The following questions and answers are from a BLC workshop given October 17, 1997, by Elana Shohamy entitled "Critical Language Teaching and Beyond." A copy of the paper and a videotape of the talk are both available from the BLC Language Teaching Resource Library in 34 Dwinelle. The text is not verbatim, but has been paraphrased for ease of understanding.

Q.: Has any of your research focused on the effect of the use of national testing on teacher motivation?

A.: Yes, we are looking at this and, without a doubt, teachers are motivated by tests. There's no question about it: a national test works very well as a motivator for teachers as to how they teach. One of our studies looks at what the presence of a national subject area exam does to teachers and we've seen it's a very effective incentive for teachers. The teachers become much more focused on the teaching of whatever the subject is—English, math, Arabic—so that their students will succeed on the test.

In the Arabic study we look specifically at behavior in the classroom and we note the very strong effect the [national Arabic] exam has on teacher behavior. Teaching becomes much more focused, much more disciplined, much more task-oriented, much more what some people would call a waste of time. There are distinct differences in terms of teaching methods depending on whether or not there is a national test. My argument is that while this [teaching to the test] may be more focused and efficient, it's also a much narrower approach. So if you as a teacher or a student are a task-oriented individual, you will find the existence of the national exam a very useful motivator. In other words, testing is very instrumental, and what I'm concerned about for teachers and students and learning is at the level of the conceptual.

One interesting thing we've found is that the older, more senior teachers are more influenced by testing than the younger ones. The more experienced teachers can't stand that every five years there seems to be a new method, so they wait to see what the test is like and teach toward it. For these teachers, the test is a stronger pedagogical source than for some of the younger teachers who are more willing to experiment with teaching methods.

In a study for which I do not yet have final results, we're looking at what the teaching of English actually means in our grades 8-12. To give you a context, it's in the twelfth grade that we in Israel give an all-important proficiency exam in English. Our study shows very clearly how the teaching of English changes over the four years leading up to grade 12, from the teaching of a broad variety of topics in grade 8 to a much narrower range of possibilities in grade 12. In grade 12 we see a nearly perfect matching of the testing and the teaching. We see very strong evidence of increased focus: the test has become the "it," the subject, rather than the English. Of course, this doesn't always happen: some teachers, especially in the earlier grades, are using much more diverse and open ways of teaching.

Q.: So given this powerful influence of testing on teachers and, by extension, on students, how should we as teachers go about engaging our students to think more creatively about assessment?

A.: The starting point is to recognize that we the teachers do not know everything. We need to recognize that each individual person, each student, has something to tell us, too. Each person knows something—the student one thing, the teacher another—but none of us knows everything. One way of giving more inclusive tests is to use the method of dialoguing, where
Q.: Given more open forms of testing, how do we assess our students' work? Isn't it like comparing apples and oranges?

A.: Here's where criteria for the course come in: they're not always negotiable once they are in place. However one derived them--and it could have been through negotiation--the objectives of the course are established and known. The freedom, the negotiation, the democratization of the course is in how students demonstrate that they achieved those goals. For example, having students teach what they learned is an excellent way of showing their control of the material. I believe, then, that it's very good idea, regardless of what you're teaching, be it a language or not, to begin by looking at all the possible ways to assess and to give students choices. The criteria are the same for everyone, how students show they've met them should be open. This is where tests are so narrow; they're only one way of showing what we know. There should be as many ways of showing as there are people.

One thing that's very important for us as educators, and even as citizens, is to say the we just don't accept this situation [the all-importance of tests] any more. It's time we protest, it's time we negotiate, it's time to say that we won't be victimized by this system any more. It's a very difficult thing to break this cycle, to do it differently, and I certainly don't have any answers to this, or any other, problem of society.

A third point is that the discussion, the dialogue, the negotiation implies action. It's not enough to just show what we know or don't know; we have to do something about it. And this effort may include me as the teacher, too, because it may very well be that I didn't present the material effectively or that I didn't refer students to the right sources. It's very important to recognize that we have this information about what worked and didn't work and that we can do something about it, as teacher and students, together.

A spring 1998 comes around, the BLC is continuing to have a really good year. Under the able leadership of Mark Kaiser, the LM C is both expanding and redefining its mission. The language teacher survey conducted last semester has led to some important recommendations on which we are taking action. We now have in place a heritage languages focus group, coordinated by Nelleke Van Dusen, that is conducting a needs analysis of heritage language students, especially speakers of Tagalog and Vietnamese. Linda von Hoene will offer a monthly workshop this spring on how to build a teaching portfolio. This semester Mark Kaiser is offering an (already over-enrolled!) graduate seminar on language learning technologies. We will be offering in fall 1998 a "Principles of Language Learning and Teaching" course especially tailored to graduate students going out on the job market. The BLC Fellows' projects this coming semester are exciting, and all involve the use of technology: Francine A'Ness, Creation of a CD-ROM for teaching Latin-American culture; Susan Martin, Use of technology for improving oral proficiency in Spanish; Nadia Yaqub, Developing a course on media Arabic, with Intranet tutorials and a class newspaper; and Ying Yang, Computer-aided grammar exercises for teaching first-year Chinese.

Again this year, the BLC will be granting up to six one-semester GSRships, and two one-semester lecturerships for the development of instructional materials in foreign languages. The deadline for application is March 16, 1998. We strongly encourage you all to apply. Make sure to contact Claire Kramsch or Mark Kaiser to discuss your project ahead of time.

We have an exciting program of events this semester that you will not want to miss, and I hope to see you there! I welcome your ideas and feedback, and I look forward to hearing from each of you as to how the BLC can best continue to serve your needs. Meanwhile, I wish you a good spring semester.
Notes from the Associate Director

by Mark Kaiser

This is a very exciting time at the Berkeley Language Center. Recognizing the growing importance of computers in the study of foreign languages, the BLC is adding, this semester, two computer labs available to faculty and students, and, in addition, has just opened the Dwinelle Computer Research Facility (DCRF) for humanities faculty research and instructional technology projects. In this article I would like to briefly describe the facilities and the rationale behind them.

135 Dwinelle houses a 26-station PC lab. The equipment in this facility was purchased jointly by the BLC and the Chinese language program of the Department of East Asian Languages. Although the Macintosh lab in B-21 Dwinelle continues to meet the needs of many faculty, others have been requesting the BLC to support the Wintel platform as well. Moreover, the equipment in B-21 Dwinelle has been showing its age for some time.

Instructors may reserve 135 Dwinelle for their classes by contacting Victoria Williams (2-0767, ext. 19) between Tuesday and Thursday (between Monday and Thursday for Chinese instructors) of the week preceding the reservation time. Any hours not reserved by Thursday at 5:00 pm become open-access drop-in hours, giving students an opportunity to work on assignments on computers “friendly” to foreign languages. Schedules for the week will be posted outside 135 Dwinelle, on the bulletin board near B-50 Dwinelle, on the schedules clipboard in B-50, and on the WWW (www.itp.berkeley.edu/blc).

