

LANGUAGE TEACHING AT BERKELEY

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On October 21-22, 2005, UC Berkeley will be hosting a national colloquium organized by the UC Consortium for Language Learning and Teaching (UCCLLT) to discuss the goals of language education in the U.S. Even though the event is advertised as “a national colloquium on U.S. language educational policy,” it would be more accurate to see it as a discussion of the goals of language education in this country. Despite the renewed interest in foreign languages for national security purposes, very little discussion has taken place as to what U.S. high school and college students enrolled at educational institutions should learn other languages for, which languages they should learn, or when and how. What are the educational goals of language instruction beyond the needs of national security?

There is a sense of urgency in this question, as things are moving quite rapidly in Washington, D.C., and policy decisions are being taken that absolutely require our input. As language educators, we have a lot to say about what language education should be about. I therefore urge you to attend as much of this colloquium as you can and make your voice heard.

Historical Background

In the last two years, the federal government’s need for linguists, interpreters, translators, and foreign language teachers has prompted a flurry of initiatives on the part of the Department of Defense. In January 2005, then Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz issued a Defense Language Transformation Roadmap that outlines a systematic plan for the Department of Defense to “ensure that [its] foreign language capability and accompanying regional area expertise are developed and maintained to be employed as strategic assets in the Global War on Terrorism and in future military operations.”

The government aims at improving not only the language capabilities of the federal workforce and the military, but foreign language education in schools and universities as well. In March 2003, a Center for the Advanced Study of Language (CASL) was founded at the University of Maryland under the direction of Richard Brecht, Professor of Russian and former Director of the National Foreign Language Center in Washington, D.C. CASL is funded directly by the Department of Defense, and is charged with helping to improve U.S. intelligence capabilities, defend national security, and serve the goals of U.S. foreign policy abroad (Brecht 2003, Brecht & Rivers 2000). However, while its primary mission is to improve the language readiness of the federal workforce, it also serves as a catalyst for nationwide efforts to tailor foreign language education in schools to the needs of national foreign policy.

As a University Affiliated Research Center, CASL draws on the scholarly resources that universities can offer. It conducts applied linguistic research in various fields related to the improved performance of language tasks relevant to the work of language professionals: cognitive science, psychology, sociolinguistics, second

NATIONAL COLLOQUIUM ON U.S. LANGUAGE EDUCATIONAL POLICY

by Claire Kramersch, BLC Director

language acquisition, and linguistics. Its main interests include 1) improving knowledge of less commonly taught languages, 2) enhancing acquisition and maintenance of foreign language capability by government professionals, especially at the advanced levels, 3) advancing the U.S. capacity to use foreign language skills in a wide variety of professions and situations, and 4) improving the quality of human language technology. As a research unit, the Center does not collaborate with existing professional organizations (e.g., Center for Applied Linguistics, American Association for Applied Linguistics, Modern Language Association, or the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages) but seeks to establish partnerships with individual researchers and research programs from academia.

CASL’s initiatives have already had an impact on the profession. One of the foci of the research that is done

there is on developing the advanced levels of proficiency necessary to accomplish specific tasks in everyday life (e.g., understanding domain-specific texts, distinguishing sophisticated shades of meaning, conducting complex negotiations). This has already led language educators to turn their attention to the advanced levels of instruction at their institutions (e.g., Byrnes & Maxim 2004) and to refocus their research on the advanced levels of language acquisition (e.g., the Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research at the Pennsylvania State University). Another consequence is the increased attention paid to the teaching of heritage languages and how heritage language learners can be brought as quickly as possible to advanced levels of proficiency and literacy.

In June 2004, CASL was instrumental in organizing a National Language Conference that brought together over 400 leaders and practitioners from federal, state, and local government agencies; academic institutions; business and industry; foreign language interest groups; and applied linguists from many nations (Feal 2004, National Language Conference 2004). Plans were drafted there for a National Foreign Language Coordination Council that would implement a national foreign language strategy to promote foreign language study. Its mission would be to improve the United States' national security (collection and analysis of intelligence, international diplomacy, military operations), and economic competitiveness (retaining U.S. leadership in a globalized marketplace, securing access to local markets, and succeeding against increasingly sophisticated competitors). It would be the responsibility of such a Council to coordinate the efforts of language researchers and practitioners at academic institutions with the real needs of government and business.

Indeed, in May 2005, a group of senators (including Senators Akaka, Cochran, and Dodd) proposed a bill to amend Title VI of the Higher Education Act of 1965 to include the establishment of just such a Council. This Council would consist of a National Language Director as well as the majority of the cabinet (e.g., Secretaries of Education, Defense,

State, Labor, Commerce). The National Language Director, to be appointed by the President, would

- develop and oversee the implementation of a national foreign language strategy across all sectors;
- establish formal relationships among the major stakeholders in meeting the needs of the nation for improved capabilities in foreign languages and cultural understanding, including federal, state, and local government agencies, academia, industry, labor, and heritage communities; and
- coordinate and lead a public information campaign to raise awareness of public and private sector careers requiring foreign language skills and cultural understanding, with the objective of increasing interest in and support for the study of foreign languages among national leaders, the business community, local officials, parents, and individuals. (1)

Such a bill has yet to be approved, but it falls in line with legislation H.R. 3077, proposed in 2003, to create an International Education Advisory Board to oversee the various area studies departments in universities funded by Title VI. This bill passed the House of Representatives and has yet to be ratified by the Senate. (2) Such a Board, that would be comprised of members of the Departments of Homeland Security and Defense, and the National Security Agency, would oversee the course materials assigned, curricula taught, faculty hired, and textbooks used in teaching the language and culture of the various areas of the world, to make sure that international education is consonant with U.S. foreign policy.

