



Berkeley Language Center

2023-2024 Impact Report

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Introduction

The BLC's mission is constructed around six pillars:

1. **Language Advocacy:** Recognize, support and advocate for multilingualism and multiculturalism on the UC Berkeley campus, in the UC system, and beyond;
2. **Developments in the Field:** Provide opportunities to engage with new developments in language pedagogy, second language acquisition theory, applied linguistics, and sociolinguistics;
3. **Research & its Dissemination:** Support applied language studies and world languages education research and its dissemination at professional meetings and in professional journals and to the wider public;
4. **Materials/Curricular Design:** Support the production of new language/culture learning materials and the design of innovative curricula;
5. **Facilities & Equipment:** Provide state-of-the-art learning facilities and equipment;
6. **Resource Archive:** Provide preservation of / access to language and culture learning materials and resources.

This annual impact report is organized around these six pillars of the BLC's mission, illustrating the work done in AY23-24 to achieve our goals.

Pillar 1: Language Advocacy

The BLC recognizes, supports and advocates for multilingualism and multiculturalism on the UC Berkeley campus, in the University of California system, and beyond.

UCB Community-Building Events

The Berkeley Language Center hosted and contributed to multiple events to build community around multilingualism, multiculturalism, and language / culture learning across the entire UC Berkeley community, complete with food, drink, multilingual trivia, and prizes.

- Fall Open House (September 2023)
- Words in Action, 10th Anniversary (April 2024)

Undergraduate Initiatives

The Berkeley Language Center hosted multiple events for undergraduate students to promote language/culture learning on campus.

Golden Bear Orientation

The BLC organized a booth at the Golden Bear Orientation the beginning of fall semester 2023, wherein approximately 17 language lecturers representing 8 different languages and BLC staff chatted with incoming UCB students about language learning and applied language studies opportunities on campus.

A&H Open House

The BLC participated with other A&H departments, programs, and units in welcoming new first-year and transfer students who are interested in a degree in the Arts & Humanities. Associate Director Emily Hellmich shared what opportunities are available for undergraduates at the BLC.

Exploring the Boundaries of Translation Contest 2024

[This contest](#), organized by the Berkeley Language Center (BLC) and sponsored by the Found in Translation working group, encourages UC Berkeley undergraduate students to critically explore the boundaries of translation and the relativity of cultures. Participants name an “untranslatable word” and engage with this boundary by exploring its (un)translatability by humans and machines. The contest was held in April 2024. With more than 30 entries, these were the winners:

1st Place: Julia Iwahori: 青春, “seishun” (Japanese)

2nd Place: Brenda Ngo: thuong (Vietnamese)

3rd Place: Arya Taupier Vishin: उन्मीलन (Hindi)

Words in Action

The BLC was proud to continue the tradition of supporting [Words in Action](#), a multilingual student performance organized and directed by Annamaria Belleza, continuing lecturer in the Department of Italian Studies. This year’s performances marked the 10th year anniversary of the event and included scenes, songs, and poems in 19 different languages:

ARABIC – Amel Belguith, Nathalie Khankan
ARMENIAN - Myrna Douzjian
CANTONESE - Chi Leung Chan
CATALAN - Ana Bélen Redondo Campillos
CHINESE -- Fei Tian Dancers
FRENCH – Rachel Shuh
GERMAN – Nikolaus Euba
HINDI - Nora Koa Melnikova
ITALIAN – Annamaria Bellezza, Cristina Farronato
JAPANESE - Yuriko Miyamoto Caltabiano

KOREAN – Ina Choi
PERSIAN – Fateme Montazeri
PORTUGUESE – Ana Simões, Monica Carvalho Gimenes, Derek
PUNJABI – Jvala Singh
RUSSIAN – Oksana Willis
SPANISH - Anna Rodas
TAMIL – Bharathy Sankara Rajulu
TELUGU -- Bharathy Sankara Rajulu
UKRAINIAN – Nataliia Goshly

Why Study Languages & Cultures at UC Berkeley Videos

BLC Associate Director Emily Hellmich and Keith Hernandez (BLC Recording Studio Manager) produced and directed two videos, [Why study language and culture at UC Berkeley?](#) and [Why study language and culture?](#) Both feature undergraduate students and highlight what is unique about studying languages and cultures at UC Berkeley: the diversity of language courses, the dedication of instructors, and the opportunity to build personal and intellectual connections.

