

SLA Weekly Newsletter
University of Maryland Second Language Acquisition Program/SLLC
Wednesday, March 28, 2007

Items in this issue:

1. SLA Brown Bag Colloquium Series Presents: "Frequencies and Probabilities in Second Language Processing" Dr. Kira Gor (3/28)
2. Ph.D. Completion Project Workshop- Writing for Publication: Effective Introductions and Discussions (3/30)
3. Call for papers- Second Language Research Forum (SLRF) 2007
4. Call for Papers- "INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS" An Interdisciplinary Conference for Graduate Students at Duke University
5. Language Testing Research Colloquium (LTRC) 2007

1. SLA Brown Bag Colloquium Series Presents: "Frequencies and Probabilities in Second Language Processing" (3/28)

By Kira Gor
School of Languages, Literatures, and Cultures
University of Maryland
Where: The Language House Multi-purpose Room
Time: 12:15-1:30

ABSTRACT

The role of frequencies and probabilities in linguistic processing is a controversial issue, which is resolved differently depending on the theoretical perspective. Linguistic theory claims that linguistic operations are computational in nature, and symbolic rule application is independent of frequencies. For inflectional morphology, the dual-system approach stemming from this theoretical position maintains that the processing of regularly inflected forms is not affected by frequency (Pinker 1999). Since irregular forms are listed and share the properties of all the lexical items stored in the mental lexicon, access to them depends on the frequency of the form. Thus, in the English past tense, *walk-walked* is generated by rule computation, whereas the *sing-sang* mapping is processed in associative memory, therefore, only *sing-sang* will show the frequency effects. The opposite position, maintained by the single-system approach and grounded in constructivism and connectionism, claims that symbolic rules are not involved in linguistic processing. Instead, both regular and irregular inflected forms (*walk-walked* and *sing-sang*) are processed by associative patterning, with frequencies playing a major role (Bybee 1995). Several positions claim that linguistic processing combines symbolic rules and probabilities in one mechanism (Albright and Hayes 2003, Gor 2003, 2004, Yang 2002). This presentation will adopt the Rules and Probabilities Model (Gor 2003, 2004), which postulates that regular rule application is affected by frequencies and linguistic probabilities both in native (L1) and second language (L2) processing. It will report the results of several experiments on L2 processing of Russian verbal morphology by three groups of L2 learners with varying amounts of instruction and exposure to Russian and compare the L2 data to the child and adult L1 data. Some of these experiments were part of the projects carried out by Vdovina (2005) and

Golovetskaya (2005). The implications of these results will be discussed within the polemics between the dual- and single-system approaches. They will also be interpreted as contributing to the ongoing discussion of the role of explicit and implicit input in L2 acquisition.

2. Ph.D. Completion Project Workshop- Writing for Publication: Effective Introductions and Discussions (3/30)

Christine B. Feak
English Language Institute
University of Michigan

Friday, March 30, 2007
4:30 to 6:30 p.m.
Skinner Hall, Lecture Hall 0200
Building #44 on campus map

This workshop will focus on preparing articles for journal submission and publication, with emphasis on writing the introduction and the discussion. Strategies for writing, and models of successful writing, will be presented.

Register online at <https://www.training.umd.edu> under the category:
Graduate School Workshops Course: GRAD: Writing for
Publication

Questions: 301.405.4183 or at retention@gradschool.umd.edu

3. Call for papers- Second Language Research Forum (SLRF) 2007

The University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign will host the 30th annual Second Language Research Forum on October 11th - October 14th, 2007. The theme of SLRF 2007 is "Second Language Acquisition and Research: Focus on Form and Function". In order to explore the myriad ways in which learners map the forms they acquire to the functions that the forms are required to serve, research presented at this conference will highlight the interconnections and interfaces between form and function in SLA research and practices. It will also explore the implications of these interfaces for second language pedagogy.

Invited speakers include:

Gabriele Kasper, University of Hawai'i at Manoa
Silvina Montrul, University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign
James Purpura, Teachers College, Columbia University
Lydia White, McGill University

We are pleased to invite proposals for papers, posters, and thematic colloquia investigating form and function in SLA from any of the following research areas:

Formal approaches to SLA
Functional approaches to SLA
Conversation analysis (CA for SLA)
Testing and assessment
Heritage language acquisition
Psycholinguistic approaches to SLA
Classroom research
SLA pedagogy
Naturalistic SLA
CALL / CMC
Learner corpora and SLA

Abstract submission will be done online, on the SLRF 2007 website: <http://www.slrff-2007.uiuc.edu>. Click on the "Abstracts" link on the left, and follow the instructions there.