In light of all these developments, the Modern Language Association (MLA) convened an Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages in September 2004. This committee, chaired by Mary Louise Pratt, was charged with examining the current language crisis that has occurred because of 9/11 and with looking at the efforts of the U.S. government (including some 40 agencies that are involved in teaching languages other than English) to meet the needs of national security. The ad hoc committee is to consider the effects of this crisis on the teaching of foreign languages in colleges and uni-

versities. It should recommend ways in which the MLA can promote dialogue with representatives from government agencies so as to present views on language acquisition that offer a rationale for language study that goes beyond the needs of national security.

What the Colloquium hopes to achieve

The goal of this Colloquium is to add an educational dimension to the public debate surrounding foreign language policy. We have invited policymakers, scholars, researchers, and teachers representing a variety of sectors: government (Richard Brecht, Jayne Abrate), international studies (Daniel Davidson), the American Council for the Teaching of Foreign Languages (June Phillips, Sally Magnan, Janis Jensen, Mahmoud Al-Batal), the Modern Language Association (Mary Louise Pratt, Roger Allen), the American Association for Applied Linguistics (Kees de Bot, Richard Donato, Timothy McNamara, Terrence Wiley) and the Center for Applied Linguistics (Donna Christian). They will speak for K-12, colleges and universities, and for some of various languages taught in the nation.

Here is the letter we sent to each of the presenters to guide their thoughts.

...We would like to provide you with a framework for preparing your presentation. Here are some of the ideas that guided our thinking as we organized this colloquium.

How should U.S. language educators respond to the challenges of globalization, i.e., the uncertainties of a global job market, the increasingly multilingual and multicultural nature of our student population, and the threats of global terrorism? How can a dialogue between U.S. teachers of languages other than English, at various levels of the educational system and from various quarters of the academy and the government, inform a national educational policy?

Our focus is deliberately on language education, rather than language training or language for special purposes. By bringing together representatives of the key professional organizations and the government, as well as teachers of foreign, second, and heritage languages, around educational rather than just foreign language policy issues, we hope

to address some of the basic questions relevant to our times.

Why should U.S. students learn foreign languages, if the rest of the world speaks English?

What should U.S. foreign language educators prepare their students for: To have a well-rounded general education? To go and work abroad? To communicate with native speakers within and outside the U.S.? To become literate in another language and to read a foreign literature?

What should U.S. heritage language teachers prepare their students for: To strengthen their family bonds? To go back to the country of their ancestors to visit, work, or study? To strengthen their sense of ethnic and cultural identity?

What linguistic, cognitive, affective, social, cultural, aesthetic, and moral objectives should language education pursue in this country? How can we develop the multi-perspective thinking, the intercultural stance, and the critical mindset envisaged by the National Standards?

Is the concept of “communicative competence” still relevant in a culturally decentralized, global world, where multilingual speakers don’t necessarily belong to any one identifiable speech community?

Is there a role for literary and cultural studies to play in foreign language education in a global world? What does anthropology or anthropological linguistics have to say to teachers of heritage languages?

We realize these are big questions and we understand that your research and publications do not necessarily address U.S. educational policy *per se*. Nevertheless, we are asking all participants at this colloquium to think outside the box and apply their scholarly and pedagogical expertise to grapple together with these important issues. As a researcher and practitioner in the foreign language field, you will bring to the Colloquium an important perspective on the pivotal issues confronting policymakers on campuses as well as in government.

You might want to think of responses to these questions yourself and share

your ideas with other participants at this two-day colloquium. We will limit each speaker to 20 minutes with ten minutes of focused Q&A. As we plan to have only three or four speakers for each half day, there should be plenty of time for general discussion. Selected papers from this colloquium will be submitted to the *Modern Language Journal* as a Special Issue on Foreign Language Education, to be guest-edited by Robert Blake and Claire Kramsch.

The early registration fee for the colloquium is \$25.00 for students and \$100.00 for faculty. International and Area Studies at Berkeley has generously offered to refund the registration of all UC Berkeley graduate students, as well as senate and non-senate faculty, who wish to attend this important colloquium and who have registered by October 1.

Notes

(1) For a full flavor of the debate, consult Campus Watch Documents <http://www.campus-watch.org/docs/cat/48>

(2) For details on the proposed National Foreign Language Coordination Act of 2005, see <http://www.theorator.com/bills109/s1089.html>

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NOTES FROM THE ASSOCIATE DIRECTOR

by *Mark Kaiser*

Welcome back to campus and the 2005-06 academic year! This summer has seen a number of exciting changes at the BLC:

- The BLC staff, and in particular John Wuorenmaa, have refurbished two of the BLC's rooms.
- B-4, which has served for many years as both film projection room and backup listening laboratory, has been transformed into a second high-tech classroom similar to 33 Dwinelle. Wheeled tables and chairs (arriving mid-September) facilitate rapidly transforming the room layout from lecture to seminar to small group. Room B-4 features one workstation capable of projecting DVD, VHS, and 16mm film to one of two different screens, and later in the year, it will also offer laptops and wireless networking. The room is fairly large, easily accommodating classes of 35 students at tables or up to 60 students in lecture format. Please contact Victoria Williams (642-0767 ext. 19, victoria@berkeley.edu) to

reserve a class in B-4 or any other BLC classroom.

- Our second new facility is a small drop-in multimedia computer lab in B-22. Two workstations in this lab have sound- and video-editing software, scanners, graphics software, the Microsoft Office suite, and various web development software including Macromedia Dreamweaver and Flash. These will provide students the multimedia production capabilities needed for their classwork and more. Room B-22 will be open during regular BLC hours (8:30-5:00, M-F) and is expected to open late September.
- As of Summer Session 2005, the BLC no longer circulates tapes for at-home use, and in-house circulation is limited to only those items we are unable to provide online at our Online Lessons website (http://blc.berkeley.edu/Online_lessons.html). Our website continues to stream everything for which we have been able to obtain

Internet distribution rights, including the lab audio accompanying most elementary language textbooks. We will no longer sell cassette copies of anything we have permission to stream after we deplete our current inventory, and future inventory will be CD-only.