Pillar 2: Developments in the Field

The BLC provides opportunities to engage with new developments in language pedagogy, second language acquisition theory, applied linguistics, and sociolinguistics.

BLC Event Series

The Berkeley Language Center continued its long tradition of hosting talks from scholars working at the forefront of applied language studies. Additional attention is given to inviting speakers that focus on heritage, or home, language speakers, given the high number of these students across language courses at UCB, and building connections across the UCB campus by inviting local scholars.

[Responding to the “Arrival”: Essential Background Information and Strategies for Language Instructors in the Age of Human-Like Language Technologies \(Machine Translation and Large Language Models\)](#), Joel Walsh, October 2023 (47 attendees)

[Toward Justice in Study Abroad, Intercultural Learning, and Language Education](#), Janice McGregor, November 2023 (36 attendees)

[Toward a Pedagogy of Transculturality](#), Glynda Hull & Catherine Park, February 2024 (23 attendees)

[Supporting Language Learning for Neurodiverse Students](#), Judit Kormos, February 2024 (31 attendees)

[Creative Connectivity and Emotional Investment in Language Learning](#), Simon Coffey, March 2024 (21 attendees)

Conference: *Language and AI: Generating Interdisciplinarity Connections and Possibilities*

The Language AI Working Group, co-founded by Emily Hellmich, Kayla van Kooten, and Kimberly Vinall, organized a BLC sponsored [conference](#) in February to generate connections across the UC Berkeley community around machine learning and language/culture study. The dialogue centered an exploration of questions of language, language use, and technology from three perspectives: research, industry, theory. With an [introduction](#) by Bill Allison, Chief

Technology Officer for UC Berkeley, panelists represented diverse disciplines and units on campus including but not limited to language departments, the college of engineering, the school of information, College Writing Programs, and the Berkeley Institute for Data Science.

Pillar 3: Research & its Dissemination

The BLC supports applied language studies and world languages education research and its dissemination at professional meetings and in professional journals and to the wider public.

BLC Professional Development Fellows

The BLC's Professional Development Fellowship, available to graduate students and lecturers, was developed to provide language lecturers and graduate students the opportunity to engage in research projects that further their own professional development and that directly impact the teaching and learning of languages and cultures on the Berkeley campus. Fellows present their projects at the Instructional Development Research Projects forum at the end of each semester.

[FA2023](#)

- **Nataliia Goshlyk** (Lecturer, Slavic Languages & Literatures) “Learning the Language of the Contemporary Ukrainian Society through Films”
- **Claire Tourmen** (Lecturer, French Studies) “French Building Classes in Languages for Professional Purposes: Opportunities, Challenges, and Best Practices
- **Yesenia Blanco** (Graduate Student, Spanish & Portuguese) “Cultivating Critical Language Awareness in the Heritage Language Classroom: A Module on Language Ideologies”

[SP2024](#)

- **Caroline Godard** (Graduate Student, French Studies) “De-centering the Native Speaker in the L2 Creative Writing Classroom”
- **Oliver Whitmore** (Graduate Student, French Studies) “Raising Awareness of Contemporary Occitan among Learners of French”
- **Cristina Farronato** (Lecturer, Italian) “Untranslatability and Transposition: Enhancing Italian Language Learning through the Challenges of Translation”

The impact of these projects could be felt immediately: for example, Oliver Whitmore was interviewed for several [Occitan advocacy news outlets on this project](#); Caroline Godard presented a portion of her presentation at a conference at Princeton; and Nataliia began using her materials immediately in her classroom.

