, 2017-2018.
- Foundation for Endangered Languages Grant, 2017.
- Bilinski Fellowship, 2017.
- Lewis and Clark Exploration Grant, 2016.
- University of Hawai‘i Graduate Student Organization Grant, 2016.
- Bilinski Research Award: Belize, 2014.
- FLAS: Miskitu Language. 2013.
- University of Hawai‘i Arts and Sciences Scholarship, 2013.
- Gilman International Scholarship, 2009.

Film Experience

- Producer: Strangers to Peace. Tagline: “After 52 years of civil war, 10,000 FARC guerrillas prepare to reintegrate into society — but will Colombia accept them?” With Noah Debonis, ongoing. Website: strangerstopeace.com

Ongoing Projects

- “The Mysterious Case of *em*: Grammaticalization of a Serial Verb Construction in Fataluku” with Yuko Otsuka.
- “Ethnography vs Filmmaking: Reflections on Ethnographic filmmaking with ex-FARC combatants in Colombia”
- “Speaker Perceptions of Linguistic Change: Contact and Endangerment in Kamëntšá”
- “Agent-voice clauses in Western Subanon, a Philippine-type language”

Language Skills

- Spanish: Proficient
- Classical Greek and Latin: Reading
- Czech: Conversational
- Other languages studied or researched: Kamëntšá, Miskitu, Italian, Western Subanon, Fataluku

Affiliations/Memberships

- American Anthropological Association
- Society for Applied Anthropology

- Alliance for Peacebuilding
- Foundation of Endangered Languages
- American Anthropological Association
- Linguistics Society of America
- Phi Beta Kappa
- Secretary of Linguistics Society of Hawai'i. 2014.
- Organizing Committee: International Conference for Language Documentation and Conservation. 2012-2013.