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Author
Jacoby, Sally

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Editorial

Now We Are Two

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> Each individual has acquired a language in the course of complex social interactions with people who vary in the ways in which they speak and interpret what they hear and in the internal representations that underlie their use of language.
>
> Noam Chomsky
> *Knowledge of Language*

The study of "language use" is a rather vague umbrella term covering a multitude of methodological and theoretical approaches to the analysis of discourse, both spoken and written. For centuries, long before the advent of "textlinguistics," written discourse has been the central object of study in the fields of literature and rhetoric. Though I am grossly oversimplifying here, the former examines texts as self-contained artistic creations or as instances of particular historical genres, while the latter investigates texts as well-structured vehicles for the explicitly and implicitly persuasive packaging of ideas. The object of the study of discourse in this tradition has been to learn about aspects of the structure, meaning, and reception of planned and artfully crafted discourse.

Within applied linguistics, a large portion of spoken and written discourse analysis research has been undertaken to answer classic questions which linguists and applied linguists have long concerned themselves with: e.g., What can be learned about Language X (or an interlanguage, or language in general) as a self-contained system of structure and meaning-making? What are the form-function meanings of a particular structure or lexical entity as it is used in actual discourse? How is language (or a particluar language) organized beyond the boundary of the sentence? How are texts of all kinds coherently structured? In this approach to discourse analysis there is a kind of inward directionality focused on

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the *language* half of the term "language use": the object of the study of discourse is to learn about language and the textuality of language and genre as a system.

In contrast, the relatively recent study of human communication, in such fields as anthropology, sociology, and communication studies, has brought to the study of language use a view of discourse, whether spoken or written, as a display of and accompaniment to the situated social and cultural organization of human life and of particular human lives in particular settings. Audio and video technology have especially had an impact on this approach to discourse, for analysts have been made aware that people communicate not only through language, but also through activity and non-linguistic, yet systematically organized, behaviors such as gaze, gesture, facial expression, body position, pauses, and laughter. The study of situated communication and interaction (whether in classrooms, workplaces, or laboratories, for example), has also revealed that spoken and written modes of communication are intertwined, co-constructed, and modified by participants in complex ways--ways that linguists and philosophers of language could never imagine or intuit from decontextualized sentences. The kinds of questions asked in sociocultural discourse analysis include: How does language use reflect, constitute, reproduce, and challenge the social order of a particular setting? How are particular cultural values encoded and constituted by Language X and thus acquired by the users of Language X? What kinds of communication go on in particular settings and how is this communicative behavior organized by the participants? What are the social implications of communicative behaviors and how do people use language to achieve social and interpersonal goals? How do discourse and communication in particular contexts differ cross-culturally? In such questions there is a kind of outward directionality focused on the *use* half of the term "language use": the object of the study of discourse is to learn about language *in* use as a part of human social and cultural life.

The issue for applied linguistics, it seems to me, is not to decide which of these two main approaches to the study of discourse is right and which wrong. The challenge is to examine the assumptions which underly both of these approaches and to ask ourselves not only to what extent language as a system can be adequately studied as an entity separate from social and cultural life but also to what extent communication in social and cultural life can be studied as an entity separate from language as a system.

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> The leisure and the fearful time
> Cuts off the ceremonious vows of love
> And ample interchange of sweet discourse
> Which so long sund'red friends should dwell upon.
>
> William Shakespeare
> *Richard III*, V: iii: 97-100

Last winter, Elinor Ochs, the most recent addition to the faculty of UCLA's Department of TESL & Applied Linguistics, approached the editorial board of *IAL* with a proposition: to guest edit a thematic issue that would feature the work of UCLA graduate students from her language socialization seminar and give center stage, in an applied linguistics journal, to interdisciplinary data-based investigations of language use. After much deliberation, the editors worked out detailed guidelines for the guest editor, the seminar participants, and themselves. Each of the five papers written at the end of the seminar were revised twice after being closely read and critiqued by Elinor Ochs and at least two appropriate readers, from within and outside UCLA and from within and outside the area of language socialization. When the manuscripts were ready for copyediting, they were put through *IAL*'s regular pre-publication preparation process.

The five main articles in this special issue, all authored by graduate students from applied linguistics and anthropology at UCLA, represent the different emphases in discourse analysis and language use discussed earlier. They focus on audio- or video-recorded situated interaction in different everyday, institutional, and linguistic settings, but they are variously informed by, inter alia, activity theory, conversation analysis, ethnography, systemic linguistics, functional grammar, and, of course, language socialization. The editors thank Elinor Ochs for her hard work and patience throughout this long process of putting the special issue together and for her introductory remarks which follow this editorial.

In addition to the main articles, we also feature Alastair Pennycook's response to Barry Kanpol who, in Volume 1, Number 2, critiqued the essay which Pennycook contributed to our first issue. The exchange between Pennycook and Kanpol concerning

postmodernism and applied linguistics has been a fascinating dialogue about assumptions and ideologies underlying theory, practice, and research in our field, as well as about the sorts of directions applied linguistics might take in the coming years.

Finally, John Povey reports on three international conferences in Africa which dealt with a range of issues relevant to language use, language maintenance, and language planning in particular multilingual geopolitical contexts: a meeting on "Language Ecology in Africa" in Namibia, a workshop-style conference entitled "Democratic Approaches to Language Planning" South Africa, and a conference on "The Creative Use of Language in a Multilingual Society" in Kenya.

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> Women and men (both dong and ding)
> summer autumn winter spring
> reaped their sowing and went their came
> sun moon stars rain
>
> e. e. cummings
> "anyone lived in a pretty how town"

This second number of Volume 2 comes just over two years since *Issues in Applied Linguistics* was first organized. Back in the fall of 1989 there was a kind of quixotic excitement in answering Antony Kunnan's call to start an issues-based journal from scratch that would be managed entirely by graduate students in applied linguistics. Having served under Antony's editorship as assistant editor, I was officially appointed Editor last June. The journal has survived this change in its leadership, and a number of graduate students who were not among the original founding group have joined the editorial staff.

It seems that *IAL* is gradually taking its place in the printscape of our field. Many institutional libraries in Asia, Europe, and North America now have standing subscriptions to our journal. *IAL* advertises on electronic networks and in other professional journals and newsletters and was invited to participate in the TESOL conference editors' meetings as of last spring. Articles which

appear in *IAL* are abstracted in Linguistics and Language Behavior Abstracts and electronically indexed on Comserve.

The challenges for my tenure of editorship include increasing the visibility and circulation of the journal, encouraging more submissions, exchanges, special features, and thematic issues, and ensuring continuity by helping to groom a new generation of graduate student editors to take over the management of the journal from those who founded it. The editors who launched the journal feel proud to have "reaped our sowing," not as a one-shot enterprise, but as two volumes and four issues over two years. Now it is upon us to keep the journal going, growing, and, hopefully, interesting.

December, 1991 Sally Jacoby

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Sally Jacoby is a Ph.D. student in the Department of TESL & Applied Linguistics at UCLA. She holds a B.S. in Speech/Theatre from Northwestern University, a B.A. in English from Tel Aviv University, and an M.A. in Applied Linguistics from the University of Birmingham (U.K.). In all of her incarnations--as an actress, translator, ESP/EAP instructor and course developer, analyst of literature, research writing, and interaction--she has remained steadfast in her interest in discourse as both the achievement and reflection of what it means to be communicatively human.