

From the Associate Editor

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Karen L. Landahl

Beginning October 1, I will be on leave for a year. During this time I will also be taking a hiatus from my work for the *Journal*. I hope to return with renewed energy after a year devoted to my linguistic phonetic research. I enjoy working for the *Journal*; it provides me with a means to repay in a small way all that I and my staff have gained from our participation in IALL. Surely our late president, Robert Henderson, was exemplary of our membership: hard-working, committed, enthusiastic, good-humored, and helpful. I have no doubt that we run a better facility to support language learning because of what we have learned from our colleagues in IALL. The *Journal* also provides a tangible, archival record of our organization; maintaining and writing for the *Journal* should be something we all feel responsible for as we contribute to the evolution of language teaching and learning.

I thank Pete Smith for this opportunity to say good-bye for awhile, and I will take my leave by telling you a bit about myself and my involvement with technology for language learning. Why am I, a linguist, a phonetician, involved with IALL? Well, linguists are also language students and often very interested in language teaching and learning. In addition to this general interest, I have been more directly involved in the state of language instruction at the University of Chicago since 1985 when I was appointed Academic Director of the Language Laboratories and Archives (LLA). Since its inception this facility has had a three-fold mandate: 1) to furnish media and equipment for language learning, 2) to provide technological support for linguistic research on speech, and 3) to maintain an archive of field and commercial recordings of speech. This year, upon the retirement of its Director, the Language Faculty Resource Center (LFRC), was merged with the Language Labs, thus affording me broader contact with the language instructors. The LFRC was set up to support the language teacher in the classroom with portable equipment, photocopying, computers for the creation of class

assignments, and, along with the LLA, facilities for the creation of course materials in audio, video or computer formats. The LFRC is also a space where the language teachers from different departments can get together, get to know one another and share experiences and ideas.

Joint facilities for language learning and linguistic research have worked out well on our campus. First, they are cost-effective. Language teachers, linguists, psychologists, anthropologists and their students often have need of the same specialized equipment. We are able to afford better equipment because we do not have to purchase redundant units for each area. Second, the LLA adds to the interactions among those interested in language. Graduate students involved in language teaching are not only from language, culture and literature departments, but indeed may come from linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and so on. This spurs an interest not only in producing language materials, but also in pursuing research that addresses general theoretical questions and that may have consequences for the teaching of language as well. Interdisciplinary exchanges add to the vitality of the LLA/LFRC, and help insure its integration into campus life as both a service unit and as a research and development facility. We have recently begun a collaboration with the Music Department on two levels—housing computer workstations for the use of composition classes and sharing a UNIX system for research on sound in speech and music. We hope for interesting interchanges as, for example, musicians work on synthesis of human voice characteristics and language students explore the phonetics of sung speech.

My contact with the LLA/LFRC has had effects on my own research. Discussions with teachers of Japanese have led to studies on the use of computer-implemented visual feedback to assist the acquisition of non-native sound systems—work which I had been interested in carrying out since graduate school. Our investigations have implications for language study, phonological theory, and “critical period” studies.

While I have gained from working with language faculty and students, I also hope that I have made contributions to their work. There are many significant issues under discussion that affect language teaching on our campus (I doubt that they are unique to us) and that are reconsidered at regular intervals. Examples include: What is the best form of language teaching? Is immersion the best means of language learning for everyone? What teaching role should graduate students play in the language program? How is technology best used in the pursuit of language acquisition? What is the

purpose of language learning in the liberal arts curriculum? Should there be a language requirement? And so on. As a faculty member with a special interest in language instruction and with knowledge of the language faculty, I hope that the interchanges and collaborative efforts that have been encouraged and supported by the LLA/LFRC will yield answers to these questions, ensuring a campus environment friendly to language learning. ■

ReCALL

The European Association for Computer Assisted Language Learning (EUROCALL) is an association of language teaching professionals from Europe and worldwide, which aims to:

- promote the use of foreign languages within Europe;
- provide a European focus for all aspects of the use of technology for language learning;
- enhance the quality, dissemination and efficiency of CALL materials.

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