Introduction:
From Description to Theory

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As early as the 1960s, researchers were writing on the topic of foreign language (FL) program articulation. Prokos (1964) brought the concept of articulation to the fore, defining it as continuity in student learning and curricular content throughout the overall educational program. A decade later, Antion (1970) identified priorities for achieving continuity in FL programs that are still relevant today: "First, schools and colleges must adopt common objectives in the training and learning of foreign languages. Second, there must be acceptance of a curricular continuum, which will serve as a basic guideline for language instruction from the earliest level of study through the teacher-training program" (p. 18). Yet, as Lange noted in 1997, "over time articulation has remained an unsolved problem" (p. 31).

In 2004, Lange's assertion still holds true. Although descriptive research highlighting successful articulation efforts has encouraged clearer definitions of the concept of articulation, several substantive questions that form the basis of a theoretical approach to articulation have not been adequately addressed: What conditions are required for articulation to be successful? What factors play a role in articulation, and how do these factors interact with one another? Through what process does articulation happen? These questions shift the discussion from description to explanation, encourage construction of a testable theory, provide fertile ground for empirical research, and encourage multiple, generalizable solutions to the "unsolved problem" of articulation.

Lange's (1982) work, in particular, has laid the foundation for this move from description to theory. Developing ideas first introduced by Lalayte (1980), Lange defined three dimensions of articulation. Horizontal articulation "refers to a coordination of any curriculum across the many or several classes that are simultaneously attempting to accomplish the same objectives" (1982, p. 115). Within the context of post-secondary FL programs, horizontal articulation promotes comparable learning experiences within each instructional level, such as across the multi-section courses of the introductory and intermediate levels. Vertical articulation "deals with the internal flow of a program from its beginning to its completion" (p. 115). It is essential to preparing FL students at one level of instruction for the content knowledge and language skills required at subsequent levels. Finally, interdisciplinary articulation refers to the capability of a second language as a school subject to associate with other disciplines in the curriculum (p. 115). It may take place within the language program itself or between the language program and other disciplines.

The research conducted since Lange's work in the early 1980s has been predominantly descriptive, focusing on successfully articulated programs and on challenges related to achieving articulation. The majority of these descriptions...
have highlighted articulation within secondary school programs (e.g., Gritzner 1999; Rieken, Kerby, and Mulhern 1996), and from high school to university FL study, looking in particular at strategies to improve vertical articulation such as placement testing and implementation of the Standards for Foreign Language Learning (e.g., ACTFL 1996; Birckbichler, Corl, and Devillez 1993; Byrnes 1999; Lee 1999). Much of this work reports large-scale projects on the state and national levels (e.g., Dembroshek 2001; Jackson and Masters-Wicks 1995; Robinson 2001; Tedick and Alcaya 2001; Vogely 2001). Recent efforts have underlined the importance of the linkage among goals, content, assessment, and instruction (e.g., Byrnes 2001; Lally 2001; Lange 1997).

This body of descriptive research contributes to the understanding of articulation in important ways. Lange’s model allows researchers and practitioners to recognize the various components that contribute to program coherence and thereby focus on aspects of FL programs needing better articulation. The reports of state and national articulation projects provide useful examples of solutions to some articulation problems. Nevertheless, because each project is context dependent, its strategies, goals, solutions, and outcomes are often not generalizable to other contexts. As Jackson and Masters-Wicks pointed out, descriptive work does not “provide a framework for, or adequately inform, the articulation process” (1995, p. 46). Byrnes (2001) echoed this belief: “I am concerned that the preponderance of these [articulation] efforts respond to the most obvious symptoms, discontinuities of various kinds, but do not address their underlying causes” (p. 157). She argued that at the root of articulation is the identification of “fundational assumptions regarding the nature of curriculum and instruction” (p. 158) that are central to the FL learning process.

Because descriptive research does not provide a coherent framework within which other programs can find answers to the underlying questions common to the post-secondary FL context, a theory of articulation is needed to first identify shared questions and then respond to them. Hence, the goal of this volume is to contribute to the development of a generalizable model of articulation for post-secondary, undergraduate FL programs. We highlighted a number of central questions at the start of this introduction, and each of the chapters in this volume responds to them, establishing a starting point for theoretical discussions of articulation. This type of theoretical foundation provides a principled point from which to conduct further empirical research into the reasons for successes and failures of articulation, thereby permitting more coherent articulation efforts in post-secondary education. All program participants who make articulation decisions can benefit from the development of a theory of articulation, using it to more effectively communicate about the articulation of their language programs. Working within such a framework, program participants can identify problems and potential solutions, create implementation plans, and ultimately improve articulation.

