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Redefining the Boundaries of Language Study

Claire Kramersch
Editor

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Toward a Reflective Practice of TA Education

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Working in the complex middle ground between theory-building and practice, the language program director significantly influences both the competence and attitudes of future language educators. Yet, despite the clear significance of the director's formative and mentoring role, language program direction within many departments of language and literature, culture, or linguistics remains a somewhat marginalized enterprise (Dvorak 1986; VanPatten and Lee 1990).

Increasing national and international demand for competence in intercultural communication highlights the paradox of program directors' marginalization. The members of language department faculties with the greatest educational capacities in this domain are those whose voices are least heard (Rivers 1992). It is frequently the language program director who is responsible for overall quality of language instruction, for on-the-job training of teaching assistants, and for ensuring that TAs develop a longer-term awareness of teaching and learning practices that will carry them into professional life beyond graduate school. Yet such work is typically not given the significance or intellectual recognition it deserves because language teaching is viewed in such dubiously dichotomous terms as "language" versus "literature," or "skill" versus "content" (Kramsch 1993). The work of language program direction is principally cast as what it is not: pedagogical, hence not scholarly, practical, hence nontheoretical.

Language program directors must, of necessity, balance their interest in elegant research findings or theoretical orientations and the more messy exigencies of life in the classroom—their own and others'. As they struggle to find this balance between theory and practice, explicit and implicit knowledge, analysis and performance—they may appreciate the impor-

tance of applying a reflective practice model to the training of their TAs.

The reflective practice model offers a metaphorical tool for constructing an integrated view of teaching that cycles iteratively through principled change and reflection upon change. Thus far, the model has proven useful in bringing about innovation through teacher-owned action research in language classrooms (Bailey 1995; Chamot 1995; Richards and Lockhart 1994). At issue in this paper is the extent to which the reflective practice model may also help language program directors understand and solve problems in the practice of TA education.

Part one of this paper offers a detailed description of the origin and nature of the reflective practice model—one among many possible models for reflecting on the practice of language program direction. Part two examines the level of “received knowledge,” i.e., the information commonly found in journals, workshops, and methods courses. This information is supposed to provide one source of initial rationale (if not impetus) for changes in practice. Some recent changes in the domain of received knowledge include a revised view of language as discourse and a longer-term understanding of learning as a process embedded in social context. Like the reflective practice model itself, current theories of received knowledge are inclusive, integrative, and process-oriented.

A discourse-based understanding of language development may enhance both the relevance and the effectiveness of language education. However, in practice, discourse-based pedagogy tends to lose momentum due to particular constraints that are essentially ideological in nature (e.g., compartmentalization of scholarship, competition for legitimized status, and product-oriented, computational—and therefore short-term and assessment-driven definition of language.) Part three shows how language instruction at American universities may be viewed as a special case of the Utilitarian discourse system (Scollon and Scollon 1995), which upholds and maintains the above-mentioned ideology.

The final section of this paper emphasizes the practice of language program direction itself, suggesting that language program directors consider reorienting their stance vis-à-vis the institutions where they work. At present a great deal of their effort goes into acquisition research and program development, often with a much needed emphasis on immediate concerns. The reflective approach, however, in suggesting a principled integration of received knowledge and practice, may lead to a broader perspective regarding the tasks facing program directors. TA education may have more impact if redirected by educators who, in full recognition of

their mentoring role as models for future professors, strive to “practice what they preach” in the design of TA education courses.

It is also suggested that language program directors develop their own understanding of language as discourse, and not only because the resulting awareness will enhance the delivery of language instruction for early-stage learners: Recognition of discourse systems and ability to parse their meaning may help the directors themselves to promote long-term and integrative change across the discourse systems that exist in the institutions where they work.

Reflective Practice

The term “reflective practice” originated in Donald Schön’s studies on the preparation and competence of professionals in such diverse fields as architecture and psychotherapy (1983). Schön begins with the observation that professionals demonstrate a kind of generalized capacity for reflection on their implicit, intuitive knowledge. This capacity is frequently brought to bear in coping with novel or unstable working circumstances. For Schön, the study of this “knowing-in-action” replaces an older model he terms “technical rationality,” in which “. . . professional activity consists in instrumental problem solving made rigorous by the application of scientific theory and technique” (Schön 1983, p. 21).