We are faced with the issue of who has access during open hours. The policy set by Workstation and Microcomputer Facilities (W & M F) for the Language Microcomputer Facility (LMF, B-21 Dwinelle) is to restrict access to those students whose instructors have registered their courses and students with W & M F. This policy has the benefit of guaranteeing that only foreign language students have access to the computers, but it has also resulted in a seriously under-used lab (typically 1/3 capacity during open-access hours). Since this very expensive equipment will be obsolete within 4-5 years, it should be utilized to its full capacity. Moreover, we should encourage students from other disciplines to study foreign languages, even if this occurs outside of regularly scheduled classes.

Therefore, we plan to experiment with an open-access policy which will recognize that 135 Dwinelle facility is a foreign language lab. Students “dropping-in” will be informed that students enrolled in foreign language classes doing foreign language work have priority for accessing the lab and that others may be bumped from their seats. In addition, software installed on the computers will be of limited interest to students outside the humanities.

A full description of the policies, including information on procedures for obtaining printing privileges, is provided on page 9 of this newsletter. If it should prove that foreign language students are unable to access the lab because of excessive use by non-foreign language students, we will then reexamine the policy.

134 Dwinelle is a small student multimedia lab. It contains one Wintel computer and one Macintosh, a scanner, video digitizing card, and more authoring and graphics editing software. Please contact me at 2-7221 or at mkaiser@socrates if you are interested in providing access to this facility for your students.

The Dwinelle Computer Research Facility (DCRF) in 310 Dwinelle was opened by Vice Chancellor Carol Christ and Dean Anthony Newcomb on January 27. (See photo.) This facility contains five high-end workstations (mixed platforms) for drop-in use (9-5 M-Th, 9-3 F) by humanities faculty and their graduate students. It also has a number of high-end peripheral devices, including scanners with document feeders, a slide scanner, a color laser printer, and video digitizing cards. The facility is staffed by computer specialists who will assist faculty in the operation of the software and equipment.

The DCRF also has nine “resident stations” which are assigned to humanities faculty working on long-term computing projects. These assignments are made annually by the Humanities Computing Committee.

The next call for proposals will come in late spring.

There are two facilities in the BLC that still need attention. B-4 is a heavily used video-viewing room and is in desperate need of remodeling and heat (the reason the room is so cold is that there are no heat ducts in the room, only air-conditioning). We are trying to address this problem with the University’s physical plant.

The second room needing attention is 33 Dwinelle. His room currently has 32 carrels with cassette recorders and a central control console. The equipment is obsolete and is experiencing frequent breakdowns, and the layout of the room is vintage audio-lingual era. This layout is still functional for a few instructors in courses such as phonetics, and UC Extension has expressed interest in upgrading equipment, but maintaining a similar layout, for a program in translation currently in development. Alternatively, this room could be remodeled into a more flexible classroom along the lines of the Stanford model (some computer access, video and data projection, a combination of moveable tables and desk chairs and/or bean bag chairs). Please contact me and let me know what you would like to see this room become, and join our discussion of the future of 33 Dwinelle on the berklangcent list in early February.

I look forward to working with you to bring the benefits of technology to foreign language learning at Berkeley.
Relationality and its Discontents in SLA: Firth and Wagner and their Respondents

The SLA Drama: An Introduction
If the second language acquisition (SLA) community were a family, it might be diagnosed as dysfunctional. Or perhaps the recent vituperative displays would be better characterized as a symptom of inter-generational conflict? Whichever the more representative metaphor, the acrimonious debates now shaking and shaping the field of SLA have their advantages—reactions are extreme, there is plenty of drama, and the volatility of the interactions have the potential to produce more powerful understandings than complacent and gracious conditions would generate.

As intimated above, a review of recent SLA journals shows heated debate between cognitive and social theories of SLA, and perhaps more importantly, tensions concerning what constitutes productive research within the field. Michael Long wrote an article in 1990 called “The least a second language acquisition theory needs to explain,” and at one point stated a need for “theory culling” within the field (p. 285 in F&W). In the March, 1996 issue of Applied Linguistics, David Block entered this escalating intra-field debate and asked what “the ontological parameters of the (SLA) field are to be. In simple terms, what counts as SLA or SLA-related research and what does not?” (1996:75) Implicit in Block’s question was a yet more important question—and who gets to decide these things for the field? Block argued for theoretical pluralism, and citing Long (1993, 1990a) and Berreta (1991) as proponents of a unified theory of SLA, challenged the “mainstream” SLA preoccupation with cognitive factors. Block offered as one critique of cognitively oriented models of SLA Latour’s notion of “black boxing,” wherein scientific groups of evidence act as a cohesive unit of support for an argument, the component parts are not disassembled or unpacked, and thus a black-box effect is produced and is often rhetorically effective. And there have been other skirmishes, notably one between Lantolf (1996), who provides a postmodern critique of mainstream SLA, and a response article supporting the rationalist scientific interests substrate to much of SLA by Gregg Long, Beretta and Jordan (1997). Each of these turns-at-talk offer perceptive, polarized, and highly charged meta-narratives on the politics and truths of the state of SLA theory building.

The most recent public forum engagement of these issues is an article by Alan Firth and Johannes Wagner (F&W), complete with six supporting and contrary response articles, published in the Fall, 1997 issue of the Modern Language Journal. F&W first presented this paper during the International Applied Linguistics Association conference in 1996. At that conference in Finland were five respondents—Gabriele Kasper, Joan Kelly Hall, Tony Liddicoat, Nanda Poullisse, and Ben Rampton. Michael Long has also been included as a respondent in this textual enactment of the conference event. In this review, I summarize Firth and Wagner’s key arguments, and discuss a few of the pivotal points made by the respondents.

Corrective to a “Skewed Perspective”? For a “reconceptualization of second language acquisition (SLA),” a phrase used a number of times throughout their article, this statement occurs in fact as the second clause of the first sentence of the abstract prefacing their paper. Perhaps it would be best, to convey both tone and content, to let F&W first present their case themselves. These are the opening two sentences to the body of their paper:

This article examines critically the predominant view of discourse and communication within [SLA]. We argue that this view is individualistic and mechanistic, and that it fails to account in a satisfactory way for interactional and sociolinguistic dimensions of language. As such, it is flawed, and obviates insight into the nature of language, most centrally the language use of second or foreign language (S/FL) speakers. (p. 285)

By “predominant view,” F&W are describing the field of SLA as “imbalanced in favor of cognitive-oriented theories and methodologies” (p. 286). This imbalance has resulted in a “skewed perspective on discourse and communication,” which they argue has precipitated a number of egregious misconceptions within the field. Though F&W sometimes assault the reader with incendiary rhetoric, they raise important issues, and include themselves in their call for SLA to engage in a “more critical discussion of its own presuppositions, methods, and fundamental (and implicitly accepted) concepts” (p. 286). F&W make the case for “three major changes in SLA: (a) a significantly enhanced awareness of the contextual and interactional dimensions of language use, (b) an increased sensitivity toward fundamental concepts, and (c) the broadening of the traditional SLA data base” (p. 186).

