



British Association of Applied Linguistics



BAAL / Cambridge University Press Seminar Programme 2008

Conceptualising Learning in Applied Linguistics
19-20 June 2008, Newcastle University

CALL FOR PAPERS & PARTICIPANTS

This is a first call for papers and for participants for this BAAL/CUP-funded seminar.

Objectives of the Seminar

The objectives of the seminar are to:

- explore and unpack the different conceptions of learning involved in research into using, learning and teaching a language;
- develop awareness of how different conceptions of learning originate in different paradigms, methodologies and epistemologies;
- develop awareness of how conceptions of learning vary according to the particular aspect of language or communication which is being learnt or taught;
- produce a conceptualisation of learning to which members of different schools of SLA will be able to subscribe;
- apply this conceptualisation of learning to a range of data involving learning and teaching a language;
- to explore notions of learning in non-institutional settings.

Speakers

So far 7 speakers are confirmed for the seminar. We are delighted to have some of the top names in Applied Linguistics from around the world, who cover a wide range of approaches to learning.

Keynote speakers

Professor Rod Ellis, University of Auckland

Professor Diane Larsen-Freeman, University of Michigan

Invited Speakers

Professor Vivian Cook, Newcastle University

Professor Constant Leung, King's College London

Professor Florence Myles, Newcastle University

Professor Manfred Pienemann, Newcastle University

Professor Simona Pekarek Doehler, Université de Neuchâtel

There will be 5 additional papers. Therefore, applications are invited for papers on topics relevant to the objectives and themes of the seminar. See below for details on presenting a paper.

Seminar Coordinators

[Professor Paul Seedhouse](#)

[Dr Steve Walsh](#)

[Dr Alan Firth](#)

[Dr Chris Jenks](#)

Themes of the Seminar

Themes which are expected to emerge include:

- Why do conceptions of learning vary in research into learning and teaching a language?
- How do different conceptions of learning relate to different paradigms, methodologies and epistemologies?
- Which conceptions of learning are most appropriate to learning which aspect of a language?
- Is it possible to produce a conceptualisation of learning to which members of different schools of SLA will be able to subscribe?
- New perspectives and approaches to learning;
- How can conceptions of learning be applied to data?
- What happens when different conceptions of learning are applied to the same data?
- What is the role of technology in language learning?
- Do most learners today still learn in face to face, structured environments or is it equally likely that they will learn in more informal settings, maybe at a distance?

Rationale for the Seminar

In the field of Applied Linguistics there are currently a number of differing conceptions of learning in relation to learning and teaching a language. In the cognitive psychology tradition of SLA, learning tends to be conceptualised as a

change in individual cognitive state. Changes, often in relation to syntax, may be tested and quantified. Pienemann (2005), for example, suggests that an individual who is observed to correctly produce a syntactical item twice in speech with lexical and morphological variation may be assumed to have learnt that item. In the social or socio-cultural tradition of SLA, by contrast, learning tends to be conceptualised rather differently and offers a holistic perspective of language learning. The focus tends to be on the processes of language learning and on socially-distributed cognition rather than on discrete items as products.

And yet these two conceptions of learning are not mutually exclusive and it should be possible to develop a perspective which incorporates the best insights and procedures from both traditions. Conceptions of learning involved in research into language teaching in particular tend to vary according to which aspect of a language is being taught. If the focus is on introducing new syntactical structures to students, the conception of learning may logically focus on whether individual students are able to actively produce these structures correctly. By contrast, if the teaching focus is on developing the ability to communicate and to participate in social interaction, the conception and evaluation of learning will necessarily be different. In vocabulary learning, mastering a word completely may require knowledge of its orthographical and phonological form, meanings, grammatical behaviour, associations, collocations, frequency and register (Schmitt & McCarthy 1997).

The seminar aims, then, to produce a conceptualisation of learning in applied linguistics which is able to explicate and incorporate variation according to a) the aspect of a language or communication which is being taught b) the paradigms, methodologies and epistemologies being employed.

Organisation of the Seminar

12 places are reserved for speakers, and places are available for participants who are not presenting papers but will participate in discussions. 2 of these places will be reserved for research students and 1 for a BAAL committee member. The intention is that the choice of speakers will provide a broad spectrum of opinions on learning from within the field of Applied Linguistics.

