Department of Linguistics and Languages

Student Research Day 2026

Chester New Hall 104 | April 8, 2026 | 9:00am-4:00pm

Program

9:00am - 9:10am	Introduction	
9:10am - 10:30am	**Session 1**	
	* Ethan Stollar	Investigation of morphological inflectional processing in Jabberwocky sentences using EEG
	* Jasmine Kwon	Learning foreign words using nursery rhymes
	* Marc-Antoine Paul	Word semantics in the parafovea: New experimental evidence
	* Yaqian (Borogjoon) Bao	Comparing horizontal and vertical reading in Traditional Chinese through scanpath similarity
10:30am - 11:00am	Break	
11:00am - 12:00pm	**Keynote Talk**	
	* Jasper Jian and Büşra Marşan *Stanford University*	Turkish comitative (non-)coordination: A new view on hierarchy effects
12:00pm - 12:15pm	Break	
12:15pm - 1:15pm	**Session 2**	
	* Audrey Ho	Towards explaining the syntax of the Mandarin ba-construction: A combined licensing and information structure approach
	* Amba Mohammed	A syntactic analysis of the Trinidadian English get passive
	* Anthony Principe	Intergenerational differences in heritage Italian speakers
1:15pm - 2:45pm	**Poster Session and Lunch**	
2:45pm - 3:45pm	**Session 3**	
	* Keerat Purewal	Beyond ability: Personality and performance in adult cognitive assessments
	* Maiia Bulakh and Emily Higgins	Language attitudes in Ukrainian diaspora in Canada
	* Brianna Griska-MacPhee	The Great See: Investigating eye movements in museum exhibits
3:45pm - 4:00pm	Closing Remarks	

Abstracts

9:10am - 10:30am
Session 1

* Ethan Stollar — Investigation of morphological inflectional processing in Jabberwocky sentences using EEG

This study investigates whether jabberwocky (pseudo-)words are processed like real words, or if their presence introduces confounds due to lexical unfamiliarity. Jabberwocky words, which are non-words that follow the orthographic and phonotactic rules of a language (Martínez-Tomás et al., 2025), are widely used in the psycholinguistic literature to control semantic coherence effects and other confounding variables. However, it remains unclear whether the processing of jabberwocky words engages the same cognitive mechanisms as real words. To address this question, I propose an EEG study testing whether jabberwocky words show sensitivity to inflectional morphology comparable to real words. Participants will read simple declarative sentences presented word-by-word. Comprehension questions will follow each sentence to ensure attention. Sentences will contain either a real or jabber-wocky main verb, while all other tokens are real words. A within-subject 2x3 factorial design manipulates Word Type (Real vs. Jabberwocky) and Grammaticality (grammatical past-tense with auxiliary, ungrammatical past-tense after modal, and a no-inflection control). If jabberwocky processing mirrors real-word processing, inflectional violations should elicit similar established ERP components (N400/P600) as real words (Leinonen et al., 2008; Molinaro et al., 2011; Morris & Holcomb, 2005); divergences in ERP patterns would constrain interpretations of prior jabberwocky-based evidence for language processing.

* Jasmine Kwon — Learning foreign words using nursery rhymes

In linguistics, prosody encompasses the rhythm, stress, and intonation patterns of speech and plays a central role in language perception and learning. The present study investigates how embedding Korean words in English prosodic structure influences the acquisition and recognition of these words. Building on models of Dynamic Attending Theory and Phonological Short-Term Memory, this study examines whether prosodic cues in English speech can facilitate the encoding and recall of novel foreign items. In a previous study, rhythmic structure was found to support immediate memory for foreign words. However, memory for them after a delay was poor. The present study used repetition to better support long-term word learning. Three experimental tasks were conducted to explore this relationship. In Task 1, participants learned unfamiliar Korean words embedded within rhythmically structured English phrases. The task was repeated twice. In Task 2, participants completed a rhythmic perception task designed to measure short-term memory for temporal patterns. In Task 3, participants completed a recognition task in which they had to identify previously presented words among a large list of distractors.

