The discussant at this colloquium was Sally Magnan (University of Wisconsin-Madison). In her mind, these papers challenged four concepts that have been central to foreign language instruction since the beginning: What is foreign? What is communication? What is culture? What might constitute teaching? Referring to the 5Cs of the National Standards (ACTFL 1996), Magnan considered in turn whether the classroom with four walls and one teacher had become inadequate in light of the new technologies; how we are to train teachers to impart international awareness to their students; how we are to conceive of assessment if the usual linguistic and cultural norms are put into question; and how language educators are best to influence policy makers.

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Lang. Teach. (2013), **46.3**, 427–431 © Cambridge University Press 2013
doi:10.1017/S026144481300013X

Symposium: Methodologies in SLA

Two panel discussions presented at the Second Language Acquisition Graduate Student Symposium on 29 and 30 April 2011 at the University of Iowa.

1. Background

The 2011 symposium, co-hosted by the University of Iowa (UI) and the University of Wisconsin-Madison (UW-Madison) continued the stimulating discussion of research methodologies at the previous year's symposium.

https://doi.org/10.1017/S026144481300013X Published online by Cambridge University Press

There were three plenary speakers. Diane Larsen-Freeman (University of Michigan) on 'From simplicity to complexity: Shifting methodological gears'; Monika Chavez (UW-Madison) on 'The relationship between SLA research and language pedagogy: A (primarily) foreign language perspective', and Richard Hurtig (UI) on 'Emergent L1 and L2 literacy: Addressing issues of parental literacy to provide children adequate shared reading experiences that support language and literacy development'. The symposium participants discussed methodologies in a wide range of studies from multiple theoretical perspectives.

In addition to the papers and posters by the graduate student presenters, the symposium featured two panel discussions which also focused on research methodologies: 'Mixed methods research in SLA' and 'Collaboration and co-authoring in SLA'. The symposium brought together specialists in mixed methods research and collaboration and allowed them to share their experiences and insights. Both panel discussions were particularly engaging because there is no single approach to mixed methods research or to collaborative projects.

2. Themes

One of the phenomena evident in the field today is the trend to combine different methods when looking at a problem. Most researchers understand mixed methods research as combining quantitative and qualitative approaches, but there appears to be no monolithic model of how the researcher should proceed when using different methodologies in the same project. Chaired by Pamela Wesely (UI), the panel featured faculty and students from the two programs: Shenika Harris (UW-Madison), Takako Nakakubo (UI), Lia Plakans (UI), and Jane Zuengler (UW-Madison).

Wesely, a contributor to the *Journal of Mixed Methods Research*, explained that there are numerous models of mixed methods research, some focused on quantitative and others on qualitative methodologies. She also suggested that those who use mixed methods in their work in effect choose their own philosophies. Examples include (i) a PRAGMATIC approach, focusing on the methods that can help to answer a certain research question; (ii) a more DIALECTIC approach, iteratively applying different methods to gain a deeper insight into the problem; or (iii) a TRANSFORMATIVE approach, focusing on issues of social justice and ethnicity (Mertens 2005).

Zuengler noted that mixed methods differ from quasi-experimental research in that the latter is fundamentally positivist and based on quantitative data illuminated by qualitative data. She claimed that mixed methods research, such as her current work with minority students from various linguistic and ethnic backgrounds, 'affords us a different ontological paradigm, an opportunity to consider breaking those boundaries . . . that maybe should have never been there, and never perhaps were there'.

The panel members stressed that, although mixed methods research combines qualitative and quantitative approaches, it is not additive. Plakans reminded us that each approach should inform the other, stating that 'there is something in the synthesis, in the interaction between them. It's not just qualitative plus quantitative nor a watered down version of either of those'.

Qualitative methods need not include quantitative methods to be considered as 'mixed methods'. Zuengler referenced Denzin & Lincoln (2005) and Johnson & Onwuegbuzie (2004), who discuss the wide range of qualitative research studies including constructivism,

https://doi.org/10.1017/S026144481300013X Published online by Cambridge University Press

postmodernism, and feminism. While some researchers consider these differences to be approaches, others call them methods. Zuengler stressed the importance of determining how researchers define the terms that they use in their own projects.

Larsen-Freeman pointed out that researchers should look at the variety of methods within both quantitative and qualitative approaches, since neither of these is homogeneous. For example, quantitative approaches involve more than the model of Gaussian (normal) distribution. Zuengler suggested that SLA research coming from the quantitative paradigm should also use qualitative approaches because 'one (approach) alone is incomplete'.

In the field of applied linguistics, Wesely referenced Dörnyei (2007), who said 'it is worth considering applying a mixed methods research design in every situation' (p. 133). Plakans and Harris responded that although they are using mixed methods in their current research projects (that is, Plakans's work on integrative assessment and Harris's on the influence of L1 English on the quality of L2 texts), such a choice should be determined by the research questions, as 'there may be questions, issues and topics that may be better answered by one methodology over another' (Plakans). Harris added that researchers should do what makes sense rather than what is trendy and argued that a variety of approaches moves the field forward.