What Irks F&W? F&W stress repeatedly that the SLA literature is dominated by a focus on individual cognitive issues and a corresponding ellipsis of serious

by Steve Thorne, Ph. D. candidate, School of Education, UC Berkeley

attention to context and socio-cultural-historical issues. This emphasis on individual cognition within SLA, F&W argue, results in essentialized views of a large number of sociolinguistic and communicative dimensions of language use, including the roles of context, discourse and interaction. But most importantly, they point to the flat social identity of “learner” and “native speaker” as they are used as research proxy for human agents, and critique a construct central to the field, “interlanguage” (the latter I will not discuss in this review). I will take a few of F&W’s key points, namely the portrayal of people in SLA studies and the language-use/language acquisition distinction, and summarize their thoughts with reference to the respondents.

**Language Use and Language Acquisition**

This is where one of the primary fissures lies, in the conceptual and investigatory differences between a focus on language use and language acquisition. Remarkably, F&W’s article is solely about language use and language acquisition, yet they never correlate the two or discuss how studies on language use would necessarily relate to language acquisition. Kasper and Long both comment on this odd omission. Kasper states that F&W’s “paper purports to redirect the field of SLA, but has in fact very little to say about L2 acquisition. Any theory of language acquisition has to make explicit what the conditions and mechanisms of learning are” (italics in the original, p. 310). In his response to F&W, Long ends on this point, “the major problem I have with F&W’s polemic remains my skepticism as to whether greater insights into second language use will necessarily have much to say about second language acquisition” (italics in the original, p. 322). By Kasper and Long’s own statements, they posit a clear differentiation between second language use and acquisition, which by extension, places their default assumption of what really matters in SLA back into individual heads. It is probable that F&W would reject this assumption and say that this false and dichotomous partition harks back to Chomsky’s competence/performance distinction, and before this to Saussure’s differential paralale.

Indeed, F&W mention both of these dualisms in ways that implicitly indicate they would wish to make a clear statement on this issue. It is a considerable weakness in their work that they do not do so.

**How “Mainsream” SLA Became What It Is**

Overview volumes (Ellis, 1994; Long & Freeman, 1991) make it clear that, for the most part, SLA researchers are not fully aware of relevant intellectual work occurring (and having occurred) in related fields. This condition may be due in part to an incommensurability of discourses (Kramsch, 1995a; Pennycook, 1994), a condition which has become more exaggerated over time as SLA seeks out its own identity as a free-standing discipline. How did the predominant focus and core research constructs within SLA come to be what they are? F&W paint a history (which Long disagrees with (p. 322, footnote 2)) of current SLA as it came to construct language use and acquisition as principally a phenomenon of individual cognition. Despite the “communicative turn” within anthropology and linguistics which occurred during the 1960s and early 70s, Chomsky’s ideas penetrated linguistics and SLA while Hymes’s influence remained primarily in anthropology and sociolinguistics. These two strands, which F&W label the “cognitive” and the “social-anthropological,” “were of great importance, because while in an embryonic state, SLA was subjected to the tensions between ... an acknowledgment of the social, contextual dimensions of language, language acquisition, and learning, and on the other [hand], the centrality of the individual’s language cognition and mental processes” (p. 287). In the end, SLA grew to become an “adjunct” of psycholinguistics, which in turn had taken on Chomsky’s research agenda focusing on the “cognitive, autonomous nature of the mind” (p. 288). F&W note that “Chomsky’s legacy is clearly evident in groundbreaking SLA work, including Corder (1967) on learner’s errors, Selinker (1971) on the notion of “interlanguage,” and Dulay and Burt, and Krasner’s (1982) model of SL speech processing” (p. 287). F&W make a strong case that at present, there is “a general methodological bias and theoretical imbalance in SLA studies that investigate acquisition through interactive discourse” (itals in the original, p. 288). The task, then, is to produce research based on serious commitments to context and language activity, which illustrate the importance (and validity) of discourse, identity, and context as critical dimensions of SLA.

**Multidimensional People? Or NNSs, NSs, and Learners?**

F&W blame the field’s domination by cognitive concerns to have “led to the prioritizing of the individual-as-‘nonnative speaker’/‘learner’ over the participant-as-language-‘user’ in social interaction” (p. 286). The sub-field of “communication strategies” is subject to a particularly harsh critique by F&W for its “general preoccupation with the learner, at the expense of other potentially relevant social identities” (p. 288). F&W also raise the point that much mainstream SLA research comes with an “analytic mindset that elevates an idealized ‘native’ speaker above a stereotypical ‘nonnative,’ while viewing the latter as a defective communicator, limited by an underdeveloped communicative competence” (p.285).

In his response article to F&W, Liddicoat builds on this theme and states that experimental SLA contexts “can be typified as institutional forms of talk in which the roles of the participants in the interaction are defined by, and constrained by, the task and the context” (p. 314). Liddicoat later maintains that “N S and N N S cannot be viewed simply as preexisting states that underlie the interaction, but rather as activities that are accomplished in the talk” (p. 314). Commenting on a transcription from a “typical” study of N-S-N S interaction, Liddicoat demonstrates that such studies create, and not merely reflect, an asymmetrical relationship between interlocutors. Additionally, and contrary to mainstream research assumptions, the patterns of the NS’s speech is clearly salient to interaction. In the N-S-N S episode Liddicoat reexamines, the N S’s attempts to accommodate the N N S resulted in atypical language use (pausing within turn construction units, for example),
and the consequence "is to achieve disfluency interactionally in the talk—that the disfluency [exhibited in the transcription] is coconstructed" (p. 315). The question of how deeply such a critique affects the validity of NS-NNS interaction studies remains an open, and compelling, question.

Relatedly, and taking to heart the above discussion, what can the controlled NS-NNS interaction research tell us about N S-NNS interaction in naturalistic settings? In his response article, Long counters F&W and claims that foreigner talk in natural and controlled settings is overall quite consistent, and hence the results of NS-NNS interaction studies are not an artifact of the experimental setting (Long includes a citation to his review article on this research [cf., Long, 1996]). This debate nicely summarizes an epistemological divide in the field between those for whom context is a variable, and those for whom "context as a variable" is a hopelessly impoverished shadow of what is a primary dimension to language-based social interaction, and by extension, to issues of social identity and second language acquisition. Regardless of where one is located in this debate, of significance to the field is the recent research examining the relations between social identity/subjectivity and second/foreign language use and acquisition (Kramsch, 1995b; Hall, 1995; Siegal, 1996; Parce, 1995; von Hone, 1995), which have direct implications for the teaching and learning of second and foreign languages.

