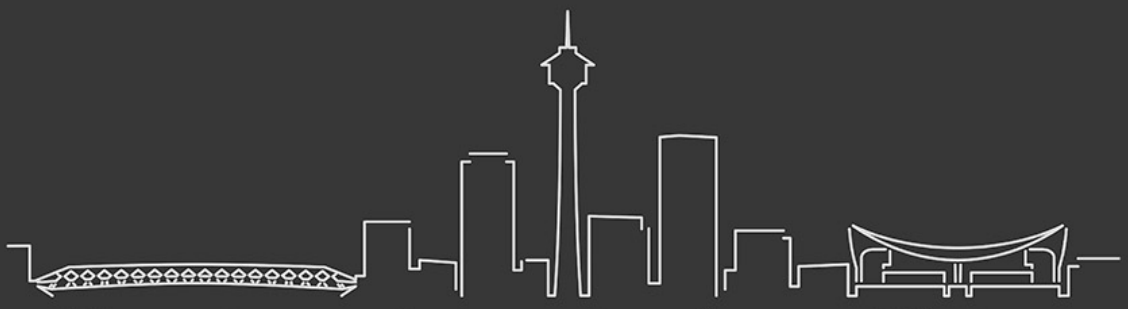
UNIVERSITY OF CALGARY



Digital Storytelling Festival

IMMIGRATION + LANGUAGE + INTEGRATION

MARCH 4, 2020 | NICKLE GALLERIES HALL | 3:00 - 5:00

Welcome

Living Migration is a community-based research project focused on understanding the effects of language on immigrants' integration into Canadian society. Through our practice, we create a safe space that enables immigrant communities to engage in meaningful conversations about language-related experiences and any barriers they have encountered in all areas, including health, education, employment, politics, and everyday life.

We meet with our storytellers in workshops that run for two to three days and teach them how to produce a well-crafted digital story. No previous experience with writing or video editing is required. We guide them to learn the structure of a good story; how to use their voice as a tool for sharing their stories; how to choose images, sounds, and videos as resources for storytelling; and how to use web-based editing software.

During the workshops, we encourage conversations and engage in writing practices focused on themes related to the storytellers' experiences as immigrants. Our purpose is to help storytellers share and tell their stories, giving them full control of the process and acting as facilitators. The stories screened today were produced during these workshops.

This 1st Digital Storytelling Festival is part of a Language Research Centre effort to build bridges between academia and the community.

Hortensia Barrios & Karina Hincapie
Research Fellows at the Language Research Centre

About Us

Hortensia Barrios

Research Fellow, Language Research Center, University of Calgary, Canada
Applied Linguistics, Master's Student, School of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature

Through the study of languages, I have met many unique people with compelling stories of loss and resilience. These stories are often unheard or forgotten. Their stories make them who they are and situate them in time and space— giving them a voice, connecting them with their communities, deconstructing stereotypes, and initiating changes. My research focuses on understanding the ways people construct their multiple selves in socio-cultural situations through the instrumentality of language. I engage in research that can lead to purposeful contributions to the public good through collaborative, action-oriented, and creative forms of scholarship.

Karina Hincapie

Research Fellow, Language Research Center, University of Calgary, Canada
Spanish, Ph.D. Student, School of Languages, Linguistics, and Literature

Throughout my studies, I have always been passionate about Latin American Literature and Cinema. Their stories are full of mourning and recovery, of difficulties and losses, but also, of magic, of realities that seek to create their own language to survive, resist, and endure despite conflict. I fervently believe that, through our oral narratives, we find ways to explain ourselves and to relate our experiences. One of the biggest challenges is to use simple words that allow us to be understood.

One of my research objectives is to look into oral history as an affective mechanism of resistance in challenging socio-political situations to which we are vulnerable.

Dr. Angela George

Supervising Professor
Assistant Professor of Hispanic Linguistics, University of Calgary, Canada

I primarily investigate how learners of Spanish become more competent in various contexts, such as online environments, face-to-face classes, and immersion (i.e., study abroad). This encompasses a variety of fields within Second Language Acquisition, including Sociolinguistics, Phonology, and Phonetics and Pragmatics. I also investigate how learners of Spanish and first language (L1) speakers use and develop different linguistic features as a function of social, geographical, or linguistic factors and how these features are best taught to Spanish learners.

