

# UC Berkeley

## Newsletters

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# LMRI



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UNIVERSITY OF CALIFORNIA LINGUISTIC MINORITY RESEARCH INSTITUTE

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## Profiles

### New Director Appointed for UC LMRI—Giorgio Perissinotto

SANTA BARBARA, CA—Giorgio Perissinotto, Professor of Spanish and Portuguese (Ph.D., Columbia University, 1970) and Chair of the Department of Spanish and Portuguese, University of California, Santa Barbara, has been appointed director of the University of California Linguistic Minority Research Institute. The UC LMRI, housed on the Santa Barbara campus, is a UC multicampus research unit established in 1984 to foster interdisciplinary research in collaboration with California public schools in order to improve academic achievement and access to higher education for children from diverse language backgrounds.



Giorgio Perissinotto  
Director, UC LMRI

"It is my hope that through our work at the institute, researchers from the nine campuses and other scholars, policymakers, and K-12 teachers, students and parents will have the necessary tools to address language minority and language rights issues," says Perissinotto, who sees his tenure at the UC LMRI as an opportunity to expand the scope of the institute's missions.

"I am confident that under Giorgio Perissinotto's leadership the institute will continue to grow and flourish," says Macías, a UCSB professor of education who served for over five years as director and continues to be a principal investigator at the UC LMRI.

A faculty member at UCSB since 1977, Perissinotto, who succeeds Reynaldo Macías, has published widely in the field of Hispanic literature and linguistics: history of the language, dialectology, Mexican Spanish, California Spanish. Author of *Fonología del español hablado en la ciudad de México: ensayo de un método sociolingüístico* (El Colegio de México, 1975); *Reconquista y literatura medieval: cuatro ensayos* (Scripta Humanística); *Juan Suárez de Peraltá Tratado del descubrimiento de las Yndias y su conquista* (1589), *Transcription, Preliminary Study and Notes by Giorgio Perissinotto* (Alianza Editorial, 1990); *Linguistic Perspectives on the Romance Languages*, William J. Ashby, Marianne Mithun, Giorgio Perissinotto, Eduardo Raposo, Eds. *Current Issues in Linguistic Theory*, 103 (John Benjamins, 1995); numerous articles on topics ranging from Medieval literature and historical linguistics

to Mexican and United States Spanish. His most current project deals with the establishment of Spanish-speaking communities in early Alta California and the beginning of bilingualism in the region. His interest in language minorities dates to the early 1970s when he worked for the Mexican Secretariat of Education in the State of Oaxaca. He participated in a large-scale project to address the language needs of speakers of Indian languages, and continues to maintain professional ties with Mexican scholars in the field of Hispanic linguistics.

### LSA Adopts Statement on Language Rights

WASHINGTON, DC—The Linguistic Society of America was founded in 1924 to advance the scientific study of language. The Society's present membership of approximately 7,000 persons and institutions includes a great proportion of the leading experts on language in the United States, as well as many from abroad. Many of the Society's members have experience with, or expertise in, bilingualism and multilingualism. Despite increasing interest in these topics, public debate is all too often based on misconceptions about language. In this Statement, the Society addresses some of these misconceptions and urges the protection of basic linguistic rights.

Save the Date!!!  
**THE UC LMRI ANNUAL CONFERENCE**  
 will be on March 27-28, 1998  
 at the  
 Holiday Inn in Santa Cruz  
 For More Information:  
 Ph: 805-893-2250  
 Web Site:  
[LMRINETUCSB.EDU/CONFS/LMRI98.htm](http://LMRINETUCSB.EDU/CONFS/LMRI98.htm)

1. The vast majority of the world's nations are at least bilingual, and most are multilingual, even if one ignores the impact of modern migrations. Countries in which all residents natively speak the same language are a small exception, certainly not the rule. Even nations like France, Germany and

the United Kingdom have important linguistic minorities within their borders. Furthermore, where diverse linguistic communities exist in one country, they have generally managed to coexist peacefully. Finland, Singapore, and Switzerland are only three examples. Where linguistic discord does arise, as it has with various degrees of intensity in Belgium, Canada, and Sri Lanka, it is generally the result of majority attempts to disadvantage or suppress a minority linguistic community, or it reflects underlying racial or religious conflicts. Multilingualism by itself is rarely an important cause of civil discord.

2. The territory that now constitutes the United States was home to hundreds of languages before the advent of European settlers. These indigenous languages belonged to several language families. Each native language is or was a fully developed system of communication with rich structures and expressive power. Many past and present members of the Society have devoted their professional lives to documenting and analyzing the native languages of the United States.

3. Unfortunately, most of the indigenous languages of the United States are severely threatened. All too often their eradication was deliberate government policy. In other cases, these languages have suffered from biased or uninformed views that they are mere "dialects" with simple grammatical structures and limited vocabularies. The decline of America's indigenous languages has been closely linked to the loss of much of the culture of their speakers.