F&W stress that an implication of moving away from (relatively) static depictions of people as "learners" or N N Ss, is that partial performativity can be re-framed as utilization of available resources, rather than as evidence of a learner's incapacities. F&W argue their points, in fact, by revisiting transcriptions of N S-NNS encounters and re-analyzing them through the lens of resources and communicative success rather than problems and learner incapacities. The above discussion also relates to other issues F&W raise (which cannot be addressed at length here), such as the preponderant focus within SLA research on formal educational settings, while SLA-relevant activity is occurring in many other social and discursive contexts of tremendous importance (e.g., the work place).

More Responses to Firth and Wagner
Three respondents supported and extended F&W and three positioned themselves in opposition. Interestingly, the three who identify themselves as F&W's supporters used their allocated space to push F&W's arguments even further (rather than critique or fine-tune the weaker portions of F&W's work). Because of space considerations (and to encourage you to read for yourself these engaging response articles), I will only briefly mention the three respondents I did not include in the above discussion.

H all opts to take up F&W's call for change and does so by outlining a sociocultural/social practice approach to SLA. In addition to providing a brief-but-thorough overview of the assumptions core to the sociocultural perspective, H all calls for "SLA as a theory of classroom practice" (p. 304). She describes this project as focusing on the identification of classroom communicative practices and the ways communities of practice are formed, which will "make clear the consequential roles that the ... communicative practices formed in our classrooms play in the construction of ... our learners' L2 development" (p. 305).

To draw in to this discussion the only counter F&W respondent not mentioned above, Poullisse accommodates F&W's arguments for an enhanced awareness of the contextual and interactional dimensions to language use, but overall she makes a case for conventional psycholinguistics. Poullisse's substantive comments mention a necessity of a rigorous data coding system, a replication of research results, both descriptive and explanatory/predictive research results, a need for continued experimental design/variable manipulation research, and that SLA research ought to "search for universal and underlying features of language processes" (p. 325). Finally, with Ben Rampton, the reflexivity of late modern logic has shown up to interrogate, and augment, the ontological and methodological parameters of SLA. Ranging in his discussion from the tensions between school and vernacular aesthetic, to "the grammatical versus the multisensory," Rampton's piece ought to be read rather than reported on. Having stated that his views of SLA are "broadly in line" with those of F&W, Rampton comments that "if there is a branch of linguistics that is concerned with fluidity and transition, with what people can't do with language, and with how they get by with what they can, then this is now its moment" (italics in the original, p. 330).

Why this Struggle Within SLA to Begin With?
Within Bourdieu's market place metaphor, discursive fields—including academic specializations such as SLA for example—operate through proper forms of symbolic exchange, and reproduce themselves through a mechanism of selection bias that favors those holding the same or similar categories of perception (1991). If a more mono-theoretical 'normal science' approach to SLA became too dominant (cf., Beretta, 1991; Long, 1990, 1993; Gregg, 1993), researchers like F&W may fear that the result would be to impoverish divergent theoretical positions of the symbolic (and economic) capital necessary for what feminist theorists Bryson & de Castell term access to "means of discursive production" (1993) (for example, publication in widely circulated journals and access to research funding). In short, SLA would be intellectually impoverished, not enriched, through an increased insistence on "accepted facts" (such as they are) and scientific positivist modeling. As Long (1993) has sought to do with a mapping from the physical sciences onto SLA, F&W and others they reference (e.g., Aston, 1993; Rampton, 1995a; Kramsch, 1995; H all, 1995; Blyth, 1995) utilize what are pertinent theoretical strategies, methods and research results that have obtained currency in related fields (cf., sociology, anthropology, cultural studies, communications, social theory), and to employ (and extend) them as they may be relevant in SLA's efforts to reflexively engage in theoretical work.

All in the Family?
Block notes that 69% of published
scholarship on SLA is North American (1996). In a parallelism to North America's reputation for inter-generational family conflict, the interactional dynamics of these current SLA debates mirror the roles taken by established parents (psycholinguistics and cognitive orientations to SLA) and quickly maturing adolescents (discourse, sociocultural and practice theory approaches to SLA). The adolescents see much wrong with their parents and briskly question the very foundations of their reality. In response, many parents cling more firmly to tradition and point to the accomplishments they have earned to maintain their position. Others smile wanly and suggest to the youths they go off and make something of themselves. This parallelism works so far as the bulk of "established findings" (itself a debated notion) in SLA are in fact resultant of cognitively oriented studies. It is after all the thirty-year history of rigorous experimental research which has established SLA as a respected discipline, and all in the SLA community are indebted to this history as it formed a field which we can now struggle over. Social practice, sociocultural, and discourse approaches to SLA do pose interesting and real challenges to status quo SLA research, but still require significant human talents and energies to construct the myriad connections and new discoveries that these approaches have the potential to bring to the understanding of SLA. It is my hope that in truly holistic fashion, these social-interactional approaches will merge with current research in neurobiology, forming what F&W end their article asking for—a syncretic and empirically based "bio-social" understanding of SLA.

References


12 Chairs Interactive: A Multimedia Russian Language Course, ver. 1.1 by Slava Paperno and Viktoria Tsimberov

Overview
Foreign language instructors who have attempted to show video in their introductory and intermediate level courses often express ambivalent attitudes toward the use of the foreign language video. On the one hand, they recognize the wealth of cultural information, the use of the language in its natural setting, and the breakdown of cultural stereotyping. On the other hand, they recognize that the video's strengths are often its weaknesses. Students are easily overwhelmed by an over-abundance of cultural and linguistic information, forcing instructors to commit many hours to the preparation of ancillary materials to aid the student in understanding the vocabulary, grammar, and the cultural setting of the video.

The computer presents foreign language teachers with opportunities to repackage the foreign language video with a wide variety of supplementary materials and exercises immediately available to the student. Such supplementary materials can include linguistic reference materials, cultural notes, and various pre-viewing exercises, to prepare the student, as well as post-viewing exercises, to reinforce new material and test comprehension.

System Requirements:
Win 3.1, Win 95, Win NT, 100 M H z processor, 16 M B RAM, 4x CD-ROM, 16-bit color, sound card, 6 M B disk space

Description
The video is divided into twenty-one episodes, and each episode is further divided into three to eight scenes. One may either view the entire episode or choose individual scenes. Navigation between scenes is easy; navigation between episodes, however, requires exiting and reloading the program.

The screen in Twelve Chairs Interactive is divided vertically into two parts. In the upper left corner the video is shown, with the play/pause, stop, replay, rewind, and fast forward buttons below. The quality of the video on a Pentium 266 M H z with 32 M B RAM was excellent, but some dropping of frames was experienced on a 486 100 M H z with 16 M B. Sound quality was generally good.