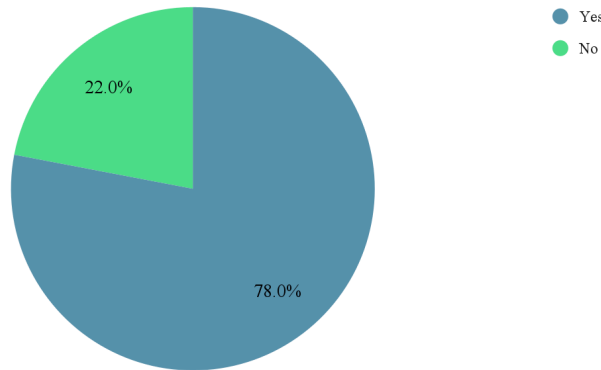
BLC Fellows Impact Survey

In FA2023, the BLC instituted a system to document the impact of the BLC Fellows Program over time. This effort began with a survey distributed to all Fellows between 2014-2020, requesting information on how the BLC Fellowship impacted their teaching and research. To

date, we have received 19 responses of 34, representing 55% of the Fellows from this time period. Below, we summarize some major results. A more robust report on the survey will be available in the next academic year.

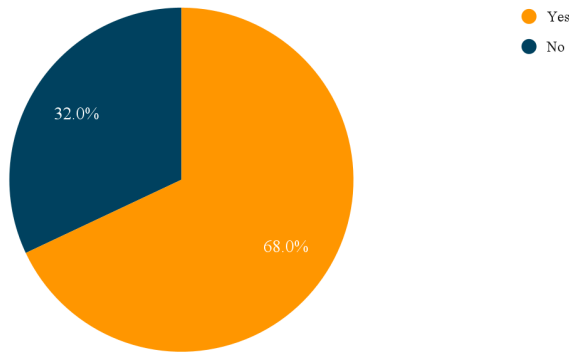
Individual Use of Teaching Materials

If you developed teaching materials during the BLC Fellowship, have you used these materials in the classes that you teach?



Departmental Use of Teaching Materials

Has your BLC Fellowship work been shared with or used by other members of your department at UCB?



Narrative Description of the Impact of BLC Fellowship

Select Responses

“The fellowship experience has been vital to my increased sense of belonging and community on this campus across language and department. I found inspiration and a renewed sense of purpose for my language classroom by sharing ideas and work-in-progress with colleagues.”

“I do think the experience of networking with the broader Francophone community and doing a certain amount of heritage and native speaker outreach has been useful in my work as an undergraduate advisor at another institution. I would also love to incorporate similar multimedia

interviews in my future courses, as a student practice. I often teach literature and culture courses with heritage and native speakers of French, and I organize events surrounding global use of French, so doing a certain amount of interfacing with community members and community outreach (to boost the major, for instance) was a useful experience. More broadly, I took an Oral History seminar in conjunction with the BLC fellowship, and broadly speaking, I hope that certain practices of oral history would be useful to my future research (a monograph biography for instance).”

“The fellowship impacted my teaching by enabling me to develop a film module, which I had always been interested in doing, instead of showing films as "filler" material. Students have been impacted by their exposure to issues of history and memory in the Hispanic world represented in this particular film module by seeing the effects of historical events in "real" people over time. This fellowship inspired me to apply again to develop new film modules for Spanish 3 and 4, which are currently part of the curriculum in both courses. I would like to develop a film course in Spanish in the future.”

“It has deepened my knowledge on the mechanisms of intercultural learning, nourished my current research agenda and deeply impacted my pedagogy when it comes to intercultural learning.”

BLC Travel Grants

A total of six grants were awarded to language lecturers to support travel to present papers at professional conferences. Congratulations to all!