In interpreting this model for language teaching, Wallace (1991) defines reflective practice in relation to two other common models of teacher development: the *craft* model that emphasizes imitation and emulation of the expert’s professional wisdom, and the *applied science* model (Schön’s *technical rationality*) that focuses on a profession’s received knowledge “the facts” to be found in journals, textbooks—and courses on education. The craft model is atheoretical: Teaching is understood to be analogous to skilled activity in general; it develops primarily through practice and exposure to the activity of experts. The applied science model is a top-down representation of teachers as consumers of knowledge, produced elsewhere by researchers and theorists. In this model, professional renewal consists of periodic updates on the pedagogical implications of research, which the teacher is expected to export and apply in the classroom. Both models epitomize commonly held views. The applied science model motivates many courses on methodology and second language acquisition provided in support of teacher education. Teachers often turn to the craft model when applied science proves impractical or irrelevant.

The *reflective* model seeks to combine and integrate both the applied

science and the craft models, and in so doing suggests a parallel to Bruner's "Two Modes of Thought" (1986). In that essay, Bruner defines two essential modes of cognitive functioning, two basic ways of knowing. One is the logico-scientific or "paradigmatic" way, which strives for ever higher abstraction and generality. The other, the narrative, "strives to put its timeless miracles into the particulars of experience, and to locate that experience in time and place" (p. 13). The successful application of the paradigmatic mode results in a good theory, the proper functioning of the narrative mode results in a good story, believable, if not necessarily true.

The reflective model attempts to reconcile the differences between these two modes of thought by representing them both within an idealized, experiential learning cycle that synthesizes practice and informed, critical reflection.

As can be seen in Figure 1, cycles of theory-building, practical application, and reflection lead, ideally, to integrating technical knowledge with life experiences. What is most compelling about the reflective practice model is precisely that it is centered on teachers' experience of diverse situations and ways of knowing.

In the context of a hierarchy of values, that places isolated research and theory generation well above the practice of teaching (Clarke 1994), the reflective approach is potentially subversive. By validating the experience of practitioners, and changing their stance in relation to the production of research and theory—acknowledging them as a primary source of knowledge production—the reflective approach reverses the theory-to-practice power relationship implied by the understanding of practice as technical rationality.

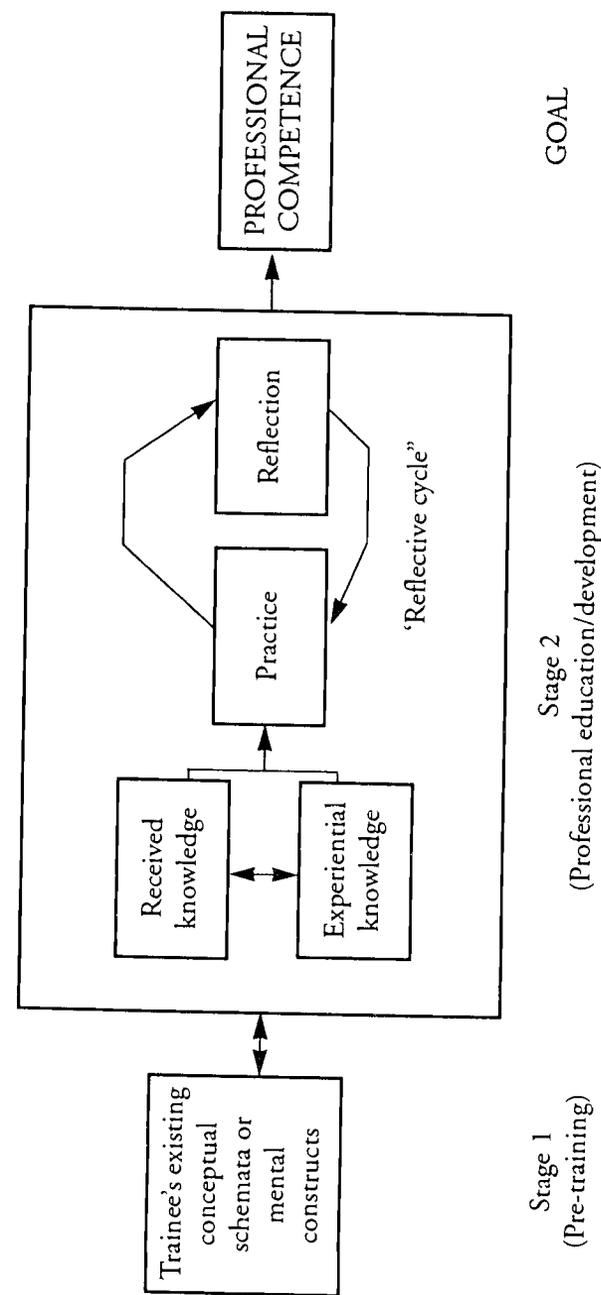
At the same time, however, cycles of reflection promote active and enabling use of theory in unceasing reiteration and re-evaluation. Reflecting on the integration of theory and practice validates the research enterprise in its "helping" dimension, as opposed to its purely epistemological value (van Lier 1991). Unlike the craft model, the reflective practice model offers a systematic way to review or redirect the uses of research and theory, which may then be redesigned or interpreted to address issues of practice.

