



Deborah L. Brandt

The social contexts of literacy: Writing in the face of change

Monday, July 25, 11:35 AM-12:35 PM

Monona Terrace Exhibit hall B

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Abstract

In this presentation Deborah Brandt explores the consequences for literacy posed by the emergence of the so-called Information or Knowledge Economy. If literacy in a society takes its meanings and consequences from how it is used, how do the relatively new yet robust uses of writing to fuel a mass economy stand to affect the future of literacy? Brandt will draw on accounts of people who write for a living to argue that the Knowledge Economy is affecting the meanings and consequences of literacy in broad and unforeseen ways. She also will consider the implications for language educators.

Biography

Deborah L. Brandt is professor of English at the University of Wisconsin-Madison, where she teaches undergraduate writing and graduate courses in literacy and writing studies. In 1998-1999, she was a visiting fellow at the U.S. Department of Education in Washington, D.C. Her book, *Literacy in American Lives* (Cambridge University Press, 2001), received the Mina P. Shaughnessy Prize from the Modern Language Association and the Most Outstanding Book Award from the Conference on College Composition and Communication. In 2003, Brandt was recipient of the \$200,000 Grawemeyer Award in Education, which honors thinkers whose ideas have significant potential to improve educational practice.



Joseph Lo Bianco

Language policy and language planning: Exemplary applied linguistics

Monday, July 25, 5:20-6:20 PM

Monona Terrace Exhibit Hall B

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Abstract

Language policy and planning (LPP) has come under severe attack in recent years, by post-modern, post-structural, and neo-Marxist theorists as complicit with state power and interests; and by critical thinkers as being weakly descriptive and given to excessive taxonomizing. Some "critical critics" go further and allege that LPP is a sub-discipline almost wholly unaware of itself, using a-historical and a-social notions of language, blind to its ideological appropriation. Alongside such criticisms from within the academy there has been an almost complete neglect of LPP by policy makers, who commission almost anyone other than language planners to make language plans.

Despite such problems of not appealing to power and of not appealing to (critical) theory, the practice of LPP is greater than it has ever been. More nation states react to globalization by promulgating national language plans. More non-national state institutions, such as commercial enterprises, religious organizations, hospitals, legal firms, various professional associations, and intelligence agencies recognize the reality of spreading multilingualism and the need to include language diversity within their operational arrangements. Also, the spread of English as lingua mundi provokes both defensive language protectionism and hyper-instrumentally motivated embrace. Among the reactions to the universalization of English are the contradictory patterns of argument for standardized norms, and the acceptance and support for post-"original" norms invoking trans-ethnic associations. Trans-national structures, especially the European Union, have also been instrumental in advocating regional and minority languages, long repressed by national states, but apparently resurgent in post-national state entities. Trade-motivated globalization also ensures that some kinds of LPP will continue to grow in practical importance for decades. Some kinds of instantaneous communications technologies make it possible that speech-writing divisions will change, and that non-alphabetic scripts may be less disadvantaged in digital communication. Global terrorism and the rise in international security concerns have also stimulated interest in language education planning. Some kind of LPP is practiced everywhere, facilitating new kinds of identity and connection, and attempts to arrest them.

In this paper, Dr. Lo Bianco discusses both contradictions and opportunities opened up by neglect of LPP theory and embrace of LPP practice. He argues for a re-invigoration of LPP theory, one which interrogates applied linguistics itself, as a distinctive discipline grounded in real-world communication settings. An applied linguistics, and a re-invigorated LPP that appeals more to policy makers, are not necessarily dependent on theoretical/descriptive linguistics, nor on those kinds of sociolinguistics derived from theoretical/descriptive linguistics. As an analytical discipline LPP must theorize power and interest as well as language. As a practical discipline LPP must devise participatory modes of operation to add to academic speculation and empirical research in language and communication.