Recipient	Conference	Paper Title
Jhonni Carr (Dept. of Spanish & Portuguese)	14th Annual Linguistic Landscapes Workshop	¿Y el español? Language policies and use of Spanish at an aspiring Hispanic Serving Institution
Liu Li (East Asian Languages and Cultures)	20th Annual Conference on Teaching and Learning Chinese in Higher Education	Teaching Intermediate and Advanced Reading by Using “Backward Design
Maria Whittle-Shaw (Slavic Languages & Literatures)	American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL)	Why Indigenous Voices Matter in Russian Studies
Antje Postema (Slavic Languages & Literatures)	American Association of Teachers of Slavic and East European Languages (AATSEEL)	Blind Spots and Broken Molds: A Troubling of Memory and Trauma Studies at the Heart of New Yugoslav Studies
John Prusynski (Department of Scandinavian)	Native American and Indigenous Studies Association (NAISA)	Travel and Ecology in the Poetry of Jalvvi Niilas Holmberg
Kijoo Ko (East Asian Languages and Cultures)	American Association of Teachers of Korean (AATK)	Genre and Proficiency-Based Writing Instruction for Beginner to Intermediate-Low Korean Learners: Guided Modules

L2 Journal

Emily Hellmich and Kimberly Vinall were selected to take the helm of [L2 Journal](#). Housed in the Berkeley Language Center, Claire Kramersch founded the *L2 Journal* in 2009 and oversaw its growth as one of the first open access journals focused on world language teaching and learning. All who have contributed to and benefited from the journal's tradition of supporting the research and practice of world languages education are grateful to Claire's vision and dedication. We are also grateful to all those who have participated in its growth and development as managing editors, copyeditors, and reviewers. Moving forward, the journal now has a new [Advisory Board](#) and updated descriptions of the three [journal sections](#) (Articles, Teachers' Forum, and Brief Reports). [Volume 16, Issue 1, 2024](#) was published in the spring with an introduction to the new co-editors. Between June 30 2023 and June 30 2024 a total of 6 articles, 2 teachers' forum pieces, and 1 brief report were published.

Applied Language Studies URAP

For the third year in a row, the BLC hosted an Undergraduate Research Apprenticeship Program. Three [undergraduate researchers](#), Zara Brandt, Shuqi (Mickey) Chen, and Madelyn Sparks, together with mentors Emily Hellmich and Kimberly Vinall, began a multiyear and multiphase research project designed to explore language learners' beliefs and perceptions of the use of generative AI in language learning. The work this year focused on a survey of undergraduate UC Berkeley language learners (n=175) and culminated in the submission of a full-length co-authored manuscript ("ChatGPT in Language Education: Centering Learner Voices") to a special issue of the journal *Technology in Language Teaching & Learning*.

Pillar 4: Materials/Curricular Design

The BLC supports the production of new language/culture learning materials and the design of innovative curricula.

Fuel Your Language Teaching Brown Bags

In response to [a survey of language instructors in FA22](#), the BLC created an informal professional learning community where interested language instructors could share and learn about language teaching and learning with colleagues. These 1-hour "brown bags" are organized around specific topics and open to any language instructor on campus. Topics in AY23-24 included:

- Games in the Language Classroom, led by Haitham Mohamed (Arabic)
- Student-created videos, led by Esmee van der Hooven (Dutch), Daniel Hoffmann (French)
- Conferences/Travel reports, led by Li Liu (Chinese), Jhonni Carr (Spanish)
- How to talk to students about AI + language, led by Kimberly Vinall, Emily Hellmich
- Neurodiversity in the language classroom (follow up to J. Kormos's talk)
- Hybrid language instruction, led by Elsa and Haitham Elhamady (Arabic)
- Travel Grants/Identifying Conference Funds, led by Antje Postema (Slavic), Marie Whittle (Slavic)

USDOE International Research & Studies Program Grant

The (BLC) was awarded a FY 2023-26 US Department of Education International Research and Studies (IRS) grant for the project [Translating Machine Translation for Language Education to Promote Language Learning, Critical Digital Literacies, and Global Citizenship](#). The objectives of this project are to develop specialized instructional materials that promote student use of machine translation tools (MT) tools across beginning, intermediate, and advanced levels. This May, eight partner instructors participated in workshops to adapt these materials to the teaching of different languages. When completed, all templates and instructional materials will be available as Open Educational Resources.