Openness to change and the ability to critically evaluate new approaches are among the most crucial conceptual tools of language educators because their profession is constantly changing. As questions, methods, technologies, contexts, and paradigms are redefined, the need for change may well be the only discrete element of the profession's self-assess-

Figure 1

Reflective practice model of professional education/development

(Wallace 1991, p. 49)



ment that remains constant over time. The reflective practice model offers a dynamic approach to the continuous professional development and concurrent drive for innovation characteristic of the profession.

Reflecting on the Profession's Received Knowledge

In the literature on language instruction, the reflective practice model has been exploited mainly in its potential to motivate "action research" and critical reflection on specific cases of procedure in language classrooms (e.g., Allwright 1988, Bailey 1995; Chamot 1995; Richards and Lockhart 1994). Its application to the general practice of language program direction and the education of teachers will require, in addition, a periodic critical review of the field's received knowledge and how that received knowledge relates to the practice of teacher education. Clearly, the goals have become more inclusive, as illustrated in Kramsch's rationale for language education in institutional settings: ". . . to become communicatively proficient in the language, to gain insights into the symbolic and the communicative functions of language, and to develop cultural awareness and cross-cultural understanding" (Kramsch 1987, p. viii).

The received knowledge of language teaching has always included, at a minimum, a theory of language and a theory of language development. Many language educators now consider it necessary to broaden the perspective from which the profession defines these essential elements, in order to provide instruction that truly fosters development of intercultural communicative competence. Accordingly, a theory of language as discourse has now become part of the received knowledge of language teaching and learning as processes embedded in a sociocultural context.

Language as Discourse

An essential feature of any discourse view of language is its emphasis on language use in real situations; the basic unit for discourse analysis is not the abstract form or rule, but a given instance of language use. "Discourse analysis" varies greatly in its object, method, and scope, from the study of logical relations creating cohesion within texts with little reference to intertextual or societal context (Halliday and Hasan 1976), to the study of coherence and ideological positioning within societal discourse systems (Gee 1990; Fairclough 1989). Under the heading "discourse analysis" a large number of other pursuits can be found: the study of communication across discourse systems (Scollon and Scollon 1995) defined, for example,

by gender (Tannen 1993); the study of conversational inference (Gumperz 1982); the discourse of formal education in classrooms (Mehan 1979). The purposes of discourse analysis are seemingly limitless.¹

It is its emphasis on language use, however, that makes discourse analysis attractive for language education. Discourse analysis holds out the promise of a real understanding of "authenticity," which would permeate the entire language teaching enterprise, from the discourse of the classroom through the portrayal of otherness and of intercultural communication as it takes place in all settings. Knowing more about language use in and out of classrooms helps teachers not only understand the regularities of form and participants' expectations of classroom language, but also expand classroom discourse options when desirable (Kramsch 1985), and above all appreciate classroom life in its own complex phenomenology (van Lier 1988).