- We have dropped support for analog tape for two reasons: we have limited resources to support the increasingly antiquated medium, and few if any students care to use it. Eight years ago we checked out 65,000 cassettes, but last year's checkouts barely squeaked past 3,000—while visits to our website climbed past 53,000.

We will continue updating our facilities to provide both language learners and teachers with outstanding service. Please help by letting us know what else the BLC can do to meet all your pedagogical and technological needs.

BLC OUTREACH

by *Sonia S'hiri, BLC Academic Coordinator,
Lecturer, Department of Near Eastern Studies*

The spring semester was my last as Academic Coordinator for the BLC; my colleague Lisa Little from Russian will be taking up the position for the next three-year cycle.

Last semester, I organized the usual two meetings for language lecturers and two meetings for language program coordinators. We discussed issues related to heritage language learners and exchanged strategies for handling mixed and separate track classroom situations. We also exchanged ideas on how to deal with the difficult working situations that program coordinators might face in a job that often requires close coordination with both senior and junior colleagues, graduate student instructors, students, and staff.

The best-attended meeting was the final one, which asked whether politics belonged in the language classroom or if it were a subject best left at the door. It became clear that opinions on the subject differed widely. Some felt it their duty to teach critical thinking and to fill the information gap they perceive their students to exhibit regarding social, political, and historical issues of the language in question. Others felt uncomfortable raising such issues in class, for fear of offending students, being perceived to abuse their authority, or getting into "sticky" subjects. Still others grappled with the need to engage students intellectually in discussions reaching beyond grammar and lexicon, against

the rising threat of surveillance that could cost instructors in some higher education institutions their jobs. The discussion was so gripping and the topic so complex that we decided to bring it to the campus as a whole. A BLC panel discussion scheduled for November 18 will present the experiences of a variety of language instructors.

LECTURER REPORT

Report on the NFLRC Summer Workshop

by *Françoise Sorgen-Goldschmidt*,
Lecturer, Department of French

The National Foreign Language Center of the University of Hawai'i at Manoa (<http://www.nflrc.hawaii.edu>)—whose Director, Richard Schmidt, was a BLC guest in spring 2005—was one of the first three centers to receive a grant from the U.S. Department of Education for improving “the nation’s capacity to teach and learn foreign languages effectively.” Among its projects and activities, it publishes online journals such as *Language Learning & Technology* (LLT) and offers summer workshops. Its most recent programs are documented at http://www.nflrc.hawaii.edu/prodev_home.cfm

It was my privilege to attend the summer 2005 two-week workshop on “Designing Effective Foreign Language Placement Systems,” and I thank the NFLRC and the Berkeley Language Center for their support.

Workshop participants were a mix of language center directors and language instructors, with Tagalog and Japanese best represented among the mix of ten languages.

Morning lecture/discussion sessions led by Thom Hudson (Associate Professor of Second Language Studies at UH Manoa) and Martyn Clark (Ph.D. candidate in Second Language Acquisition in the same department) presented ten topics in as many days:

- What are placement, articulation, and curriculum?
- Language proficiency, development, and placement
- Validity, reliability, and practicality
- Placement as a system
- Common placement issues: threats to validity
- Alternatives in assessment
- Cut-scores and guidelines
- Norm-referenced and criterion-referenced tests (NRT vs. CRT tests)

- Establishing and maintaining test quality
- Using commercial tests

Afternoon discussions and hands-on work sessions using programs such as Excel or TAP (Test Analysis Program) required each participant to write a case study for incorporation into the placement testing manual to be published by our workshop facilitators.

My interest in the workshop was to produce tests that are effectively aligned with learning outcomes and curriculum design, rather than placement tests *per se*. This workshop exceeded my expectations, although I would have enjoyed having more discussion on the advantages, and disadvantages, of technology for different types of assessment tests. One lesson we all learned in this rich workshop is that, as Thom often stated, “it takes a village to make a test.”

I strongly recommend NFLRC workshops to the members of the language teaching community and particularly to instructors of less-commonly-taught languages.

BLC Language Teaching Resources Library 34 Dwinelle Hall

The Language Teaching Resources collection is comprised of books and some journals on language teaching methodology and second language acquisition (SLA). It also includes video recordings of the BLC Lecture Series—talks by experts in the field of applied linguistics theory and practice.

You may explore this small, but focused, collection of print materials by clicking on the Collections button at the BLC website, <http://blc.berkeley.edu>. Under Collections/Archives, click on Language Teaching Resources to access our searchable online catalog.

You are also welcome to browse the collection: simply find Victoria K. Williams, B-33C Dwinelle, between the hours of 8–12 pm and 1–5 pm, Monday through Friday, for access to 34 Dwinelle and for reference help.

Checking materials out is also straightforward: we add you to our circulation database and then check out to you up to four books for one month.

If you have any questions, special requests, or suggestions of titles to enhance this collection, please contact Victoria K. Williams by email at victoria@berkeley.edu, or by phone at 642-0767 ext 19.

BLC FELLOWS' REPORTS

A Portrait of a Heritage Community: Implications for Language Teaching

by *Natasha Azarian*,
Ph.D. Candidate, Graduate School of
Education

Armenian is an Indo-European language with a unique thirty-eight-letter alphabet dating back to the fifth century. Two standard dialects of Armenian reflect different linguistic trajectories. Eastern Armenian is the dialect of Armenia and the diaspora community of Iran, but Western Armenian, being a minority language spoken widely by the Armenian population that had occupied Eastern Anatolia for centuries, does not have an established country. Prior to 1915, Western Armenian had enjoyed a presence within the Ottoman Empire, because in principle the Ottoman system tolerated the religious, cultural, and educational autonomy of its minority subjects (Donabedian 2000). After the Armenian genocide of 1915, thousands of people were displaced and Western Armenian was transformed into a diaspora dialect. The survivors of the Armenian genocide settled in countries in the Middle East, Europe, and the United States, where California has the largest Armenian population.

