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Kramsch, Claire

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## Editor's Preface to the New Journal Feature: Instructors' Perspectives

CLAIRE KRAMSCH

*University of California, Berkeley*  
*E-mail: ckramsch@berkeley.edu*

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With this issue of *L2 Journal*, we are happy to introduce a new section of our journal called "Instructors' Perspectives." Unlike the Teachers' Forum, which features formal reports of pedagogical activities, innovations, and experiments in the classroom, this section presents short, informal opinion pieces that offer a personal stance on any aspect of the teaching and learning of language and culture in instructional settings. It can also serve to share thoughts about readings that you as language teachers and learners may have done or experiences you may have had that have enriched your teaching. These contributions are not sent out to external reviewers but are reviewed in-house.

While the contributions to this section need not fit any particular theme, the first essays published here represent the perspectives of four language instructors from UC Berkeley, UC Santa Cruz, UC Los Angeles, and UC Irvine respectively; these essays were first presented at a colloquium organized by the Berkeley Language Center in February 2014 on the topic "The legitimacy gap: Foreign born native language instructors in foreign language departments." The focus of this colloquium was described as follows:

Today institutions of higher learning are encouraged to redefine themselves within a global economy that values multilingualism and transnational diversity. Indeed, in 2007, foreign language educators were urged by the Modern Language Association to teach not just communicative competence, but "translingual and transcultural competence", "historical and political consciousness" and the ability to "operate between languages" (MLA, 2007, p. 235).

One would think that foreign born, native language instructors, who have had to adapt to another social, educational, historical and political culture by coming to the U.S. and teaching their language at an American university, have had to develop the ability to operate between languages and cultures, and that they would thus be eminently suited to share some of their experience with their students. Indeed, they can help their students to become multilingual and multicultural global citizens by showing how they came to terms with the paradoxes and incompatibilities of intercultural communication, and with the self-questionings that such paradoxes inevitably occasion.

However, most foreign language departments expect the native language instructor to represent a monolingual national model of linguistic and cultural authenticity. Native instructors are valued not for their multilingual experience, but for their flawless grammar and their authentic accent, and for the genuineness of their cultural habitus. Their legitimacy comes from being the "pure" representatives of a monolingual, national

culture. But in a multilingual, transnational world, where do native language instructors draw their legitimacy from?

The papers presented here offer various responses to this complex question.

## **REFERENCES**

MLA Ad Hoc Committee on Foreign Languages. (2007). Foreign language and higher education: New structures for a changed world. *Profession*, 12, 234-245.