A focus on language use is also attractive because of the interdisciplinary character of discourse-based language study:

Language education becomes interdisciplinary. While its focus remains in the description of language, grammar, lexis, phonology and discourse, an understanding of the curriculum landscape now requires insights from cognitive psychology and sociology, from studies in ideology and media studies, from conversational analysis and ethnography and from cultural history . . . Characteristically new here is the insistence on a continuum and a community of teachers of foreign and second language and teachers of the mother tongue. (Candlin 1994, p. ix)

To take just one of Candlin's "source fields" as an example, conversational analysis (Wardhaugh 1985) has the potential to bring much greater depth and precision to the profession's understanding of classroom events as well as to the teaching of conversation itself. Using the tools of conversational analysis, it is possible to describe: how taking turns at talk (and, hence, rights to generate meaning) are distributed; how conversational problems are resolved; and how topics are foregrounded. It is also possible to compare these patterns of use within and across many different social contexts: in the classroom (van Lier 1988); in the courtroom (Matoesian 1993); at the dinner table (Tannen 1984; Wieland 1991). Conversational analysis is necessary to elucidate the complexities of *oral*—in contrast to written—discourse. Increasingly, the analysis of conversational interaction also provides useful insights into the process of second language development itself (Donato 1994).

For language instruction at universities in the United States, a dis-

course-based focus would remind educators of the need for explicit links between language study and the other fields of study within language departments, such as literature, culture, or linguistics. Many of the potentially relevant disciplines are not normally housed in departments of language and literature, but many others are: cultural theory, linguistics, history, literary studies.

A Sociocultural Approach to Language Development

At the same time that second language education has developed discourse-based approaches to describing language, second language acquisition research has tried to illuminate the relationship between language development and social context. For example, the work of Hatch (1978) and Long (1981) marked the beginning of a line of research whose aim has been to explore the development of grammatical competence through the processing of input in interaction (see recent overview in Pica 1994). In this research, partly inspired by Krashen's popular Input Hypothesis (1985), discourse is viewed as a medium for the delivery of comprehensible language that will drive an undefined acquisition mechanism. Without a complete or plausible explanation for the development occurring in interaction, this research has been limited to the description of conditions which may—or may not—favor input processing.

More recently, scholars following a Vygotskian line of research have taken up a sociocultural view, which defines language development as the process of social interaction itself. For Vygotsky, all higher order mental functions develop first on the intermental plane, that is, in interaction with others, prior to their appropriation by individuals on an intramental plane. Development occurs in the individual's *zone of proximal development*, or level of activity at which performance is possible in dialogic interaction with assistance from a more capable other. As individuals proceed through this *zone of proximal development*, they move from other-regulated action to control of their own activity, or self-regulation in the accomplishment of the task. To study the development of such a complex capability as second language competence, therefore, one should focus, according to Vygotsky's microgenetic theory, on the individual's appropriation of sociocultural knowledge in assisted performance.

A thorough account of Vygotskian theory in second language studies would be beyond the scope of this article and is, in any case, available elsewhere (Lantolf 1994; Lantolf and Appel 1994). Most interesting here is the very fact that the field of second language education now includes

among its received knowledge a theory placing the locus of cognitive development in social interaction; that is, in discourse-based activity. Moreover, this theory may well prove to have greater explanatory power than theories based on input-processing metaphors, and this for two reasons: 1) because its theory of development is explicit, whereas input-processing approaches tend not to explain *how* input drives language acquisition, and 2) because its frame of reference includes all that is learned through and about participation in sociocultural activity. Other theories, by contrast, often separate language form and function, and generally only account for the acquisition of a distinct grammatical competence.

For the moment, sociocultural theory does not represent the mainstream of second language development theory. However, the approach has gained sufficient legitimacy to be considered part of the profession's received knowledge. Like the discourse-based definition of language, this theory of development has important implications for both researchers and educators. For researchers, sociocultural theory implies a process-oriented and long-term view of acquisition that is very different from prevailing notions of the mind as a blank slate awaiting the mentor's chalk, as a container to be filled with knowledge, or as a processor to be activated by data entry. For language educators, the theory directs attention to the qualities of "informal" learning, to teaching as "assisted performance," to the evolution of knowledge over years of experience.

Ideology and the Practice of TA Education

Thus far, this paper has argued that the received knowledge of second language education includes a view of language as discourse and a sociocultural approach to understanding language development. Taken together, these two orientations imply the design of language education with the following attributes:

1. It values the authenticity of language use in all contexts, including the classroom.
2. It is interdisciplinary in its intellectual origins, in its approaches to research, and in the design of learning environments.
3. It values social interaction in its vital role in language development; in its assessment of social interaction it does not distinguish between product and process, between medium and message.