In an effort to answer questions regarding language and identity, my BLC project this semester focused on one of the oldest Armenian communities in the United States, the Armenians of Fresno, California. During the course of the semester, I interviewed three different Armenian families. Within each family I spoke to a member from each generation, the youngest 16 and the oldest 85. These individuals either spoke Western Armenian or were direct descendants of those that did.

For the first Armenian immigrants to Fresno, it was the landscape that spoke to them. As one third-generation grandson of Armenian genocide survivors explained to me, "A lot of the Armenians

that came to this area came because of agriculture and farming... We all grew up on family farms. That whole lifestyle made families join together." There was a sense of cohesion among the Armenian immigrants in Fresno in the early twentieth century as there were 10,000 Armenian immigrants in 1919 and 18,000 a decade later; this sense of cohesion continues today. Today continues a community with all of the characteristics of Giles and Johnson's (1987) ethnolinguistic vitality theory, including demographic strength, economic status, and institutional support. While a sense of ethnicity has been preserved and passed down through generations, as individuals frequently and openly identify themselves as Armenian, the language has largely been lost except for the stray Armenian word in an otherwise English sentence. Thus the questions that fueled my research this semester were: what unites an ethnic group in the absence of the heritage language?, and more specifically, how can the teaching of heritage languages valorize and pay tribute to the experience of the multigenerational ethnicity in America?

Many researchers have documented immigrant communities in which the language was not transmitted past the third generation (Fishman 1985; Dorian 1989; Hinton 1999). What is of interest in such a community is the sense of ethnic pride and desire by some fourth-generation members to learn Armenian. In the introductory issue of the *Heritage Language Journal*, Lo Bianco (2003) outlines areas of inquiry for the field of heritage language teaching, and he includes *language ecological* patterns as a cluster to explore within heritage communities. These include intergenerational transfer of language, consideration for the historical experience of the language, and unique circumstances surrounding the language and its speakers. Thus oral histories, family biographies, participant observation, and interviews are relevant research methodology for tracing the intergenerational transmission of language.

This population does not fit the traditional heritage learner definition put forth by Guadalupe Valdés (2001), because these individuals were not raised in a home where Armenian was spoken, don't speak Armenian, and are not bilingual in English and Armenian. However, Valdés makes a calculated distinction between what the term "heritage language" means for foreign language educators as opposed to what it means for those concerned with endangered languages or immigrant languages like Armenian that are not regularly taught in school. She writes, "It is the historical and personal connection to the language that is salient and not the actual proficiency of individual speakers" (Valdés 2001: 38). The main distinction lies in the incentive and investment in the heritage language, and thus Valdés maintains that even a monolingual English speaking student of Armenian descent would be a heritage learner, because the inspiration fueling the study of the language would be different from that of the typical foreign language student. The nature of the student I am describing has been erroneously referred to in the literature as a *learner with a heritage motivation* or a *heritage seeker* (Van Deusen-Scholl 2003). These students are described as *perceiving* a cultural connection to a language and "seeking to reconnect with their family's heritage through language, even though the linguistic evidence of that connection has been lost for generations." This notion does not fit the population in question because Western Armenian has not been lost for generations within the community: Armenians settled in the area approximately ninety years ago. These students don't *perceive* a cultural connection to a language—there *is* one! So the question remains, how should this type of student, who may have little to no linguistic capabilities in the heritage language but who was raised in an Armenian or other community of practice, be treated?

Cultural Inheritance and Cultural Citizenship

I suggest that cultural inheritance and cultural citizenship are missing from the dialogue surrounding heritage languages and specifically less-commonly-taught languages such as Armenian. Lantolf (2000) refers to "cultural inheritance" which is reworked by a generation to fit a community's needs. Part of this cultural inheritance is language; he writes, "languages are continuously remolded by their users to serve their communicative and psychological needs" (p. 2). For the community in question, I observed use of certain Armenian words in otherwise English sentences. For example, on one occasion, a sixteen-year-old interviewee said, "I'm going to get some *choor*," rather than "I'm going to get some water." This is a practice that I have often observed among Armenians of all ages within the community. It is as if the community is making an implicit statement against complete loss of the heritage language.

If individuals with immigrant backgrounds decide to enroll in university level language courses, especially in less-commonly-taught languages, putting their passive knowledge and their "cultural citizenship" to linguistic use is advantageous.

Rosaldo (1997) writes about cultural practices within minority communities that play a role in creating ethnic and social identities and add to what he calls cultural citizenship. Studies in cultural citizenship have previously examined how cultural phenomena from familial to communal and linguistic to artistic cross the political realm and contribute to a process of identity formation. Implicit in both notions of cultural inheritance and cultural citizenship is the idea that the past is not an absent phenomenon but a salient aspect of the ordering of the present.

Throughout the interviews I found several poignant themes in which a sense of cultural inheritance and citizenship are evoked in this community. Music, recipes, and family relations tended to resonate with "Armenian-ness" for the younger generation. Language teachers of immigrant languages can look to the themes present in a community of practice (Lave & Wenger 1991) and expound upon them. In this way students have a familiar conduit to develop

future scenarios of possibility within the language. For example, one twenty-two-year-old commented, "I think there are good things to save as the generations go on. Pass down recipes; the old original recipes of good Armenian food." Language teachers can use the recipes as a springboard for vocabulary development, verb declinations, or grammar explanations. Another sixteen-year-old spoke of the Armenian dances she has learned—language teachers might consider using the lyrics of cultural songs as the basis for a lesson with both linguistic and socio-historical orientations. Western Armenian is not a dialect learned for travel or professional advancement; it represents a milieu infused with historicity; it is the language of a people forced from their homeland; it is a language representing a time and place—in fact a specific region. These notions influence the motivation of those wanting to learn it; it is therefore important that the time, place, goals, and motives of the learners are given the highest degree of attention.