* Marc-Antoine Paul — Word semantics in the parafovea: New experimental evidence

Can we access semantics of words viewed rapidly and in the parafovea? Previous eye-tracking research have provided mixed evidence so far. We used an underutilized paradigm in which emotionally loaded words are briefly presented as distractors in the parafovea while participants performed a simple visual task of fixating a target. The goal was to determine whether high-level semantic information like valence (positivity) would affect saccade curvature. Different deviations in saccade trajectories to positive vs negative words would indicate that word semantics can be accessed very rapidly, even in the parafovea. Each trial began with central fixation, followed by the brief parafoveal presentation (100 ms) of a positive, neutral, or negative English word as a distractor. After a short, medium, or long temporal delay,

participants were instructed to fixate a visual target. Linear mixed-effects model analyses of data from 45 English readers yielded a significant effect of temporal delay on saccade executions. Saccade deviations away from the distractor were larger at short delays and decreased for longer delays. However, at longer delays, they were only larger for neutral distractor words. A follow-up study where word arousal is manipulated will be presented to complement the present results.

* Yaqian (Borogjoon) Bao Comparing horizontal and vertical reading in Traditional Chinese through scanpath similarity

Traditional Chinese can be read horizontally or vertically, providing a unique test of whether reading direction shapes global reading strategy. Using eye-movement data from 59 readers across 24 text units, we quantified pairwise scanpath similarity within texts and compared horizontal-horizontal (HH), horizontal-vertical (HV), and vertical-vertical (VV) trial pairs. HH and HV distances were similar, whereas VV distances were reliably smaller than both, indicating greater within-direction regularity in vertical reading. Standard eye-movement measures converged with these scanpath findings: vertical reading was associated with longer reading times, more fixations, longer fixation durations, and slower reading rates. Together, these results indicate that vertical reading supports a distinct but more homogeneous global reading strategy. Readers' own cross-direction scanpaths were also more similar to one another than to those of other readers, revealing stable individual signatures across directions.

11:00am - 12:00pm
Keynote Talk

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* Jasper Jian and Büşra Marşan

Stanford University

Turkish comitative (non-)coordination: A new view on hierarchy effects

Turkish (Turkic; Turkey) features two constructions which match the profile of nominal coordination. The first involves a cross-categorial coordinator ve, and the second, the comitative marker -(y)lA. Both strategies permit two nominals to be combined into a larger constituent, and result in the nominals sharing the same syntactic and semantic status within the clause. Drawing on a series of asymmetries between ve and -(y)lA coordination, however, we argue that these shared properties arise from radically different underlying structures. We show that -(y)lA structures are asymmetric and involve adjunction (e.g., Munn 1993, McNally 1993, Progovac 1998), while ve structures are symmetric (e.g., Jackendoff 1977, Neeleman et al. 2023). These results affirm (i) that 'coordination' is a descriptive label with no unique grammatical status, and (ii) that symmetric syntactic structures are attested in natural language. Looking forward, we discuss in more detail one of the contrasts between the -(y)lA and ve constructions: person hierarchy effects arise in the former, but not in the latter. These constructions may thus provide a new window into the source of hierarchy effects more broadly (e.g., Perlmutter 1971, Coon & Keine 2021, Deal 2024).

1:15pm - 2:45pm
Poster Session

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* Somya Khurana Memory for rhythm and sentences in noise

Previous research has suggested a link between auditory temporal processing and phonological short-term memory (STM), but the mechanisms underlying this relationship remain unclear. The present study examined whether STM for non-linguistic rhythmic patterns is related to linguistic STM and sentence repetition ability. Specifically, the study compared STM for temporal patterns measured using a tapping task with linguistic STM measured using a digit span task, and investigated how these abilities relate to repeating sentences in silence and noise. Forty undergraduate students reproduced sequences of short (200 ms) and long (600 ms) tones by tapping. Participants then completed a digit span task and a sentence repetition task consisting of English sentences presented in either silence or noise. Each participant repeated ten sentences in silence and ten in noise. Some sentences were anomalous, being grammatically correct but semantically implausible. Participants performed better when repeating sentences in silence compared to noise. Significant correlations were observed between the tapping task and the digit span task. Correlations were also found between temporal pattern and verbal STM tasks on the one hand and sentence repetition performance in silence and noise on the other. These findings suggest that individual differences in rhythmic STM predict differences in sentence repetition ability.

