



## FREE SPRING 2025 SEMINAR SERIES

### Linguistics and Languages

Palmerston North Central Library  
4 The Square, Palmerston North



Wednesdays 1:30pm – 2.45pm

This seminar series is organised by U3A Manawātū. It is open to the public. After the presentations, audio recordings and PowerPoint presentations will be made available on the Manawātū U3A website. See: <https://www.u3amanawatu.org.nz/seminars/>

**Verbal and visual communication both reflect and shape our perceptions in a continuously evolving way. Most of us pay little attention to these processes, except to be irritated by the way younger people fail to speak “properly”. However, some people have the luxury to research these matters. In this series we hear from four linguistics and language specialists from the School of Humanities, Media and Creative Communication, Te Kunenga ki Pūrehuroa Massey University, providing insights into the dynamic area of verbal and visual language.**

#### **October 22<sup>nd</sup>: How Spanish came to be**

*Dr Celina Bortolotto and Mr Francisco González*

When did a *canoa* arrive to the banks of Spanish? Why isn't *recordar* to make an LP? This talk will take us back to the origins of Hispanic culture in the Iberian Peninsula and then its expansion to America, following the historical trajectory of conquests and civilisations and their impact on the Spanish language.

#### **October 29<sup>th</sup>: Vanuatu languages**

*Dr Eleanor Ridge*

With around 140 Indigenous languages spoken by a population of about 325,000 people, Vanuatu has more languages per person than any other country in the world. The maintenance of these languages is supported by traditional patterns of multilingualism that prize languages for their role in the relationship between people and places. This picture is further complicated by Vanuatu's history as a shared colony of Britain and France, and the creation of a new national language. Bislama is a pidgin-creole language with English vocabulary but Melanesian grammar and phonology.

#### **November 5<sup>th</sup>: The secret life of language**

*Dr Arianna Berardi-Wiltshire*

What *is* language, and what does it tell us about ourselves? This talk will take you on a journey into the hidden life of language – its sounds, words, sentences, meanings and the ways it grows and changes. Drawing on examples from languages around the world, it will uncover surprising facts and quirky stories that reveal the extraordinary role language plays in shaping human thought, culture and connection.

#### **November 12<sup>th</sup>: The power of visual language: a brief history of art in the Hispanic world**

*Mr Francisco González*

*"I know now that he who hopes to be universal in his art must plant in his own soil . . . The secret of my best work is that it is Mexican."* (Diego Rivera)

This talk will showcase art in Spain and Latin America to reflect on how the social and political realities of both regions have been represented through painting, since the time of the Conquest to present day.

## Presenters



**Francisco González**, a native of Colombia, is a Senior Tutor in the Spanish Programme at Massey University. With over 25 years of language teaching experience, Francisco came to Massey in 2011 and since then has actively taught courses on Language, Hispanic Cinema and Heritage and Culture.

**Dr Arianna Berardi-Wiltshire** is a Senior Lecturer in Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at Massey University. Her research explores how languages are learned, how families use and maintain heritage languages, and how language shapes our identities and cultures. A passionate teacher and communicator, she loves sharing the fascinating world of linguistics to her students and to audiences beyond the university.



**Dr Eleanor Ridge** is a Senior Lecturer in linguistics at Massey University. She first became interested in linguistics after getting to know some Vanuatu languages while working as an English teacher on Pentecost Island. Her research focuses on language documentation and sociolinguistics of Vatlongos, the language of Southeast Ambrym.

**Dr María Celina Bortolotto** is a Senior Lecturer in Spanish at Massey University. Her research explores the interrelation between cultural values and individual emotions, with a focus on humour and affect in contemporary Latin American literature, and emotion and motivation in L2 learning.