Biography

Joseph Lo Bianco holds the Chair of Language and Literacy Education at the University of Melbourne and was formerly director of the National Languages and Literacy Institute of Australia. He has worked on language policy, literacy planning, bilingualism and multicultural education in several countries, including Australia, Sri Lanka and Scotland. His recent books include: *Australian Literacies: Informing National Policy on Literacy Education*, with P. Freebody, 2001; *Australian Policy Activism in Language and Literacy*, with R. Wickert, 2001; *Voices from Phnom Penh, Development and Language*, 2002; *Teaching Invisible Culture: Classroom Practice and Theory*, with C. Crozet 2003; and *Language Policy in Australia*, Council of Europe, 2004. For his research and policy work in language and literacy Professor Lo Bianco has been elected Fellow of the Australian Academy of the Humanities and Fellow of the Australian Council of Educators, and has been awarded the Order of Australia and the title of Commendatore nell'ordine di merito della repubblica Italiana.



Brian MacWhinney

The emergence of a second language

Tuesday, July 26, 11:35 AM-12:35 PM
Monona Terrace, Exhibit Hall B

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Abstract

First language acquisition differs from second language acquisition in several fundamental ways. Perhaps the most obvious difference is the appearance in second language learning of critical period effects such as fossilization. Another important difference is the impact of transfer in second language learning. Because of these differences, the fields of first and second language acquisition have developed independently, only occasionally trading fragmentary insights. Recently, I have explored the shape of a new account of language learning that postulates a core set of learning mechanisms that operate in different ways across the life-cycle in different configurations of linguistic input. I refer to this new model as the Unified Competition Model. At the core of the new model is the mechanism of competition from the traditional version of the Competition Model, which has emphasized the ways in which learners pick up cues on the basis of statistical properties of the input in a variety of linguistic arenas. The Unified Model places additional emphasis on the role of chunking in advancing fluency and the role of storage mechanisms in accounting for processing difficulties. The conflict between languages or codes is understood in terms of non-modular, interactive activation. The key new concept in the model is the notion of resonance that allows the L2 learner to develop inner speech in the new language and to form rich, physically grounded, memorial representations of new target-language structures.

Biography

Brian MacWhinney is professor of psychology at Carnegie Mellon University, where he directs the CHILDES Project (Child Language Data Exchange System) for the computational study of child language transcript data and the TalkBank system for the study of conversational interactions. With Elizabeth Bates, and other colleagues from many countries, he has developed a model of first and second language acquisition and processing called the Competition Model.



Mark Warschauer

Change, power, and learning: Competing discourses of technology and literacy

Tuesday, July 26, 5:20-6:20 PM
Monona Terrace Exhibit Hall B

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Abstract

Three main discourses shape how we think about digital technologies and literacy. The discourse of change focuses on how new forms of communication are transforming our notions and practices of literacy. The discourse of power examines how mastery of digital literacies enables individuals and communities to achieve their social and economic ends. The discourse of learning attends to how use of new technologies affects the development of reading, writing, and academic literacy. In this presentation, Dr. Warschauer analyzes the empirical bases of these discourses and considers how the underlying perspectives interrelate. Drawing on evidence from international data sets and case studies in developed and developing countries, he argues that too narrow a focus on one or two elements of this triad hinders efforts at educational improvement and social inclusion.

Biography

Mark Warschauer is associate professor in the departments of education and informatics at the University of California, Irvine, and associate director of the university's Ada Byron Research Center for Diversity in Computing & Information Technology. Previously, he has taught at the University of California, Berkeley, the University of Hawai'i, Charles University in Prague, and Moscow Linguistics University; and he has also directed an educational technology program on a large U.S. development project to improve English teaching in Egypt. Warschauer is the author or editor of seven books on language, literacy, and technology, including, most recently, *Technology and Social Inclusion: Rethinking the Digital Divide* (MIT Press, 2003). He founded *Language Learning & Technology* journal and edited it from 1997 through 2003. He was the recipient of the 1998 TOEFL Policy Council International Award for outstanding individual contribution in the area of technology and language learning. His research on technology in education has been funded by the University of California, the U.S. Department of Education, and the National Science Foundation.



Nkonko M. Kamwangamalu

Multilingualism and language planning in postcolonial Africa: What prospects for the indigenous languages?

