
From the Associate Editor, *MLJ* Reviews: Presenting the Special Issue Reviews

JUDITH E. LISKIN-GASPARRO

University of Iowa

THE POLICY THAT INTRODUCES THE RE-views section of each issue of the *MLJ* begins with this statement: “The *MLJ* reviews books, monographs, computer software, and other materials that . . . present results of research in—and methods of—foreign and second language teaching and learning” (*MLJ*, 2005, p. 292). In most issues, books in the “Theory and Practice” category are the most numerous, a reflection of the rapid expansion in the field of SLA and of the concomitant appetite among SLA professionals for publications that report on research, as well as those suitable for use as course textbooks.

In the nearly 90-year history of the *MLJ*, the Reviews section has reinvented itself numerous times in terms of its focus (e.g., descriptive, evaluative), the standard length of reviews (from 300 to over 1,000 words), and the types of books the editor has chosen to include. Occasional review essays, inaugurated during the editorship of Charles L. King (1971–1979), were largely laudatory descriptions of books considered by the editor to have major significance to the field.

The review essays in this special issue represent an innovative and stimulating approach to the discussion of recent publications that come under the rubric of “Theory and Practice.” By considering together a set of publications on a particular research paradigm, the essays by Crookes, Yates, and Chapelle provide readers with a thoughtful picture of recent books on action research, qualitative research, and quantitative research, respectively, that would not be possible in the traditional way the Reviews section has been structured. In addition, the particular tack that these writers have taken—a critical analysis of ethical issues inherent in their respective research traditions—brings to the fore a focus on issues of importance to language researchers that are discussed all too rarely.

The books treated in the review essays were selected for their timeliness and for their significance to researchers in language learning and teaching. Because the *MLJ* strives to publish reviews of new materials within two years of publica-

tion, reviews of three of the nine books featured in the essays had already appeared by the time the shape of the reviews essays in the special issue had been decided: Burns, *Collaborative Action Research for English Language Teachers* (reviewed in *MLJ*, 85, 2001, p. 473); Edge, *Action Research* (reviewed in *MLJ*, 87, 2003, p. 131); and Holliday, *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research* (reviewed in *MLJ*, 88, 2004, p. 314). Reading the reviews of these three books in their two iterations highlights the impact that the approach taken in the special issue can offer to current and future scholars in our field as we contemplate not only the technical side of conducting research, but also deeper questions concerning the relationship between the methodological choices we make and the meanings we attribute to the outcomes of our research.

Resources for Incorporating Action Research as Critique into Applied Linguistics Graduate Education

GRAHAM CROOKES

Department of Second Language Studies

University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa

1890 East-West Road

Honolulu, HI 96822

Email: crookes@hawaii.edu

Works Reviewed

BURNS, ANNE. *Collaborative Action Research for English Language Teachers*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1999. Pp. xi, 259. \$26.00, paper. ISBN 052163895X.

EDGE, JULIAN. (Ed.). *Action Research*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages, 2001. Pp. iii, 195. \$29.97, paper. ISBN 0-939791-92-7.

FREEMAN, DONALD. *Doing Teacher Research: From Inquiry to Understanding*. Boston: Heinle, 1998. Pp. x, 258. \$20.95, paper. ISBN 0-838479006.

WALLACE, MICHAEL J. *Action Research for Language Teachers*. New York: Cambridge University Press, 1998. Pp. xii, 273. \$26.00, paper. ISBN 0-521555353.

Several contributions to this special issue remind us that the idea that research should inform action is both common sense and ethically supported. As readers are well aware, *action research* is the name of the historical tradition in social science research that incorporates that idea as a definitional theme. Within the area of applied linguistics, action research (also known as *teacher research*) has been recommended to teachers and other professionals by experts for several decades and has been of growing interest in our field, or at least among commercial publishers, in the last 10 years or so. A piece of research of some kind, in some cases explicitly presented as action research, is a requirement in many degree programs in our field. Consequently, although many book-length introductions to second and foreign language (L2/FL) studies include treatments of action research (e.g., McDonough & McDonough, 1997; Nunan, 1989), we also now have on hand a small number of texts on action research that introduce the language teacher (and often a captive audience of graduate students) to the ideas, research techniques, and other practices and positions of action research. I review here the three major books in this subcategory of the applied linguistics research manual, as well as an edited collection, in the context of a discussion of the function of action research in applied linguistics graduate education. I note in beginning that the focal works originate primarily from the teaching of English as a second language (ESL) branch of the profession, though the Burns and Freeman volumes contain material from FL teachers. This distribution, though regrettable, reflects what is published and available. In addition, after a brief recent spurt of publishing, we have not seen any new titles appear in the last few years. Overall, my advocacy of an action research approach will be in line with a repeated theme of this issue, which derives its force from a position on the ethics of research in an applied field; namely, that it is ethical to foster research that can be of maximum practical use.

ACTION RESEARCH, PROFESSIONAL DEVELOPMENT, PROFESSIONALISM

The first presentations of action research that deliberately use that term were the work of estab-

lished professionals rather than part of training or degree programs. John Collier (1945), an administrator in the Bureau of Indian Affairs, provided a broad retrospective survey and description of projects that he supervised in which community leaders as well as researchers joined forces to come up with solutions to problems faced by Native American groups on reservations in the early 1940s. Kurt Lewin (1988/1946), considered the founder of the tradition, cited Collier and seems to have drawn inspiration from Collier's work in conceptualizing how to handle the contracted investigations that he conducted to ameliorate race-related housing problems in urban eastern United States following World War II.¹

It is important to recognize that this early version of action research was more radical than later versions. In the initial work of Collier and Lewin, we find a strong emphasis on community participation and an agenda in which action research was to be used by the people and for the people, where the people in question were minorities. Lewin (1988/1946), for example, writes of his work and that of Collier on the improvement of intergroup relations as necessarily affected by changes at higher levels of society and as allied to movement against "the policy of exploitation which has made colonial imperialism the most hated institution the world over" (p. 46).

By the 1950s, action research had become briefly popular, and the specialists at Teachers College, Columbia University, advocated it as part of the training of young teachers. (It or something like it first showed up in the L2/FL literature a little later, in Lane's 1962 work.) But it soon fell out of favor in the United States. It seems to have passed to the United Kingdom through connections involving the Tavistock Institute (McKernan, 1996), surfacing in the work of curriculum projects supported by the Ford Foundation and in the work of Stenhouse (1975; an influence on Candlin, cf. Long & Crookes, 1993). Carr and Kemmis, who studied at the University of East Anglia, where some curriculum action research projects and staff were located, took it to Australia, and particularly to Deakin University. In that country, it seems to have entered the L2/FL arena through the ESL work of the Australian Migrant Education Programs, but without its political subtext. The changing tenor of the times led it to find favor widely across the social sciences beginning in the 1970s. It is well established currently under a variety of names, including *participatory action research* (PAR), *participatory rural appraisal* (PRA; see Selener, 1997), and *action science* (e.g., Mumford, 1997). In the education area,

teacher research is another term that is almost synonymous with action research.

Conceived narrowly, action research projects are an obvious element in programs for professional development. Faculty in language teacher development programs, as in other graduate programs that draw heavily on a research-oriented conception of the professional, have often felt that having students do research was a good way for them to understand research, even if thereby they only became informed research consumers. At the same time, many programs have found that having students do a piece of research using a respectable amount of standard research methodology presented too great a burden on individuals who did not intend to become academic researchers. In those circumstances, program designers advocate only small projects of this kind—enough for students to get an inside understanding of the processes of research, but not requiring that students be held to the most rigorous academic research standards. A variety of labels is available for a work of this sort: a *pilot study*, a *small-scale study*, a *piece of teacher research*, or indeed *action research*.

Our field has high aspirations for its better-educated workers. Although the equivalent of a bachelor's of education degree is a standard entry-level qualification, a graduate degree is a common requirement. And whereas, in practice, FL teachers in many countries must simply follow strict guidelines (i.e., syllabi, prescribed textbooks) set down by administrative authorities, in other areas, it is assumed that applied linguistics professionals who are teachers will do their own needs analyses, develop and deliver curriculum and materials, possibly work on in-house tests, and be involved in participatory program evaluation. Presumably, the latter group of individuals, given the skills needed to do program development, will also be capable of conducting research. Perhaps the ability to do research is now a presumptive component of our definition of a well-trained, graduate-degree-holding language teacher. If so, field leaders have hold of a critique of the status quo, given that most ordinary language teachers do not have the working conditions or, usually, the self-image in question (Crookes, 1997b). A critique of the status quo concerning the role of research and teachers' relationship to it is also embodied in both the original model of action research and its later developments; this version of action research can respond to the concerns of those professional programs in our field that have the highest aspirations for the profession. Given the potential of action research, it is not surprising that it has been increasing in prominence and

that we now have a range of how-to-do-it manuals available.

ACTION RESOURCES

Until recently, those of us promoting action research were obliged to draw from mainstream education literature. (E.g., I have used Altrichter, Posch, & Somekh, 1993; Anderson, Herr, & Nihlen, 1994; and Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988a, 1988b, in my courses on repeated occasions.) We then perhaps supplemented these texts with excerpts from teacher-oriented research manuals in our field, many of which include a chapter on action research (e.g., McDonough & McDonough, 1997; Nunan, 1989). It was not until 1998 and 1999 that applied linguistics came out with three exponents of the genre of how-to-do-it manual in action research: Burns (1999), Freeman (1998), and Wallace (1998). The three books illustrate different emphases in the diverse ways that action research is understood by our field.

The Manuals in Our Field: Wallace (1998), Freeman (1998), and Burns (1999)

Wallace is the simplest. His conception of action research is one that, though I understand it, I would very much like to go beyond. For him, action research is primarily the sort of small project that experienced teachers do for in-service courses, and to this kind of reader he addresses himself directly, with a simple writing style. As presented in this work, action research can be collaborative, but need not be. Almost no mention is made of the historical tradition of action research; the exemplars of research reports, mostly older articles from *ELT Journal*, are included to show how to use a particular research technique, not to illustrate a distinctive kind of discourse. Most of the book is concerned with data collection techniques that could subserve small projects for teacher in-service courses. Only in the final chapter (pp. 207–252) does the author get close to some issues in action research, which he groups under the heading “Sharing Ideas.” These ideas include the desirability and feasibility of collaborating in action research and how to communicate the findings of action research.

