FROM THE GUEST EDITOR

It is with great pleasure that I introduce the first of two special millennial issues on "The Role of Computer Technology in Second Language Acquisition Research." While the articles in *Language Learning & Technology* generally report on research studies of how technology can be used to facilitate language learning, these two special issues will focus on how technology can facilitate second language acquisition research. Of interest are the unique features of computer-based or Web-based software that can elicit and record L2 data and that help to shed light on the *processes* of SLA.

In the first article, "The use of computer technology in experimental studies of second language acquisition: A survey of some techniques and some ongoing studies," Jan Hulstijn provides an excellent overview of some of the ways in which SLA researchers use the computer to elicit L2 production data and to record how L2 learners process L2 input. The multimedia computer is the ideal tool to present linguistic stimuli, both in spoken and in written form, and to register all reactions of learners in terms of both accuracy and time. The types of tasks and techniques described are typical of those used in the field of psychology and have had an enormous impact on the study of the processes of language acquisition and use, in particular, the acquisition of automaticity in L2 reading, writing and listening, and the use of electronic bilingual dictionaries.

In the second article, "Insights into the construction of grammatical knowledge provided by user-behavior tracking technologies," Joseph Collentine reports on software that tracks user-behavior, in this case, for the purpose of investigating the construction of grammatical knowledge. The study documented the types of data sources (e.g., digital videos, sound files) that learners accessed in a CALL-based consciousness-raising task and assessed whether such interactions promote grammatical development. One of the underlying goals was to provide a fuller picture of the processes that affect the acquisition of grammatical knowledge, in this case, generating indirect speech in Spanish.

In the third article, "What lexical information do L2 learners select in a CALL dictionary and how does it affect word retention?" Batia Laufer and Monica Hill describe an empirical study of EFL learners' behavior and learning outcome when using various types of dictionary information incorporated into a CALL program. Log files registered every selection of the learners, and recall data was recorded by this research tool. This common thread of using computer technologies for eliciting data and tracking L2 learners' behavior is evident throughout this special issue.

In the fourth article, "Web-based elicitation tasks in SLA research," Dalila Ayoun presents an experimental study in second language acquisition designed with Web-based elicitation tasks. She demonstrates how a rich set of data can be elicited by using a variety of Web-based tasks. The experimental tasks included some typical SLA grammaticality/acceptability judgment tasks and tested the acquisition of the properties subsumed under the verb movement parameter and the null subject parameter by English native speakers learning French. Ayoun suggests that the Web-based tasks allow in general for more versatility, for a better control of experimental variables and for richer data that better inform SLA processes.

Please visit the columns in the current issue. *On the Net* presents Jean W. LeLoup & Robert Ponterio's description of Cooperative Learning Activities for the Foreign Language Classroom. In *Emerging Technologies,* Bob Godwin-Jones reports on the

timely topic of Speech Technologies for Language Learning. Our book reviews feature Learner English on Computer and Media, Multimedia, Omnimedia: Selected Papers from the CETaLL Symposium and the Vth Man and the Media Symposium in Nancy. Our software reviews feature Reading German and LIBRA.

We hope that you will find these papers inspiring and will stay tuned for the second issue on this topic which will appear in May 2000.

Dorothy Chun
Guest Editor