* Benjamin Earle Case assignment in Sakha: A critical review of the dual-modal approach

This study examines dependent and unmarked case alternations within possessive and nominalized constructions in Sakha to evaluate two competing accounts of case licensing. Previous research by Baker and Vinokurova (2010) suggests a dual-modality approach where dependent case is licensed configurationally, and unmarked case is licensed by functional heads. Levin and Preminger (2015) offer a counter proposal of a single configurational approach for both dependent and unmarked case, where Agree is parasitic on case assignment. The goal of this study is to determine whether Sakha truly requires a functional-head-driven mechanism for unmarked case licensing, or whether a unified configurational case-licensing system can better account for both dependent and unmarked case licensing. I evaluate which theory is better supported by examining the distribution of case through speaker-judgment diagnostics, including possessed-nominal ellipsis, nominalized small clause, and impersonal raising constructions. These diagnostics test whether a functional-head licensing account correctly predicts how case arises in contexts where functional heads and the Agree operation responsible for case licensing are weakened or absent. By testing case distribution in these environments, this study aims to determine whether a dual-modality account can adequately capture Sakha case distribution without additional theoretical stipulations.

* Jinmei Zhang Mandarin hyperraising

Hyperraising refers to the syntactic configuration that DP undergoes movement out of the embedded finite CP clause into a higher structural position. Previous studies have suggested that Mandarin may exhibit hyperraising, but these claims have not been supported by systematic empirical evidence or clear diagnostic tests. This paper argues that Mandarin does permit hyperraising and provides a set of diagnostics demonstrating that the relevant movement involves A-movement out of a finite CP. This movement is triggered by semantic features associated with the construction.

* Serena Jun Exploring short-term memory for rhythms and prosodic sentence repetition

Prosody, the rhythm, stress, and intonation of speech, is important in verbal comprehension. Previous literature has shown that the alteration of prosody impairs the comprehension and memory of auditory linguistic input (Cohen et al., 2001). Further research found a correlation between recall of non-verbal sequences and meaningless sentences, suggesting the importance of temporal structures for storage in short-term memory (STM) (Service et al., 2022). This study explores if STM for non-verbal sequences correlates with STM for sentences with natural and unnatural prosody. Forty-five participants completed a rhythm tapping task and a sentence repetition task. For the rhythm tapping task, participants listened to sequences of long and short beeps and replicated them on a response pad. In the sentence repetition task, participants listened to a series of sentences before repeating them verbally. Sentences were either in a “natural”, “unnatural”, or “f0” prosody condition, containing natural pauses, unnatural pauses, or a flattened pitch, respectively. We predict a correlation between the rhythm and sentence repetition tasks. Further, we predict that unnatural sentences will lead to inaccurate segmentation of syntactic phrases, and therefore more errors in repetition. These results will speak to the role of prosody in STM for speech and, possibly, language acquisition.

* Laurian D'Souza, Karissa Ford, Joyce Hui, Yasmin Mahmood, Ana Martinez Loma Welcome to the dark side: Display mode and emotional valence’s effects on lexical decision

Screen usage is a factor known to affect individuals’ minds and well-being, including mood and visual fatigue while reading. With the emergence of new display options, how do variations such as dark mode affect how words are processed when read on a screen? Our study answers how display mode modulates the processing of valence in visual word recognition. Prior research tells us that positive words elicit quicker lexical decision responses, and light mode tends to lead to better performance in cognition and reading tasks. We expect that dark mode will slow down responses and produce higher error percentages, regardless of the valence rating. We also predict that positively valenced words will elicit better results than negative even in a dark presentation mode. This study is currently active and aims to present the results of a lexical decision task conducted in light and dark mode variants. This study will be statistically analyzed using a linear regression model. There is a lack of research on display mode effects during LDTs. Significant results will provide a novel look into whether the choice of presentation mode affects how we process words or if the light mode, positive word biases remain intact regardless of valence.

* Olivia Carstensen The structure of discontinuous verbs in Cantonese

This research investigates the structure of discontinuous verbs in Cantonese. Discontinuous verbs are a type of construction in which a contiguous verb surfaces with intervening grammatical elements within the verb, such as aspect markers and wh-words. Cantonese discontinuous verbs are challenging to previous analyses, which have largely been focused on a VO reanalysis approach, given their diversity of morphological compositions. This project surveys existing analyses of Cantonese discontinuous verbs and identifies empirical patterns that have not been fully captured in previous accounts. In particular, this project will build upon the recent syntax-phonology approach proposed by Lee and Yip (2024) by making observations which will inform refinements to support their analysis of the structure of Cantonese discontinuous verbs.