Like Wallace, Freeman writes as a teacher educator, though his writing is more complex. By that I do not mean academic; it is a sophisticated simplicity, characterized by a fair amount of personal disclosure, some telling of personal stories about teaching, and interesting use of analogies

and graphics. His book, entitled *Doing Teacher Research*, descends from Cochran-Smith and Lytle (e.g., 1993), as well as from mainstream educational researchers like Shulman (1987) and Strauss (1987), not to mention Wolcott (1994) on data analysis. Action research is treated in a footnote, as a version of teacher research; at the same place, Freeman mentions Kemmis and McTaggart (1998b) but he prefers Stringer's (1996) exposition for clarity and comprehensiveness. The familiar action research spiral diagram illustration appears several times, but it is not acknowledged as such; and Lewin does not put in an appearance at all.

Freeman's emphasis on teacher research as a mode of action and also as a genre of writing is supported by a long extract from a teacher research report that is a central chapter in the book. This material usefully illustrates the first-person, narrative writing that often appears under the heading of teacher research and that is distinguishable from conventional academic research writing. Although, as in Wallace's (1998) work, a substantial amount of the book concerns data collection, Freeman scores high in my opinion by providing a crucial chapter on data analysis that is fleshed out with sample materials for qualitative data analysis. Specialists who teach action research will presumably have their own sample data sets, but this area is often mystifying to those new to research, and it is one where learning by doing may be the most effective way to proceed. It is of great benefit to any peripatetic action research trainer to have this material and a brief discussion of associated qualitative techniques, both grounded analysis and what Freeman calls "a priori" analysis (p. 103), included in a text.

Burns writes out of a strikingly different, far more extended professional experience of working with teachers in collaborative action research projects, rather than merely as a teacher educator supervising them. Over some years, the Australian Migrant Education Program (AMEP), an Australian government entity, provided support and coordination for teachers who wished to engage in action research. ESL programs that were part of AMEP provided input concerning "possible research areas" (p. 2). Burns writes that teachers were

invited to express their interest in participation as practitioner researchers in investigating [an] area. During their involvement in the research, the teachers receive paid release time to attend workshops and write up their findings, but data collection activities [were] conducted in their own time. (p. 2)

With her co-researcher Susan Hood, Burns collaborated with participating teachers and developed a "linked network of teacher research groups across the country" (p. 2). In other words, Burns's personal experience of action research is closer to the form in which its founders conducted it. Not surprisingly, then, her text goes beyond the other two in many ways.

Burns fully connects with the historical tradition of action research and emphasizes its collaborative dimension. Her work is legitimately directed not only to the teacher but also to the researcher and teacher educator as fellow professionals who can benefit from discussion at a higher and more extended level. Accordingly, the writing style is somewhat more academic than that of Freeman and expects a good deal from the reader. The book is also sensitive to the critical perspectives that I personally see as an essential spark in action research. Towards the end of the work, Burns has a section headed "Sustaining the Action" (pp. 201–211) that deals with ways in which an orientation to collaborative action research can be kept alive in programs and across networks of teachers.

Concerning data analysis, which as I mentioned is a strength of Freeman's book, Burns (1999) comments that "in many ways this is the most difficult chapter in this book to write" (p. 152). This comment emphasizes my point that support in this area is needed. It is interesting that Burns goes on to explain that the chapter was difficult to write because approaches to data analysis specific to action research have not yet been extensively developed (p. 152). I agree with Burns; one mostly falls back on mainstream qualitative data analytic techniques. Burns's approach is illustrative of the differences across the three works, with Burns being the one most committed to an exposition that is explicitly action research from top to bottom. She and Freeman discuss validity issues, but it is Burns who goes for the radical line on validity specific to action research that Anderson et al. (1994) develop.

Both Burns and Freeman close their texts with samples of research reports. I admit to a slight preference for Freeman's selection because of the typographical distinctiveness: the reports appear photographically, as if we were looking at the originals. In contrast, the reports Burns collected have been merely re-typeset. Foreign language specialists may appreciate Freeman's collection more than Burns's, because his samples include work from teachers of languages other than English. Notably, they are, like those of Burns, Australian teachers, and their research was supported by

Australian government funds. Elsewhere in Freeman's book, extracts and comments from teachers include some from FL teachers from the United States. Indeed, the entire series in which this book appears specifically targets L2 and FL teachers, rather than English language specialists only.

Resources Outside Applied Linguistics

One notable challenge for a course on action research and for a manual on it is how to present and assist the development of a set of techniques and procedures, as well as support and embody a thorough critique of dominant or mainstream approaches to research, both in and of themselves and in reference to their relation to society. If the book in question is to be used by novices—and why else would one present a how-to-do-it manual?—then the task is close to impossible within the usual compass of a single volume. Relating to and understanding the critique requires understanding how research is conventionally conducted and what does or does not happen to it within existing social and educational structures. So it is not surprising that what is missing from the three introductory works canvassed above, although Burns's book comes closest, is such a critique, as well as a concern for and exposition of theory and the role of action research in the change process. Indeed, action research reports have sometimes been criticized by academics for being relatively theory-free. Thus, we need to turn either to a great classic in the area (Kemmis & McTaggart, 1988b) or to a more recent action research text along the lines of Kincheloe (2003). Although it provides enough of the basic nuts and bolts to get a teacher-research group started, the Kemmis and McTaggart volume does not shrink from theory. The authors begin their second chapter with crucial points:

We must have some understanding of our own and others' educational values Our values name the things we proclaim ourselves willing to struggle towards. We must know something about the way our educational work fits into the wider context of schooling and society We must have some historical understanding of schools and schooling. (p. 29)

They go on to discuss educational change and the role of action research within it, in terms of a critique of education and society. Kincheloe (2003), vehemently committed to the concept of the critical teacher researcher and action research as a force for change, has written an advanced book-length discussion of matters of research methodology, social theory, and critical

pedagogy, leaving the how-to-do-it parts for other works.

A TESOL Collection of Action Research Studies: Edge (2001)

Print, or even Web publication, is not necessarily the final manifestation of a piece of teacher research. Published works, however, can be seen as a reflection of interest in the area. In that sense, it is interesting that one of the most recent book-length works on action research in our field comes out under the imprint of the Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) organization itself. Edge (2001) has not written a research manual, or a broad discussion of action research, but instead he has collected pieces of action research in the field of TESOL. The volume follows, among other items, the series of conference proceedings *Teachers Develop Teachers' Research* (Edge & Richards, 1993; Head, 1998) and the *Teachers' Voices* series (Burns & de Silva Joyce, 2001; Burns & Hood, 1995). Edge's (2001) volume consists of 13 pieces of action research plus an introductory chapter, and, for action research specialists, it is a rewarding collection of studies, although, reflecting its TESOL orientation, it deals only with English. As Edge points out, these examples of action research, which appear to have been accumulated in response to a request for submissions, do not manifest a concern for the critical or sociopolitical issues that some of us might wish to see (Edge, 2001, pp. 1ff.). With one or two exceptions, they provide readers the satisfaction of seeing serious and dedicated professionals working through problems and concerns (mainly curricular, with some pedagogical) and, in most cases, solving them. In almost every case, programs, teachers, and students emerged the better for a persistent, often cyclical process of trial, error, and retrial; or error, trial, and solution; or a gradual longitudinal development of practice. The writing is educated, personal, and not particularly formal, but neither does it challenge conventions of educated report writing. I agree with remarks made by Edge in his opening chapter that there is a pleasure to be had (one of recognition, perhaps) in reading these accounts of practice developed by experienced practitioners. These accounts are primarily of interest to those readers concerned with similar programs and topics, of course. They are informed by regular published research, more so than many teacher research reports, but perhaps not as much as journal articles. That seems as it should be, to me. I did find it noteworthy that only one chapter

concerns high school or elementary levels; all the rest are from people teaching English to adults. Most chapters are from university English as a foreign language (EFL) teachers, with one contribution from an industry language training center and one from a famous private language school. I hazard that the working conditions of these individuals have been one reason why they have been able to carry out and report on these studies. Almost a quarter of the authors identify themselves as graduate students working on a doctoral degree.

ACTION RESEARCH IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS GRADUATE EDUCATION

Graduate programs are natural places for the socialization or reeducation of members of the L2/FL profession; faculty members often take a stance concerning what is desired of individuals and of the profession as a whole, as well as what one's responsibilities and ideal working conditions are. How they present the concept and activity of research is naturally part of this educating process.

The manuals discussed above constitute place-markers for some main roles that action research (variously understood) can or should have in the education of our graduate students and in their future careers. Wallace's (1998) position seems to be minimal: that it is legitimate to have L2/FL teachers do projects to complete in-service degree programs, and that these projects may as well be relevant to teachers and teaching. Thus, his position is that teachers need training in basic techniques for small-scale research. Freeman's (1998) text from the very beginning is a call for change:

The activity of teaching—indeed the whole notion of the teacher's work—is changed when the process of research is introduced. Likewise, research and the researcher's work are changed when these functions are undertaken by teachers. . . . So in a larger sense, being or becoming a teacher-researcher is about repositioning yourself as a teacher in relation to what you are expected to do in your job. (pp. 2–3)

Freeman recognizes what he calls the "real pressures that . . . social contexts of teaching exert on the ways in which teachers' work is organized," but he claims that "this status quo can be changed" (p. 2). He does not say how.

Similarly, Burns (1999) represents a position that calls for an altered conception of the teacher role but, unlike Freeman, she suggests how such a conception can be maintained. Having spent years working with government-supported collab-

orative teacher-research groups, she quotes directly from teachers about the benefits that they have experienced from this aspect of practice. She also emphasizes the primary role of teachers, rather than academics or teacher educators, in agitating for action research as part of teachers' work and responsibilities. Freeman is looking forward to new roles; Burns has seen a nationwide working institutional structure that embodied such roles. As a result, for Burns (I think), educating teachers as action researchers means also educating them to be activists for action research.