4. It takes into account the long-term nature of second language development as socialization.

What becomes of these notions when they are included in a program of TA education? In this author's experience, there is generally an initial period of deep and genuine appreciation for the possibilities they represent, followed by expressions of doubt as to their relevance for practical teaching concerns. Occasionally, TAs claim that these attempts at "education" are confusing; they express a desire for a more "training-" oriented approach, that is, an emphasis on teaching technique rather than on theory. Upon reflection, it is easy to understand why TAs have difficulty integrating certain aspects of the new received knowledge, for it does not mesh well with the political, ideological, and organizational realities of language departments, nor does it fit easily into the general experience of formal education.

In discussing the discourse systems that define culture, Scollon and Scollon (1995) define a discourse system as constituted by its preferred forms of verbal practice, which are shaped by its ideology, learned via its socialization patterns and its politeness practices, or "face systems." An ideology is "a system of thinking, social practice and communication . . . which is used either to bring a particular group to social power or to legitimate their position of social power . . ." (p. 119). The authors take as one example the Utilitarian discourse system that pervades many Western professional contexts. For example, Utilitarianism as a discourse system is in large part responsible for an American public educational system that "has been traditionally based on utility, democracy and scientific measures of progress" (Kramsch 1993, p. 187). Utilitarian ideology traces its roots to the European Enlightenment, i.e., to the origins of individualism and egalitarianism. It is based on the ethical principle that society exists in order to produce the greatest happiness for the largest possible number of people. Utilitarianism also presumes that humans are logical, rational economic beings; that the free individual is the basis of society; and that the key to greater production (hence progress toward greater happiness for more people) is technology and invention. The Utilitarian society's most valuable members are those who produce the greatest wealth. Among the ideals of Utilitarian discourse is a preference for the deductive and the public, and an emphasis on empirical fact.

It is characteristic of the ideological structure and worldview of the Utilitarian system that the ideal mode of socialization into Utilitarianism is formal schooling. It was, indeed, early Utilitarians who, in the mid-nine-

teenth century, institutionalized a division between formal and informal learning via generalized, compulsory public education. Structured to train a workforce who would willingly give up traditional practices and values in favor of wealth production through technology and industry, the public school took on many of the attributes of its parallel institution, the factory. Classrooms were, in fact, designed to maximize the efficiency and cost-effectiveness with which knowledge is progressively dispensed in discrete measured quantities. This commodity—formal knowledge—was produced by researchers, collected by teachers, then transmitted to students. With the emergence of institutionalized schooling came devaluation of non-formal learning; forced separation of working and learning contexts; emphasis on the quantifiable; and, of course, the conception of the student mind as a vessel to be filled with knowledge, through the purposeful act of teaching.

Scollon and Scollon also describe the politeness practices, or "face systems," of Utilitarianism within organizations. The ideal of egalitarianism prompts organizations to present the view, at least to the outside world, that all their members are in symmetrical solidarity with each other. In fact, membership in corporations and schools is hierarchically organized. The "higher-ups" may choose to invite involvement from those below, whereas those below tend to demonstrate respect to their superiors via strategies of independence. Rising to the top within the hierarchy is dependent on individuals' ability to compete with peers, proving themselves more productive and better able to control the public, deductive, and empirically based forms of Utilitarian discourse.

Language education in institutional settings is a subset of general formal education, and hierarchically lesser among equals than fields that produce more easily quantifiable or more lucrative knowledge. In symmetrical solidarity, it, too subsists through upholding the values of its origin. Having considered the Utilitarian discourse system in some detail, it becomes possible to precisely identify some obstacles encountered by TA educators who attempt to invoke discourse-based and sociocultural approaches to language teaching or teacher education. They pertain specifically to the notions of authenticity, interdisciplinarity, and social interaction as learning.