Finally, the discussion moved to practical issues such as the challenge of writing up mixed methods research concisely for publication. Plakans suggested that researchers should be selective while acknowledging that the methodological section of a study might turn out to be longer when several methods are used.

Nakakubo stressed the inherent connection between research methodology and teaching. Her dissertation research involved the effects of task planning on spoken production when the students embarked on a story-telling task. Her qualitative findings can inform pedagogical practice and show that instructors need to guide language learners through the process of planning their production of discourse in speaking tasks. In closing, Wesely encouraged the audience to find new ways to represent the data and to try new perspectives, including mixed methods.

The second panel shifted from the discussion of mixed methods to the mixing of voices and perspectives through collaboration. To paraphrase Larsen-Freeman, academia does not have to be a solitary place. Chaired by Judith Liskin-Gasparro (UI), the panel included Diane Larsen-Freeman (University of Michigan), Sally Magnan (UW-Madison), and Roumyana Slabakova (UI). They shared their experiences and advice surrounding the phenomenon of co-authoring and collaboration.

Liskin-Gasparro began the discussion by sharing the results of a survey of top journals in the field. These show that the field of SLA has shifted from primarily single-authored articles to co-authored studies. It follows that co-authoring and collaboration should be valued by researchers in the field. Panelists also discussed the tension between the importance of single-authored and co-authored publications for successful career building, and the various types and styles of collaboration, including cross-disciplinary, cross-language, and faculty–graduate student collaboration.

Slabakova shared her history of collaboration with Silvina Montrul (University of Illinois at Urbana-Champaign). Their collaboration began when both were graduate students and continues into the present. Slabakova and Montrul first started working together on a big project on the acquisition of aspect and decided that one of them would write the first draft

https://doi.org/10.1017/S026144481300013X Published online by Cambridge University Press

of each research report, with the other colleague editing the work. At the end of the project, the primary author received first authorship.

Magnan noted that collaboration often emerges from conversations shared at conferences such as this, in which graduate students form 'intellectual friendships'. Hurtig, a plenary speaker, discussed how research projects can come out of stimulating conversations after a lab meeting or a seminar. Larsen-Freeman agreed and shared the story of how she and Lynne Cameron (Open University) were attending the Georgetown University Round Table on Languages and Linguistics when a blizzard shut down Washington, DC. While trapped in a hotel for three days, they 'sketched out a book' that became the seminal work, *Complex systems and applied linguistics*.

Magnan remarked that 'collaboration has been one of the great joys of [her] career' but advised that while there are different styles of collaboration, communication is always crucial. The panelists suggested that researchers involved in co-authored projects should discuss specifics beforehand, such as the order of authorship, publication names, and ownership of data sets. Researchers may wish to write down an agreement, recognizing that it could shift over time and through circumstance. Magnan noted that during her tenure as *The Modern Language Journal* editor from 1994 to 2007, manuscripts came back after review with a different authorship. Communication is especially important in the co-authorship of textbooks because, as Liskin-Gasparro said, 'there is probably no more complex book project that you can get involved with than a foreign language textbook because of the length and the complexity of the components'.

Larsen-Freeman remarked that she considers co-authoring, at least in the initial stages, as a type of 'parallel play', during which the table of contents is written up and goals are articulated. With this approach, it would be fairly easy to determine who wrote which chapters in the final product. Slabakova said that the same would be true for texts that she and Montrul composed, because they have very different writing styles. Although all of Larsen-Freeman's collaborations have been interactive, at least initially, they were also 'divide-and-conquer' projects. Larsen-Freeman recounted her first big collaboration project on *The grammar book* with Marianne Celce-Murcia (UCLA), in which they worked independently, commenting on each other's chapters.

A lively thread of discussion among all of the panel participants involved the technological evolution of communication between authors from exchange through the post and FedEx of printed manuscripts edited by hand with multicolored ink to email with electronic attachments. However, as Larsen-Freeman and Liskin-Gasparro reminded us, despite the changes in technology, the human aspect of the working relationships is the same as it was. In the words of Liskin-Gasparro, 'you always have a personal relationship with the people that you're working with'.

Panelists also discussed how collaboration is taught to graduate students. Should this be done implicitly or explicitly? Larsen-Freeman observed that she tends to teach collaboration implicitly through having graduate students work with her on certain projects. One of the examples of a scaffolded collaborative model was her work with her former graduate student Michael Long (University of Maryland) on their book *An introduction to second language acquisition research*. As for co-authoring with your mentor, Magnan mentioned that a couple of articles with your dissertation advisor is not problematic, but it is a concern when that becomes the

https://doi.org/10.1017/S026144481300013X Published online by Cambridge University Press

norm. Larsen-Freeman reminded everyone that when one divides students up and asks them to work together, one should remember that collaboration could be a challenge. It is not necessarily more efficient, but she believes that collaborative work makes projects better than they would have been otherwise.

Symposium details are available at www.uiowa.edu/~flaregra/symp11/

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https://doi.org/10.1017/S026144481300013X Published online by Cambridge University Press