The right side of the screen comprises three tabbed sections, Summary, Transcript, and Descriptions, any one of which is always visible (see screenshot). The Summary provides a short description of the scene. Here students may button-click on individual words to obtain an English gloss. In many cases, by clicking on a word one not only sees the English gloss, but also the action or object demonstrated in the video. For example, clicking on svoj chelovek renders the gloss “an insider, one of us” and also shows one character self-assuredly entering the office of another and making himself feel right at home.

The Transcript tab provides a complete transcript of the dialog for the scene, including the narrator's parts. By clicking on any character, the video for that section is played.

A description of the setting and characters in the scene is given in the Description section. Again, one may click on individual words for an English gloss and/or stills or clips from the video.

Evaluation
In summary, this software comprises a video accompanied by an electronic glossed transcript and other background information. I am very impressed by the program within the scope adopted by the authors. They have gathered an enormous amount of material and clearly put much work into a product that is attractive, functional, and easy to use. There is no doubt in my mind that Twelve Chairs Interactive would be of great benefit to the students using it, and I recommend it to both teachers and students of intermediate level Russian language courses.

Within its present scope, I have few criticisms: the program would be slightly more user-friendly if the episodes were not labeled numerically, but rather by title, e.g., “Bender Meets Ippolit,” “Bender at Ellochka’s.” Also, as noted earlier, navigation between episodes should be possible within the program.

In my ideal world, however, the project would have taken on a much larger scope. One would like to see exercises...
testing comprehension or reinforcing new vocabulary. For example, after viewing an episode, students might see a series of scrambled statements summarizing the events of the episode and be given the task of putting the statements into chronological order. Or, the user might be given segments of dialog and be asked to assign them to one of several characters. There are numerous other exercises one could create to work with the raw material of the video. Yet, one can hardly fault the software or its authors for what wasn’t done, given the excellent quality and value of Twelve Chairs Interactive.

### Policies and Procedures for the PC Lab

**Who is Eligible to use the PC Lab?**
All currently registered students, as well as faculty and staff are eligible to use 135 D winelle during general access hours. The PC Lab schedule is posted outside the room, on the bulletin board outside the Language Media Center (B-50 D winelle), and at the Berkeley Language Center Web site (http://www.itp.berkeley.edu/blc/). You must show a valid UC Berkeley ID in order to use the facility. Printing is available for a fee for general access patrons; there is no printing charge for scheduled language classes.

**The PC Lab is for use primarily by language classes.** When it is not in use by a class, it is available on a general access basis. **Preference is given to students studying foreign languages.** Any available computers will be assigned to other eligible patrons in the order in which they arrived. If the lab is full, general access patrons will be asked to give up their positions to foreign language students.

**Software available:**
In addition to foreign language tutorials and reference materials, the lab provides:

- Microsoft Word 97
- Internet Explorer
- Eudora
- Telnet

You may install and run foreign language software checked out from B-50 D winelle. You may not run your own software from a floppy disk.

**Reserving the PC Lab for Use by a Language Class**
Instructors of foreign languages may reserve the PC Lab for their classes by contacting Victoria Williams, either by e-mail (victoria@socrates.berkeley.edu) or phone (642-0767, ext. 19) between Tuesday and Thursday for hours the following week. Reservations will be accepted until Thursday at 5:00 pm. Victoria will publish the schedule on Friday morning for the following week. The schedule will be posted outside the PC Lab, on the bulletin board outside B-50 D winelle, and at the Web site.

**Printing Information**
Students who wish to use the laser printer in 135 D winelle may do so by paying a small fee to cover operating expenses. For $5, you may purchase a minimum of 100 pages; additional increments of 100 pages/$5 are possible. Make your check payable to the UC Regents, fill out the application form, and leave it with the monitor in 135 D winelle. If you need to pay cash, contact the lab monitor or office staff for instructions. Your printing privileges will be activated within 24 hours. We cannot print on special paper or provide refunds of unused paper lots.

**Diskette and Hard Disk Information**
Bring in your own diskettes to save your work. Access to the hard disk is limited and hard disk storage is not permanent. You may not install your own software on the hard drive.

**Wait Lists**
Once all general access positions are filled, we will take people from the wait list sign-up for the next available computer. The lab monitor will consult the wait list, call out names, and seat you in the order in which you signed up. If you are not present when your name is called, you forfeit your turn and must sign up on the wait list again to be considered for a seat. Lab access priority is given to students studying foreign languages.

**Getting Help**
The PC facility is staffed by student lab attendants who are there to monitor the use of the facility only. You are responsible for knowing or learning how to use the computers and software. The lab monitors can assist you in setting up your printer usage account.

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**Education 256A**

**Research on Technology and Literacy: Theory and Practice in Computer-Assisted Language Learning**

Mondays, 4-7 pm, 34 D winelle

In this course we will study the pedagogy of computer-assisted language learning (CALL). We will address the impact of computers on the curriculum, how computers can be used to present language and culture and their limitations therein, the use of computers for testing student learning, and designing software for use in the classroom or in the computer lab. We will cover the principles of good screen design, navigation within a program, and models of feedback to the user. We will apply our theoretical foundation to the review of numerous commercial CALL packages.

In addition to a discussion of the more theoretical aspects of CALL, the course will feature hands-on training in multimedia authoring software and the creation of multimedia language software for Web, server, and CD-ROM distribution. A major component of the course will be the creation by each student of a piece of CALL software in a field of interest to the student. To this end students will learn how to digitize images, audio, and video, as well as acquire basic programming techniques in an authoring program.

This course is designed for graduate students with little computer experience beyond basic word processing. No previous computer programming experience is required. This course will assist graduate students meet the frequently cited need for “experience with instructional technology” in today's job market.

**Contact Mark Kaiser (mkaiser@socrates.berkeley.edu or 642-7221) for more information.**

This course will be offered again in spring 1999.
Language and Applied Linguistics
Programs at Surrounding Universities

During the fall of 1997, I began the first of a series of outreach visits to surrounding universities on behalf of the Berkeley Language Center. The purpose of these visits is to exchange information about our language programs, establish contacts, and learn more about innovative approaches or new initiatives in language teaching. The first programs on my list were UC Davis (UCD) and the Monterey Institute for International Studies (MIIS). This spring, I am planning to observe the Language Center at Stanford University and the applied linguistics program at San Francisco State University. Below are some of my notes from my trips to UCD and MIIS, comparing their language courses and programs, emphasis on teacher preparation, second language acquisition or applied linguistics, and use of technology in language instruction.