Authenticity

A discourse-based and sociocultural approach, to recall Part Two, values the authenticity of language use in all contexts and recognizes the uniqueness

of every instance in which knowledge is created through language use. The concept is exemplified in Savignon's definition of communicative competence as a dynamic, relative and context-dependent construct (1983). When introduced into the milieu of discourse systems of formal education, a sociocultural view survives only with difficulty because it resists quantification and commodification. The "authenticity" of texts, for example, has become a question of the extent to which they reflect putative native speaker norms, with little reference to the legitimacy and variability of nonnative interpretations (Kramsch 1995). "Authentic texts" are now the products of textbook publishers who have seized the notion and repackaged it in an acceptable, commodified form. Many educators—or so it would seem—cannot avoid conceiving of L2 proficiency as an individually owned commodity, that exists in measurable quantity regardless of the context in which it is used. This is in some fundamental way unavoidable, given the overwhelming influence of utilitarianism in U.S. education.

Interdisciplinarity

The newer received knowledge as described in this paper also informs a view that is interdisciplinary in its intellectual origins, in its approaches to research and in the design of learning environments. It is instructive to look at this problem from an institution-wide perspective. Brecht and Walton (1995, pp. 140–41) have identified the lines of demarcation around which academic compartmentalization typically occurs, identifying what they consider to be the four essential missions of departments of language and literature:

1. the proficiency mission that furthers the goal of developing useful communicative ability in the languages taught
2. the general education mission that strives to develop metalinguistic awareness and overcome ethnocentrism
3. the expertise mission that creates the university professor of the future, typically in the mold of the professors of today
4. the ethnic heritage mission that preserves the linguistic and cultural identity of member groups

Brecht and Walton further suggest that departments exhibit inconsistencies in their observance of these missions. Normally, the department

claims to be driven by the first mission, that is, the fostering of language proficiency. However, according to Brecht and Walton, language courses typically achieve more in the area identified as "general education" than they do in the development of communicative proficiency. The ethnic heritage mission is addressed rarely and often neglected entirely.

The fundamental organization of departments most clearly supports an expertise mission: The most resources and the quantifiably and quantitatively greatest professorial teaching efforts are devoted to upper-level and graduate courses, which are seen as involving something other than language. Mirroring the Utilitarian face system, therefore, departments claim to be organized around egalitarian utility, producing maximal good for the greatest possible number of people. The problem with this, in universities as in corporations, is that the claim to egalitarianism conflicts with other facets of Utilitarianism, including the differential evaluation of individuals according to their production capacity and adherence to the discourse system. To solve this problem, Utilitarianism must contradict itself and override the principle of egalitarianism in favor of preserving the hierarchies that structure the institution. Within language departments, the institutional requirement of self-preservation is an implicit prime directive leading to disproportionate emphasis on academic "expertise."

Language program directors are associated with the lower ranks of the department because of their preoccupation with the less highly regarded "language proficiency" mission. When they reach out to other disciplines, it is therefore less a matter of moving *across* disciplinary lines than it is a question of reaching up into higher organizational levels. Recalling the discussion of face systems within hierarchies, only "higher ups" may invite participation from below; those who inhabit the lower rungs of the hierarchy avoid initiating dialogue with their superiors out of respect for their independence. The drive for institutional self-preservation combines with the face system of Utilitarianism to override the principles of utility and equality, effectively stifling interdisciplinary approaches to language study.

Social Interaction as Learning

Because of prevailing aspects of Utilitarian ideology, the understanding of social interaction as learning encounters several important conceptual obstacles. Firstly, this definition runs counter to the Utilitarian view that the free individual is the basis of society. Within this view, the social exists only by rational consensus because all of the individuals consider a particular social arrangement to their advantage. In school, individuals are

evaluated, ranked, promoted and so on according to the value of their own performance. Secondly, any learning perceived as “non-formal” is routinely devalued in schools. When the quantifiable educational objectives and grade benefits of a school-based activity are neither pre-established nor self-evident, students perceive the activity at best as “down time.” Or worse, as wasted time.

Thirdly, locating learning in social interaction does not fit the common understanding of the mind as a container to be filled with knowledge. It is neither meaningful nor possible to determine with precision just what content comes to the individual mind from informal learning, and it is equally impossible to quantify that content for evaluative purposes. To quote a TA known to the author, “All of this is real exciting, but I can’t figure out where to put it on the mid-term exam.”