Having considered action research as a matter of book choices first, let me now turn the matter around and ask: What would be the function of a course on action research as part of graduate applied linguistics training? One way to answer this question is to ask about the goals of degree programs. In some contexts, master's degrees in applied linguistics are supposed to have less to do with classroom teaching and more with disciplinary content, or research. On the one hand, in these programs, the customary master's-level research course would be quite unashamedly an academic research-oriented one. On the other hand, in master's programs whose clientele is language teachers, one would advocate a research course that focused exclusively on research that teachers might conduct in their own classrooms, unless one took the position that the relationship of teachers to research was primarily that of consumers.

One problem we face is that applied linguistics education is often education both for teachers and for applied linguists. That is, although most graduate programs in the field are university-based programs whose clients are language teachers, they operate as part of a discipline, or interdisciplinary field, whose operatives are professors, many of whom see themselves primarily as academic researchers. Ideally, a research course in, for example, a master's program in Spanish, should serve the needs of future and in-service Spanish language teachers, as well as those of the handful of students whose long-term goal might be to do research in the area.

What might you do if you had a graduate program with academic leanings, but you were dissatisfied with the utility of research in our field, which you saw primarily as an applied field? Perhaps you would build a critique of the status quo into a research methods course. Action research is implicitly such a critique. But you might need to dispute an implied absolute distinction between action research (done by teachers) and other types of research (done by academics). I make

use of the common equation between action research and teacher research to emphasize a distinction between, for example, teacher action research and academic research. Regular academic research, it is said, does not usually concern itself with use. I agree that most academic researchers have been brought up to believe that whether, how, or when their research may be used (if ever, if it ever can be) is not their concern or responsibility. However, many researchers in our field used to be L2/FL teachers. For some of them, their research agenda and even specific inquiries may be regularly prompted by questions that emanate from their time as classroom teachers or classroom researchers. In some cases, their research questions may be prompted by collaborative work with their students, who are likely to be in-service language teachers. The results of such inquiries are clearly not exactly teacher research because they do not originate in the work of someone presently a teacher. They are not teacher research because they are not disseminated in a visibly nonacademic genre to other teachers, nor do they return swiftly to a classroom and a group of teachers from which they arose in the first place. But they are likely to have an applied nature. Thus, if one views the landscape of applied linguistics research carefully, it appears that some of that research represents work that has either an action origin or a long-term interest in action. This view accords with the position implied by McDonough and McDonough (1997), for whom action research offers teachers one of a number of orientations.

This position, however, is rather conservative. It does not take into account the institutional, structural, or political aspects that contribute to the non-use of much academic research in our field. Even for teacher educators to advocate action research to teachers is potentially an abuse of power, as well as unrealistic, as Allwright (e.g., 1991; this issue) has emphasized. In terms of how to explain the weaknesses of existing graduate education in our field (Crookes, 1997a, 1997b) to new language teachers in master's programs, the problem is how to resist the need to explain the mainstream first and then get on to the critique, given the shortage of time. In an academic program, it is tempting to have a course on academic research first, followed by one on action research, perhaps. But there are the dangers in this strategy of "leaving the best till last." Perhaps a better approach for those like myself who are committed to a critique of academic research is to start off the novice with an action-research orientation, introducing whatever research techniques are ap-

propriate within this framework but not losing the social and collaborative dimension of action research. A second course could then couple the exposition of a selection of advanced research techniques with issues of research utilization and dissemination. These issues could include a consideration of the role of both academic and action research in teacher and program development, policy studies in general, and alternative institutional structures, such as teacher-researcher collaborations and university-school partnerships. Alternatively, if a program sees itself as having a role in changing the existing unsatisfactory situation with regard to the use of research in our field, then its faculty may wish to devote a separate course to this topic in order to educate the next generation of teachers and researchers. In a large program, a course of this kind ought to be of interest and benefit to senior teachers, who may have in-service and teacher development responsibilities, as well as to doctoral students, whose future responsibilities may include responding to requests to design and teach courses of practical as well as theoretical relevance.

LOOKING FORWARD

Action research in education is an active area of publishing. Teachers College Press and Routledge, to name just two publishers, produce a steady stream of book-length titles. The former's Practitioner Inquiry series, edited by Cochran-Smith and Lytle, has about 30 titles. The breadth and depth of the series allows extended treatment of narrow topics, such as Zeni's (2001) book, on ethical issues. In the mainstream of education, how-to-do-it manuals also continue to appear, such as the recent one by Arhar, Holly, and Kasten (2001). Action research as an international enterprise is now visible (Hollingsworth, 1997; McTaggart, 1997). Outside of traditional book publishing, developments continue apace. Action researchers were early adopters of electronic mailing lists and much advice, both basic and advanced, was always available on them. The Web has put to rest one problem of advocating action research outside of developed countries, given the easy access it provides to samples of reports and publications. The major action research journal, *Educational Action Research*, provides the full text of all articles and makes them freely available online 12 months after publication. *Networks* is one of a number of new online journals devoted to teacher research.

Those of us who wish to promote action research for its own sake or as part of a critique

of existing arrangements have excellent ammunition in the focal titles of this review, but the area is by no means exhausted. With the increasing prominence of critical applied linguistics, my own inclination to look outside applied linguistics or TESOL publications for a missing element of importance in expounding action research as critique suggests that focused and relevant language-related action research publication is called for and will indeed appear.

 NOTE

¹ It is to Lewin that we seem to owe the typical diagrammatic formulation of the action research cycle, but it seems unlikely that this idea sprang uninfluenced from his mind; John Dewey's influential conception of an investigative process inherent in human interaction with the environment must have played a part (McKernan, 1996). Dewey's influence as the senior philosopher of that time and place, his longevity, and his prolific writings make it unlikely that Lewin was unaware of this conception.

 REFERENCES

- Allwright, D. (1991). *Exploratory teaching, professional development, and the role of a teachers association* (CRILE Working Paper No. 7). Lancaster, UK: University of Lancaster.
- Allwright, D. (2005). Developing principles for practitioner research: The case of exploratory practice. *Modern Language Journal*, 89, 353–366.
- Altrichter, H., Posch, P., & Somekh, B. (1993). *Teachers investigate their work*. New York: Routledge.
- Anderson, C. L., Herr, K., & Nihlen, A. S. (1994). *Studying your own school*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Corwin Press.
- Arhar, J. M., Holly, M. L., & Kasten, W. C. (2001). *Action research for teachers: Traveling the yellow brick road*. Upper Saddle River, NJ: Merrill.
- Burns, A. (1999). *Collaborative action research for English language teachers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Burns, A., & de Silva Joyce, H. (Eds.). (2001). *Teachers' voices 7: Teaching vocabulary*. Sydney, Australia: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research at Macquarie University.
- Burns, A., & Hood, S. (Eds.). (1995). *Teachers' voices: Exploring course design in a changing curriculum*. Sydney, Australia: National Centre for English Language Teaching and Research.
- Cochran-Smith, M., & Lytle, S. L. (1993). *Inside/outside: Teacher research and knowledge*. New York: Teachers College Press.
- Collier, J. (1945). United States Indian administration as a laboratory of ethnic relations. *Social Research*, 12, 265–303.
- Crookes, G. (1997a). SLA and language pedagogy: A socioeducational perspective. *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, 19, 93–116.
- Crookes, G. (1997b). What influences what and how second and foreign language teachers teach? *Modern Language Journal*, 81, 67–79.
- Edge, J. (Ed.). (2001). *Action research*. Alexandria, VA: Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages.
- Edge, J., & Richards, K. (Eds.). (1993). *Teachers develop teachers' research*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Freeman, D. (1998). *Doing teacher-research: From inquiry to understanding*. Boston: Heinle.
- Head, K. (Ed.). (1998). *TDTR3*. Whitstable, UK: International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language.
- Hollingsworth, S. (Ed.). (1997). *International action research: A casebook for educational reform*. Washington, DC: Falmer Press.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (Eds.). (1988a). *The action research reader* (3rd ed.). Deakin, Australia: Deakin University Press.
- Kemmis, S., & McTaggart, R. (Eds.). (1988b). *The action research planner* (3rd ed.). Deakin, Australia: Deakin University Press.
- Kincheloe, J. L. (2003). *Teachers as researchers: Qualitative inquiry as a path to empowerment* (2nd ed.). New York: Routledge.
- Lane, H. (1962). Experimentation in the language classroom: Guidelines and suggested procedures for the classroom teacher. *Language Learning*, 12, 115–121.
- Lewin, K. (1988). Action research and minority problems. In S. Kemmis & R. McTaggart (Eds.), *The action research planner* (3rd ed., pp. 41–46). Deakin, Australia: Deakin University Press. (Reprinted from *Journal of Social Issues*, 2, pp. 34–46, 1946)
- Long, M. H., & Crookes, G. (1993). Units of analysis in syllabus design. In G. Crookes & S. Gass (Eds.), *Tasks in a pedagogical context* (pp. 9–54). Philadelphia, PA: Multilingual Matters.
- McDonough, J., & McDonough, S. (1997). *Research methods for English language teachers*. London: Arnold.
- McKernan, J. (1996). *Curriculum action research* (2nd ed.). London: St. Martin's Press.
- McTaggart, R. (Ed.). (1997). *Participatory action research: International contexts and consequences*. Albany, NY: State University of New York Press.
- Mumford, A. (Ed.). (1997). *Action learning at work*. Aldershot, UK: Gower.
- Nunan, D. (1989). *Understanding language classrooms*. Englewood Cliffs, NJ: Prentice Hall.
- Selener, D. (1997). *Participatory action research and social change*. Ithaca, NY: Cornell University Participatory Action Research Network.
- Shulman, L. (1987). Knowledge-base and teaching: Foundations of the new reform. *Harvard Educational Review*, 57(1), 1–22.

- Stenhouse, L. (1975). *An introduction to curriculum research and development*. Portsmouth, NH: Heinemann.
- Strauss, A. (1987). *Qualitative analysis for social scientists*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Stringer, E. T. (1996). *Action research: A handbook for practitioners*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Wallace, M.J. (1998). *Action research for language teachers*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Wolcott, H. (1994). *Transforming qualitative data: Description, analysis, and interpretations*. Thousand Oaks, CA: Sage.
- Zeni, J. (Ed.). (2001). *Ethical issues in practitioner research*. New York: Teachers College Press.