Language programs
UC Davis and MIIS have nearly identical language offerings, as they each teach Spanish, German, Russian, French, Italian, Japanese, Chinese, and ESL. In addition, UC Davis also has a Classics department, while Arabic is a regular course offering at MIIS. At UC Davis, several other languages which are not offered within the regular language programs are available for self-access language study (e.g., Portuguese, Arabic, Tagalog, and Hindi). At Monterey, the language courses are offered through an intensive summer program, which requires four to five hours of language study per day. Students frequently take these courses to acquire the language skills required in the professional degree programs at MIIS, such as the language teaching or the translation and interpretation programs.

Besides its skills classes, which focus on acquisition of basic language skills in writing, conversation, public speaking, etc., MIIS also offers a number of content classes, which combine content instruction with foreign language learning. Some examples are Business Concepts (in French, Spanish, German, and Japanese), Twentieth Century China (in Chinese), or Personalities in Russian Politics (in Russian). One recent course, entitled Post-Communist European Politics, is taught in English, French, Russian, and German. The course uses a break-out model in which students meet for part of the time in their separate language sections. They then present their projects in joint sessions with the entire group, while students in the Translation and Interpretation program provide simultaneous translation of the other languages employed in the class. Thus, language learning, content instruction, and interpretation are integrated in one course, which seeks to model real-life contexts, such as international meetings and negotiations, where multiple languages are used.

Programs and courses in second language acquisition and applied linguistics
UC Davis has just received approval for the establishment of a cross-disciplinary Second Language Acquisition Institute. It is comprised of researchers in African and American Studies, French, German, Linguistics, Spanish, Education, East Asian, Native American Studies, and Psychology. The Institute, under the direction of Professor Robert Blake, Chair of the Spanish and Classics Department of UC Davis, has as its mission to increase cross-cultural awareness, support research in foreign language acquisition and English as a Second Language, and promote innovations in language teaching and learning, including the use of technology in the classroom. Specific goals for the next three years include the establishment of a doctoral designated emphasis in second language acquisition/technologically-based instruction; various initiatives in second language acquisition research, such as colloquia, pre-and post-graduate fellowships; and a proposed national conference. Special attention will be given to research on bilingualism and multilingualism. The SLA Institute has developed a homepage, which can be accessed via http://philos.davis.edu/SLA/default.htm.

MIIS offers a number of specialized programs at the graduate level which combine language training with specific career objectives. It is comprised of four Graduate Schools: International Management, Translation and Interpretation, International Policy Studies, and Language and Educational Linguistics. The latter offers an M.A. in Teaching Foreign Language (MATFL) and an M.A. in Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages (MATESOL), which share core courses in research design, linguistics, pedagogical theory and practice, and second language acquisition. Students must also take courses in sociolinguistics, methodology, curriculum development, pedagogical grammar, language assessment, and various electives. As a follow-up to the M.A. program, a Certificate in Language Program Administration is available, in which students can acquire management and administrative skills to complement their professional preparation in language teaching.

Technology and language teaching
As noted above, technology plays a central role in the mission of the UC Davis Second Language Acquisition Institute. One technological innovation which is currently under development at UC Davis is the Remote Technical Assistance (RTA) project which emphasizes the use of RTA in language learning (specifically Japanese, Russian, and Spanish). RTA provides a mechanism for on-line interaction between students and their instructors, using the Internet as the communications medium. The system can be used to send enhanced messages, e.g., a request for assistance by a student, which can contain a snapshot of the computer screen or relevant window, and attach a file pertinent to the question. The message can then be returned by the instructor with annotations. A second feature is the capability to transmit sound messages, which can be replayed, and multilingual text dialogues. The system also contains a knowledge base derived from course materials, student questions, external URL addresses, and other relevant material, which is searchable with the use of browsers. Further information on the RTA project can be obtained from its...
increasing demand for technology in language teaching.

At U C D , I observed a Spanish language class, which was held in one of the computer facilities in the Language Learning Center. Efforts are being made to integrate Internet resources into the language curriculum through the use of online class materials and by incorporating useful Web links in the textbooks. In this particular class, students were working together in pairs on various projects, using the World Wide Web to obtain reference material in the target language. They used e-mail to send their written assignments to their instructor, who in turn sent back their corrected work via the Internet. The drawback of using a traditional computer lab for this purpose is its configuration, with a row of computers against the wall and a set of tables grouped in the middle. Such a classroom setup leaves few opportunities for group or whole-class interaction.

M I I S has recently developed a state-of-the-art multimedia facility under the direction of Leo van Lier, which was influenced by his research on the ecology of the language classroom. In this lab, the computers are recessed into the tables and the desks are designed to accommodate two students per workstation in order to facilitate pair work. The computer tables, in turn, are grouped together, so that the entire class can engage in discussions. The computers thus no longer form a barrier to interaction in the classroom, but are unobtrusively positioned to allow the students to work in groups and function at the same time as a classroom resource. Most of the regular classrooms at M I I S are multimedia integrated and are provided with an overhead projector which is capable of projecting books and objects, a V C R and monitor, and a computer. The School of Language and Educational Linguistics has just been given approval to offer a new certificate program in computer-assisted instruction, which is designed to prepare students for the increasing demand for technology in language instruction.

Conclusion
It became clear during my trips that despite obvious differences between the programs in terms of, for instance, their curricular emphases, departmental and administrative structure, or the size of the programs, a number of current trends in language teaching can be noted which are shared by the different programs. One of the primary findings of the B L C survey last fall was the overwhelming interest in the role of technology in language teaching. This issue clearly takes priority at other universities as well. At U C D avis, computer-assisted instruction is being integrated into the language curriculum and efforts are made to use computers for distance-learning purposes. At M I I S, much attention is given to developing the “language lab of the future,” which is being reconfigured to facilitate interaction rather than hamper it. A second issue of current interest is that of content-based instruction, which has long been a central topic in the field of ESL, but is only recently being discussed in the context of foreign language teaching. At M I I S, various content courses have been developed which are taught in the target language, or, in some cases, in several target languages simultaneously. An added twist to the more traditional content-based models is the training in simultaneous translation that M I I S has added to the language and content components.

If you are interested in finding out more about these programs, I have put a number of handouts in the B L C Language Teaching Resource Library, 34 D winelle. Among these are brochures from M I I S about their programs, a list of their library holdings in second language acquisition and language pedagogy, the mission statement for the U C D avis Second Language Acquisition Institute, a description of the RTA technology, and several course syllabi.

Faculty and graduate students from the University were important contributors to the various sessions, giving talks on their areas of expertise, while many others attended the conference as participants. Steve Newton, from the Department of German presented activities for the German classroom. Jean Schultz and Rick Kern from the Department of French gave presentations on writing. Jean’s topic, “Journal Writing in the Language Classroom,” was very well received. Rick Kern gave a stimulating presentation on “Reading, Writing and Thinking in the Foreign Language Classroom,” keeping all the participants on their toes with the presentation and the activities that accompanied it.