4. Because of this history, the Society believes that the government and people of the United States have a special obligation to enable indigenous peoples to retain their languages and cultures. The society strongly supports the federal recognition of this obligation, as expressed in the Native American Languages Act. The Society urges federal, state and local governments to continue to affirmatively implement the policies of the Act by enacting legislation, appropriating more adequate funding, and monitoring the progress made under the Act.

5. The United States is also home to numerous immigrant languages other than English. The arrival of some of these languages, such as Dutch, French, German, and Spanish, predates the founding of our nation. Many others have arrived more recently. The substantial number of residents of the United States who speak languages other than English presents us with both challenges and opportunities.

6. The challenges of multilingualism are well known: incorporating linguistic minorities into our economic life, teaching them English so they can participate more fully in our society, and properly educating their children. Unfortunately, in the process of incorporating immigrants and their offspring into American life, bilingualism is often wrongly regarded as a "handicap" or "language barrier." Of course, inability to speak English often functions as a barrier to economic advancement in the United States. But to be bilingual—to speak both English and another language—should be encouraged, not stigmatized. There is no convincing evidence that it may actually enhance certain types of intelligence.

7. Multilingualism also presents our nation with many benefits and opportunities. For example, bilingual individuals can use their language skills to promote our business interests abroad. Their linguistic competence strengthens our foreign

diplomatic missions and national defense. And they can better teach the rest of us to speak other languages.

8. Moreover, people who speak a language in addition to English provide a role model for other Americans. Our national record on learning other languages is notoriously poor. A knowledge of foreign languages is necessary not just for immediate practical purposes, but also because it gives people the sense of international community that America requires if it is to compete successfully in a global economy.

9. Furthermore, different languages allow different ways of expressing experiences, thoughts, and aesthetics. America's art and culture are greatly enriched by the presence of diverse languages among its citizens.

10. To remedy our policies towards the languages of Native Americans and to encourage acquisition or retention of languages other than English by all Americans, the Linguistic Society of America urges our nation to protect and promote the linguistic rights of its people. At a minimum, all residents of the United States should be guaranteed the following linguistic rights:

A. To be allowed to express themselves, publicly or privately, in the language of their choice.

B. To maintain their native language and, should they so desire, to pass it on to their children.

C. When their facility in English is inadequate, to be provided a qualified interpreter in any proceeding in which the government endeavors to deprive them of life, liberty or property. Moreover, where there is a substantial linguistic minority in a community, interpretation ought to be provided by courts and other state agencies in any matter that significantly affects the public.

D. To have their children educated in a manner that affirmatively acknowledges their native language abilities as well as ensures their acquisition of English. Children can learn only when they understand their teachers. As a consequence, some use of children's native language in the classroom is often desirable if they are to be educated successfully.

E. To conduct business in the language of their choice.

F. To use their preferred language for private conversations in the workplace.

G. To have the opportunity to learn to speak, read and write English.

11. Notwithstanding the multilingual history of the United States, the role of English as our common language has never seriously been questioned. Research has shown that newcomers to America continue to learn English at rates comparable to previous generations of immigrants. All levels of government should adequately fund programs to teach English to any resident who desires to learn it. Nonetheless, promoting our common language need not, and should not, come at the cost of violating the rights of linguistic minorities.

## Profiles

### Figueroa Landeros Joins Newsletter Team

Coming to us from Oakland, CA and Huejúcar, Jalisco, Mónica Figueroa-Landeros is the newest addition to the UC

LMRI team. Mónica studied at UC Davis where she graduated with a B.A. in International Relations and a primary focus on Global Politics. She started pursuing an M.A. in Latin American and Iberian Studies at UC Santa Barbara this Fall 1997.

Mónica has traveled and worked in México, including helping put out a bilingual Spanish-English newspaper. She is working as the Editorial Assistant for the UC LMRI News. She also assists in proofreading and editing Spanish language copy for the Institute.



Mónica Figueroa Lardone  
UC MRI News Editorial Asst.

#### Net Notes >>>>>

##### Language Policy in the U.S.

The National Council of Language and International Studies (NCLIS), the "National Policy Voice for Language" states that "the member organizations of NCLIS-INCL are united in their belief that all Americans must have the opportunity to learn and use English and at least one other language." To this end they have created the Language Policy web site. For the latest news on policy initiatives in Washington, DC, go to the page <http://www.languagepolicy.org/new.html>.

##### Interactive Language Exercises on the WWW

To meet the needs of beginning and intermediate-level language learners who cannot always deal with authentic text in the target language on the web, many instructors have turned to producing web pages and sites designed expressly for these learners. But as the initial fascination with the WWW itself wears off, they may find that their students' attention is not held for more than a few minutes by static web pages. Many ingenious activities have been developed to utilize such pages by providing associated tasks. At the same time, language teachers and developers are finding ways to add elements of interactivity to their pages.