Introducing New Researchers to Qualitative Research: Some Current Options for Textbooks

LYNDA YATES

School of Educational Studies

La Trobe University

Bundoora

Victoria 3086

AUSTRALIA

Email: Lynda.yates@latrobe.edu.au

Works Reviewed

- DEMARRAIS, KATHLEEN, & STEPHEN D. LAPAN (Eds.). *Foundations for Research: Methods of Inquiry in Education and the Social Sciences*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum, 2004. Pp. xiii, 432. \$49.95, paper. ISBN 0-8058-3650-0.
- HOLLIDAY, ADRIAN. *Doing and Writing Qualitative Research*. London: Sage, 2002. Pp. iii, 242. \$37.95, paper. ISBN 0761963928.
- RICHARDS, KEITH. *Qualitative Inquiry in TESOL*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan, 2003. Pp. xxv, 323. \$30.95, paper. ISBN 1-4039-0135-X.

Although I would not want to argue that all research should be utilitarian, it nevertheless makes good sense from any number of perspectives for dialogue between what Mitchell and Myles (1998) call “the ‘practical theories’ of classroom educators, and the more decontextualized and abstract ideas deriving from programs of research” (p. 195). This dialogue makes it imperative that we not only ask relevant research questions and tackle them in a way that connects with the realities of teaching and learning languages, but also that we present and disseminate the fruits of this

research in ways that are accessible to teachers, not only as consumers, but also as potential producers of research.

Qualitative research has much to offer practitioners. Many teachers find its potential for offering insights into the learning and teaching of language appealing, and it is frequently perceived by novice researchers (albeit incorrectly) to be easier to do than quantitative research. So it has always struck me as rather paradoxical that research from a range of qualitative approaches, including those premised on inclusiveness and empowerment, is so often rendered virtually unintelligible to teacher and novice researchers by virtue of the way it is presented. Although the use of such “technologized discourses” (Fairclough 1995, p. 91; Holliday, 2002, p. 159) may bestow benefits of precision and authority, it is ironic that it often excludes precisely those potential researchers and consumers of research who might be best placed to pick up new insights and carry them forward into social action. To me, accessibility to the processes and products of qualitative research is an ethical issue (Lazaraton, 2003), and one that is not always addressed. I am therefore delighted to be able to review some options for current introductory qualitative research methods textbooks, considering them from the point of view not only of their coverage of topics essential for new researchers, but also for their success in addressing an audience with professional experience in the field but little background in research.

I have in mind not only the more usual audience for such texts, that is, graduate and postgraduate students enrolled in university programs, but also the potentially wider readership of practitioners who become involved in research for other reasons. Teachers may come into contact with research in various ways during their careers. Some may decide to find out more about theory and practice or upgrade their qualifications by undertaking graduate and postgraduate work; others may come into contact with research outside a university setting through their reading of journals or through participation in research projects at their places of work. Both groups are in the process of adding research skills to the teaching skills they already have. I come into contact with both groups through my teaching and research work in a postgraduate school and my work with the Adult Migrant English Program Research Centre¹ in Australia, where practicing teachers who are not enrolled in an academic program are involved in research projects because they want to find out more about issues that matter to them in their professional lives. These teachers, just as

much as those who have signed up for a place in academia, deserve access to research in our field and support in how to do it.

There are many views of what makes a good introductory course book. In this article, I consider three recently published textbooks not only for the extent to which they cover the theoretical and practical issues that a novice researcher needs to know, but also for their accessibility for this readership. I first give a brief characterization of each book before considering how far each work provides an accessible account of key issues in qualitative research.

THREE RECENT INTRODUCTORY TEXTBOOKS ON QUALITATIVE METHODOLOGY

The first textbook, by deMarrais and Lapan (2004), is an edited collection of chapters by authors working in different, mostly qualitative, traditions in university settings in the United States. It is designed as an introduction to "methods of inquiry in the professional and social sciences" (cover), and it is written by educational researchers for a general education audience. A notable strength of the book is that it includes 19 chapters (by different authors) covering almost as many approaches to qualitative research, and it therefore offers new researchers a taste of a wide range of approaches and methodologies. Because the authors vary in how they address the key concepts in their particular tradition, however, I found it the least accessible of the three books for absolute newcomers to research.

As the editors note in their introduction, most of the authors address central issues, such as the ontological (related to views of the nature of reality) and epistemological (related to views on the nature of knowledge) underpinnings of their approach, the relationship between theory and research design and implementation, trustworthiness, and ethical issues including the relationship between researchers and participants (p. 5). The perspectives included in the collection are mostly qualitative, and the chapters are loosely grouped in a sequence that starts with a general exploration of ethical issues and then covers various approaches to data, including interviews, focus groups, and ethnographic approaches. There are chapters on critical and poststructural approaches, and attention is also given to multi-method, survey, and experimental research.

The Holliday (2002) and Richards (2003) books are both monographs by single authors, were written in the United Kingdom, and include

language learning and cultural issues as their research interests. Holliday is an applied linguist by background, but his book is aimed at a wider audience of research students in a range of disciplines, focusing on the critical process of writing up research. Richards is an expert in the teaching of English to speakers of other languages (TESOL), and his is the only one of the three books that addresses a TESOL audience specifically. It also addresses an audience of teachers at different stages in their development as researchers, from the complete novice to the more seasoned researcher.

Holliday approaches qualitative research through the challenge of writing about it. He sees writing as central to both the interpretation and the rigor of qualitative research, which he understands as "doing culture" (p. 12) and "social action" (p. 10). Although he is an applied linguist, he deliberately draws on examples of research outside education to broaden the appeal of his work to other disciplines. His extensive use of written studies to illustrate his points is one of the strengths of the book, although I would have preferred to see more references to studies related to language and language learning.

A central theme for Holliday is "showing the workings" (introduced on p. 8), which he addresses throughout the eight chapters of the book, from the first chapter, in which he introduces definitions and the paradigmatic bases of different qualitative approaches, to the last, in which he tackles the issue of making appropriate claims. The balance between opportunism and principles in conducting qualitative research and how to go about starting to research are highlighted in the second chapter. Chapter 3 provides a useful overview of how a piece of writing may be structured to reveal the researcher's position and conceptual framework. The emphasis here is on how researchers can show the validity of what they have done by making their readers, and possibly themselves, aware of exactly what they did and why. The following two chapters explore where data can come from and how researchers can write about them. Chapters 6 and 7 consider in greater depth the use of language and the all-important articulation of the researcher's position in relation to the data.

I found Holliday's text particularly useful for the way in which subjectivity and the role of the researcher are discussed throughout, from the first chapter, where a researcher's worldview and subjectivity are seen as an advantage rather than as a perspective requiring an apology, to the later chapters, where the agency and voice of the researcher in new ways of writing about research are

discussed in depth. His style is lucid and personal; his short sections, leavened with helpful diagrammatic summaries of ideas, make for pleasant reading. The whole book provides a good example of the way in which a single, accessible work can provide incremental insight into both the theory and the practice of a complex area.

The third text under consideration here, Richards's (2003) book, is aimed at TESOL practitioners and researchers. Richards is motivated by a desire to see teachers conduct qualitative inquiry of high quality from their earliest involvement in research. This goal is evident in both the organization of the book and the way in which it is written. Each chapter of the book is designed to be read at one or more of three levels, and each covers the topic at hand for different audiences. Level 1 is designed for beginning researchers and those conducting small-scale, individual projects in their workplaces; Levels 2 and 3 offer in-depth accounts designed for master's, doctoral, and postdoctoral students. Although I was skeptical at first, I found that the book worked at each of these levels, despite my belief that some postgraduate students would also have benefited from reading the beginner levels.

The book is organized into three parts, each tackled on the three different levels. In the first part, Richards pulls off an almost unbelievable feat: an introduction to the notion of qualitative research and some of its major traditions and their paradigmatic bases that is both brief and accessible. In the second part, he describes different approaches to data collection and illustrates how data collection skills may be developed. In the third part, he deals with the practicalities of developing and running a research project.

As a reader, I felt guided and supported all the way through to the final chapter, and I marveled at the apparently effortless way in which this was done. This book is written in a plain English that is humorously human. Richards draws our attention to important points through personal anecdotes, that, through their modest, even self-deprecatory tone, make topics relevant and accessible without appearing to digress or patronize.² I got a real sense of an author who wants his readers to understand and feel as passionate about research as he does, whatever their level of involvement.

COVERING THE ESSENTIALS OF QUALITATIVE RESEARCH

I now turn to a consideration of how each text covers the basics of qualitative research, including the nature and philosophical bases of qualitative

research, the role of theory, and practical issues in conducting research and ensuring its quality. I then comment on any gaps each work may have as an introduction to qualitative research in language learning and teaching.

One of the challenges for an introductory textbook on qualitative research is to acquaint novice researchers with the ontological and epistemological bases of different approaches in a way that is both meaningful and accessible. Discussion of such issues is complex and potentially alienating. As Richards wryly notes, these terms do not "trip lightly off the tongue" (p. 28), and yet they are crucial in understanding what we are doing as researchers and why. I discuss how they are treated by our three textbooks.

Uncovering the Underpinnings: Making Paradigms Accessible

Although all three texts tackle paradigmatic issues, in deMarrais and Lapan's work, they are treated to varying degrees by the different authors. They are, for example, given useful treatment in discussions of ethnography (chapters by Preisse & Grant and by Noblit) and of critical approaches (chapters by Lather and by Johnson-Bailey), but are little mentioned in the chapters on case study research (Hays) or on evaluation studies (Lapan). Although useful, some of the discussion in this collection is quite demanding for the novice, and it may serve better as a complement to accessible introductions such as those found in the Holliday and in Richards books.

Both Holliday and Richards appropriately locate discussion of paradigmatic issues in their first chapters. Richards gives an account of different traditions and their relevance to TESOL in Level 2 of his first chapter, and he takes the discussion to a theoretical level in Level 3. Although I did not find his example of two teachers with different worldviews helpful (because he attributes teaching behaviors rather than research perspectives to ontological and epistemological differences), his characterization of the two research positions of postpositivism and constructivism and their opposition to a third, critical paradigm, was useful and clearly articulated.

