

FOREWORD

The past ten years have seen a rapid expansion of SLA research in France and in French-speaking Switzerland. The catalytic agent for this development has been the Groupe de Recherches pour l'Acquisition des Langues (GRAL), founded at the University of Paris VIII. Indeed, many of the contributors to this issue belong to that original group. GRAL organized at regular intervals colloquia on SLA in which not only French-speaking researchers participated, but also researchers from various European countries and the English-speaking world (Perdue & Porquier, 1979; Arditty & Mittner, 1980; Dommergues & Grandcolas, 1980; Noyau, 1981; Trévisse, 1982; Py, 1984b; Noyau & Porquier, 1984; Giacomi & Véronique, 1986). Several members of GRAL are currently participating in major collaborative European research projects, such as the Neuchâtel project on bilingual practice and the European Science Foundation project on adult immigrant second language acquisition.

This issue of SSLA both testifies to the growing activity of French-speaking researchers in the field of SLA and serves as an example of the sort of fruitful dialogue that could develop between English- and French-speaking SLA researchers. It represents the sort of useful contact at the international level initiated by the two EUNAM (European-North American SLA) Workshops organized by R. Andersen and J. Meisel: EUNAM 1, Los Angeles, 1981 (Andersen, 1984) and EUNAM 2, Gohrde, German Federal Republic, 1982 (Pfaff, in press). This contact was continued at the workshop on European trends in SLA scheduled in conjunction with the 1985 LSA-TESOL Summer Institute at Georgetown University. What distinguishes the present endeavor, however, is that it constitutes the first attempt to bring together for an anglophone audience contributions from French and French-speaking Swiss researchers representing nearly every theoretical orientation and every subfield of second language acquisition.

Before closing we would like to thank Albert Valdman for helping us develop this issue and express a debt of gratitude to the SSLA editorial staff (Charles Schroen, Chris Swanson, and Molly Wieland) for their indefatigable efforts in assisting the authors in the expression of their ideas for the intended audience. Any infelicity in style or lack of clarity stemming from the attempt of the authors to report on their research in a language that is not their usual working medium remains their responsibility and that of the co-editors.

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