Professor Christina Yee, president of FLANC, spoke to the attendees at the morning’s welcoming address, pointing out that the conference presented a full day of activities and that those who were attending included participants from out-of-state. The day’s events ended with wine, cheese, and hors
d’oeuvres on the terrace of the library overlooking San Francisco.

FLANC also presents workshops in the spring, which will be hosted by St. Mary's College in Moraga on Saturday, March 28, 1998. Workshops allow presenters to give a more detailed, hands-on experience for those interested in trying out these new activities in their classrooms. Each workshop lasts two hours and forty-five minutes. The following is a brief rundown on what is offered this spring.

Morning: 9:00-11:45
1. “Spanish Films in the Classroom,” Anjouli Janzon, UC Berkeley
2. “Using Paintings as Comprehensible Input,” Gloria Payette, John Swett High School
3. “Teaching Writing Using Daedalus,” Ilona Vandergriff, SF State University and Lynne Frame, University of San Francisco
5. “Les Olympiques de Révision,” Marcia Henisz, Arroyo High School

Afternoon: 1:00-3:45
7. “Mexican Folk Dances,” Francisco Zermeño, Chabot College
8. “¿Conversemos? Estrategias para las clases de conversación,” Rocío Ferreira, U C Berkeley
9. “Using the Internet in the Chinese Classroom,” Tianwei Xie, U C Davis and Ying Jin
10. “Distance Learning Using JAVA for Teaching Japanese,” M i d o r i M c K e o n and Yukiko Alam, SF State University
11. “All About Web Pages,” Alex Dimitriou, Consultant

For further information about the workshops, e-mail Agnes Dimitriou at agned@socrates.berkeley.edu

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BLC Lecturer Survey

by Linda von H o e n e, for the survey committee (Linda von H o e n e, M ark Kaiser, Karen M ø ller-Irving, and Næleke Van Deussen-Scholl)

We would like to thank all the lecturers who participated in the Town Meeting held on October 24, 1997, to discuss the results of the BLC survey. Those who were unable to attend should have received the survey report either as an e-mail attachment or in your departmental mailbox. Please contact Ina Evans at the BLC office, B-40 D winelle, if you did not receive a report and would like one.

For those of you who may not have had the opportunity to read the survey, we would like to present here in abbreviated form some of the highlights of the survey along with recommendations made by the survey committee based on the data gathered. We would also like to share with you information about programs and projects that are currently being implemented in response to the needs expressed in the survey.

The survey was completed by 36 (out of a pool of 55) lecturers representing 30 different languages. Of interest in terms of the makeup of the group is that 81% of those responding are native speakers of the languages they teach. Regarding pedagogy, it comes perhaps as no surprise that lecturers defined their teaching as primarily communicatively oriented. What was more difficult to discern, however, was how the term “communicative” is actually understood by teachers, i.e., whether it has become a catch-all term for an eclectic approach to teaching or one that follows more strictly communicative methodologies.

When asked what aspects of teaching lecturers feel they do well, most indicated satisfaction with the way they teach culture and grammar, motivate students, and do group work. Those areas that lecturers indicated that they most need to improve include using computers in teaching and helping students write better. Of note is that though lecturers listed group work as something they already do well, this topic was also listed as an area they would like to improve. This points, perhaps, to the centrality of group work in current foreign language teaching methodologies and the recognition on the part of instructors of the need for ongoing refinement of basic instructional skills.

Questions surrounding computers and teaching revealed several major needs: greater availability of computers on both Macintosh and PC platforms, a centralized “one-stop shopping” location where lecturers could get assistance in creating software for use in the classroom, and increased availability of VCR-equipped classrooms. We are pleased to note that several of the needs expressed in the survey regarding technology are in the process of being addressed. At the beginning of February a new 26-postion PC lab will be available to lecturers and an increased number of VCR-equipped general assignment classrooms will also be available for use by foreign language instructors by the fall of 1998. Other recommendations, such as the development of a multimedia classroom, require funding that exceeds the current BLC budget and will therefore need to be seen as long-term goals. In terms of the availability of services and equipment, the survey committee also suggested that LMC services and programs be advertised more rigorously to lecturers and GSIs, especially given that some of the programs called for by lecturers are already available (e.g., technical support for software development, demos of software for particular languages). In response to the call not only for technical but also financial support, lecturers are encouraged to apply for a BLC fellowship. Lecturers who expressed the need to learn basic skills such as developing Web sites, digitizing, working with templates and developing software should contact M ark Kaiser in the LMC as well as take part in workshops offered regularly at other sites on campus such as the Teaching Library and IS&T.

The aspects of the survey that addressed professional activities were also illuminating. Though research is not a required part of the work that lecturers...
do, 14 lecturers reported that they are engaged in research on the teaching of foreign languages, with projects ranging from articles and conference presentations, to textbook chapters, videos, and technology-related teaching materials. What stood out was that 15 lecturers who are not currently engaged in research stated that they would be interested in doing so in the future. Though limited in the number of projects they can support each year, the BLC fellowships have a significant role to play in providing the requisite release time and intellectual forum for lecturers to define and pursue these research interests. In spite of the expressed interest in research, the survey also revealed that a majority of the lecturers who responded did not read professional journals. Because reading journals can be seen as the first step in undertaking research, the BLC would like to encourage lecturers to use the wide range of resources available in the BLC Language Teaching Resource Library, 34 Dwinelle. On the basis of the research interests expressed by lecturers, the survey committee recommended that the BLC explore the possibility of research groups around particular topics. One such research group on the topic of heritage language students is now underway under the facilitation of Nelleke Van Densen.

More than half of the respondents to the survey were involved with GSIs preparation for teaching, representing in total, 12 language programs. Though foreign language departments at Berkeley and elsewhere have a long and reputable tradition of GSI preparation for teaching, respondents themselves indicated areas that are in need of improvement. For example, a full one-third of the language programs do not have a forum such as a 300-level seminar to regularly discuss the theory and practice of second language acquisition, though one of the departments without such a course is preparing one for the coming year. Lecturers also addressed the need to further develop 300-level courses to include both the theory and practice of second language acquisition and to expand the number of 300-level courses beyond the typical one or two semesters. This would enable GSIs to have a substantive course in each of the four semesters of beginning and intermediate language courses that they generally teach. The current provision of one or two semesters of formal preparation does not allow enough time to prepare GSIs for what in most cases will be the bulk of their work load as new assistant professors. The survey committee therefore strongly recommended that the model used in the French Department of four semesters of 300-level courses with rigorous syllabi and substantive work on practical and theoretical issues be adopted by all foreign language departments. The committee noted that the work involved in a rigorous 300-level pedagogy seminar is equivalent to that of other academic seminars and should therefore carry with it the same course credit, standards, and requirements of other graduate seminars. Because lecturers currently receive only one-half of a course credit for teaching this course, the committee recommended that the BLC advocate for a review of these policies.