I regularly teach courses for learners of Spanish including Introductory Spanish and topics courses in Hispanic Linguistics. I have also taught methods courses for current and future foreign language teachers, including Foreign Language Methods in the K-12 classroom and Second Language Acquisition.

Dr. Martin Wagner
Director of the Language Research Centre
Assistant Professor of Hispanic Linguistics, University of Calgary, Canada

Martin Wagner received his Ph.D. in German literature from Yale University in 2014 and subsequently taught comparative literature at Yonsei University, Underwood International College. He is especially interested in the intersections between literary writing and various specialized discourses of politics, philosophy, and the sciences.

In a new project, he studies literary attempts to represent, complicate, and expand on a form of individual freedom that emerged between the Reformation and the Enlightenment. This form of freedom articulates a language of agency that does not rely on resistance to established norms and structures of authority.

Dr. Wagner is the Director of the Language Research Centre (LRC), Technology in Language Learning, an interdisciplinary hub of language, teaching, and research. The LRC features several research groups, speaker series, and other engaging academic events. In addition, LRC also provides classrooms, meeting rooms, and study spaces for students.

Schedule

Wednesday, March 4

3 p.m	**Welcome Remarks** Dr. Martin Wagner Director of the Language Research Centre
3:10 p.m.	**Living Migration** A Short Descriptive Video on the Project
3:15 p.m.	**Language** 4 Stories on Language and Immigration Perseverancia | Perseverance Attitudes toward language learning in adult learners La fuerza de mi voz | The strength of my voice Language brokering Una madre primeriza e inmigrante | A first-time mom and an immigrant Immigrants and healthcare access J-U-A-N Name mispronunciation, pronunciation categories and racial microaggressions
3:35 p.m.	**Identity** 4 Stories on Identity and Immigration Querencias | Longings Reconstruction La del otro Bando | The Other Otherness ¿Quien soy yo? | Who am I? Transnationality Erase una vez yo | Once upon a time there was me Wellbeing and Resilience
3:50 p.m.	**Coffee Break**
4:00 p.m.	**Immigrant Experience** 6 Stories on the Immigrant Experience

	Sean's Message Is it Worth it? Canadian Impression Añoranza | Longing Not Black or White Captivated by China
4:15 p.m.	**Discussion Panel**
4:45 p.m.	**Digital Storytelling in Urgent Times** Sharing love and hope in 2020: A story about coronavirus COV-19
4:50 p.m.	**Closing Remarks** Dr. Angela George Supervising Professor Assistant Professor of Hispanic Linguistics

Our Digital Stories

LANGUAGE

Perseverancia | Perseverance

Attitudes toward language learning in adult learners

Imagine for a minute that you can't understand anything around you. Everything has changed, and even the things that you knew become a challenge to overcome. Milagro´s story, *Perseverance*, illustrates the struggle immigrants encounter with language skills. In her situation, the body becomes a fundamental tool for communicating and evolving into a new sense of being, step by step, into a community.

La fuerza de mi voz | The strength of my voice

Language brokering

Marietta shares her experiences as a newcomer in Canada with limited language skills. She elaborates on how she has learned to rely on her daughter for daily tasks and how this situation has affected their relationship.

Una madre primeriza e inmigrante | A first-time mom and an immigrant

Immigrants and healthcare access

Johana shares her most challenging as well as intimate experience as an immigrant: giving birth to her son in Canada. She tells us about her first days there and the day she delivered her child. She focuses on her interactions with hospital staff and health professionals during her stay, concluding that the Canadian healthcare system needs to improve support for immigrant women giving birth.

J-U-A-N

Name mispronunciation, pronunciation categories and racial microaggressions

In a refreshing story, Juan shares his experiences relating to his name and how it was pronounced by people at his school and friends in general. He poses a compelling question about the importance of people knowing how to pronounce and write one's name that opens the discussion on themes such as recognition of heritage and racial microaggressions.

Our Digital Stories

IDENTITY

Querencias | Longings

Reconstruction

Our storyteller speaks of her life as a heritage architect in Caracas, Venezuela and how her identity and self of being is reconstructed as result of her immigrant experience. She speaks of how personal experiences influenced her journey into becoming an visual artist creating glass mosaics, but also into embracing her new identity as Venezuelan-Canadian.