Richards returns to theoretical issues in chapter 5 with a delightfully pithy warning from van Geert (1994); namely, that in nature, the straightest line between two points is the "wobble" (Richards, 2003, p. 255). Overall, I found his treatment of the role of theory as a powerful but also potentially restricting "explanatory phenomenon" (p. 259) both insightful and liberating;

If we embrace it too early, we invite it to dominate our thinking and close off opportunities for discovery at a vital stage in the research process. If we seek it out only when all other work has been done, it will have lost its power to illuminate and enliven our enquiry. (p. 260)

Paradigmatic issues are also tackled head-on by Holliday at the beginning of his book. He illustrates clearly throughout the volume the central role of ontological and epistemological issues in the act of creating and presenting a piece of research, both through the advice he gives and how he gives it. Drawing on 19 different studies, he demonstrates this role in a practical way at all levels, from the conceptual stage through the organization of the writing to the choice of words. I particularly liked the overview tables he presents on "sources of validity" (p. 8) and "paradigms, strategies and methods" (p. 18). His discussion of the differences between naturalism and progressivism was clear, although I prefer to reserve the labels *quantitative* and *qualitative* for approaches to research rather than paradigms (see, e.g., Brown & Rodgers, 2002). Readers will find his articulation of theory and his integration of theory with the practicalities of research very useful.

Treatment of Different Approaches to Data

Because of the nature of an edited collection, deMarrais and Lapan's work offers insight into a larger range of different approaches to qualitative research. They include approaches not dealt with in depth by the other two authors; for example, historiography (Rousmaniere), the critical incident technique (Kain), narrative inquiry (Kramp), narratives in feminist work (Johnson-Bailey), and focus groups (Kleiber).

However, the two single-authored texts present in-depth discussions of the business of collecting and organizing data. Holliday provides useful insights into the techniques of ethnographic approaches to the collection, organization, and presentation of data (chapters 4 and 5), and Richards addresses the way in which skills can be developed in interviewing (chapter 2), observation (chapter 3), and collecting and analyzing spoken data (chapter 4).

Novice interviewers will find it useful to read both the chapter by deMarrais (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004), and Richards's chapter 2, because they provide good practical guidelines as well as theoretical perspectives on the conduct of interviews. I particularly liked Richards's description of interview data as "accounts" rather than "reports," so that interviews are "construction" not

"excavation" (pp. 88–91, following Mason, 2002). Researchers undertaking ethnographic studies or using observation in some way will find the detailed treatment by Preisse and Grant (deMarrais & Lapan, 2004) useful, although Richards's account of observation as a developing skill (chapter 3) stands out for acquainting novices with the skills they will need.

For researchers interested in finding out about critical and postcritical approaches to ethnography, there are several relevant chapters in the deMarrais and Lapan work, although not all chapters are transparently written (e.g., Noblit on critical and postcritical ethnography and Lather on feminist and poststructuralist perspectives). The beginning researcher may therefore find Holliday's illustration of what it means to write from a progressive stance and Richards's insightful discussion of the role of theory in research more accessible and useful on a practical level.

As noted above, however, Richards has more to say than the other two texts on approaches to spoken interaction, although he focuses more on the use of language than on learner developmental issues. In his chapter on "Collecting and Analysing Spoken Interaction," he gives a general account of dealing with spoken interaction at the three levels. In Level 1, he focuses on the important practical skills of recording, transcription, and analysis, and in Level 2, he presents conversation-analysis-based skills as a springboard to introducing skills such as transcription, which he sees as fundamental to all research traditions. In Level 3, he illustrates the insights that can be gained from analyzing the same stretch of discourse using conversation analysis, critical discourse analysis, and interactional sociolinguistics. This pragmatic adoption of different approaches is illuminating, although Richards avoids the thorny issue of the commensurability of these approaches at the theoretical level.

Planning and Writing Up Research

Holliday tackles research from the perspective of presentation, which he considers on both ideological and practical levels. In chapter 2, he offers useful advice for students who are refining a topic for research, and he presents a table with good examples of how questions might address specific themes and particular agendas (p. 32). His account of how hypotheses can be generated rather than validated through qualitative research is enlightening, and I will make frequent use with students of the diagrams in which he illustrates "showing the workings" (p. 48) and "placing your

argument and agenda" (p. 134), within the framework of a possible structure for a written study. He also covers issues that students regularly encounter, such as defining terminology, providing adequate context, and outlining the conceptual framework to be explicit about the position of the author and the procedures that are used when conducting the study. New researchers will also find his description of how he used a data catalogue very useful and practical.

Although Richards delays consideration of the planning and writing up of a project until chapters 5 and 6, respectively, that is, until after he has introduced the reader to data collection, it is worth the wait. The diagrammatic overview at the beginning of chapter 5 (p. 232) and the exposition that follows offer an accessible and practical way of thinking about developing a project and include examples of how to tackle practical issues such as topic development, literature searches, note-taking, and project design. Levels 1 and 2 deal with projects oriented towards reflective practice, classroom data, and action research, whereas Level 3 embraces issues of the relationship with theory and the wider world of research issues outside the immediate context of the study. There is also helpful advice in this chapter on activities such as the research proposal (pp. 251–252) and on the relationship between analysis and other aspects of a study (p. 276), although specific examples, such as those provided by Holliday, would have been even more helpful.

In general, deMarrais and Lapan provide less support for students in planning projects than the other two texts, but the volume offers insights into different kinds of study design such as, for example, the insights of Schutz, Chambless, and DeCuir on multimethods research and of House on using multiple methods.

Quality as an Ethical Issue

An important issue running through all three texts is that of the quality of research. Although Lazaraton (2003) argues that the quality of research needs to be considered on two levels—the quality of the piece of research and its contribution to the field—Richards points out that these characterizations converge because research has to be good to be useful. The authors in the deMarrais and Lapan work address the issue of quality to different extents; some authors examine it explicitly (e.g., Preissle & Grant; Garaway), whereas others mention it merely in passing (e.g., Kain). However, the issue of quality is developed as a central concern throughout both the Holli-

day and the Richards books in ways that are both useful and accessible to the novice researcher.

For Holliday, who works in a progressive paradigm, rigor and ethics are closely connected, given that the relationship between the researcher and the participants is central to the research. A researcher is always "socially located," never neutral, so that qualitative research is a "personal struggle . . . [to] . . . interact with people" (p. 10). Rigor is therefore found in establishing credibility by managing the subjectivity that is at the heart of research. Holliday does not see this personal involvement as "contamination," but as a positive resource to capitalize on, and qualitative research becomes a "relationship of dealing" rather than the impossible task of trying to see "naturalistically what was there before the researcher arrived" (p. 148). Thus, although quantitative research relies on strict adherence to and confidence in the use of appropriate instruments and procedures, the quality of qualitative research must be managed through rigor in the writing process (p. 8).

Credibility, therefore, involves looking at something with the fresh eyes of a stranger and showing the workings of that process. Researchers must show how they have dealt with the messiness of real life by providing sufficient information for readers to follow what they have brought to the research situation and what they have done there. Central, therefore, is the credibility that comes from a clear statement of authorial position, and the separation of data, discursive commentary, and argument. In his chapter 4, Holliday provides a useful section on the importance of cross-checking and triangulation in the development of emic categories. In chapter 5, he presents an insightful and practical discussion of what an argument is and how it can be constructed using both the conventions of academic discourse and new, personal approaches. He practices what he preaches in showing the workings of how themes in the data may be identified and organized.

For Richards, maintaining quality and rigor is also one of the most crucial issues in qualitative research. He deals with it on all three levels, through both the practical advice he offers and his theoretical sections. In particular, Level 3 of his chapter on analysis and representation (pp. 284–295) provides a useful introduction to debates about notions of reliability, validity, generalizability, and their alternatives in qualitative research. The advice he brings together from various sources provides guidelines for researchers which are helpful without being overly prescriptive. As in Edge and Richards's (1998) work, there is a strong sense of the importance of the individual researcher's

role and a wariness about the ultimate usefulness of any set of evaluative criteria for the quality of qualitative research, given that all criteria are inevitably relative and will be filtered by whoever is making use of them: "Good research, like good writing, cannot be pinned down by any list of criteria or captured in guidelines, however general. It is accomplished through involved practical engagement, and demands as much of its judges" (Richards, 2003, p. 295). This reasonable approach to judging quality has the advantage of being more inclusive and less bewildering for the novice than an approach that proliferates different criteria for the regulation of quality for each qualitative approach (e.g., *TESOL Quarterly*, 37, 1, which gives guidelines for reporting on three different types of qualitative research).

Accessibility through Pedagogical Exploitation

Both Holliday and Richards excel in the possibilities they offer for pedagogical exploitation. By this I mean that, in addition to their use as readings for private study, both books have potential as texts to be used in a session or class with groups of teachers. They can be exploited through the strategic use of their helpful tables and figures, which offer fertile ground in which group discussions may be nurtured. Richards also provides boxes and extracts which could serve as the basis for a variety of class activities that could be devised to go with them.

In terms of helping novice researchers find their way into the chapters and the ideas in them, both writers are exemplary. At the beginning of each chapter, Richards crafts neat summaries of the following chapter, often in a table form, and this table often constitutes a rich resource for pre-reading discussions with a group. At the end of each chapter, he provides an extremely useful annotated reading guide for each of the three levels. Holliday also provides useful summaries at the ends of the chapters, and these can be handy as a quick reference tool.

The easy-to-read table of papers and their key concepts provided by deMarrais and Lapan in their first chapter also makes it easy to mine their book strategically for pedagogical purposes, as do the pedagogical questions placed judiciously throughout each chapter. However, the questions listed at the end of the book that Holliday provides seem to be more specifically designed for use with classes or groups. Richards does not provide questions, but he includes some—rather time-consuming—tasks at the end of each chapter which can provide the basis for reflection.

