Some Unresolved Issues in an ELT New Media Age:
Towards Building an Interlanguage Semantics

- A Seminar Given by Professor Larry Selinker

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*Prof. Larry Selinker (3ʳᵈ from right, 2ⁿᵈ row), Prof. ZhaoHong Han (4ᵗʰ from right, 2ⁿᵈ row),
and the Advanced SLA class*

On May 10, 2011, students from Professor ZhaoHong Han's Advanced Second Language
Acquisition (SLA) class in Spring 2011 had the honor of attending an invited seminar in which
Professor Larry Selinker, was the honorary speaker.

A well-respected researcher who helped found the field of SLA with his Interlanguage
Hypothesis 40 years ago, Professor Selinker has persistently sought to advance the research
space vis-a-vis the second language (L2) learner's developing system. His conception of
interlanguage fossilization, in particular, has been a fundamental impetus for many existing
strands of SLA research, including L2 learnability and teachability, as well as ultimate
attainment.

At the seminar, Professor Selinker shared with the class his latest thoughts regarding the vast
amounts of interlanguage data (e.g., through the use of new "smart" mobile devices) in the data-

deluged digital world we are in. Seeing such data as vast amounts of interlanguage information, he posed the following question:

How should "the making of meaning" in interlanguage terms be captured?

His answer to this all-important question is: *interlanguage semantics*.

To tap into learners' underlying interlanguage intention and thereby a serious interlanguage semantics, Professor Selinker suggested that new media and new predictive technologies (e.g., machine learning) be studied and thoroughly analyzed.

What exactly does interlanguage semantics refer to? What is its significance in relation to the classic concerns of L2 acquisition? How is it related to the notion of interlanguage fossilization?

The TESOL/*AL Web Journal* is pleased to present our readers with Professor Selinker's talk in its entirety below – along with the two handouts that went along with the presentation.

- *Presentation – Professor Selinker*   (Link to video)
- *Handout*   (Download)
- *References*   (Download)