Carnegie Mellon University
Doctoral Program in Second Language Acquisition, Department of Modern Languages

Core Faculty
Mariana Achugar, Discourse Analysis
Keiko Koda, Reading and Biliteracy
Brian MacWhinney, Psycholinguistics
Naoko Taguchi, Interlanguage Pragmatics
G. Richard Tucker, Language Policy and Planning
Remi A Van Compernolle, Sociocultural Theory

Program Description
The PhD in Second Language Acquisition (SLA) provides students and future professionals with a theoretical grounding in linguistics and cognitive psychology, coupled with broad training in qualitative and quantitative research methodology. The goal of the PhD program in SLA is to create independent and insightful researchers capable of using analytical and empirical methods to illuminate and understand the acquisition, use, and maintenance of second languages.

The program offers four foci: reading development in second languages, social dimensions of second language learning, instruction and second language learning, and cognitive aspects of second language learning.

The reading concentration addresses the following questions:

- Does reading development differ among first- and second-language learners?
- How do reading skills acquired in one language affect reading development in another language?
- How does oral language proficiency relate to reading development in a second language?
- In what ways is learning to read similar (or different) across languages?
- What type of intervention and scaffolding can content teachers provide to help language learners develop their academic literacy?

Four-year Residential Program
Currently, 11 students are in residence (4 focusing on second language literacy development, 2 on instruction, 2 on cognitive aspects, and 2 on social dimensions).

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Notable Graduates and Notable Published Papers

Megumi Hamada (2005). Associate Professor of English at Ball State University.


Chan Lu (2009). Assistant Professor of Modern Languages and Literatures at Loyola Marymount University.


Dongnbo Zhang (2010). Assistant Professor of Teacher Education, Michigan State University.


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