La del otro Bando | The Other

Otherness

"The other" tells us about the experiences of an immigrant woman landing in Canada and at a workplace dominated by men from different parts of the world. She narrates her struggle and how she manages to deal with discrimination and stereotypes in a process of self-evaluation that allowed her to regain agency disregarding social norms and social constructions. The storyteller concludes revisiting her ways of being and the attitudes of other immigrants and Canadians. Through this process of deep thinking, she builds a new version of herself embracing her otherness as something positive.

¿Quien soy yo? | Who am I?

Transnationality

In this digital story, the storyteller takes us on her identity journey as an Italian Venezuelan and Canadian. Discussing the use of words such as "musiu" and "catira," the narrator reveals basic social dynamics of a Venezuelan society based on groups often organized based on countries of origin. Through her experiences in Canada, she introduces us to the discussion of languages attitudes in Calgary related to accents. In this story, the narrator moves between languages and identities without even noticing revealing how she inhabits multiple identities.

Erase una vez yo | Once upon a time there was me

Wellbeing and Resilience

This powerful digital story speaks of immigrant women in the science and well-being. Our storyteller discusses her struggles in a new country, with inclement weather and workplace while dealing with fibromyalgia. Through her experiences, she talks of stigma and silence in relation to illness and well-being and how highly qualified immigrant women often are unable to go back to work in their field of expertise after they emigrate.

Our Digital Stories

IMMIGRANT EXPERIENCE

Sean's Message

Sean from South Korea, who has only been in the city for a couple of months, is still learning the language; yet that did not stop him from creating a compelling story about identity, preferences, and stereotypes. Talking about what he does, his likes and dislikes, and the disappointments of daily experiences, Sean sketches his identity in a way that dismantles stereotypes and gives us a great message: *Believe in yourself. The personal is the most creative*.

Is it Worth it?

Virginia's story speaks of resilience and empowerment. Through the question, "Is it worth it?" she elaborates a story close to the heart of many people—the process of reconstructing the self. The message is: Embrace your capabilities and work constantly to produce a better version of yourself while teaching others how to embrace their uniqueness. Virginia's journey into this new version of herself has been an engine for her work with people of different abilities in Calgary.

Canadian Impression

What to expect in a new city with its new culture and people? Carol shares her experience of trying to find her way into a mall and a government office. Receiving unexpected help from a Canadian marked her real introduction to Canada. Her story speaks of finding kindness in unexpected places and how these acts of kindness can make a difference for newcomers, easing their integration into Canadian society.

Añoranza | Longing

Mariana takes us on a roundtrip between geographical and temporal spaces: the past, present, and future of her hometown. Her story was written during her flight back to Calgary after spending time with family, friends, and the people of Caracas. Filled with cultural and geographical symbolism, her story speaks of the migratory experience of one of the world's most recent diasporas: The Venezuelan. Using recurrent images of the tropics, the valley, the food, and the people of Caracas, this story calls for hope and reconciliation for all Venezuelans: those who stayed and those who left.

Not black and white

In Zhara's story, she gains a new vision of the world through exposure to different cultures. Her eyes were opened to new perspectives and views of the world. Many immigrants have to travel around and visit different places before coming to the country that will become their home. Just as in the story, immigrants are often challenged and have to revisit and compare their ideologies of being in the world. Zhara reminds us that there's *not black or white*: *humans, all over the world, deserve love and respect.*

Captivated by China

Dion tells us about the first time he traveled outside of Canada. Originally from Newfoundland, Canada, Dion believed his life was complete until he took a flight to meet a friend in China. He tells us how his perspective changed and how he found a new home. Since that first trip, he married and became the proud father of two sons in his wife's native country of China. In our conversations, he spoke of the effect that return immigration has had for him and his family. His story presents a refreshing view of how a Canadian learned to love and embrace a new culture.

Discussion Panel

We have invited two of our storytellers to join us, Hortensia Barrios and Karina Hincapie, in a discussion panel that will open a Q&A session on the project, the process of using digital storytelling, the stories and their own experiences as immigrants living in the city of Calgary. We will also delve into what it is to be a Venezuelan in this time of crisis for the country.

OUR GUESTS

Geraldine Fuenmayor

Geraldine is an urban and transportation planner with a Ph.D. in Civil Engineering from the University of Calgary. She has worked in urban simulation since the year 2000. Also a profound, creative, and passionate artist, she was born in Venezuela and immigrated to Canada in 2008. Back in Venezuela, Geraldine graduated from the Universidad Simon Bolivar and was later a faculty member of the school of architecture of the Universidad Central de Venezuela.