Benjamin Earle, Nadija Lucyshyn, Eva Scatozza, Gabrielle Sancho, Marilou Vachon

Why words matter: The lexical processing of academic words

This study investigates the differences in lexical processing between academic and non-academic words, and whether emotional properties modulate this processing. Previous research has shown that emotional valence influences word recognition speed and accuracy in lexical decision making tasks, with positive-valenced words processed more efficiently under the stated metrics of reaction time (RT) and accuracy. However, this research has focused on general effects, without examining whether these effects differ by word type or participant population, or whether words associated with particular groups are processed more efficiently by members of those groups. This study addresses this gap by testing whether academic words that carry experiential relevance for university students are processed faster than non-academic words. Participants from McMaster University will complete a lexical decision making task measuring RT and accuracy of each decision. This data will be analyzed using a two-way ANOVA with word type and valence as factors, testing for main effects and their interaction. We predict that academic words will elicit the faster and more accurate responses, and that this effect will be modulated by valence, where positive-valenced academic words will elicit the fastest and most accurate responses.

Sofia Eva Marcia **Are post-secondary students' reading skills actually COVID-sliding?**

Previous educational research demonstrated that primary and secondary school students exhibit a decline in academic skills during the summer months, commonly referred to as "summer slide". A similar phenomenon has been identified from the extended academic disruption due to the pandemic, referred to as "COVID-slide", and has led to a learning decline—particularly in reading. However, there is insufficient empirical evidence on the severity and impact of COVID-slide in post-secondary students. To assess this, the current study collected and compared eye-tracking studies, English reading comprehension tests, and individual differences tests from undergraduate students at McMaster University in the pre-pandemic period (2019), and post-pandemic period (2025). The findings revealed a reduction in refixation variables, shorter reading durations, small increases in regressions (re-reading) and saccades (rapid eye-movements), yet a nearly identical high comprehension accuracy. This demonstrates that the post-pandemic wave has faster reading times while maintaining high comprehension, most likely influenced by greater amounts of re-reading and rapid eye-movements—ultimately suggesting against a COVID-slide in university-level students' reading. However, to strengthen this conclusion, there is ongoing work to analyze individual differences such as reading efficiency and vocabulary knowledge, as these are additional factors that affect reading performance.

Waverly Chan **Does language acquisition depend on memory for the order of verbal units or for rhythm in general?**

Verbal short-term memory (STM), a process previously linked to language acquisition, allows individuals to rehearse and store speech in their memory. Service et al (2022) found that STM for rhythmic, timing-related patterns correlates with verbal STM, suggesting that rhythmic STM indirectly supports language learning. The current study examined the extent of this correlation, specifically whether it was due to the simpler, binary nature of the rhythmic STM task or due to our STM for the order of verbal units in speech. Forty students completed four tasks. To assess rhythmic STM, participants heard a series of long and short beeps and repeated the pattern from memory by tapping. To measure verbal STM, participants completed a traditional digit span task and a digit span task with binary sequences. We used the STM tasks to predict nonword sentence repetition, a task previously found to correlate with language acquisition. We explore whether STM for binary sequences are as good a predictor of nonword sentence repetition as the traditional digit span. This suggests a domain-general memory for rhythmic patterns that contributes to language learning. This research can inform cognitive process theories in verbal STM that have broader implications in language learning and language disorder rehabilitation.

* **Bo Derek Lane-Smith Surface word order of external possession in Tagalog**

This study looks at how external possession affects word order in Tagalog, and Nie's (2019) claim using Low Applicative Phrases and Raising Applicative Phrases. External possession occurs when the possessor of a direct object is treated as the subject of the verb and is licensed with nominative case. To receive nominative case, the possessor must go through movement or "raising." Nie proposes that nominative case is assigned by Voice Phrase, and because of possessor movement, external possessors cannot be introduced at the direct object level. Instead, Nie makes use of Low Applicative Phrases and Raising Applicative Phrases to assign case external possession. I argue that Low Applicative Phrases and Raising Applicative Phrases are not necessary for the validity of the sentence, and that the structure of their proposed X-bar tree must be modified in respect to surface word order and case assignment. I base my evidence on Richards and Rackowski's (2005) argument shift in Tagalog, and through prediction testing of Nie's proposal on complex external possession sentences. The evidence points to potential rethinking of DP movement in Tagalog and other Verb-Subject-Object languages.