Thursday, July 28 11:35 AM-12:35 PM
Monona Terrace Exhibit Hall B

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Sponsored by Multilingual Matters

Abstract

When most African countries liberated themselves from British, French or Portuguese colonialism some 40 or so years ago, one of the challenges they faced was what to do with the language—English, French or Portuguese—which they inherited from the former colonial power. Should the language of the former colonial power be replaced with an indigenous language and, if so, which one of the many available languages? If not, what policies should be introduced to promote the rights of the indigenous languages? In this paper, Dr. Kamwangamalu reports on the current state of language policy and planning in post-colonial Africa, with a focus on sub-Saharan Africa. He points out that although colonialism ended years ago, its legacy together with elite closure continues to impact on the language policies of most African states. He considers the implications of these policies for the indigenous languages, and calls for policies that ensure that the indigenous languages and the ex-colonial languages co-exist not at the expense of the former, as has been the case over the years, but in addition to the latter. He warns that maintaining the status quo is a recipe for language shift and ultimate linguistic genocide, both of which are increasingly gaining momentum—especially in African urban centers.

Biography

Nkonko M. Kamwangamalu is professor of English and linguistics at Howard University in Washington, DC. He has taught linguistics at the National University of Singapore, the University of Swaziland, and the University of Natal in Durban, South Africa, where he was professor and director of the Linguistics Program. He holds a Ph.D. in linguistics from the University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign, and has also received a Fulbright award. His research interests include multilingualism, code-switching, language policy and planning, language and identity, new Englishes, and African linguistics. He is the author of the monograph *The Language Planning Situation in South Africa* (Multilingual Matters, 2001), and has guest-edited special issues on this and related topics for *The International Journal of the Sociology of Language* (2000), *Multilingua* (1998), *World Englishes* (2002), and *Language Problems and Language Planning* (2004).



James P. Lantolf

Sociocultural theory and L2 learning: Three research agendas

Thursday, July 28, 5:20-6:20 PM
Monona Terrace Exhibit Hall B

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Abstract

In this paper, Dr. Lantolf discusses three important foci for research on second language learning and development from a sociocultural theoretic perspective: Concept-based classroom instruction, dynamic assessment, and internalization. Although some research has been and is currently being conducted in each of these areas, it is important for researchers in sociocultural theory to develop a collaborative and coherent research agenda in each of these areas.

The first—concept-based classroom instruction—is based on the pedagogical theory of systemic theoretical instruction in which concrete empirical activities are built on from abstract theoretical concepts. STI begins with a detailed and abstract theoretical presentation of the meaning of grammatical concepts, which is linguistically and diagrammatically offered to learners. The learners then verbalize the concept and internalize it as a consequence of the verbalization paired with concrete communicative activities.

The second research domain is dynamic assessment, an approach which dialectically integrates testing and assessment into a single activity. Dynamic assessment has been used with increasing success in general education and psychology to promote development of at-risk children. Dynamic assessment is based on Vygotsky's notion of the zone of proximal development and as such it argues that if assessment only measures what the individual achieves as a result of solo performance it is not uncovering the full picture of what the individual is capable of. Assessment must also determine what the individual is capable of with assistance because, as Vygotsky proposed, what the person can do with assistance today, he or she can do without assistance tomorrow. The implication in all of this is that dynamic assessment not only assesses development, but at the same time promotes it.

The final agenda is internalization. This is the crucial construct of sociocultural theory because it is this which dialectically unites the individual with social forms of mediation. Through internalization the person develops self-regulation, or the ability to control his or her own cognitive (and emotional) behavior. Several studies have been conducted on second language internalization, including those by Lantolf, Lantolf and Yañez, and Centeno-Cortés, but most of this research has focused on the formal properties of a second language. While this is important, the presentation argues that because meaning is central to mediation, this aspect of second language knowledge should be brought into focus in future research as well as in language instruction.