Geraldine is constantly expressing her uniqueness and creativity through art, theater, and writing. She is a founding member of ExpresARTe Theater Club, where she has been an active board member since 2015. As a playwright, Geraldine contributed to the scripts of the plays “Inmigrante Soy” (2014) and “Cuéntame de Tu Amor.” (2017).

Virginia Borges

Virginia was born in Maracaibo, Venezuela, where she graduated from Rafael Urdaneta University with a bachelor’s degree in accounting. When she first moved to Canada in 2015, she started as an English as a Second Language Student at SAIT. She furthered her education and obtained a Diploma in Business Administration with a major in Supply Chain Management. As many international students do, she faced a challenging period where discipline, time management as well as on budget skills were needed. As Managing Director of RE:GRUB she started to be more involved with people with different abilities through the “we are all equal” Program.

“After 3 years working with people with different abilities, 25% of our team, I have opened my mind to what “Inclusion” means. How satisfying it is to have a team with an inclusive and diverse culture that accepts, supports and protects each member regardless of their differences and how fulfilling is to live in a country where resources are available to the minority to improve their experiences.”

DIGITAL STORYTELLING IN URGENT TIMES

Sharing Love and Hope in 2020

Carol Xu tells us a story close to the heart of many members of the Chinese community in the world and in Canada. In her she focuses on the spreading of the Corona virus COVID-19. She shares how she incorporates her culture and tradition into her daily practices to promote caring, loving, and hope among people. Her story calls the community to stay strong to handle this global disaster. Carol is from mainland China. She speaks Mandarin and English. Canada has been her home for 19 years now.

Note from the Storyteller

On her story:

Disasters often create fear and chaos in our society, especially in today's information age. So much negative news about disasters may or may not be true. People easily become scared and turn to blaming and hatred. But the negative reactions won't save us and only make us suffer more. Challenges always come with opportunities. When disasters happen, it's also the time for us as humans to learn the lessons together, to help, to support, and to love as one. Everyone wants to survive, and in order to survive, we need to help each other carry through big disasters.

Her thoughts on the Project:

Everyone has stories to tell, and the workshop gave me an opportunity to listen to other people's stories, to learn from their experiences, to get closer to other immigrants, and to know a small part of their life. I was surprised I could put together a nice digital story within 2 days (actually only 8 hours) through the workshop. I had no experience of video editing, English is my second language, and I am not a writer.

This workshop is very inspiring and well organized. I am very excited to be part of this project, and I learned so much in a short time. I think it's important for our culture in Canada to have people sharing their own stories. It's an efficient way for communication and understanding. We need more love and support in our community. The digital workshop can be a centre of influence to gather people together.

The Storytellers

Milagros Arias
Venezuela

Cecilia Barboza
Venezuela

Virgina Borges
Venezuela

Vincenzina Ciccaglione
Venezuela

Johana Fonseca
Costa Rica

Mariana Márquez
Venezuela

Marietta Méndez
Venezuela

Sean Na
South Korea

Geraldine Fuenmayor
Venezuela

Gina Pavone de Appel
Venezuela

Dion Ryan
Newfoundland, Canada

Juan Sánchez
Venezuela

Carol Xu
China

Zahra Haji
Iran

The Digital Storytelling Festival is hosted by Hortensia Barrios & Karina Hincapie, Research Fellows at the Language Research Centre in the School of Languages, Linguistics, Literatures, and Cultures.

This community outreach activity is sponsored by the Language Research Centre.

This Festival wouldn't have been possible without the support of the community and our participants. Special thanks to:

Cecilia Barboza, editing and workshop support
Rosa Gomez, workshop support
Daniel Hernandez, workshop support
Geraldine Fuenmayor, workshop support and community outreach
Mariana Márquez, staging
Jesus Rojas, community outreach
Carol Xu, community outreach
Alice Allen, editing

We also want to express our gratitude for the support received from:
The Venezuelan Canadian Organization for spreading the word about our project, Living Migration.

Master Ruyuan and Master Ruli for opening the doors of the Middle Path Temple and their community allowing us to learn more about their culture and enlightening us with profound conversations about our condition as humans.

Marc Stoeckle, a film composer and music librarian at the University of Calgary, for allowing us to use his music for the project and many of the digital stories produced by our participants as well as for his insights based on his own research experience collecting stories from the German community in Vancouver.