* **Emaan Siddique, Kya Carter, Isabella Cafarelli, Emma DeGier**

Extra! Extra! Read all about it:
An investigation of reading habits and word recognition

Lexical processing refers to how the visual form of a word is mapped onto its meaning during reading. One theoretical framework that explains individual differences in this process is the Lexical Quality Hypothesis, which proposes that greater print exposure leads to more precise and accessible lexical representations. In contrast, individuals with lower print exposure may rely more heavily on phonological decoding when processing written words, as described by the Bimodal Interactive Activation Model. This study investigates how print exposure influences sensitivity to orthographic typicality during a lexical decision task. Participants complete measures of print exposure using an Author Recognition Task and a Spelling Recognition Task, followed by a lexical decision task involving real words and nonwords with varying levels of letter-sequence typicality. We hypothesize a main effect of print exposure, such that individuals with greater print exposure will demonstrate faster and more accurate responses. We also predict an interaction between print exposure and letter-sequence typicality: individuals with higher print exposure will be less affected by atypical letter sequences, while those with lower print exposure will show greater difficulty. These findings aim to further our understanding of how individual differences in print exposure interact with orthographic processing during visual word recognition.

* **Leanna Espanillo, Maria Hrycko, Rafia Malik, Manfredis Reyes, Jashmeet Tamber**

Case Closed: How Letters Affect Reading Speed

This study looks at how different letter cases (lowercase, uppercase, mixed-case) affect performance in a lexical decision task (LDT) and how this effect varies with respect to individual differences in reading and spelling proficiency. Student researchers conducted the LDT where participants were tasked with deciding if the word on the screen was a word or non-word, as accurately and quickly as possible. Participants would then complete an author recognition test and a spelling test to indicate whether individual reading and spelling scores play a significant role in visual word processing. Hypothetical results propose that participants with higher proficiency in reading and spelling will have faster and more accurate word processing with all uppercase and lowercase words. Whereas mixed-case words will strain cognitive efforts in LDT's. The word-shape hypothesis is believed to also play a key role in word processing, suggesting that the general shape of a word would result in faster word recognition and processing speeds. This study will have practical implications pertaining to literacy education, optimization of text design, and support for individuals with reading difficulties.

12:15pm - 1:15pm
Session 2

* Audrey Ho Towards Explaining the Syntax of the Mandarin Ba-Construction: A Combined Licensing and Information Structure Approach

This project investigates “how does the syntax generate the Mandarin Ba-construction?”. Mandarin syntax generates a Subject-Ba-Object-Verb word order (the Ba-construction), despite being generally Subject-Verb-Object. The syntactic and semantic properties of the Ba morpheme are debated in the literature. Some proposals argue for a syntactic licensing approach to Ba, where Ba’s function is to license the object preceding the verb. Other proposals argue that inherent semantic properties produce Ba-constructions, where Ba marks a focused/topicalised object, or exists to combine with perfective event complements. I propose that the Ba-construction should be explained by combining a syntactic licensing component and an information structure component. The syntactic licensing component comes from the argument that the object cannot receive licensing from the verb in a lower position, and has to receive licensing in a higher position from Ba instead. The Ba-construction shares properties with nominalisation structures that are argued to contain verbs which fail to license lower objects. The information structure component comes from the observation that Mandarin word order variation derives different topicalised and focused elements in a manner which I argue is similar to Basque. Like Basque, I argue that the raised object is a semantic topic derived structurally.

* Amba Mohammed A Syntactic Analysis of the Trinidadian English Get Passive

This project investigates whether the Trinidadian English(TE) get passive has the same syntactic properties as the Standard English(SE) get passive. As a dialect of Caribbean English, TE is considered a non-standard variety of English. This anticipates that the grammar of TE structures language using strategies which deviate from that of SE. Contrary to this expectation, I demonstrate using syntactic diagnostics that the TE get Passive(1a) realizes the same thematic properties as the SE get Passive(1b).

(1) a. The thief get catch (by the police)
    b. The thief got caught (by the police).

I show that (1a), like (1b), has an external agent (realized as a by- phrase or understood existentially), and that the surface subject is the underlying direct object. I also identify that get and its complement are verbal. I propose a full syntactic analysis which accounts for these findings. I conclude that there is no difference in the syntactic properties of (1a) versus (1b). My findings challenge traditional conceptions of the supposed incorrectness of dialects/creoles while also engaging with larger theoretical discussions of how tenable the divide between standard and non-standard language varieties really is.