GAPS FOR BEGINNER RESEARCHERS OF LANGUAGE LEARNING

I found that the three books reviewed here had a lot to offer novice researchers in the field of language learning and teaching. However, I also felt there were some gaps in the treatment of how to include language and language learner data in qualitative studies. Although Richards explores the use of spoken interaction data in his chapter 4, other types of qualitative linguistic analysis that can also make an important contribution to our knowledge about language learning go generally unremarked. Systemic functional linguistics, for example, is briefly mentioned by Richards, but not at all by Holliday, although it offers a rich, if conceptually and practically demanding, framework for the analysis of text for a variety of purposes (e.g., Eggins & Slade, 1997; Martin & Rose, 2003). Because the collection by deMarrais and Lapan was designed for a wide education audience, it may be forgiven for not treating language-related issues in depth. However, it does have a chapter on ethnomethodology and conversation analysis (Roulston), although no other language analysis perspective was included.

Perhaps more pressing is the need for introductory texts to support researchers in developing new ways of looking at language use and language learning in context (Bardovi-Harlig & Hartford, 2004; Block, 2003). None of the three books reviewed here has a language learning dimension or focuses on the use of qualitative approaches to investigate how learners develop their proficiency in language. Although many of the insights and practical suggestions from Holliday and Richards are useful, neither tackles design and analysis issues in relation to learner language data. Textbooks that address the qualitative analysis of discourse are largely concerned with native or expert user data and so do not have a specific learning dimension (e.g., Cameron, 2001). Although there are some good recent textbooks on methodologies used in second language acquisition research (e.g., Brown & Rodgers, 2002), these texts tend not to cover issues of qualitative research in sufficient depth.

Another omission in these texts is a close investigation of the possibilities offered by the use of both qualitative and quantitative approaches to questions. Although this omission is to be expected, given the avowed aim of the authors of the texts to introduce qualitative approaches, it is nevertheless disappointing that they do not consider the integration or at least complementarity of qualitative and quantitative data. DeMarrais and Lapan pay some attention to this issue in the later

chapters in their collection, but only one chapter deals with the use of survey techniques, and two chapters cover mixed approaches (House; Schutz, Chabless, & DeCuir). The collection does not address issues of how such approaches could be combined in second and foreign language studies.

CONCLUDING REMARKS

Edited collections and single-authored texts each offer readers a different product, and so it is in this case. The diversity of approaches found in the deMarrais and Lapan book exposes the reader to a number of research models, each argued and illustrated by a committed practitioner. The advantage to the new researcher of this type of exposure is the opportunity to sample the different perspectives alongside a true believer, and so it is a reasonable place to “shop before you buy” when looking for an approach. The downside for new researchers is that collections of this type expose the reader to a bewildering array of worldviews and terminology that may or may not be carefully unpacked, and opportunities for connecting ideas between different chapters are not always taken up.

An author of an introductory text, however, can manage the introduction of concepts and terms in a controlled way, allowing genuine development by the readers as they make their way through the book. Given that learning of any kind is rarely linear, both types of book have their place on the reading list of a university research methods course, in which the steady accretion of expertise can be fostered by the authored text, and simultaneous dashes of color and excitement can be added in the form of readings from a range of different research worlds illustrated in edited collections.

In summary then, all three texts are useful, although newcomers to qualitative research may find the Holliday (2002) and Richards (2003) books more accessible than the deMarrais and Lapan work. I plan to use Holliday’s text to help students understand the nature of the reality in which they are enmeshed as researchers and how they can make their own assumptions and procedures explicit. His sections on organizing data, developing an argument, and finding an authorial voice will also be valuable reference material for new researchers. I will recommend Richards’s work for his overview of several qualitative traditions in his opening chapter, as well as the insight he offers to neophytes on the importance of ontological and epistemological arguments in research. I think they will find his discussion of the

role of theory refreshing and helpful and his treatment of the issue of rigor in qualitative research sensible without being restrictive. I will plunder both texts for the useful summary diagrams they provide to stimulate discussion or illustrate a complex relationship in group sessions on a range of topics in qualitative research. I will also find it useful to have the deMarrais and Lapan book on my shelf to give new researchers a taste of different approaches to satisfy their curiosity or when they want to read more about the different research approaches they encounter.

So all three books will be well thumbed, but we are still waiting, I think, for an introductory text to qualitative research in the language learning and teaching field that comprehensively addresses methodologies both from qualitative approaches in general and from language learning and acquisition perspectives in particular.

NOTES

¹ This centre is funded by the Department of Immigration and Multicultural and Indigenous Affairs to conduct research and provide evidence-based professional development for teachers in the Adult Migrant English Program in Australia.

² Compared with, for example, Brown and Rodgers’s (2002) work, which is accessible but adopts a great author-student narrative distance and therefore can appear rather patronizing in tone.

REFERENCES

- Bardovi-Harlig, K., & Hartford, S. (2004). *Interlanguage pragmatics: Exploring institutional talk*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Block, D. (2003). *The social turn in second language acquisition*. Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press.
- Brown, J. D., & Rodgers, T. S. (2002). *Doing second language research*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Cameron, D. (2001). *Working with spoken discourse*. London: Sage.
- de Marrais, K., & Lapan, S. D. (Eds.). (2004). *Foundations for research: Methods of inquiry in education and the social sciences*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Edge, J., & Richards, K. (1998). “Can I see your warrant please?” Justifying outcomes in qualitative research. *Applied Linguistics*, 19, 334–356.
- Eggs, S., & Slade, D. (1997). *Analysing casual conversation*. London: Caswell.
- Fairclough, N. (1995). *Critical discourse analysis: The critical study of language*. London: Addison Wesley Longman.

- Holliday, A. (2002). *Doing and writing qualitative research*. London: Sage.
- Lazaraton, A. (2003). Evaluative criteria for qualitative research in applied linguistics: Whose criteria and whose research? *Modern Language Journal*, 87, 1–12.
- Martin, J. R., & Rose, D. (2003). *Working with discourse*. London: Continuum.
- Mason, J. (2002). Qualitative interviewing: Asking, listening and interpreting. In T. May (Ed.), *Qualitative research in action* (pp. 225–241). London: Sage.
- Mitchell, R., & Myles, F. (1998). *Second language learning theories*. New York: Arnold.
- Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.
- van Geert, P. (1994). *Dynamic systems of development: Change between complexity and chaos*. Hemel Hempstead, UK: Harvester Wheatsheaf.

Graduate-Level Quantitative Research Methods Textbooks: Options and Issues

CAROL A. CHAPELLE
 Department of English
 Iowa State University
 339 Ross Hall
 Ames, IA 50011–1201
 Email: carolc@iastate.edu

Works Reviewed

- BACHMAN, LYLE F. *Statistical Analysis for Language Assessment*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004. Pp. xii, 364. \$36.00, paperback. ISBN: 0-415-28189-X.
- MACKEY, ALISON, & SUSAN GASS. *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates, 2005. Pp. 424. \$99.95, cloth; \$41.95, paper. ISBN: 0-8058-5602-1, cloth; ISBN: 0-8058-4249-7, paper.

This review examines textbooks that introduce students of applied linguistics to quantitative research methods for the study of second language (L2) problems. I have to begin by pointing out that no current textbook exists for that precise purpose. The most recent was Hatch and Lazaraton's *The Research Manual: Design and Statistics for Applied Linguists*, published in 1991. In the current era, research texts in applied linguistics cover both qualitative and quantitative methods. One such text, by Brown and Rodgers (2002), was reviewed in *The Modern Language Journal* (Hatasa,

2004). Porte's (2002) book, a second text addressing quantitative methods reviewed in the *MLJ*, was written as a guide for students of applied linguistics attempting to read quantitative research. The reviewer of Porte's text insightfully points out that although the expertise required to conduct quantitative research takes years to develop, graduate students are typically asked to assess the scientific quality of such work: "This is an unreasonable expectation" (Padilla, 2004, p. 315). How do students of applied linguistics develop the expertise they need to become not only reasoned critics of the work of others but also architects of technically sound, scientifically relevant, and ethically informed quantitative L2 research?

One approach for teaching quantitative methods in applied linguistics programs would be to begin with a text such as Porte's, which is intended to help students read and appraise existing research critically. The next step would be to teach quantitative methods as one type of research under the larger umbrella of applied linguistics research methods. To do so, one might consider the textbook by Brown and Rodgers mentioned above, or one can now turn to another option: Mackey and Gass's (2005) *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design*. Each of these texts covers the basic issues of research design, observation, and quantitative data analysis. Because assessment is fundamental to quantitative research, one might add to the quantitative methods in a curriculum another new text, Bachman's (2004) *Statistical Analysis for Language Assessment*. I review the two new books—the one by Mackey and Gass and the other by Bachman—in view of their contribution to teaching quantitative research methods in applied linguistics. Given that the purpose of this special issue of the *MLJ* is to explore new territory for instructed second language acquisition (SLA) research, my review extends beyond a description of the books and an evaluation of the extent to which the books meet their intended purpose. I also identify additional purposes and topics that one would hope to find in a quantitative methods text for L2 research. I do so by drawing on the ethical challenges for SLA research that Ortega (this issue) defines in terms of the monolingual bias of SLA research as well as its perceived lack of relevance for teachers and for others interested in using knowledge generated by research for the improvement of education and society.

THE TWO TEXTBOOKS

Students in applied linguistics could not get a more solid, experience-based introduction to L2

research and to quantitative issues in language assessment than what is offered in these two textbooks. The authors have shared their expertise with readers to help them work through the issues that arise while conducting research and analyzing tests. It is evident that the authors have taught the material covered in their respective texts; their explanations anticipate the questions that inevitably come up when students design and conduct research.

Mackey and Gass (2005)

Second Language Research: Methodology and Design, by Mackey and Gass, offers a comprehensive introduction to the issues associated with conducting L2 research. As an introduction to all phases of SLA research, only one chapter deals with statistical analysis. Nevertheless, the issues covered in the majority of chapters pertain to quantitative research. Chapter 1, "Introduction to Research," explains the contents of a research report and the process of developing research questions. Chapter 2, "Issues Related to Data Gathering," contains an extensive discussion of what most L2 researchers associate with ethics—the process of obtaining permission from an institutional review board to conduct research on human participants. It explains the role and process of institutional review boards in approving research proposals and gives some history of and the rationale for this practice. Chapter 3, "Common Data Collection Measures," offers more than the title suggests: It talks the reader through the process of designing or selecting a data collection measure and introduces measures that have been used in various types of L2 research. The number of examples in this chapter and the detail with which they are explained and illustrated with images and drawings are real strengths of the book.