Taking Lo Bianco's advice, I suggest that in-depth studies of language communities such as that examined by this study are useful for taking stock of the inter-relatedness of language and community and the ecology of the location's historical, cultural and linguistic aspects— aspects which should in turn be reflected in syllabus design for heritage languages. If we believe that heritage communities are valuable resources, as suggested by Mary Louise Pratt (2003), then looking to these communities as a source of information adds to the design and implementation of language pedagogy.

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How Do You Teach Translation?

by Anna Livia Brawn, Lecturer,
Department of French

The answer to this question has, since the era of the great pedagogic paradigm shift in the 1960s, been “Just Say No.” When the communicative approach took over from grammar-translation, the use of the first language was all but banned from the second language classroom. This antipathy toward translation is manifest at every level of the academy from beginning language class, where instructor competence is judged by the ability to avoid the L1, to graduate student program, where translation exams are disguised as “reading” exams, to tenure review committee, for whom translations are not acceptable as tenure books.

How, in this intellectual climate, does one teach translation, let alone set up a minor in Translation Studies? My BLC project of spring 2005 focused on creating an upper division course to serve as lynchpin for a minor in translation. This involved studying translation pedagogy and theory and preparing a calibrated sequence of exercises to break down translation into a series of tasks. I was already teaching an upper division course on translation, French 131A, but this was essentially content-based and product-oriented, rather than offering linguistic insights into the different stages in the translation process. Apart from its selection of French source texts, the redesigned French 131A is intended to serve as a model for translation courses in other languages.

Moving from a text-based to a task-based approach requires shifting our conception of what translation entails. A course arranged around texts emphasizes the finished product, and texts are chosen to exemplify different content areas. A task-based course focuses on helping students activate and articulate their native-speaker insights into how language works, so they can anticipate the challenges presented by a language that encodes things differently. It also allows the instructor to provide “just in time” training in the linguistic concepts and categories needed to recognize morpho-syntactic disparities between language systems.

The texts used in French 131A are dense and grammatically complex, as befits an upper-division course. The techniques used to translate them, however, could be introduced as part of a lower-division course at the intermediate level. Although pedagogical translation has been out of favor for more than thirty years, the intellectual climate is changing. Anne Kelley, for example, has recently written of the strategic use of translation in the second-year foreign language program (2001). She notes that foreign languages are not learned the same way as the first language, and the best way to deal with first language interference is to approach it head-on by having students translate from the L2 into the L1. Translation helps students identify those areas of least overlap between the linguistic systems of the L1 and the L2. Thus, from the negative view of first language interference, which has dominated the field of language acquisition, we move on to the concept of first language advantage.

In the sequence devised for the Minor, students would take one course on “Techniques of Translation” and one course on “Literary Translation.” Ideally, “Techniques of Translation” would come first, as it introduces a skill set that will be useful for both literary and non-literary translation. Whatever their topics, they will need to know basic things, like how to divide the text into units of translation, how to deal with lack of overlap between linguistic systems, and how to identify translation loss and gain. Although there is substantial overlap between the two domains, literary and non-literary translations also involve different types of decision-making. The literary translator needs to attend to the sound of the language, its connotations and word associations, and how these features convey a message, whereas the technical translator needs to be certain that the information is accurate, logical, and unambiguous.

It was apparent from the theories of foreign language pedagogy I studied, that a large part of the intellectual backlash against translation emanated from a belief that translation involves only lower-order processing. Because students of translation are not required to articulate their own ideas, their task is

minimized as the mere transposition of ideas into another language—an intellectual trifle.

Indeed, if one assumes that translation requires only memorizing vocabulary lists and understanding key facts in a document, then one may well conclude only lower-order processing is required. Bloom’s taxonomy of cognitive levels (1965) establishes a hierarchic ordering of tasks in which Knowledge is at the lowest level, involving only memorization; Comprehension is second lowest, involving explanation; Application comes next, requiring use of concept to solve a different but parallel problem; Analysis follows, entailing breakdown of material into its component parts; Synthesis is at the second highest level, requiring one to compare and contrast to produce something new; and finally Evaluation is put at the highest level of cognitive processing, requiring judgments to be formed based on previously learned criteria. Within this taxonomy, Bloom considers translation a level two task; he includes it under “Comprehension.”

Bloom’s assumption that the prime task involved in translation is understanding the text may relate to early studies of bilingualism by Ervin and Osgood (1954), who introduced the distinction between coordinate and compound bilingualism. Coordinate bilingualism exhibits no connection between the two languages, as though they were held in two reservoirs kept completely separate from each other. In compound bilingualism, on the other hand, the L2 is learned through the L1 and maps onto it, as though it were contained in the same reservoir. The latter, compound bilingualism, is the typical pattern of the second language classroom. Early theorists condemned it as restricting the learner to the concepts of his or her native language. Consequently, students will have one reservoir for vocabulary with tokens for each language, rather than realizing that the L2 may have a completely different concept, not just a different word. Thus an appropriate French translation for “take out food” is *plat à emporter*, but behind this simple vocabulary switch is a clash between the French world where food is savored, appreciated, and eaten slowly, and the

American world where multi-tasking is a must. Ervin and Osgood actually mention the infamous “vocabulary list” notion of translation, declaring that the despised compound command of language “is obviously fostered by learning vocabulary lists.”

The revised French 131 requires students to cycle through tasks that test both upper- and lower-order cognitive processing. These are pre-reading, close reading, close listening, pre-translation, and post-translation. Spending fifteen weeks in the linguistic interstices between languages, students gain insight into the processes of cognition and communication. And, maybe, they become less likely to produce some of the bloopers and howlers we hear in our classes, like my French 3 student, Brad, who, acting the part of a waiter and meaning to say “My name is Brad and I will be your waiter tonight,” introduced himself thus: *Je m'appelle Brad et je suis votre garçon pour la nuit*—“My name is Brad and I am your boy for the night.”