* Anthony Principe Intergenerational Differences in Heritage Italian Speakers

Heritage speakers are often cited as having variable attainment in their heritage language due to factors such as limited exposure to the language, informal learning environments, or reduced opportunities for regular use. Following the post-WWII diaspora of Italian speakers, there are multiple generations of heritage speakers in the Greater Toronto and Hamilton Area (GTHA), providing the ideal context to examine such variability. This study examines whether reduced opportunities for heritage language use across generations predict differences in the production of the alveolar trill rhotic /r/ among heritage Italian speakers in the GTHA. It is hypothesized that second-generation heritage speakers will demonstrate lower rates of canonical trill realization compared to first-generation heritage speakers. Speech data from first- and second-generation Italian heritage speakers will be compared to determine whether either generation produces /r/ in ways comparable to speakers of Standard Italian. Although data collection and analysis are ongoing, preliminary observations from a small subset of speakers in each generation will be presented. These findings will contribute to research on phonetic variation and the maintenance of heritage languages spoken outside of their countries of origin.

2:45pm - 3:45pm
Session 3

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* **Keerat Purewal** **Beyond Ability: Personality and Performance in Adult Cognitive Assessments**

In recent years, personality traits have been recognized as important correlates of educational attainment and labour market outcomes [1][2]. However, less is known about how personality relates to cognitive skills. Using data from the Programme for the International Assessment of Adult Competencies (PIAAC) [3], this study examines the relationship between the Big Five Personality traits (extraversion, emotional stability, conscientiousness, open mindedness, and agreeableness) and adult literacy, numeracy, and adaptive problem-solving (APS) skills across 22 countries. Weighted regression models were estimated by country and skill domain with various demographic controls. The results show that extraversion is the most consistent predictor of cognitive test scores. Across most countries, higher extraversion is associated with lower literacy, numeracy, and APS scores. Additional analyses revealed that extraverted individuals tend to have higher educational attainment and more educationally enriching backgrounds despite their lower test performance. This paradox suggests a measurement mismatch rather than a skill deficit. Standardized assessments like PIAAC emphasize sustained attention, independent work, and controlled testing environments; conditions that may disadvantage extraverts [4]. These results highlight the need for more inclusive testing to showcase diverse skillsets.

* **Maiia Bulakh and Emily Higgins** **Language Attitudes in Ukrainian Diaspora in Canada**

This research examines the attitudes of forcibly displaced Ukrainians in Canada towards the Ukrainian and Russian languages. The project focused on understanding how language attitudes changed over time, particularly after the Russian full-scale invasion in 2022. Questionnaire data was collected from 177 participants that had settled in Canada post 2022. The questionnaire consisted of three sections: demographic information, self-rated language proficiency in Ukrainian, Russian, English, and French, and sociolinguistic attitudes towards Ukrainian and Russian. Ordinal logistic regressions were used to examine the influence of various demographic factors on proficiency, with the most significant being native language, sex, and education. Exploratory factor analysis of the 22 attitudes revealed three general groupings, which corresponded largely to Russian orientation, Ukrainian orientation, and language use in Canada. The strongest influences on this model came from proficiency, native language, and sex. Individual logistic regressions were conducted on specific language attitudes to address more targeted research questions regarding changes in perception and current language use. Along with survey data, some participants opted to complete an online interview discussing their language use and perspectives. Additional research will focus on thematic analysis of transcripts and connections to survey responses.

* **Brianna Griska-MacPhee** **The Great See: Investigating Eye Movements in Museum Exhibits**

An important focus within museum studies is to provide insight into how exhibit design and interpretive materials (namely, texts) shape the visitor experience and learning. The current study analyzes exit survey information and eye-tracking data from 82 participants wearing mobile eye-tracking devices as they visited a museum gallery exhibit at McMaster's Museum of Art. The data collected reflects visitors' self-reported learning outcomes, exhibit engagement, and behavioural patterns within the exhibition space. Higher learning ratings were reported by male participants and participants who spent more time in the main and secondary exhibit spaces. Additionally, greater time spent in the secondary exhibit area predicted higher ratings that participants would visit a similar exhibit. The time spent reading the introductory text was a strong predictor of whether participants navigated the exhibit in the intended direction. While the present analysis focuses on survey data, ongoing work will apply machine learning tools to further examine the eye-tracking recordings to better understand how visitors interact with text (captions, labels, etc.) within the exhibits. In particular, we aim to analyze gaze patterns when participants read caption labels in order to explore how engagement with textual signage may influence learning and visitor experience.