- Here are some examples of interactive language websites:
- Spanish Language Exercises by Juan Ramos de Arana: <http://mld.ursinus.edu/~jarana/Ejercicios/>
  - Civilisation française by Marie Ponterio: <http://www.cortland.edu/~lteacher/civ/>
  - Internet Aided Language Learning (INSTALL) by Michael Vallance: <http://www.geocities.com/Athens/Forum/5724/index.html>
  - Cutting Edge CALL Demos by Jim Daber: <http://www-writing.berkeley.edu/choras/call/cuttingedge.html>
  - Self-Study Quizzes for ESL Students by Charles Kelly: <http://www.aitech.ac.jp/~itesl/quizzes/>
  - Demonstration lessons in several languages by the Univer-

sity of Arizona Computer Aided Language Instruction Group: <http://cali.arizona.edu>

For more information on how the above pages are created, see Language Interactive: Guide to Web Scripting for Language Learning by Bob Godwin-Jones: <http://www.fn.vcu.edu/cgi/interact.html>.

#### Call for Proposals

- USIA's Office of Academic Programs is seeking proposals for the Summer Institute for the study of the United States for Foreign Secondary School Teachers and Teacher Trainer Programs. Participants will play a role in developing textbooks, curricula, and other materials used to teach other cultures about the U.S. The deadline for all proposals is **January 16, 1998**. For more information contact the Academic Program Office at (202) 619-4557.
- USIA's Office of International Visitors is requesting proposals. The Multi-Regional and Regional Projects for International Visitors supports exchange and collaboration between professionals and potential leaders in areas such as politics, government, and education. The deadline for each project varies. For more information contact either the Multi-Regional Project Office at (202) 205-3058 or the Regional Project Office at (202) 205-9596.
- The Department of Education is inviting new applications for Bilingual Education: Comprehensive School Grants. This program provides grants to implement and upgrade bilingual education to schools serving limited English proficient (LEP) youth. The contacts for these programs are: Diane DiMaio at (202) 205-5716; Cecile Kreins at (202) 205-5568; James Lockhart at (202) 205-5426; Ursula Lord at (202) 205-5709; and Brenda Turner at (202) 205-9839. The deadline for applications is **January 26, 1998**.

University of California  
Linguistic Minority Research Institute  
1998 Annual Call  
for

Small Research Grant Proposals on Language  
Minority Students and Schools  
and  
Dissertation Research Grant Proposals

Application Deadline: April 30, 1998

For More Information:

Ph: 805-893-2250

Web Site:

<http://lmriael.ucsb.edu>

### Calendar of Events

- January 15-17, 1998**— Inside Portfolios: Interpreting the Cultural Artifacts of Literacy; sponsored by the National Council of Teachers of English, for English teachers, in San Jose, CA. Call (217) 328-3870 ext. 203.
- January 27, 1998**— Phonemic Awareness and Prereading Skills workshop, sponsored by the Churchill Center for Learning Disabilities, for elementary school teachers and administrators, in New York City. Call 212-722-0610.
- January 28-31, 1998**— The Fourth International Conference on the Americas, "Toward the Year 2000: Points of Convergence in the Americas." Holiday Inn, Tampa/Busch Gardens, FL.
- February 4-7, 1998**— CA Association for Bilingual Education (CABE) Annual Conference, San Jose Convention Center, San Jose, CA. Call 213-532-3850; FAX 213-532-3860.
- February 10-14, 1998**— Conf of the National Association of African American Studies and the National Association of Hispanic/Latino Studies, Houston, TX. Contact by email Marisa Rivera: marisa@instate.edu.
- February 12-14, 1998**— 7<sup>th</sup> UNM Conference on Ibero-American Culture & Society jointly with 16<sup>th</sup> conference on Spanish in the United States, University of Albuquerque, NM. Contact the Department of Spanish & Portuguese at UNM at (505) 277-5907 or at spanish@unm.edu
- February 15-18, 1998**— American Indian Education 21<sup>st</sup> Annual Conference sponsored by Ahmim Education, Inc. Town and Country Hotel, San Diego, CA. For more information please call (800) 924-8744; FAX (209) 237-3525.
- February 23, 1998**— Teaching and Technology Conference sponsored by the Fresno County Office of Education, Convention Center, Fresno, CA. Call Don Collins, (209) 265-3090; FAX (209) 237-3525.
- February 24-28, 1998**— Bilingual Education: Good for US! NABE '98 27<sup>th</sup> Annual International Bilingual/Multicultural Education Conference, Dallas Convention Center, Dallas, Texas. For more information please call: (202) 898-1829.

**March 19-21, 1998**— Women Matter: Lives, Conditions, Cultures. The New Mexico Women's Studies Conference at the New Mexico State University, Las Cruces Campus. For more information contact Lisa Freehill phone: (505) 646-4235, fax: (505) 646-3725, e-mail: lfreehill@nmsu.edu.

#### UC LMRI News Staff

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A slightly different version is also posted at:  
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Address correction requested

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