Grammatical Estrangement

by Jeremy s. ecke, Ph.D. Candidate,
Department of English

My spring BLC project was to develop a course on “grammatical estrangement” (hereafter, *g.e.*). The idea for this course came to me while I was constructing a syllabus for a spring 2004 Reading & Composition course for the Department of English. At the time, I wanted to address ways in which critical thinking and grammar are often framed as competing interests. This focus stems from my observation that R&C courses tend to emphasize argumentation and principles of organization over—and often implicitly against—grammar. For many, grammar is seen as something formal and set; grammar is a list of rules, and those rules are best reinforced by reference to a number of grammar and style handbooks. In my mind, this practice

has reduced grammar to a formal and normative function that overlooks grammar’s role in the logic of language and the representation of thought.

Consequently, I set out to design a course that would challenge students to examine the prescriptive (and often unconscious) rules they have learned about grammar and language. Because this course was an English R&C course, literature would play a large role. But what type of literature? To estrange students from the conventional modes of writing, I turned to texts such as Joyce’s *Finnegans Wake*, and Beckett’s *NoHow On*. I came to these texts with the premise that grammar “made strange” engages readers in the act of interpretation and models revision and rewriting as strategies of reading; that is, in reading “difficult” works, we revise and rewrite non-standard forms in our minds as we read. Arguably, this process is not one simply of correction—it is a process of interpretation. Thus, grammar in this broader sense becomes a tool for critical thought.

From this core idea developed my theory of *g.e.* It was natural to argue that these texts, by using non-standard, minimal, and experimental forms, were involved in an “estrangement” that drew on the Russian Formalist sense of *ostranenie* (defamiliarization), and the Brechtian sense of *Verfremdungseffekt* (estrangement). This observation broadened my conception of *g.e.* and prompted me to explore a wider array of textual genres (including street signs, political slogans, and advertising campaigns). Likewise, it clarified that the goal of *g.e.* is not alienation of readers from grammar, but rather distancing students from entrenched reading and writing habits.

Therefore, *g.e.* not only seeks to draw out the grammatical knowledge of students, it seeks to discover what this knowledge represents, and ultimately to engage students with the expressive potential of language. In the end, *g.e.* challenges students to expand their conception of grammar; it encourages them to see grammar as the systematic description of forms, as well as the logic that permits analysis of these forms; finally, it encourages them to see grammar as a force for differentiating emergent and potential meanings. As Wittgenstein reminds us in his *Philosophical Grammar*,

“language is not something that is first given a structure and then fitted on to reality” (p. 89).

To develop the philosophy of *g.e.* and explore the creative capacity of language and grammar, I designed a number of course sections and supplemental readings for students and instructors. I will outline two of these course sections here: textual and literary estrangement.

Textual estrangement

Textual estrangement engages students with the notion that grammar plays a logical (as well as a linguistic) role in the interpretation of meaning from form. In this section, students collect and interpret the “implied” and minimal grammar of street signs, advertising, and political slogans. For example, regarding interpretation of street signs, I introduce students to a number of odd and humorous street signs, such as SLOW PEOPLE WORKING, NO DUMPING VIOLATORS WILL BE PROSECUTED, and PEDESTRIANS WAIT FOR SIGNAL. As a class, we examine the ambiguity of these signs and discuss the related grammatical notions of *constituency*, *entailment*, *ellipsis*, *mood*, etc. Students then collect their own signs to illustrate how grammatical concepts, such as mood, are involved in the interpretive distinction between a STOP, YIELD, EXIT, or DIP sign. I have found that discussing the signs and examining our grammatical and logical intuitions is a great way to reintroduce students to grammatical terminology, without relegating grammar to supplemental handbook exercises. Likewise, I have found that textual estrangement raises the students’ awareness of their unconscious participation in grammar as an act of decoding. I have found that this approach engages students in the discourse surrounding them in their daily lives and provides them interpretive strategies they can profitably apply to more conventional modes of composition.

Literary estrangement

Drawing on concepts advanced in the section on textual estrangement, the section on literary estrangement illustrates how grammatical distinctions can themselves become a basis for interpretation and creative expression.

The class moves from a critical essay by Heather McHugh, "A Genuine Article," to novelistic excerpts from James Joyce's *Finnegans Wake*, to the semi-dramatic *NoHow On* by Samuel Beckett. This section does not attempt sustained literary analysis, but rather introduces students to the interpretive difficulties involved in reading experimental writing. This section also introduces students to the role grammatical concepts play in constructing meaning and consequently emphasizes the role of "grammatical" (as opposed to "lexical") items in discourse and interpretation.

In conclusion, *g.e.* challenges students to "think their language through," or to "think through their language." In doing so, I hope they discover that—as in a phrase as simple as "think through"—multiple meanings can emerge. By thinking our language through, or considering language, we can learn to consciously think through the instrument of our language. We can make meaningful discoveries by thinking through or beyond the conventional and prescriptive notions of language and grammar.

References

- Beckett, Samuel. 1996. *NoHow On*. New York: Grove Press.
- Joyce, James. 1972. *Finnegans Wake*. New York: Viking Press.
- McHugh, Heather. 1993. "Broken English, poetry and partiality." Hanover: University Press of New England.
- Wittgenstein, Ludwig. 1978. *Philosophical Grammar*. Trans. Anthony Kenny. Berkeley: University of California Press.



Whither 'Communities'? An Appraisal of Foreign Language Education in Light of the National Standards

by Robert Schechtman, Ph.D.
Candidate, Department of German

In 1996, the *Standards for Foreign Language Learning* were released by a joint task force of ACTFL and individual language organizations. Organized into five goal areas known as the "five Cs" (Communication, Cultures, Connections, Comparisons, and Communities), the *Standards* offered objectives for curricular development. How they were to be met in practice was left open.

My research at the BLC this spring examined aspects of language instruction in light of the Communities standard, "Participate in multilingual communities at home and around the world." Two sub-points are associated with this goal. First, students should be able to use the foreign language as a "tool for communication" inside and outside the classroom. Second, learning another language should enable learners to access global information and to travel widely throughout their lives. In several ways, the *Standards* document positions the Communities standard as the culmination of the other four goal areas.