Chapter 4, "Research Variables, Validity, and Reliability," introduces types of variables used in quantitative research and defines some measurement concepts as they are understood by L2 researchers. Chapters 5 and 6 distinguish between the considerations involved in the design of quantitative and qualitative research in chapters entitled "Designing a Quantitative Study" and "Qualitative Research," respectively. Chapter 7, "Classroom Research," which draws upon qualitative or quantitative methods (or both), takes up the issues that are unique to studies that are conducted in L2 classrooms.

This chapter on classroom research is another strength of the text because it extends beyond the prototypical introduction to quantitative and

qualitative research methods to focus on the classroom as a distinct context in which mixed-method L2 research frequently takes place. Echoing several of the contributions in this special issue, Mackey and Gass observe at the end of this chapter that "second language learning theory is unlikely to be fully developed without some understanding of how second languages are learned in the classroom and, consequently, how they may be more effectively taught" (p. 219). They also note an increase in collaborative teacher-researcher classroom research. Chapter 8, "Coding," includes a unique combination of language and nonlanguage data to cover the wide range of coding issues that one might encounter in L2 research. Illustrations are given for a range of coding conventions.

Chapter 9, "Analyzing Quantitative Data," gives a brief overview of the statistical methods typically used in L2 research. After the caveat that researchers should gain additional help with statistical analysis through coursework, statistical texts, or consultations, the chapter introduces descriptive statistics, the normal distribution, standard scores, statistical probability, selected inferential statistics, statistical tables, strength of association, eta squared and omega squared, effect size, meta-analysis, correlational procedures, and statistical packages. With such a large number of complex topics covered in this single chapter, the degree of detail that each topic receives is necessarily limited. Nevertheless, the conceptual introductions should prove useful to students making their first pass through statistical analysis methods and provide a good foundation for additional study. Chapter 10, "Concluding and Reporting Research," discusses the final steps in the research process—writing up the results of the study. This chapter lives up to the best parts of the book, anticipating many of the questions that novice researchers have and providing examples taken from the published L2 research to illustrate points, such as how researchers express the generalizability of their research. This chapter also demonstrates implicitly the extent to which research is intertwined with writing.

Overall, *Second Language Research: Methodology and Design* offers a wealth of information and analysis to beginning L2 researchers that is presented in an accessible manner with numerous examples of instruments, forms, coding schemes, and other materials. Moreover, the text reflects the ethical concerns raised in several contributions to this special issue through inclusion of classroom-based research, which is intended to provide knowledge pertaining to instructed

SLA. Explicit mention is made of ethics in the traditional sense of institutional review boards, to which a whole chapter is devoted. With respect to specific ethics-related quantitative issues, however, one might hope for a substantial discussion of language assessment. For this discussion, one needs to turn to the other text.

Bachman (2004)

Statistical Analysis for Language Assessment is one of seven volumes in the Cambridge Language Assessment Series edited by J. Charles Alderson and Lyle F. Bachman. As Alderson's preface to the book indicates, statistical issues constitute only one area of concern for language assessment, the more central being the constructs that tests measure and the ways that tests are used. Statistics help test developers understand the measurement properties of the tests they develop and their utility. The preface makes an important point about the need for such a text, namely, that quantitative research methods are best learned with reference to the specific case of language assessment (pp. ix–x). One might add that development of the statistical rationales and methods opens the opportunity for the author to address the issues that arise in the analysis of language testing data. For example in chapter 9, "Investigating Validity," two examples are shown of how to formulate a validation argument, one focusing on predictions about future performance in situations requiring language and the other on inferences about what test takers know. The two different perspectives demonstrate some of the language-related complexity inherent in developing a validity argument. Taking the space to develop the language-specific issues associated with quantitative methods is essential if an ethical perspective is to be explored because the predictions and inferences about what test takers know require researchers to describe language knowledge and use from their chosen analytic perspectives, which in turn have implications for monolingual normativity and relevance.

Statistical Analysis for Language Assessment is divided into three parts. Part 1 covers basic concepts of measurement and statistics with the chapters "Basic Concepts and Terms," "Describing Test Scores," and "Investigating Relationships among Different Sets of Test Scores." The first chapter will look familiar to readers who know Bachman's prior books (Bachman, 1990; Bachman & Palmer, 1996); it blends concepts that form the basis of language assessment with those of general measurement and statistics. The second and

third chapters are introductions to their respective topics that use examples from language assessment to explain the procedures and their purposes. Part 2 introduces statistics for test analysis and improvement in the following chapters: "Analyzing Test Tasks," "Investigating Reliability for Norm-Referenced Tests," and "Investigating Reliability for Criterion-Referenced Tests." These three chapters, like the previous two, offer introductions with language tests used as examples. Part 3 goes into a deeper discussion of statistical inference than one typically finds in a language assessment book, particularly in chapters 7 and 8, "Stating Hypotheses and Making Statistical Inferences," and "Tests of Statistical Significance," respectively. Chapter 9 gives an up-to-date account of issues involved in investigating validity, and chapter 10 discusses reporting and interpreting test scores.

Bachman's book unapologetically covers the quantitative aspects of assessment without attempting to include the many qualitative issues also associated with assessing performance, such as research on test-taking strategies, discourse analysis of performance on speaking and writing tests, and analysis of power relations in the testing process, all of which are among the topics appearing in the flagship journal *Language Testing*. The focus on quantitative aspects creates sufficient space to develop the quantitative grasp that may allow students to step beyond the role of technician to be able to use statistics to help them think about language issues. This text, along with a workbook and CD-ROM (Bachman & Kunnan, 2005, not reviewed), offers a means of gaining such a grasp.

Bachman's thesis in this textbook articulates one aspect of the ethical mission of those who develop and use language tests:

Language tests . . . have the potential for helping us collect useful information that will help benefit a wide variety of individuals. However, to realize this potential, we need to be able to demonstrate that scores we obtain from language tests are reliable, and that the ways in which we interpret and use language test scores are valid. If the language tests we use do not provide reliable information, and if the uses we make of these test scores cannot be supported with credible evidence, then we risk making incorrect and unfair decisions that will be potentially harmful to the very individuals we hope to benefit. (p. 3)

This component of an ethical perspective—the responsibility for the technical quality of work performed—is one that I will add to those raised by Ortega (this issue) as I consider some of the issues that would be covered by a text focusing on

quantitative methods and aiming to incorporate an ethical dimension.

THE QUANTITATIVE UMBRELLA

How could a textbook on quantitative methods for applied linguistics be developed in a way that includes the ethical dimensions of L2 research discussed in this volume? The purpose of such a text would have to extend beyond the technical aspects of how to conduct and report quantitative research. Ethical dimensions, according to Ortega, center on the monolingual basis of SLA research and on its decontextualization. She discusses the former in terms of “the crisis of the native speaker,” whereas the latter pertains to “the perceived lack of relevance of SLA research for teachers” (p. 428). On the basis of these ethical issues, Ortega asserts principles intended to help guide future research: that the value of research should be judged by its social utility, that value-free research is impossible, and that epistemological diversity is a good thing. With these three principles in mind, I formulate five ethical principles that might pertain to quantitative L2 research. I describe these emergent principles in terms of the issues that they entail with the intention that these ideas serve as a point of departure for developing an ethics-informed quantitative methodology text.

Assuring Technical Quality

The first issue that would need to underlie an ethics-based quantitative research methods text is the technical quality of research. Technical quality has an ethical dimension in view of the enormous value placed on results from quantitative research outside the L2 profession. Quantitative research can yield clear results that may speak to decision makers. For example, conclusions drawn on the basis of inferential statistics about how one group performed relative to another are a mainstay in educational and scientific discourse in the United States. This fact seems to be impervious to criticisms of quantitative research from applied linguists. For better or worse, L2 researchers need to work within standards for quantitative research or convincingly argue why such standards are not pertinent to their work. Either way, knowledge and use of the technical standards of quantitative research may be the key to the door through which research must go if it is to have any chance of achieving social utility. In short, the issues of social utility and technical quality are tightly intertwined in quantitative research.

An ethics-informed quantitative methods text would therefore address issues of technical quality of particular relevance to L2 researchers, such as the justification of the assessment used in research. The most fragile piece of quantitative methodology in practice is typically the assessment that serves as the basis for all analyses and conclusions. Justifications for an assessment in L2 research often consist of citations showing that the instrument has been used in prior research rather than relevant arguments concerning the validity of interpretations and uses of the assessment in the research at hand. As Bachman explains, reliability and validity are not properties of a test. Substantive arguments about assessment, such as those presented in Bachman’s text, remain separate from presentations of quantitative research methodology in applied linguistics today, but in order to increase the technical quality of quantitative research, assessment issues as they play out within L2 research need to be developed as part of quantitative research methodology.

A second example of a technical quality issue pertaining to L2 research is the need to probe the implications of the use of statistical techniques despite the tenuous adherence of data to assumptions. Adherence to assumptions underlying statistical procedures is a gray area in quantitative research. Some argue that assumptions (e.g., normality of distributions, independence of observations) must be adhered to strictly, but the reality is that if such rules were strictly enforced by reviewers and journal editors, we would see very little quantitative research published in applied linguistics journals. Instead of blindly enforcing laboratory guidelines in the use of statistical analysis, a better understanding is needed concerning the implications of not adhering closely to assumptions. Statisticians study this problem, but results as they pertain to the types of issues that arise in L2 research need to be discussed from the perspective of the reality of research results, particularly those coming from the classroom, rather than from a prescriptive perspective.

Both of these issues would require the author of the quantitative methods text to draw on work in other areas in order to inform an argument about the state of the art in quantitative issues as they pertain to L2 researchers. All research methodology texts and guidelines intend to work toward the goal of technical quality, but the ethical lens reveals issues that deserve elaboration that could only be developed in a text focusing on quantitative research methods in L2 research. The groundwork for such a text has begun to be laid in papers reviewing measurement issues in

SLA (e.g., Norris & Ortega, 2003), so moving this thinking into the graduate textbooks of tomorrow seems a realistic goal.

