

Canadian Linguistics Association National Achievement Award 2011

The Canadian Linguistics Association is pleased to present Shana Poplack with a Canadian National Achievement Award in recognition of her outstanding contributions to the discipline.

Born in Detroit, Michigan and raised in New York City, Shana Poplack received her Ph.D. from the University of Pennsylvania in 1979, where she studied under William Labov, founder of variationist sociolinguistics. Her ground-breaking Ph.D. dissertation, based on the language use of New York City Spanish/English bilinguals of Puerto Rican descent, proposed universal principles of intra-sentential code-switching, a framework against which all competing theories are still measured.

Shana Poplack took up a position in the linguistics department of the University of Ottawa in 1982 and soon embarked on a major corpus-based study of Ottawa–Hull French, which became a methodological model for variationist sociolinguistics. Another methodological innovation which grew out of the Ottawa–Hull project involved the development of quantitative diagnostics for distinguishing single-word code-switches from borrowings, the object of longstanding debate in language contact research. The Ottawa–Hull study revealed important insights about bilingual language use, showing for example that the effects of language contact are much more tightly constrained than had previously been thought. It also provided a wealth of information about the present-day structure of Laurentian French. Her more recent corpus, *Récits du français québécois d'autrefois*, a collection of spoken-language data from speakers born in the 19th century, adds an important diachronic dimension to this strand of her research program.

Over the years, Professor Poplack has worked on diaspora varieties of African-American English, a number of Hispanic vernaculars, Brazilian Portuguese, and Quebec English, along with a wide variety of



Shana Poplack, winner of the 2011
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other languages, looking at variation and change in morphology, syntax and phonology. She has been a prominent contributor to the African-American “origins” debate, providing evidence, some from Nova Scotia Black English, for the substantial English contribution to the formation of AAE. A major theme of her research has been the careful delineation of the importance of functionalist constraints on variation and change, resulting in a series of publications which seamlessly integrate variationist methodology with linguistic theory.

Professor Poplack’s research has been disseminated in the major journals for sociolinguistics, bilingualism, and general linguistics and in important anthologies. She is the author of three books and the editor of four others. Her research is frequently reprinted and widely cited, and she is much in demand worldwide as a keynote speaker: by way of example, a quarter of her more than 250 presentations have been plenary addresses. Another testament to the quality of Professor Poplack’s research is uninterrupted research funding from the Social Sciences and Humanities Research Council of Canada over a period of almost thirty years.

She has also played a leading role in the training of the next generations of sociolinguists. She is the founder and director of the University of Ottawa Sociolinguistics Laboratory, rivalled only by Labov’s University of Pennsylvania Sociolinguistic Laboratory in terms of its impact on the field. Professor Poplack has directed the work of more than 50 graduate students and post-doctoral fellows, a list which includes some of the leading sociolinguists in Canada and abroad. Several of her former students have held offices in the Canadian Linguistic Association, and they, among other former students, have themselves become leaders in the field. The Ottawa Sociolinguistics Laboratory has also hosted a wide array of visiting scholars from other institutions world-wide, which has made an important contribution to the dissemination of the methodology and theory of variationist linguistics.

Professor Poplack’s stellar career has been recognized in the form of a Canada Research Chair, Tier 1 (2001), the Killam Prize (2007), a Trudeau Foundation Fellowship (2007), and the Ontario Premier’s Discovery Award (2008). She was elected a Fellow of the Royal Society of Canada in 1998 and a Fellow of the Linguistic Society of America in 2009. We are pleased to add to this truly impressive list a Canadian Linguistics Association National Achievement Award for 2011.



There can be no doubt that Yves Charles Morin, professor emeritus at the Université de Montréal, is fully deserving of the CLA National Achievement Award for 2011. This award honours those researchers whose work has expanded our knowledge in linguistics and has brought distinction to the Canadian linguistics community. It also recognizes their role as ambassadors in the promotion of Canadian linguistics here and abroad.

Yves Charles Morin's journey from Brie in France, where he was born in 1944, to Canada has not followed a straight line. He has brilliantly translated his great passion for language as a cognitive and social system, in studies that have since become classics. He received a diploma in engineering from the Paris École des Arts et Manufactures in 1967 and went on to earn two master's degrees (in computer science and communication and in linguistics), followed in 1971 by a doctorate in computer science and communication, from the University of Michigan in Ann Arbor. Which of these two passions would he pursue? For those who know Yves Charles, the answer is obvious: both. His ability to excel scientifically in more than one field is probably the outstanding characteristic of Yves Charles Morin's exceptional career.



The two honorees, Shana Poplack and Yves Charles Morin

His more than 130 publications have established important milestones in linguistics and his works have left a deeply original mark, striking a happy balance between linguistic description and theory. First and foremost, he has contributed to the advancement of knowledge of French in general and of the varieties of Canadian French in particular. His many articles on the history and synchronic study of schwa, liaison, vowel length and quality, on the relationship between oral and written language, among other works, have been studied and commented upon in North America and elsewhere, in both English and French. This alone would be enough to fill one career, but his influence doesn't stop there. He has also made important contributions to theories and debates about the origins and

development of Quebec French, our sociolinguistic understanding of standard French and its development through the centuries, as well as the study of French poetic meter. Few linguists have studied so many aspects of a given language, but even more impressive is the fact that the scope of his interests is not limited to a single field. In this regard, one might recall his two trips to Pakistan in the 1970s and his publications with Étienne Tiffou on Burushaski, a language isolate spoken in the Yasin Valley. The steady flow of research grants from SSHRC and FQRSC/FCAR and of invitations to deliver lectures throughout his career is a testimony to the quality of his research work. He seems to have discovered the secret of appearing everywhere at once.

He has also communicated his passion and scientific rigour to his students. The number of master's and doctoral theses he has directed can be counted in the dozens and the enthusiasm he has inspired in his students is evident in their original work in the fields they have begun to explore. His mentorship, receptive to the ideas of others and characterized by intellectual generosity, seeks to pass on the torch to a new generation. Yves Charles responds to daily questions from students and colleagues with long and detailed emails. His answers alone could serve as the basis for numerous articles. He has demonstrated his commitment to the community time and again by sitting on review committees of journals and as a juror for granting councils.

A passionate and uncompromising researcher, profoundly demanding of himself and never content with half measures, Yves Charles Morin is certainly one of Canada's finest linguistics ambassadors.