To learn the impetus behind the Communities goal, I sent an email questionnaire to members of the Standards Task Force. June Phillips, former Project Director of the initiative, explained that the strongest push for inclusion of Communities came from the private sector. The Task Force's Advisory Board, composed of external stakeholders such as parents, school superintendents, government leaders, and international business people, saw this standard as "the ultimate reason for foreign language study." They would have preferred the Communities goal to be central, with all other goals flowing from it, she stated. However, this intended centrality of the Communities goal stands in contrast with its reception in foreign language pedagogy. A review of literature since the *Standards* were issued reveals few references to the so-called "Fifth C," and what has been published has been superficial and occasionally overtly critical.

As an attempt to evaluate how the standard has been applied in practice, I analyzed six textbooks, three in German—*Kontakte* (5th ed.), *Deutsch, Na Klar!* (4th ed.), and *Fokus Deutsch* (1st ed.)—and three in French—*Voilà!* (5th ed.), *Entre Amis* (5th ed.), and *Horizons* (3rd ed.). I analyzed each on several dimensions for how it approached communities, both explicitly and implicitly, inside and outside the classroom.

Each of the six textbooks addressed the national standards and the Communities goal in introductory notes to the instructor. However, only one of the six books contained exercises explicitly directing students to contact speakers outside the classroom. *Kontakte* offered two brief notes in the instructor's edition associated with reading tasks in chapters six and ten stating that if students "feel adventurous, they might try to get in touch with someone" associated with the institutions described in the respective passages. No further instructions were provided. Similarly, an instructor's annotation to an exercise on meals suggested that students with relatives from German-speaking countries might ask them about mealtime customs. These examples seem meager in comparison to the intent of the Communities goal, but they are exemplary compared to the other instructional materials I reviewed.

All other references to the Communities standard that I found in the textbooks were associated with Internet search tasks. Students were generally directed to websites to find more information about a person, place, or thing discussed in the text. Information retrieval, however, is by no means participation in a language community. Textbook authors, publishers, and language instructors have yet to take on the task of integrating language learners with real-world language users.

All the texts contained numerous exercises intended to foster communicative interaction within the classroom, as one would expect given today's dominant language learning paradigm. There was no mention, however, that these and other simple tasks could also be used to build a sense of community among learners. Research by Greta Little and Sara Sanders published in the *Foreign Language Annals* (1989) revealed the importance of fostering such a sense

of classroom community. The authors concluded that, rather than being a mere nicety, a “sense of classroom community is a crucial prerequisite to truly communicative interaction” (p. 277). Unfortunately, explicit references to participation in language communities, inside or outside the classroom, are notably absent from the texts I reviewed.

As evidenced in these language textbooks, a large gap stands between the stated goal of the *Standards*—participation in multilingual communities at home and abroad—and current mainstream practices of language instruction. While the goals for Communication, Cultures, and Comparisons have been woven into all of the texts I examined, the Communities goal is widely neglected. Journal articles can be found that describe community-based learning projects and various ways in which the Internet has been used to put language learners in touch with communities of speakers, but these remain isolated examples.

For instructors to close the “communities gap,” and to prepare speakers to participate in multilingual communities of speakers, we need pedagogically sound instructional materials, usable tools,

and teacher training on a scale with the efforts, twenty years ago, to shift language pedagogy from pattern drills to a “communicative” approach. Stakeholders outside academia may view the Communities standard as central to language learning, but current practices relegate the so-called “Fifth C” to fifth place.

We need to enrich our current, impoverished, pedagogical models of “communicative competence.” Instructional materials implicitly build communicative competence that is indexed to a community no larger than the classroom and that involves mere information exchange. Students remain completely isolated from real-world speakers and socio-cultural, historical settings.

Enriching approaches to the “Communities” standards must be coordinated at the national level, in a partnership of educators, policymakers, publishers, and external stakeholders if results are to be usable in practice by the “teacher in the trenches.” The starting point for this effort must be to reinvigorate our understanding of communicative competence by stressing the goal of “participation in communities.”

References

Standards for Foreign Language Learning: Preparing for the 21st Century. 1996. Yonkers, NY: ACTFL.

Little, Greta D. and Sara L. Sanders. 1989. Classroom Community: A Prerequisite for Communication. *Foreign Language Annals*, 22:3, 277-281.

ATTENTION LANGUAGE LECTURERS

**The BLC deadline for new materials for spring 2006 is
APRIL 15, 2006**

Contact Marianne Garner at mgarner@berkeley.edu, 642-0767 ext 24, about acquiring language learning materials for your spring classes.

If you would like to schedule the use of Berkeley Language Center facilities for the spring semester, contact Victoria K. Williams at victoria@berkeley.edu, 642-0767 ext 19.

ANNOUNCEMENTS

ucb-language

ucb-language is a moderated listserv for the Berkeley Language Center (BLC). It is used mostly for conveying information about BLC events, conferences, and topics of interest to the language learning and teaching community at UC Berkeley.

Subscribe To subscribe to the list, send email to Majordomo@listlink.berkeley.edu with the following command in the body of your message: `subscribe ucb-language`

Unsubscribe Similarly, to remove yourself from the list, send email to Majordomo@listlink.berkeley.edu with the following command in the body of your message: `unsubscribe ucb-language`

Post If you wish to post a message to the list, send an email message to ucb-language@berkeley.edu. As this is a moderated list, your posting will not appear immediately. (The list is moderated to remove spam and mistakes in posting.)

If you have trouble subscribing or unsubscribing, or have questions about the listserv, send email to the list owner, Victoria K. Williams, at victoria@berkeley.edu. For information about the Berkeley Language Center, visit our website at <http://blc.berkeley.edu>.



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Fall 2005

GSI Workshops On Teaching

All workshops will be held in 331 Sproul, unless otherwise indicated.