The Long Term

Finally, in a discourse-based and sociocultural view of language education language educators must take into account the long-term nature of second language development. If second language learning is a process of socialization over a period of years, it is also continuous with respect to learners’ prior experience. In the Utilitarian discourse system, however, value is measured in terms of quantified production, which leads to concerns regarding efficiency and cost-effectiveness. The production of education is measured in units, such as hours of classroom seat-time or standardized test scores. The production of foreign language education in the United States is measured in units of reproducible “authentic language” (Frawley 1993). Since responsibility for formal education is divided among several institutions and many classrooms, each of which strives to meet its own local production goals, discontinuity is characteristic of the normal language education experience in school. TAs are not easily persuaded to distance themselves from local production concerns in order to fully appreciate the long-term social process of language development. The TA’s first mission, after all, is the production of A’s and quantifiable success in the program.

The Reflective Practice of TA Education

A careful look at the dilemma of the language program director shows that there is more at stake than mere tension between theory and practice. The irreconcilable discourses of language education and of institutional school-

ing place the informed program director in the position of continuously steering a course between unquantifiable communicative competence and measurable proficiency, between disciplinary constraints and interdisciplinary explorations, between short-term and long-term goals in language education. Acknowledging and analyzing the ideological component of incompatible discourses will not produce immediate practical solutions, but at least it charts certain obstacles.

Meanwhile, reflective practice remains a potentially useful model for TA education because it suggests experimentation with different ways of integrating new ideas within teaching practice. Faced with the problem of incompatible discourses, language program directors may opt to integrate themselves more successfully into the institutional system, or attempt to change the system. Strategies for the first option include continued efforts to upgrade the status of language teaching within institutional authority structures. Program directors may simply provide information to their colleagues about the scholarly nature of second language studies, and to the public about the substantive findings of research on learning nonprimary languages and cultures (Cummins 1995). To do this successfully, of course, will require that they communicate to varying audiences in understandable terms. For this they will have to develop their own understanding of intercultural communication and apply it to the work of furthering an appropriate agenda.

Another, complementary approach involves critical examination of the extent to which language program directors contribute to maintaining the status quo. Sociologists commonly observe that oppression requires the participation of the oppressed, who acquiesce unwittingly because they believe there is no other way of thinking: “Social and cognitive structures are recursively and structurally linked, and the correspondence that obtains between them provides one of the most solid props of social domination” (Bourdieu and Wacquant 1992, p. 14). One problem for program directors is that they usually have heavy administrative responsibilities involving many people and numerous discrete tasks. Under the daunting circumstances they face, they must reserve what little research time they have for furthering work in their specialty. When they write as *language program directors*, they tend to concentrate on practical problem solving and putting out fires. They very infrequently reflect on the integration of scholarship in the literary, linguistic, or cultural disciplines represented in language departments. This is the case even though problems of integration and independence are central to language teaching as a discipline. As

long as program directors continue to consider their role as primarily administrative and practical, substantive communication with the other levels of institutional authority structures will be impeded.

As for changing the authority structure, the best opportunity available to the program director is TA education itself: The TAs of today form the professoriate of tomorrow and will one day govern their institutions. In order to effect change, "academic re-supply" must be replaced by another view of graduate education, one in which the program director participates actively as scholar and educator. The kind of TA education envisaged here would offer a comprehensive understanding of language and its development. It would demonstrate convincingly that this view is not only useful, but essential to the language educator.

Program directors can further this goal by "practicing what they preach" in their own efforts at TA education. This may mean, among many other things, applying the reflective practice model to continuous innovation in courses for TAs; working to integrate in their teacher training the best available received knowledge, for example, by bringing a view of language as discourse to the center of their TAs' attention, adapting a multi-disciplinary perspective, or integrating their TAs' own experiences as students and users of language. Looking at language development as a long-term and socially embedded process might lead TAs to question the discontinuities marking their own lives as learners.

It may not be too optimistic to suppose that TA education, redefined as a vehicle for change, can work toward shaping a professoriate of tomorrow capable of integrated, overarching, yet ultimately realistic conceptions of language education.

Notes

1. There are several useful introductions to the field of discourse analysis (Brown and Yule 1983; Stubbs 1983; van Dijk 1985; Fairclough 1989); and to the relevance of discourse analysis for language instruction (Cook 1989; McCarthy 1991; Hatch 1992; Kramsch 1993; McCarthy and Carter 1994).

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Part III

Linguistic Boundaries