On both days there will be 1 keynote paper, and 5 papers, making 12 sessions in total. Keynote papers will be 1 hour (40 minutes plus 20 minutes discussion) and papers 40 minutes (20 minutes plus 20 minutes discussion). Papers are written and circulated before the seminar for participants to read. Presenters talk to and discuss the papers but do not read out the papers in their entirety. It is intended, then, that papers presented at the seminar will subsequently be modified by the presenters in the light of discussions at the seminar; this should create coherence in the subsequent publication. Forum sessions at the end of each day will provide an opportunity to discuss emerging themes and to promote discussion and dialogue. A group dinner will also promote more informal interaction.

Publication

The aim is to publish a collection of papers initially presented at the seminar which would subsequently be revised to create a coherent publication, with linking editorial comment. The publication may be a book or a special edition of a journal in the field of applied linguistics.

The book will be offered to Cambridge University Press in the first instance as seminar sponsors. Newcastle has a very strong record of publication in relation to previous BAAL/CUP seminars: the July 2002 seminar resulted in the 2005 collection *Applying Conversation Analysis* and the July 2005 seminar resulted in the 2007 collection *Language Learning and Teaching as Social Interaction*, both published by Palgrave Macmillan.

Time

19-20 June 2008 from 10 am to 4.30 pm. We recommend that participants arrive on 18 June.

Location

School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences
Newcastle University
Newcastle on Tyne NE1 7RU
UK

The School of Education, Communication and Language Sciences (ECLS) is a large multidisciplinary school in the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences.

www.ncl.ac.uk/ecls

Newcastle has one of the largest groupings of linguists in the UK, whose research is presented in the Centre for Research in Linguistics and Language Sciences (CRiLLS) <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/linguistics/>

The seminar will take place in Bedson Teaching Centre room 1.46.

Getting here

Newcastle is very well connected by air, road, rail and sea.

Newcastle airport is only 8 miles away from the city centre and is served by many airlines. Click here to get to Newcastle Airport website.

<http://www.newcastleairport.com/>

Newcastle train station (also called Central Station) is within walking distance to many city centre destinations. To plan your journey from within the U.K., click here.

<http://www.nationalrail.co.uk/>

By road, the A1(M) passes through Newcastle, linking the city to major routes across the country.

The North Shields International Ferry Terminal links the North of England to Scandinavia and Northern Europe (Holland). North Shields is only about 7 miles from Newcastle. More information here.

<http://www.dfdseaways.com/>

Maps of the University are available at <http://www.ncl.ac.uk/travel/maps/> and of Newcastle and the region at <http://www.newcastlegateshead.com/travel.php>. The seminar will take place in Bedson Teaching Centre room 1.46. Getting around:

Once you are in Newcastle, there are many ways to get around including buses, metro, taxis.

The best way to get around Newcastle is probably to use the Metro network. It links the airport and the train station to the city centre. It may also be a convenient way to travel from your hotel to the University if you don't want to walk. Here is a map of the Metro system. The Civic Centre is located next to the Haymarket metro station.

<http://www.nexus.org.uk/wps/wcm/resources/file/eb6aab024fc3efc/Metro%20Map.jpg>

If you would like more information on travelling to and within Newcastle, please visit the Newcastle Gateshead link.

<http://www.newcastlegateshead.com/travel.php>

Accommodation

To view and book a range of accommodation, visit

<http://www.newcastlegateshead.com/Accommodation.php>

For a free accommodation booking service, call on 0906 680 6805 (calls charged at 25p per minute) or email: bookonline@gateshead.gov.uk. If you are calling from overseas, please call on +44 (0)191 499 8150. We recommend that participants arrive on 18 June.

To Apply to Present a Paper

5 places are reserved for applications to present papers. If you wish to present a paper, please send an abstract of about 300 words to Paul Seedhouse at paul.seedhouse@ncl.ac.uk by March 28, 2008. Please include your name, contact details, institutional affiliation, and bio data (maximum 150 words).

To Apply to Participate

Places are available for participants who are not presenting papers but will participate in discussions. Two places will be reserved for research students and 1 for a BAAL committee member. Since there is likely to be heavy demand and the number of

places are limited, please email paul.seedhouse@ncl.ac.uk with your name, contact details, institutional affiliation. Again, the deadline for your application is March 28, 2008.

Cost

The cost for the seminar is £100 which includes lunch, tea and coffee. We will contact participants at a later date for further details regarding payment options.