Language Testing and Assessment in Applied Linguistics: identifying reciprocity in applied linguistic research

18-19 June 2007
University of Bristol:

Proposal for paper

Registration

CALL FOR PAPERS AND INVITATION TO REGISTER (Paper proposal and registration forms are in separate files)

This seminar aims to build on the growing presence of assessment and testing concerns with applied linguistics and to explore ways in which language assessment can contribute theoretical insights to second language acquisition research. The seminar provides an opportunity to challenge current thinking concerning language testing and assessment in applied linguistics from both sociocultural and psycholinguistic perspectives. A key aim is to contribute to a research agenda through dialogue between different communities in sub-fields within applied linguistics and language assessment.

Seminar Objective " To bring together researchers working at the interface of language testing and assessment research in different areas of applied linguistics. " To critique and evaluate, referenced to current thinking and research, the contributions of language testing and assessment in applied linguistics. " To contribute to a dialogue between sub-fields within applied linguistics and language assessment theory and practice from both socio-cultural and psycholinguistic perspectives.

Seminar Rationale Facets of language testing and assessment permeate much research in distinct sub-fields of applied linguistics, although these may not be formally recognised as such. Similarly, in language testing and assessment practice, elements of research in applied linguistics are intertwined. One illustration of the reciprocity of roles in assessment and applied linguistics research is the need for evidence of the validity of different elicitation procedures in areas such as second language acquisition on the one hand (Purpura 2006), and the use of corpora and approaches to corpus linguistics by examination boards in broadening their understandings of the language domains for which they are setting tests on the other (e.g. Ball 2001). Secondly, it is suggested that research in language assessment and applied linguistics have been perceived as distinct, with the roles of language testing and assessment in applied linguistics relatively unexplored, an artificial divide that Bachman & Cohen (1998) argue should be bridged (see also Shohamy 2001). Exceptions include symposia at Language Testing Research Colloquium and more recently the Invited Joint ILTA/AAAL Symposium, Montreal 2006, focusing specifically on interfaces between language testing and assessment and second language acquisition research. However, these have tended to be limited to using language assessment procedures as elicitation techniques, i.e. as tools, rather than contributing theoretical insights to second language acquisition research. This conference, therefore, provides an opportunity to challenge current thinking around language testing and assessment in applied linguistics from sociocultural and psycholinguistic perspectives, as reflected in our invitations to keynote speakers and Round Table participants. Thus, an additional motivation for proposing this conference is to build on the growing presence of assessment and testing concerns within applied linguistics, not merely to address issues of visibility but, importantly, to contribute to a research agenda between different research communities within our (wider) applied linguistics community.

Invited keynote speakers Jim Lantolf, Greer Professor of Language Acquisition and Applied Linguistics, Department of Linguistics and Applied Language Studies, University of Pennsylvania, USA Socio-cultural perspectives on assessment in applied linguistics research Elana Shohamy, Professor of Language Education, Tel Aviv University, Israel Language testing and assessment in education: the social implications Rob Schoonen, Associate Professor of Second Language Acquisition, University of Amsterdam Psycholinguistic perspectives on assessment in applied linguistics research There will be a small number of other papers, proposed by participants, plus a number of Round Table discussions.

Presenting a paper: If you wish to present a paper, please fill in the 'proposal to present' form, providing a 250 word abstract. Papers will each be 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes for discussion. Deadline for submission of paper proposals is 1st May.

Postgraduate student scholarships Two postgraduate student scholarships are available. These will cover the costs of registration (attendance and refreshments), but exclude travel. Applicants should state they are applying for these scholarships on their registration form, provide proof of full-time student status and a short summary (maximum 350 words) of their research and why the seminar is relevant. If they would like to present a paper, they should also complete the submission to present form and include the 250 word abstract of the proposed paper. Preference for award of the scholarships will be given to postgraduates presenting papers. Deadline for submission of application for the postgraduate scholarships is 1st May.

Seminar Dates: Monday 18th June - Tuesday 19th June Cost (including attendance at the seminar and refreshments, and conference dinner on 18th June) Full delegate fee £70.00 Reduced student fee £50.00

Registration: A maximum of 30 places are available. If you would like to attend, please fill in the registration form. The deadline for registration is 15th May 2007.

Deadline for submission of both paper proposals and applications for postgraduate scholarships is 1st May. Notification of the selection of papers and of the award of student scholarships will be given by 8th May.