Almost all the respondents indicated that classroom observation of GSIs is an established component of the departmental language programs, though, in some cases pre- and post-observation procedures could stand to be refined. Other areas that respondents indicated as needing improvement and expansion are the pre-semester orientations offered by departments. On suggestion made by the survey committee was to develop a week-long pre-semester orientation program for new GSIs similar to the Ohio State model, where GSIs from all language groups meet in the morning in a plenary session and in the afternoon with their departmental coordinators to do hands-on practical preparation for teaching.

Lecturers who completed the survey indicated interest in addressing professional development needs in collaboration with their peers. A resounding majority stated that they would like to meet with colleagues to discuss such topics as developing communicative activities, assessing teaching, using computers, motivating students, and developing teaching portfolios. As a result of these interests, the survey committee recommended that the BLC create a second track of workshops to address these topics. To avoid “fast food” coverage, the committee recommended that one topic be chosen per semester and that both the theory and practice of that particular topic be covered over several sessions. The first of these workshop series will be held this semester on the topic of the teaching portfolio. (See announcement below).

In the process of creating and interpreting the survey, our goal has been to ascertain how the BLC can help lecturers in their work. We hope to have accurately interpreted the information that was given to us. With the realization that instructional and intellectual needs are always in process, we invite you to keep us apprised of how the BLC can assist you as your needs evolve.

**Workshop Series for Lecturers Spring 1998**

**Topic: The Teaching Portfolio**

**Facilitator: Linda von Hoene**

The goal of this workshop is to introduce participants to the teaching portfolio and to work step by step over the course of the semester to construct a teaching portfolio and to become more reflective practitioners. Participants will be expected to attend all four workshops, as each session builds on the previous one. The series is intended for lecturers who would like to improve their teaching, assist GSIs in developing portfolios, or begin to work on documenting teaching for the review process.

Tentative schedule: Thursdays (February 19, March 19, April 16, May 14), 3-5 pm, 34 Dwinelle
Berkeley Language Center
Instructional Research Fellowships
1998-1999

The Berkeley Language Center is pleased to announce the availability (pending authorization of funding) of two one-semester lecturer fellowships and up to six one-semester GSRships IV for the academic year 1998-1999. These fellowships will enable language teachers to work on special projects to improve the quality of language instruction at UC Berkeley. Research projects might include not only design and development of language learning software and other instructional materials, development of handbooks on specific aspects of language instruction, curricular innovations, cross-language teacher development, but also empirical classroom research, or research into theoretical aspects of language learning and teaching, possibly with a view to publication. The projects will be undertaken in collaboration with the BLC Director, Claire Kramsch, and the BLC Associate Director and Director of the Language Media Center, Mark Kaiser.

Eligible are lecturers and graduate students teaching any foreign language at UC Berkeley. These fellowships correspond to one course release time in either the fall or spring semesters. If you are interested in applying, make sure to contact Claire Kramsch (ckramsch@socrates) or Mark Kaiser (mkaiser@socrates) to discuss your research project ahead of time.

Please submit a two-page description of your project, a current curriculum vitae, and a letter of recommendation by the Chair of your department, explaining how your project benefits the teaching and the research mission of your department to:

Professor Claire Kramsch
BLC Fellowship Program
Berkeley Language Center
B-40 Dwinelle Hall, #2640

Application Deadline: March 16, 1998
Two language acquisition theories: Krashen's i+1 and Vygotsky's ZPD

Incommensurable discourses; incommensurable theories

This paper considers the claims that have been made in the second language acquisition literature that Krashen's concept of i+1 and Vygotsky's notion of the ZPD (zone of proximal development) are constructs that in some way address the same phenomena. It argues that these claims are misguided because the constructs and more importantly, the theories from which they emerge, represent incompatible views of learners and the learning process. The difference between these two theories have serious implications for the way we view the teaching and learning of foreign languages.

Workshop

Learning and Using Other Languages: SLA or Language Crossing?

This paper presents some ethnographic description of the other-language learning and use of adolescents in multi-ethnic peer groups, many of whose parents or grandparents migrated to Britain from India and Pakistan. It begins by intimating some of the complex issues surrounding second-language-learner English in the neighborhood where my research was located, and outlines the ways in which this variety was ritualized in spontaneous peer group interaction. After stressing the importance of historical and not just biographical time to an understanding of language learning processes, the paper moves to a brief account of White and Black adolescents picking up Panjabi, and from there it moves to a critical discussion of orthodox views in SLA (e.g., the distinction between “natural acquisition” vs. “classroom instruction”). The paper conclude with some reflections on conceptual and methodological resources that might usefully help to expand our understanding of other-language processes.

Workshop

The Spring 1998 BLC Instructional Development Fellows Presentations

The purpose of this colloquium is to initiate a discussion on some of the issues raised by the use of computer technology for the development of literacy, be it in a first or in a second language. What kinds of formal and contextual constraints does the medium impose on the creation of texts? What kind of textual imagination is fostered by electronic technology? How does the medium redefine cultural and historic authenticity, authorship, textual cohesion and coherence, genre, voice? How does the use of digital technology affect traditional forms of teaching and traditional academic structures?

Colloquium

Technology, Language and Literacy


Respondents: Rick Kern, Assistant Professor, Department of French, UCB
Donald M. Croade, Professor, Department of English, UCB
Richard Sterling, Executive Director, National Writing Project, UCB

The American Association for Applied Linguistics, AAAL '98, Seattle, Washington
Web: http://www.oise.utoronto.ca/AAAL98

TESOL '98: Connecting our Global Community, Seattle, Washington
Web: http://www.tesol.edu/index.html

Foreign Language Association of Northern California, FLANC Spring Workshops, S t. Mary's College, Moraga
E-mail: agnesd@socrates.berkeley.edu

July 6-10
CALICO '98: New Directions—New Paradigms, San Diego State University, San Diego, California
Web: http://calico.org/CALICO98.html

November 20-22
The American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, ACTFL '98:
"Winds of Change," Chicago, Illinois
Web: http://www.actfl.org
The mission of the Berkeley Language Center (BLC) is to improve and strengthen foreign language instruction on the Berkeley campus by keeping teachers informed of new developments in the fields of language pedagogy, second language acquisition, and applied linguistics. The BLC promotes and facilitates the use of new language learning technologies in the classroom.

The BLC is particularly interested in helping lecturers develop new materials, attend conferences and in-service training workshops, and publish their ideas and materials. It has modest funds to help lecturers attend professional meetings and develop new teaching projects.

The Language Media Center (LMC) is an integral and essential component of the Berkeley Language Center. The LMC supports the language and literature instruction programs of the Berkeley campus by providing audio/video/computerized lesson materials; listening, viewing, recording, duplicating and archiving facilities; and related technical and administrative services. It houses a multimedia development lab to assist faculty in the development of instructional software.

1997-98
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