

coherent subjects. Instructing new generations of students, they settle their roots in places where the capoeira game will stop being an imported culture to become a locally adapted culture.

At the same time, this internationalization is deeply influenced by a migratory dimension. The life stories of Brazilian *capoeiristas* (the ones who practice capoeira) enable to state that their group's networks export worldwide a "migratory social capital" acquired in Brazil. As a migratory phenomenon, the capoeira collectives constitute *sui generis* social nets, distinguished by the specialization of a service offered by Brazilians migrants to other Brazilians, but preferably destined to European and North American people. Simultaneously, these nets consolidate the commerce of "originally Brazilian" capoeira products, therefore activating an economy that changes substantially many Brazilian localities. From this point of view, the global capoeira is a migratory phenomenon that gives rise to a transnational economy. Both this economy and the circulation of people mobilized by the *capoeiristas* are strongly connected to the net of international localities to which the *capoeiristas* emigrated.

A surprising fact is to be pointed out: these capoeira groups located in globalized cities remain in touch with—and in often many cases are commanded by—their Brazilian headquarters. The complex, symbolical (and yet communitarian) life of the capoeira groups is the key to understand how Brazilian masters—which are usually located in poor communities, and often situated in peripheral stratum of Brazilian society—can still exercise both a leadership and a charismatic authority strong enough to allow them coordinate, command and determine the way their disciples from different nationalities worldwide would live their quotidian experience as *capoeiristas*.

Please send any comments, suggestions and ideas, including photos for future columns, to Annelou Ypeij at j.lypeij@cedla.nl or to CEDLA (Centre for Latin American Research and Documentation), Keizersgracht 395-397, 1016 EK Amsterdam, Netherlands.

Society for Linguistic Anthropology

JAMES STANLAW AND MARK PETERSON,
CONTRIBUTING EDITORS

DLAB and ALAB: Lives are on the Line

By James Stanlaw

The Defense Language Aptitude Battery ("Dee-Lab") is the military test used to determine those likely to succeed in learning one of the 50 languages taught at the Defense Language Institute. The DLAB is said to also statistically predict success in particular languages. If candidates score high enough they can apply to study a language in one of four groups: Category I (French, Italian, Portuguese, Spanish); Category II (German or Indonesian); Category III (Dari, Hebrew, Hindi, Persian, Punjabi, Russian, Serbo-Croatian, Tagalog, Thai, Turkish, Urdu, Uzbek); and

Category IV (Arabic, Chinese, Japanese, Korean). The University of Maryland's Center for Advanced Study of Language (CASL)—"Language Research in Service to the Nation"—has updated this test. CASL claims DLAB 2 now incorporates "new cognitive measures, as well as non-cognitive measures such as personality and motivation."

No one is supposed to know what is on the DLAB ahead of time, and those who take it are not supposed to talk about it. Lately, however, more information has come out through the grapevine and the internet. The Navy, under its "cryptology" job description site even has some sample questions, though some claim these are easier than the actual exam. The test is about two hours, consisting of an audio and visual portion. In the audio portion, test-takers are asked to identify stress patterns in nonsense words. Next, an almost-English pig-Latin-like language is presented in a foreign accent. You are told rules for this language and asked to select the correct translation for a short phrase, such as "red car," from the choices spoken only once. Then new rules are added, like verbs begin and end in *-i*. Next, you may be asked to extrapolate a rule for tense by looking at example sentences.

In the visual portion of the test, you are given a picture and asked to extrapolate some linguistic features of the item presented. You might be given these pictures and glosses: a black dog, black cat and white dog. You are then asked to give a gloss when shown a picture of a white cat.

However, in spite of all these efforts at recruitment, the number of US nationals in Afghanistan who speak Dari or Pashto is still quite small. The vast majority of translators are Afghans who speak English—to varying degrees. The Western media has often questioned their English proficiency. For example, Brian Ross in a *Nightline* report in September 2010 claimed that more than a quarter of Afghani translators in the battlefield could not speak passable English. CASL again has offered a solution. They are currently validating their ALAB (Afghan Language Aptitude Battery), designed to find Afghans who will succeed in the Defense Language Institute's English language program. However, this test differs from DLAB in several significant ways. First, there is a range of non-linguistic tests for general intelligence (like spatial reasoning). The language analysis test examines things like case marking, using an artificial language as in DLAB. For instance, given these examples—*zorit* ("farmer"), *volip* ("the worker"), *zorit volipu pigom* ("The farmer pushed the worker")—the test-taker would be asked to translate "The worker pushed the farmer." But ALAB also tests for ability to be numerically and orthographically literate, as well as being able to transliterate scripts between Dari, Pashto, and the artificial language.

The predictive power of DLAB seems supported by several decades of testing by applied linguists. However, ALAB is still new. Never before has the military taken on such a vast and expensive undertaking—a billion and a half dollars to provide intensive English language training from scratch to hundreds of locals during a war. But this is a mission that must be accomplished. As one wrote on *The Economist* blog, "Yes, training competent linguists is hard. So is ... training F-18 pilots. But the American military does [the latter] ... in superlative fashion."

Please send your comments, contributions, news and announcements to SLA contributing editors Jim Stanlaw (stanlaw@ilstu.edu) or Mark Peterson (petersm2@muohio.edu).

Society for Medical Anthropology

KATHLEEN RAGSDALE, CONTRIBUTING EDITOR

Death, Dying, and Biomedicine: "Thinking with Film" as a Teaching Resource for Medical Anthropologists

By Rafael Wainer (U British Columbia)

As medical anthropology gains caché within Schools of Medicine around the globe, we are increasingly asked to contribute to the education of medical students, interns, and practicing physicians. In 2007, I received such an invitation to present a seminar to medical residents and staff physicians at a public hospital in Buenos Aires, Argentina. I decided that a good topic for health care providers (HCP) would be using anthropological perspectives as a platform to explore the complexities of death and dying and how historical, socio-economic, and political changes have altered the relationships between death and dying and biomedicine. I designed the PowerPoint presentation to gradually engage the audience in a discussion about their medical knowledge, practices, and personal experiences linked to multifaceted processes associated with death and dying. My first slide asked the audience to engage in a "free listing" exercise using the word "death," which produced words such as "anguish," "powerlessness," "nothingness," and "relief." I asked the audience to keep their list of words in mind while viewing the film clips I was about to show them.

During the seminar, many HCP enthusiastically engaged in listening to each other's experiences related to death and dying, such as examples of particular patients or situations. Occasionally though, audience members had difficulties expressing their feelings and the room was wrapped in silence. At such moments of unease, I used the film clips to visually illustrate particular points, catalyze discussions, and engage the audience in self-reflection and critical thinking.



Rafael Wainer at the Jewish Cemetery in Villa Dominguez, Entre Rios, Argentina. Photo courtesy Ana Vivaldi

To structure the seminar, I organized the film clips around three main perspectives germane to end-of-life issues: (1) the dying person's perspective(s); (2) the