

James Slotta  
Curriculum Vitae

Department of Anthropology  
University of Texas at Austin  
2201 Speedway Stop C3200  
Austin, TX 78712

jslotta@utexas.edu  
jameslotta.com

## EDUCATION

PhD	University of Chicago, Chicago, IL Anthropology & Linguistics	2012
MA	University of Chicago, Chicago, IL Anthropology	2003
BA	University of Chicago, Chicago, IL Anthropology	2000

## PROFESSIONAL APPOINTMENTS

Assistant Professor, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX Department of Anthropology	2017-present
Lecturer, The University of Texas at Austin, Austin TX Department of Anthropology	2016-17
Postdoctoral Scholar, The University of California at San Diego, San Diego, CA Department of Anthropology	2013-16
Visiting Assistant Professor, Franklin & Marshall College, Lancaster, PA Department of Anthropology	2012-13

## PUBLICATIONS

### Peer-Reviewed Articles

1. Cooperrider, K., **Slotta, J.** & Núñez, R. Forthcoming. The ups and downs of space and time: Topography in Yupno language, culture, and cognition. *Language and Cognition*.
2. Amha, A., **Slotta, J.**, and H. S. Sarvasy. 2021. Singing the Individual: Name Tunes in Oyda and Yopno. *Frontiers in Psychology* 12:667599. doi: 10.3389/fpsyg.2021.667599
3. Slotta, J. 2019. The annotated Donald Trump: Signs of Circulation in a Time of Bubbles. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 29(3): 397-416.
4. Fleming, L. & **Slotta, J.** 2018. The pragmatics of kin address: A sociolinguistic universal and its semantic affordances. *Journal of Sociolinguistics* 22(4): 375-405.

5. Cooperrider, K., **Slotta, J.** & Núñez, R. 2018. The preference for pointing with the hand is not universal. *Cognitive Science* 42(4): 1375-1390.
6. Slotta, J. 2017. Can the subaltern listen? Self-determination and the provisioning of expertise in Papua New Guinea. *American Ethnologist* 44(2): 328-340.
7. Cooperrider, K., **Slotta, J.** & Núñez, R. 2017. Uphill and downhill in a flat world: The conceptual topography of the Yupno house. *Cognitive Science* 41(3): 768–799.
8. Slotta, J. 2015. The perlocutionary is political: Listening as self-determination in Papua New Guinea. *Language in Society* 44(4): 525-552.
9. Slotta, J. 2015. Phatic rituals of the liberal democratic polity: Hearing voices in the hearings of the Royal Commission on Aboriginal Peoples. *Comparative Studies in Society and History* 57(1): 130-160.
10. Slotta, J. 2014. Revelations of the world: Transnationalism and the politics of perception in Papua New Guinea. *American Anthropologist* 116(3): 626-642.
11. Slotta, J. 2012. Dialect, trope, and enregisterment in a Melanesian speech community. *Language & Communication* 32(1): 1-13.

### Invited Chapters, Commentaries & Reference Works

12. Slotta, J. 2021. Pragmatics. In *The International Encyclopedia of Linguistic Anthropology*, edited by James Stanlaw. Hoboken: Wiley-Blackwell
13. Slotta J. 2020. Endangered Languages and Porous Selves. Comment on Don Kulick's *A Death in the Rainforest*. *HAU: Journal of Ethnographic Theory* 10(2): 650-5
14. Slotta, J. 2020. The Significance of Trump's Incoherence. In Janet McIntosh and Norma Mendoza-Denton (eds), *Language in the Trump Era: Scandals and Emergencies*, pp. 52-62. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
15. Slotta, J. 2016. Distinguishing 'gene lines' from 'affines': The troubled genealogy of Yopno & other New Guinea languages. In *The Ideal of the Slightly Bent Person of the Yupno in Papua New Guinea*, Jürg Wassmann (lead author). Heidelberg: Universitätsverlag Winter. Pp. 30-38.

### Conference Proceedings

16. Slotta, J. 2016. Slang and the semantic sense of identity. *Texas Linguistic Forum*, Vol. 59: 119-128.
17. Fleming, L., & **Slotta, J.** 2015. Named relations: A universal in the pragmatics of reference within the kin group. *Proceedings of the 51<sup>st</sup> Annual Meeting of the Chicago Linguistics Society*, pp. 165-179.
18. Cooperrider, K., Núñez, R. & **Slotta, J.** 2014. The protean pointing gesture: Variation in a

building block of human communication. *Proceedings of the 36th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society*.