Biography

James P. Lantolf is director of the Center for Language Acquisition and professor of applied linguistics and Spanish at The Pennsylvania State University. He is also co-director of CALPER (Center for Advanced Language Proficiency Education and Research), a National Foreign Language Research Center. He has served as co-editor of *Applied Linguistics* and is president of the American Association for Applied Linguistics. He serves on the editorial board of *Applied Linguistics*, *The Journal of Applied Linguistics*, *The Modern Language Journal*, *Spanish in Context*, *Critical Inquiry in Language Studies*, and *Revista Electronica de la Lengua Española*. He has published over 80 articles, book chapters, and edited volumes. His most recent publications include *Sociocultural Theory and Second Language Learning* (editor, Oxford University Press, 2000) *Talking Yourself into Spanish: The Role of Private Speech in Second Language Learning* (with Carmen Yañez-Prieto), *Hispania* (2003), and intrapersonal communication and internalization in the second language classroom in A. Kozulin, V. S. Ageev, S. Miller, & B. Gindis, (Eds.), *Vygotsky's Theory of Education in Cultural Context* (Cambridge University Press, 2003), *Dynamic assessment: Bringing the past into the future* (with Matt Poehner), *Journal of Applied Linguistics* (2004). At the moment, Dr. Lantolf is completing work on a book, co-authored with Steve Thorne, *Sociocultural Theory and the Genesis of Second Language Development* to be published by Oxford University Press.



Yasir Suleiman

The Linguistic Construction of National Identity

Friday, July 29, 11:35 AM-12:35 PM

Monona Terrace Exhibit Hall B

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Sponsored by the University of Wisconsin-Madison Language Institute and the Schoenleber Foundation

Abstract

Language has long been recognized as an important element in the construction of national identity. In the Middle East, this is true of Arab, Jewish, Persian and Turkish national identities; it is also true of sub-national identities in the region, such as those of Berber and Kurdish national identities. This situation is replicated, with all its complexities, in Central and Northern Europe, the countries of the Russian Federation, and in Asia and Africa. In many contexts, the debates about language are a proxy for extra-linguistic objectives of various kinds. Issues of power, inclusion and exclusion, ethnic purity and contamination, globalization and localization, tradition and modernity, the allocation of resources in society, religiosity and many other factors constitute the impulses that inform these debates. The premise upon which these debates are based is this: language is an important resource in society which can be exploited or manipulated in task-orientation and political mobilization to achieve intended outcomes. The conflict over languages is, therefore, a real one; although it is normally pursued at a level of low intensity in inter nation-state relations. The situation is often different in intra nation-state relations because the economic and political stakes are much higher.

Our understanding of the above issues is complicated by the indeterminacy of the concept of identity itself. Identity operates at the individual and at the collective level in a context-sensitive manner. Thus, identities are fixed yet fickle, immutable yet mutable, self-generated yet other-ascribed, resistant to manipulation yet amenable to it. Within these sets of oppositions, linguistic identity assumes different meanings in different situations. In many cases, attitudinal beliefs about language are inconsistent with the linguistic behavior of the individual. In spite of all of this, language is always a means of indexing the individual and collective self in definitional terms.

Our categories of analysis add to the complexity alluded to above. Is there a difference between national identity as a cultural construct and its meaning in the context of the nation-state as a political unit? And if so, how do we capture it? What is the connection between ethnic and national identity? Can national identities be gendered? Can we draw a distinction between functionality and symbolism in constructing national identity? To what extent are Third World national identities a reaction to or the intended results of their recent colonial pasts? Dr. Suleiman's paper addresses these (and other issues) in relation to language from a cross-cultural perspective. His aim is to position the linguistic construction of national identity at the intersection of a set of debates that are of relevance to a broad multi-disciplinary constituency.

Biography

Yasir Suleiman is professor of Arabic and Islamic studies at Edinburgh University and director of the Edinburgh Institute for the Advanced Study of the Arab World and Islam. His research interests are in Arabic sociolinguistics, Arabic grammatical theory and linguistics, translation studies, Arab intellectual history, nationalism and cultural politics, teaching Arabic as a foreign language, and Arabic literature. He is the author of *The Arabic Language and National Identity: A Study in Ideology* (Georgetown University Press, 2003) and *A War of Words: Language and Conflict in the Middle East* (Cambridge University Press, 2004).