Summer Film Fellows

Generously funded by the Gladys Delmas Foundation, the 2023 BLC Summer Film Fellows cohort included Ambika Athreya (German), Myrna Douzjian (Armenian), Nathalie Khankan (Arabic), David Kyeu (Swahili), Natalya Nielsen (Swedish), and Oksana Willis (Russian). Guided by workshop leaders Mark Kaiser (BLC Associate Director, retired) and Maya Sidhu (French), they developed lesson plans using film clips in [Lumière](#) (the Berkeley Language Center Library of Film & Clips). With the additional support of Emily Hellmich, all of the materials, including Tips for Working with Film in the Classroom, Activities to Engage in the classroom, Language and Film Lesson plans, and the roundtable discussion recording are available as open educational resources [here](#).

Pillar 5: Facilities & Equipment

The BLC provides state-of-the-art learning facilities and equipment.

Classroom Usage

The new classroom reservation system, introduced Fall 2022, was designed to increase accessibility to BLC room offerings, transparency in relation to scheduling timelines, and clarity around room offerings (capacity, set up, technology available). Overall reservations continue to increase as does the number of language learners impacted.

BLC classrooms by the numbers:	AY 2023-2024	AY 2022-2023
Semester-long classes	89	82
Distinct languages used	28	25
Students learning	1170	1085
Departments / units represented	11	11
Distance learning courses	21	22

Tech Open House

The beginning of fall semester the BLC hosted its first Tech Open House, an opportunity for language instructors to prepare for their teaching by learning about the available classroom technology.

Classroom Upgrades

This past year we replaced the black box theater space in B-4. In addition to being used as a classroom space, B-4 is also used for BLC events, including the speaker series. It serves an important role in supporting performance-based language teaching, and houses yearly performances of the German 102A Cabaret, taught by Nikolaus Euba, and the Italian Theater Showcase, hosted by the Department of Italian Studies.

Recording Studio

The BLC Recording Studio offers professional quality audio and video production, analog media digitization, and technical media support to all language instructors and departments. In addition to supporting the learning and teaching of heritage and world languages, the recording studio also offers recharge services to the wider campus community and public.

Over the past academic year, the recording studio engineer, Keith Hernandez, has recorded events for the Center for Jewish Studies, the Magnes Collection, the Department of French, Ancient Greek and Roman Studies (AGRS), and the Department of Middle Eastern Languages and Culture (MELC).

Additionally, he has recorded episodes of the following Podcasts:

Campus-based

Borderlines (Berkeley Law)

The Science of Happiness (Greater Good Science Center)

Chatter brains (Neurotech Collider Lab)

Outside organizations

Against the Odds with Michael Lewis

The Great Creators with Guy Raz

NPR

The Atlantic

Women Rising Radio

The New Yorker

Ten Percent Happier

Freakonomics

Munck Studios

Pillar 6: Resource Archive

The BLC provides preservation of / access to language and culture learning materials and resources.

BLC Website

The BLC website has migrated to Open Berkeley. Design and development will continue throughout Summer 2024.

Lumière

This online library contains 20,742 clips drawn from 7,944 films in 191 languages.

Historical Summary

	2024*	2023	2022	2021	2020	2019	2018
USERS							
# of new institutions	3	4	2	9	6	unavailable	unavailable
# of new users	87	199	225	361	620	64	unavailable
ORDERS							
# of films requested	3597	7340	7733	8011	7855	4184	3221
# of film clips requested	279	552	699	895	878	724	1030
NEW MATERIALS							
# of new clips created	3	45	53	203	35	776	831
# of new lesson plans	1	8	13	29	0	50	0

* 2024 data is through June 30, 2024.

As of June 30, 2024:

Total participating institutions	101
Total participating users	

# of Campus Administrators	61 (active)
# of Instructors	452 (active)
# of Graduate Student Instructors	43 (active)

Berkeley Online Language Testing (BOLT)

The Berkeley Online Language Testing platform offers partial placement exams for Chinese, Japanese, and Korean and proficiency exams for Japanese.