### Reviews

19. Slotta, J. 2014. Review of *Communication, Culture and Society in Papua New Guinea: Yu Tok Wanem?* edited by Evangelia Papoutsaki, Michael McManus, and Patrick Matbob. *The Contemporary Pacific* 26(1): 251-4.
20. Slotta, J. 2010. Review of *Society of Others: Kinship and Mourning in a West Papuan Place* by Rupert Stasch. *Journal of Linguistic Anthropology* 20(1) :248-250.

### Linguistic Archival Material

21. Slotta, J. 2017. Documenting Yopno Diversity: Dialect Variation in a Papuan Language. Endangered Languages Archives (<https://elar.soas.ac.uk/Collection/MPI43302>). Deposit includes 196 audio and video recordings totalling roughly 4,700 minutes; 35 transcripts, translations, and interlinear glosses totalling roughly 315 minutes; as well as a multilectal word list (16 pp.) and sketch grammar of Yopno (51 pp.)

### Public-facing Writings

22. Sarvasy, H., Amha, Azeb, & **Slotta, J.** If you were called by a melody how would it sound? Communities in Ethiopia and PNG name people with unique individual tunes. *The Conversation*, September 20, 2021, <https://theconversation.com/if-you-were-called-by-a-melody-how-would-it-sound-communities-in-ethiopia-and-png-name-people-with-unique-individual-tunes-165969>.
23. Fleming, L. & **Slotta J.** 2020. Social Distancing and the Cultural Semiotics of Contact. Society for Linguistic Anthropology Blog. Posted June 2020, <http://linguisticanthropology.org/social-distancing-cultural-semiotics-contact/>

### In Preparation

24. **Slotta, J.** & Handman, C. Submitted. Communicative Inequality in the “Last Place” on Earth: Global Languages as Instruments of Social Justice. *Language and Social Justice: Global Perspectives*, eds. Kate Riley, Bernard C. Perley & Inmaculada M. Garcia Sanchez. Bloomsbury Press.
25. Slotta J. *On the other side of the word: the politics of listening at the ends of the earth*. Book manuscript, under review at Cornell University Press.
26. Slotta J. Intelligibility as a Sociolinguistic Variable: Communicative Imaginaries of English in Papua New Guinea

### FIELDWORK AND ARCHIVAL RESEARCH

2014-5            Five months in Papua New Guinea documenting dialectal diversity in the Yopno region

- 2013 One month in the Yopno region of Papua New Guinea investigating gesture and the language of space and time
- 2007-9 18 months dissertation research in the Yopno region of Papua New Guinea

### **FELLOWSHIPS, GRANTS, AND AWARDS**

- 2019 “Language at the limit of communication: The ‘cult’ of creole slang in English-language schools.” College Research Fellowship, College of Liberal Arts, University of Texas at Austin.
- 2018 “Native listeners: The self and others’ speech in an anarchic polity.” Summer Research Assignment, College of Liberal Arts, University of Texas at Austin
- 2013-5 “Documenting Yopno Diversity.” Individual Postdoctoral Fellowship, Endangered Languages Documentation Programme.
- 2012-3 “Topographies of Time in the Yopno Valley.” Committee for Research & Education Grant, National Geographic Society. Rafael Núñez (Principal Investigator), James Slotta (Co-investigator), Kensy Cooperrider (Co-investigator)
- 2008-9 “Dialect, Register, & the Big-Man: Social Organization of Sporadic Linguistic Innovations.” Wenner-Gren Dissertation Fieldwork Grant
- 2007-8 “Dialect, Register, & the Big-Man: Social Organization of Sporadic Linguistic Innovations.” Fulbright-Hays Doctoral Dissertation Research Abroad Fellowship
- 2003 “Discourse and the Function of Case-Marking in North Baffin Inuit.” Jacobs Research Funds Grant.
- 2003 “Discourse and the Function of Case-Marking in North Baffin Inuit.” Phillips Fund Research Grant, American Philosophical Society.
- 2000-2004 Century Fellowship. The University of Chicago.