A theory of articulation is of particular relevance to language program directors (LPDs) as they make a variety of articulation-related decisions. LPDs contribute to horizontal and vertical articulation within the introductory language program (understood as the first one to two years of language instruction), and to
vertical and interdisciplinary articulation as learners make the transition from introductory language courses to intermediate- and advanced-level language, literary, linguistic, and culture courses. LPDs must therefore plan the curricu-

The chapters in this volume contribute to the development of a theory of articulation in different ways. Part One, Overall Models of Program Articulation, examines the range of factors that must be incorporated into a theory of interactions among these factors, and processes for improving articulation. Part Two, Articulation, Curricular Content, and Instructional Delivery, and Three, Articulation and Learner Experience, provide a close look at individual factors and discuss the relationship of these factors to successful articulation.

In Part One, Fiesani and Barrette (Chapter 1) propose a generalizable model of articulation in which program articulation consists of the interaction among eleven sets of factors along three dimensions. The authors employ a multidimen-
sional scaling analysis of survey data to test their proposed model, focusing in par-
ticular on the role of the LID within it. Results support the three-dimensional model, and indicate probable interactions between the LFD and other factors studied. Muñillo (Chapter 2) uses the Theory of Constraints Thinking Process a problem-solving model typically applied to business contexts in a case study of one undergraduate language program. She identifies impediments to the successful articulation of the program's curriculum, proposes a potential solution, and discusses the implications of its implementation. Her case study demonstrates the ability of the Theory of Constraints Thinking Process to address both theoretical and practical questions in program articulation; this approach allows generalization to multiple contexts but retains a level of specificity that can incorporate the idiosyncratic characteristics of individual programs. In addition, Muñillo argues for the expansion of curricular coordination at all levels of language pro-
grams, emphasizing the important role of LPDs in this process. In Chapter 3, Wilkinson approaches the issue of articulation through the unique challenges presented by study abroad programs. Efforts to integrate the study abroad and home campus curricula and differences in learners' experiences in these two contexts lead her to propose an expansion of Lange's concept of interdisciplinary articulation to a new depth dimension that takes into account the layering of cognitive demands characteristic of the foreign immersion context.

The three chapters in Part Two share a common theme: the need to spiral, or incorporate, language and content at all levels of the undergraduate FL curricu-
lum as a strategy for creating well-articulated programs. Schultz (Chapter 4) presents a solution to two of the primary tensions of program articulation: the common division between language and literature courses and the dynamic, vari-
able nature of articulation. Schultz proposes the use of special focus sections—in essence, independent but integrated instructional units—as a viable means of incorporating language and content instruction at the intermediate level while allowing for frequent curricular updates, thus ensuring continuity of content and skill development for students moving to the advanced level of instruction. Maxim
(Chapter 5) also addresses the language-literature divide. He argues that the vertical articulation of writing skills across the undergraduate program is intrinsically tied to a genre-based approach to curricular content. Many identifies four conditions central to the successful articulation of language curricula, and argues that this approach can be applied to multiple FL programs to improve articulation. Sinka and Zachau (Chapter 6) report the results of a survey of post-secondary students' motivations for beginning and continuing their study of German. Their results indicate that affective factors and the improvement of written and oral proficiency are the most motivating factors in German study. These results provide empirical support for successful vertical articulation through the spiraling of language and content, and point to the key role of pure patterns in shaping and maintaining a well-articulated curriculum.

Part Three focuses on the central role of the learner as a factor in achieving well-articulated programs. Levin (Chapter 7) presents a multilingual model of classroom code choice in which learners' joint decisions about acceptable uses of the first and second language contribute to the horizontal and vertical articulation of introductory and intermediate language courses. This model contributes to horizontal articulation by providing a unifying framework for code choice practices, and to vertical articulation by treating code choice norms differently across instructional levels in keeping with learners' changing language proficiency. Woody (Chapter 8) provides a convincing argument that articulation is partly created by each individual learner; it does not exist solely in the curriculum or other aspects of program design. She therefore advocates the use of long-term portfolio projects that encourage learners to reflect upon their FL education and thus, create an articulated learning experience. Finally, Magan, Frantzen, and Werth (Chapter 9) investigate the effect of previous FL study on students' anxiety. Their survey and interview results show that students who have previously studied any FL in college are significantly less anxious in their current FL class than students without this prior college experience. Based on these results, they argue that LPSs must consider the effects of previous FL study in college on horizontal articulation and must look at ways to best support each group of students. The authors further suggest that this new factor be considered part of interdisciplinary articulation: each language, like each discipline a student studies, affects the learning of other FLs.

Taken as a whole, this volume moves us closer to a theory of articulation by beginning to answer the key questions conveyed to the articulation of all FL programs. The chapters address overall articulation as well as individual factors that contribute to it, while also identifying interactions among those factors. The authors build upon established concepts to provide new insights into the workings of horizontal, vertical, and interdisciplinary articulation, and present ideas that provide ample opportunities for further research. The inclusion of empirical studies motivates the conclusions made about articulation and begins the process of advancing our understanding of articulation through a novel theoretical approach.

We conclude with a compelling statement by Phillips: "Perhaps the only point about articulation on which members of the profession agree is the value of the concept in the abstract. . . . Historically, articulation has tended to be defined more