Only online PDF submissions at the site specified above will be accepted. Abstracts should be anonymous. They must be limited to 400 words for papers or posters, and 500 words (plus individual abstracts submitted separately) for thematic colloquia. Each author may submit no more than one individual and one co-authored abstract.

SUBMISSION DEADLINE: May 1, 2007

Notification of Acceptance: July 1, 2007

Please contact the SLRF 2007 organizers at slrf-2007@uiuc.edu if you have any questions.-

4. Call for Papers- "INSIDERS AND OUTSIDERS" An Interdisciplinary Conference for Graduate Students at Duke University

September 21-22, 2007

The graduate students of the Romance Studies department at Duke University are pleased to invite submissions for their fifth annual interdisciplinary conference. The conference will bring together graduate students from a wide variety of disciplines whose work engages questions of inclusion and exclusion. In order to encourage a truly interdisciplinary exchange of ideas, we welcome papers in fields including, but certainly not limited to: literary studies, political science, cultural anthropology, philosophy, Latin American studies, art history, language studies, women's studies, history, film studies, critical theory, media studies, musicology, European studies, and psychology. We hope to initiate meaningful conversation through an exploration of various problems posed by inclusion and exclusion.

Papers could engage questions such as:

- How are so-called “underground” texts (literature, film, music, etc.) and their authors affected by mainstream approval? Why might an author/artist choose to stay “underground”?
- To what degree is the dynamic of citizen participation and exclusion fundamental to the existence of the nation-state?
- What is "inside" a text, and what is "outside"? How do marginal notes, early drafts, a writer's biography, her correspondence, etc., relate to the "finished" text?
- What are the stakes of membership in a religious, political, social, or ethnic group? Of exclusion? What is at stake when a non-member becomes a member of these groups (or vice versa)?
- Higher education: bastion of the elite or motor of social advancement?
- Is the distinction between “insiders and outsiders” a false dichotomy? What are some ways this distinction might break down? Is there such a thing as an intermediate or liminal position?
- How does technology unite or divide people?
- What is the relationship between works in the literary or religious canon and marginal, dissident or apocryphal works?
- How are so-called “minor” languages—languages spoken by minority groups inside countries like Spain, France, Italy, Switzerland, etc.—faring in artistic/literary production?
- Does a language’s status as a minority dialect confer special status on those who speak/write it? Or does such status doom a language’s speakers to existence on the margins?
- How do peripheries define the center (and vice versa)?
- How do public spaces (museums, monuments, parks, etc.) baptize the citizen into the national family? What are the implications of presence in or absence from such places?
- In an age that has seen increasing globalization and the advent of "virtual space," what is the significance of national/regional boundaries? Are boundaries, and hence categories like “citizen,” “resident,” “immigrant,” etc. losing their relevance?

Please send abstracts of approximately 250 words to insidersandoutsiders@gmail.com. Abstracts must be submitted in English. In order to facilitate discussion across the disciplines, presentations will also be made in English. Presentations will last 12-15 minutes. With your submission, please include on a separate page your name, institutional affiliation, phone number, street address, email address, and a brief biographical sketch focusing on your academic work.

Deadline for submissions is June 15.

5. Language Testing Research Colloquium (LTRC) 2007

Theme: Exploring Diverse Methodologies & Conceptualizations in Language Testing Research

University of Barcelona, Barcelona, Spain
June 7 – 11, 2007

LTRC Highlights

- Messick Memorial Lecture: Toward a test theory for the interactionist era (Robert J. Mislevy)

- UCLES/ILTA Lifetime Achievement Speech: Reflections on where we have been and where we should go (Charles W Stansfield)
- Symposium 1: The measurement of language aptitude and high-level L2 abilities (M. Long, C. Doughty & K. Gor),
- Symposium 2: Current perspectives on language assessment for migration and citizenship" (N. Saville, E. Shohamy, S Gysen, K. Dalderop & A.Kunnan)
- Symposium 3: Cognitive diagnosis approaches in language assessment (Y-W. Lee, H-J. Kim, Y. Sawaki, E. Eunhee Jang & A. Kunnan)
- * 29 papers, 16 posters, and 10 works-in-progress Pre-LTRC Workshops
- Language testing: the social dimension" (T. McNamara & C. Roever)
- Using qualitative research methods in test development & validation (L. Taylor)
- Statistical analyses for language assessment (L. Bachman & A. Kunnan)
- A short course on structural equation modeling (B. Byrne & A. Geranpayeh)

For More Information:

On LTRC's program, registration & hotels: <http://www.iltaonline.com/ltrc07/index.htm>

On the International Language Testing Association (ILTA): <http://www.iltaonline.com/>