### **PRESENTATIONS**

#### **Invited Lectures and Discussions**

- 2019 Invited Discussant: Orthographies & Identities. The Anthropology of Language in Mainland Southeast Asia, The University of Sydney.
- 2019 Intelligibility as a Sociolinguistic Variable. The Anthropology of Language in Mainland Southeast Asia, The University of Sydney.
- 2018 Bubbles, Silos, Cocoons. Keynote Lecture, Symposium about Language and Society — Austin (SALSA) XXVI, University of Texas at Austin, Austin, TX
- 2017 The ups and downs of space and time in the Yopno valley. Cognitive Science area meeting, Department of Psychology, University of Texas at Austin.
- 2015 Can the subaltern listen: Listening and self-determination in post-colonial Papua New Guinea. Seminar Series in the Department of Anthropology at the University of Texas, Austin.
- 2013 Addressees, agency, and other minds: Persuasion and the self-determining subject in

the Yopno Valley (Papua New Guinea). School of Arts and Social Sciences Seminar, James Cook University.

- 2013 Coding the non-spatial setting in Yopno: Finite verb morphology and non-finite verb constructions. Non-Spatial Setting in Finisterre-Huon Languages: An International Workshop, James Cook University.
- 2013 All (local) politics is global: “Global” chronotopes in the here & now of Yopno politics (Papua New Guinea). Linguistic Anthropology Seminar, University of Virginia
- 2013 “Talk” is good to think & good to talk: fashions of speaking about “talk” (*gen*) & fashioning a polity through talk about “talk” (*gen*) in Melanesia. Linguistic Anthropology Workshop, University of California, San Diego.
- 2012 Panel Discussant: Polyphony and Politics. American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, San Francisco.
- 2008 Peripheral elements: At the intersection of pragmatics and phonology in the Yopno language (a non-Austronesian language of Papua New Guinea). Field Seminar presented at the Australian National University.

### Conference Presentations

- 2020 Roundtable Participant: Constructing Facts, Construing Reality: Anthropological Approaches to “Fake News.” Raising Our Voices 2020, Online event sponsored by the American Anthropological Association.
- 2020 with Courtney Handman. Communicative Inequality in the Last Place on Earth. Society for Linguistic Anthropology Biannual Meeting, Postponed due to COVID.
- 2019 Cargo Cults and Cultural Prospectors. American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Vancouver.
- 2018 Unintelligible. European Society for Oceanists 2018 Conference. Cambridge, UK.
- 2018 with Kensity Cooperrider & Rafael Núñez. A typological sketch of gesture in Yopno (Papua New Guinea). International Society for Gesture Studies conference. Cape Town, South Africa.
- 2018 Bubbles in the Public Sphere. Society for Linguistic Anthropology Conference, Philadelphia.
- 2017 The Annotated Donald Trump: From Speaking with Names to Living in Bubbles. American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Washington DC.
- 2016 The Gift of Not Understanding and the Value of Confusion: Some Offerings from Papua New Guinea. American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Minneapolis.
- 2016 Gesture in the Yopno valley. Data Session, Moody College of Communications, Austin.
- 2016 Slang and the semantic sense of identity. SALSA XXIV, Austin, TX
- 2015 Transient visions: Revelation and the temporality of iconography in Papua New Guinea. Annual Conference of the Canadian Anthropology Society, Québec.
- 2015 with Luke Fleming. Social pragmatics and types of person reference: The case of proper names v. kin terms. 51st Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society, Chicago, IL.
- 2015 Secret stories and public records: Language documentation as communicative context in Papua New Guinea. Linguistic Society of America Annual Meeting, Portland, OR.
- 2014 with Kensity Cooperrider and Rafael Núñez: Topographic construals of indoor space in the Yopno valley of Papua New Guinea. Conceptual Structure, Discourse, and Language 12, UC-Santa Barbara.

- 2014 On the subject of clause-chaining and serial verb constructions in Yopno. Linguistic Society of Papua New Guinea Meetings, Madang.
- 2014 with Kensity Cooperrider & Rafael Núñez: The protean pointing gesture: Variation in a building block of human communication. 36th Annual Meeting of the Cognitive Science Society, Quebec City, Quebec.
- 2013 From patricialect to “language:” the emergence of hierarchy in Yopno ethno-sociolinguistics. American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Chicago.
- 2011 The meaning of ‘meaning’ and the meaning of ‘money’ in post-colonial Papua New Guinea. American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Montreal.
- 2010 Dialectal registers: The eventful making of enduring identities in a Melanesian speech community. American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, New Orleans.
- 2010 Linguistic form at the intersection of grammar and ethno-pragmatics: Yopno kinship terms. Symposium about Language and Society, Austin.
- 2009 There’s villages and then there’s villages: Relational and autonomous variation in Yopno patricialectal variation. Meeting of the Association for Social Anthropology in Oceania, Santa Cruz.
- 2003 Authenticity and the archive. American Anthropological Association Annual Meeting, Chicago.