Time: 12–1:30 pm

Location: 331 Sproul Hall

- September 7 * **Developing Your Teaching Portfolio**
- September 22 **Working with Student Writing: Essays and Lab Reports**
- October 3 **Grading with Rubrics**
- October 20 ** **Library Resources and Digital Images for Teaching**
- November 7 **Techniques for Maximizing Student Learning**
- November 17 ** **From GSI to Professor: Getting a Head Start at Professionalization**

* To be held in 370 Dwinelle

** Location TBA

FALL 2005 COLLOQUIUM

U.S. Language Educational Policy

Friday & Saturday, October 21-22, 2005
Pauley Ballroom, ASUC, UC Berkeley

Friday, October 21, 2005

Policies and Practices in Foreign Language Education

- 9:00 - 9:30 **Opening Remarks:** Robert Blake, Marcia Greenwood, Anthony Cascardi
- 9:30 - 12:30 **Panel:** Sally Magnan, June Phillips, Terrence Wiley
Moderator: Peter Patrikis
- 2:00 - 5:00 **Panel:** Kees de Bot, Richard Donato, Mahmoud Al-Batal, Donna Christian
Moderator: Olga Kagan
- 5:00 - 7:00 **Reception**

Saturday, October 22, 2005

Language Education and the National Interests

- 9:00 - 12:00 **Panel:** Janis Jensen, Daniel Davidson, Timothy McNamara, Elaine Tennant
Moderator: Duarte Silva
- 1:30 - 4:30 **Panel:** Richard Brecht, Jayne Abrate, Mary Louise Pratt, Roger Allen
Moderator: Neil Granoien
- 4:45 - 6:00 **Closing Remarks:** Claire Kramsch

The Colloquium is sponsored by the UC Consortium for Language Learning and Teaching

For information, visit <http://uccllt@davis.edu>



**2005-2006
Title VI Travel Grants
for Foreign Language Lecturers**

Fall Deadline: Tuesday, November 1, 2005 (travel through 01/15/06)

Spring Deadline: Friday, April 14, 2006 (travel through 08/01/06)

The Berkeley Language Center provides limited funding for foreign language lecturers to attend professional conferences. The Title VI Travel Grant is for \$500.00 if you are presenting a paper, and \$250.00 if you are not.

Include a copy of the program, an abstract, and/or a letter of invitation with your application form.

University Regulations state that the Berkeley Travel Office will only reimburse travelers who provide original receipts in their own name. There are no exceptions to this rule. Travel expense reimbursements should be processed within two weeks of conference travel. You are required to sign a 'UC Travel Voucher Form' to complete the paperwork. Please do not mail receipts to the office.

If you have further questions please contact BLC Business Manager Ana Arteaga at 642-0767, x. 22, or aablc@berkeley.edu. You may also visit <http://blc.berkeley.edu> for more information.

Submit application and attachments to:

Title VI Travel Grant
Berkeley Language Center
B-40 Dwinelle Hall, #2640
CAMPUS

2005-06 CALENDAR

B L C L E C T U R E S

Friday, September 23

METAPHORS TO DIE FOR:
TOWARDS A RHETORIC OF
NATIONAL SYMBOLS

Michael Geisler

Dean of the Language Schools and
Schools Abroad & Professor of
Linguistics and Languages
Middlebury College
3-5 pm, 370 Dwinelle Hall



Friday, October 7

LADIES FROM THE PHILIPPINES
ARE MORE COMPATIBLE WITH
AMERICAN GENTLEMEN THAN
AMERICAN WOMEN: THE LIN-
GUISTIC CONSTRUCTION OF
IDENTITIES ON MAIL-ORDER-
BRIDE WEBSITES

Ingrid Piller

Professor & Chair
English Sociolinguistics and the
Sociology of English
as a Global Language
Universität Basel

3-5 pm, 370 Dwinelle Hall

Friday, November 18

GRAMMAR AND POLITICS IN
THE LANGUAGE CLASSROOM

Panel:

Hatem Bazian, Yoko Hasegawa,
Sam Mchombo, Jaleh Pirnazar,
Sarah Roberts

Moderator: Sonia S'hiri

3-5 pm, 370 Dwinelle Hall



Friday, December 2

INSTRUCTIONAL
DEVELOPMENT RESEARCH
PROJECTS

BLC Fellows:

Nikolaus Euba
Olga Gurevich
David Malinowski

BLC Research

Associate:

Sarah Roberts

3-5 pm, 370 Dwinelle Hall

C O N F E R E N C E S

November 12, 2005

*Foreign Language Association of
Northern California (FLANC)
Fall Conference*
San Francisco State University
<http://www.fla-nc.org>

November 17-20, 2005

*The American Council on the
Teaching of Foreign Languages,
ACTFL 2005: Realizing Our
Vision of Languages for All*
Baltimore, MD
<http://www.actfl.org>

December 27-30, 2005

*The 121st Annual Modern Lan-
guage Association of America
(MLA) Convention*
Washington, DC
<http://www.mla.org>

March 15-18, 2006

*TESOL's 40th Annual
Convention and Exhibit:
Daring to Lead*
Tampa, FL
<http://www.tesol.org>

March 23-25, 2006

*DigitalStream 8th Annual Confer-
ence: Emerging Technologies in
Teaching Languages
and Culture*
California State University
Monterey Bay,
Seaside, CA
[http://wlc.csUMB.edu/digital-
stream/index.html](http://wlc.csUMB.edu/digital-stream/index.html)

*The BLC Lecture Series is sponsored by the College of
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Department of Education.*

BERKELEY LANGUAGE CENTER

The Berkeley Language Center (BLC) was established on July 1, 1994. It serves as a resource center for all language teachers on the Berkeley campus.

The mission of the 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 BLC also provides audio-video-computerized lesson materials, listening, viewing, recording, duplicating and archiving facilities and related technical and administrative services.

The BLC also administers the Dwinelle Computer Research Facility (DCRF) which supports humanities faculty, engages in computer-based research projects, and provides equipment and technical expertise for the development of instructional materials.

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