Justifying Relevance

Ortega (this issue) suggests that “the value of research is to be judged by its social utility” (p. 430). With respect to quantitative research, relevance is connected to the technical issues of generalizability, but it also entails the honesty of the researcher about the intended audience for research results.

As Ortega points out, samples drawn from some populations are prevalent in SLA research while others are virtually invisible. Bigelow and Tarone (2004) suggest that learners who are illiterate in their first language are dramatically different from literate L2 learners and, consequently, their L2 development may differ in some respects from that of the literate learners, who have served as participants in the large majority of SLA research. From a quantitative perspective, this argument is understood as raising an issue of appropriate generalizability to a population of interest, but adding an ethical dimension forces other questions: Why have researchers not noted the limitations of results from literate samples? Why have illiterate populations not been studied? What social, political, and material realities have to be overcome to study these learners? These are issues that might be addressed in an ethically informed text on quantitative L2 research.

The more slippery issue is the need for the researcher’s honest construal of the scope and relevance of the research for particular audiences. As Ortega (this issue) suggests, the issue of relevance in SLA research has been dichotomized as a choice between pure and applied research. Mackey and Gass offer excellent advice for beginning researchers in their answer to the question: “Where do research ideas come from?” (p. 17). Research questions need to be current and theoretically interesting; they come from reading the literature, and they can come from observation of classroom learners. Their discussion avoids the simple dichotomy of pure and applied research questions, but it also avoids the idea that research questions have affiliations within the profession and that choosing research questions also chooses the academic company one keeps. For example, the choice of a language socialization perspective for doctoral dissertation research affects which authors the writer reads, what conferences and conference sessions the writer attends, and where the writer can or cannot work. Without an analysis of these issues associated with choosing a re-

search question, it is not surprising that many researchers seem to feel under no obligation to state explicitly for whom their research is intended. It is not unusual for readers to have to infer the audience for a study reported in SLA journals. Topics appear to be relevant for an educational setting, but in many cases they are not. A text on quantitative research might teach researchers to state explicitly the readers for whom their research is relevant.

Justifying Criteria

Ortega (this issue) points out that the critique of the native speaker as norm has affected many areas of applied linguistics research but has not had significant impact on research on instructed SLA. It is an issue that remains invisible in the texts under review, but that would have to be addressed explicitly in an ethically informed quantitative methods text. Native speaker performance on assessments is often used as the criterion for assessing the correctness of learners’ responses to linguistic tasks. The issue is not that native-like responses as a criterion of performance should be categorically rejected for some other criterion of performance. Instead, the issue is that native-like performance should not be assumed to be the relevant and appropriate criterion. This issue pertains to the way in which language is assessed in a study and, therefore, would be treated in an ethically informed text on quantitative research methods. Such a discussion would be included as part of the development and scoring of assessments used in research.

Informing Future Research

Quantitative research is typically intended to produce results that can be generalized to a defined population to accumulate evidence about issues of relevance to the profession. A successful process of quantitative research consists of the cumulative progression of one set of results adding to a previously established pool of knowledge in a manner that allows for increased knowledge. A successful process requires that the variables and procedures employed in each study be described in a manner that forms a foundation for the next study. Therefore, an ethically based quantitative text would contain critical commentary on the measurement and procedural issues that require clarity. Research on educational and psychological measurement does not help very much because of the general terms in which

discussion of constructs is cast (AERA, APA, & NCME, 1999).

It seems unlikely that any other field of inquiry is going to provide L2 researchers with the conceptual infrastructure required to improve the systematicity with which empirically measurable constructs can be understood. Taking advantage of the most interesting and sophisticated characterizations of knowledge and performance (Mislevy, 1994), but it would be difficult to argue that such recent approaches to measurement have significantly advanced our understanding of how to characterize L2 constructs. If L2 research is to attain accumulated knowledge, quantitative researchers will need to adopt a more proactive agenda toward understanding language constructs as empirically observable objects of investigation.

Understanding Epistemological Options

A quantitative research methods text would present its contents as a means of carrying out research within the epistemological framework of positivism (and postpositivism). It would need to explain positivism relative to other perspectives to situate the quantitative perspective as one way of knowing rather than as the only credible way of conducting L2 research. It would discuss the societal privileges and responsibilities of the quantitative researcher in a world where the most simple-minded and powerful people often seek guidance from quantitative research, whereas a full and relevant picture of L2 issues defies quantitative summarization. Ortega (this issue) argues that epistemological diversity is a good thing, but it can only be as good as researchers and readers think it is. If the next generation of quantitative L2 researchers is to recognize the value of epistemological diversity, students need to learn what it is and why it is of value.

LEARNING TO THINK QUANTITATIVELY

Learning how to think quantitatively is important for students in applied linguistics. It has been 14 years since the publication of Hatch and Lazaraton's *The Research Manual: Design and Statistics for Applied Linguistics*. Why have no books probing the current issues in technical quantitative research methodology been written since then? If quantitative approaches to L2 research are intellectually empty as an area of scholarly inquiry, are L2 researchers destined to continue to borrow unanalyzed cookbook methodologies

from the quantitative research of other disciplines? Current practices consist largely of sending students of quantitative approaches off to courses in educational psychology, psychometrics, or statistics. But how does this approach help students to develop the analytic and technical tools they need to think quantitatively about L2 acquisition and use?

Exploring implications of the ethical dimensions of quantitative research methods in applied linguistics may help to distinguish the quantitative issues in L2 research from quantitative approaches taught in education, political science, or agronomy, for example. The issues I have raised offer only an armchair analysis of some observations on quantitative L2 methods prompted by the perspectives described in this *MLJ* special issue. These issues suggest that students in applied linguistics are not served well if they are learning that quantitative methods imply that one can substitute scores on language tests for those on math tests, counts of modal auxiliaries for political party, and classes of L2 learners for bushels of corn. At one level, a unit counted is a data point to be analyzed, but if L2 researchers hope to move beyond this superficial level to be able to argue quantitatively in the real-world arena of education and science, a textbook that fully probes and explores the ethically based issues in L2 research is needed.

REFERENCES

- American Educational Research Association [AERA], American Psychological Association [APA], & National Council on Measurement in Education [NCME]. (1999). *Standards for educational and psychological testing*. Washington, DC: American Educational Research Association.
- Bachman, L. F. (1990). *Fundamental considerations in language testing*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bachman, L. F. (2004). *Statistical analysis for language assessment*. New York: Cambridge University Press.
- Bachman, L. F., & Kunnan, A. J. (2005). *Statistical analysis for language assessment workbook*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Bachman, L. F., & Palmer, A. S. (1996). *Language testing in practice*. New York: Oxford University Press.
- Bigelow, M., & Tarone, E. (2004). The role of literacy level in second language acquisition: Doesn't who we study determine what we know? *TESOL Quarterly*, 38, 689-700.
- Brown, J. D., & Rodgers, T. S. (2002). *Doing second language research*. New York: Oxford University Press.

- Hatasa, Y. A. (2004). [Review of the book *Doing second language research*]. *Modern Language Journal*, 88, 468–469.
- Hatch, E., & Lazarton, A. (1991). *The research manual: Design and statistics for applied linguistics*. Boston: Heinle.
- Mackey, A., & Gass, S. (2005). *Second language research: Methodology and design*. Mahwah, NJ: Erlbaum.
- Mislevy, R. J. (1994). Evidence and inference in educational assessment. *Psychometrika*, 59, 439–483.
- Norris, J., & Ortega, L. (2003). Defining and measuring SLA. In C. J. Doughty & M. H. Long (Eds.), *The handbook of second language acquisition* (pp. 718–761). Malden, MA: Blackwell.
- Ortega, L. (2005). For what and for whom is our research? The ethical as transformative lens in instructed SLA. *Modern Language Journal*, 89, 427–443.
- Padilla, A. M. (2004). [Review of the book *Appraising research in second language learning*]. *Modern Language Journal*, 88, 315–316.
- Porte, G. K. (2002). *Appraising research in second language learning: A practical approach to critical analysis of quantitative research*. Philadelphia: Benjamins.

MLJ Seeks New Editor for 2008

At the end of 2007, I will have served as *MLJ* Editor for 14 years. I am not seeking additional terms because I wish to pursue other avenues of scholarship. I hope that this early announcement of my decision will allow adequate time to select a new editor and make a smooth transition. Editing the *MLJ* continues to be a stimulating and rewarding professional experience for me. I encourage your applications and would be pleased to correspond with anyone seeking more information about my current duties.

SALLY MAGNAN

Editor, *MLJ*

Call for Nominations/Applications

Professor Sally Sieloff Magnan will be stepping down as editor of the *Modern Language Journal* effective with the last issue of volume 91 (2007). A new editor will be named effective with the first issue of volume 92 (2008), which goes to press in mid-October of 2007. The new editor will begin receiving manuscripts for consideration in July of 2007. Although no fixed limit for the term of office exists, the new editor should be willing to serve a minimum of three years. A modest honorarium and budget for office expenses accompany the position. The individual named editor is expected to name his or her own editorial staff, editorial board, and associate editors.

Qualifications: The ideal candidate will have a background in Applied Linguistics/SLA/Foreign Language Education; strong scholarly record; familiarity with quantitative and qualitative research paradigms; and experience in teaching a foreign language in the U.S. context. Prior editorial experience and EFL/ESL background is helpful but not essential.

Application Procedure: Those interested in being considered for the position should submit as electronic attachment: (1) a letter expressing interest, qualifications, and proposed policies and plans for the *MLJ*; (2) an up-to-date curriculum vitae; (3) a statement of support from the applicant's dean and/or department chair outlining the institutional support that would be guaranteed the editor, e.g., released time, a part-time secretary or research assistant. **The deadline for applications and nominations is February 28, 2006.**

Search committee: Members of the search committee are Heidi Byrnes (chair), Richard Donato, John Lett, and Judith E. Liskin-Gasparro.

Please direct nominations, applications, and inquiries to:

Dr. Heidi Byrnes, Chair, *MLJ* Editor Search Committee
 German Department
 Georgetown University
 Washington, DC 20057.
 Phone: 202-687-8386.
 Email: byrnes@georgetown.edu