Exam by language and type	June 30, 2023 - June 30, 2024
Japanese Placement exam	129
Japanese Proficiency exam	4
Chinese Placement exam (Simplified characters)	357
Chinese Placement exam (Traditional characters)	54
Korean Placement exam	356

Grants

Gladys Kriebel Delmas Foundation

“Teaching Modern Languages/Cultures through Film”

Awarded \$13,349 to fund [Summer Film Fellows](#) program

USDOE International Research & Studies Program Grant

“Translating Machine Translation for Language Education to Promote Language Learning, Critical Digital Literacies, and Global Citizenship”

Awarded \$150,762

Community

The six pillars of the BLC's mission extend beyond the local UCB community to the local Bay Area and beyond.

Berkeley World Language Project (BWLP)

In 2023-24, BWLP Team, composed of teacher-leaders and Co-directors Don Doehla and Nancy Salsig, held two 5-day professional development workshop series for teachers of World Languages. These workshops centered on critical topics including Social-Emotional Learning, Global Competence, the UN Sustainable Goals, Social Justice, and the new California World Languages Standards and Framework.

They also supported local schools and districts in our service area. Our workshop with the Oakland Unified School district focused on *Scaffolding Reading and Writing Activities for Language Learners*.

Visiting Student Researchers and Scholars

The BLC hosted several visiting student researchers: Nazan Demirci, Minjing Yu, and Enxi Jin, and scholars, Professor Hongling Zhang, Professor and Director of the Intercultural Institute, Shanghai International Studies University. Co-coordinators Vesna Rodic and Michael Arrigo of the Found in Translation working group, hosted a talk by Professor Zhang titled *Intercultural Competence in China's Foreign Language Teaching: Exploring the Hidden Dimension*, which led to a follow-up roundtable discussion moderated by Claire Kramsch and Mark Kaiser, to further explore historical, political, and cultural perspectives on the intercultural.

National German Exam Testing for Bay Area Kinderstube

For approximately the past 10 years, the BLC hosted 35 students from Bay Area Kinderstube, an after-school German program for elementary, middle, and high school-aged students. In January 2023, students took the National German Exam, an online exam that tests students' German proficiency and doles out prizes, in the BLC's computer lab.

People

BLC Staff

Kimberly Vinall, Executive Director
Emily Hellmich, Associate Director
Orlando Garcia, Office Manager
Keith Hernandez, Recording Studio Manager
Elle Suzuki, Applications Programmer

Advisory Board

Laura Sterponi (Chair of the Advisory Board, Professor, BSE)

Rick Kern (Chair and Professor, Department of French)

Justin Davidson (Professor, Department of Spanish and Portuguese)

Lihua Zhang (Senior Lecturer, East Asian Languages and Cultures)

Nikolaus Euba (Senior lecturer, language program coordinator, Department of German)

Martha Saavedra (Associate Director, Center for African Studies)

Linda von Hoene (Grad Division, Asst. Dean for Professional Development)

Natalya Nielsen (Graduate student, Department of Scandinavian)

Acknowledgements

The BLC is supported by the Division of Arts and Humanities of the College of Letters and Science. In addition to general operations, we acknowledge the generous financial support of the A&H Dean's Office for the lecture series, community events, and professional development fellows. We wish to acknowledge specifically Les Gorske, Assistant Dean, Finance and Administration; Sarah Fullerton, Director of Communications; Emily Rabiner, Communications and Student Engagement Coordinator; and Rebecca Ricksen, Leadership Gift Officer.

Additionally, we acknowledge the generous donations from multiple donors.

We are also grateful to the entire community of instructors and learners (lecturers, staff, graduate students, undergraduate students, senate faculty, K-12 teachers, and community members) who contribute their passion for the learning and teaching of languages and cultures.

We would like to extend a special note of gratitude to the following people for their invaluable tech assistance this past year:

- Kris Beltran, Kevin Chan, Tim Gotch, William Gross, Davey Hathorn, Mike Howard, Jonathan Kogelman, Edgar Ortega, Patrick Pender, Michael Quan, Ronald Sprouse, and Walter Stokes