

An Oral History of

LEONARD NEWMARK and STANLEY CHODOROW

On December 17, 1998

1 **CHODOROW:** —right questions. And I said, "Sure"—I thought it would be fun—and I've
2 been fascinated for years—I mean, many, many years; fifteen years, at least—by the intellectual
3 history of this institution. That is— I keep saying—one of my character faults, and one of the
4 reasons I fall into these administrative positions, is because it gives you license to think about
5 and talk to people in all these different fields, and I'm not focused enough to be just one thing.
6 And so, this gave me an opportunity to do this, and once we did it, it turned out so well that, we
7 decided we would do it again; and we'd start to do it. And Brad [Bradley Westbrook] —who had
8 been part of the organization, in effect, that Jim had relied on to get this done—suggested that I
9 do a whole series; so that's what we're doing. So that's what we're doing. And then, of course,
10 Nancy Anderson's makes you want to do something [*laughs*] because it's so awful. I mean, I
11 urged Jake[?], when I read the manuscript, to "deep six" it; [*laughter*] he had invested so much
12 in it.

13 **NEWMARK:** I loved it—I loved it because I knew none of that.

14 **CHODOROW:** Well, it was all the political stuff, and the land deals and so on.

15 **NEWMARK:** I loved it because it made it clear how insignificant— We thought we were doing
16 something important, and here we were just pawns, you know—they were just playing with us.

17 **CHODOROW:** They were building an economic engine, as far as they were concerned.

18 **NEWMARK:** But that was something I would never order up. Nobody ever talked about; that
19 was "up there" somewhere.

20 **CHODOROW:** Well, some of the documents I've been reading, even including some this
21 morning, indicate—that the faculty were innocent of all of that stuff.

22 **NEWMARK:** Absolutely. We thought the big players were Keith [Brueckner] – mainly Keith,
23 and, of course, Dave [David] Bonner. And they appear as kind of just minor characters.

24 **CHODOROW:** In this particular story. Well, I had a lot of objections to it—the quality of
25 writing and the quality of research and so on—it was not good history— Anyway, let me just
26 explain what we do in these sessions. The questions that we are interested in have to do with
27 the foundations of the department, starting with the vision and the way the vision—intellectual
28 vision—related to the state of the discipline at that time—as far as that can be recalled. And
29 then, going beyond that, to a discussion of the early recruitments—both successful and
30 unsuccessful—and the way in which those recruitments of real people doing work affected the
31 original ideals and vision as you developed, say, up into the early seventies. Because by the
32 time you get to '73 or '74, the departments have a core—obviously, the early departments have
33 a core and have an intellectual formation that will now evolved from there; So that's what we're
34 after. And so, why don't you start—you just said hello to Brad, by the way; Brad will jump in with
35 questions or comments as he sees fit—Why don't you start by talking about what you had in
36 mind, and where your particular discipline was. It was an important space in 1960 and early
37 sixties, and what you had in mind in the formation of a new department here.

38 **NEWMARK:** Okay. I'm not sure—I was thinking about this this morning, what I would say—
39 and I don't think I can do it without giving you a very short history of linguistics.

40 **CHODOROW:** Do it.

41 **NEWMARK:** There had been an interest in language from classical times, of course. In the
42 nineteenth century, the interest in language became very historically minded; developed in what
43 we now refer as philological interest—determine history of languages and relatedness of
44 languages—and they developed—the linguists of that time, the philologists of that period—
45 began to develop slowly a kind of methodology. By the 1860s, it had been pretty much firmed
46 up. The way in which language changed was now thought to be governed by rules, which had
47 not been true up until that—until about 1830—it began to talk about rules. Then, for American
48 linguists, what happened next was Franz Boas, geographer from Germany, came to the United
49 States [Canada] to study its Carr Indians [Inuit], became fascinated with them and Indian
50 languages, and discovered that what were thought to be primitive Indian languages were just as
51 complicated as any of the classical languages; and began to develop a way of talking about that
52 in terms of processes of—ongoing processes; not rules, but processes. At the same time in
53 Europe, a man named Ferdinand de Saussure, who's Swiss, began talking about languages as
54 being systems—systems of opposition. He made the famous statement that there were no
55 entities languages, there were only oppositions; so, entities were defined as their position in

56 oppositions. That notion was picked up by [Sergey] Karchevsky, and later [Jan/Ivan] Baudouin
57 de Courtenay in Russia; and later [Mikołaj] Kruszewski in Russia. Kruszewski had a young
58 friend— Roman Jakobson, who picked up the idea and incorporated it into an idea that
59 language consists of sets of oppositions—systems of opposition. Boaz had students; his main
60 student—as far as linguistics were concerned—was Edward Sapir, who also looked at American
61 Indian languages, and began developing very, very deep insights into those languages. And he,
62 Sapir, in turn had many students who got interested in American Indian languages, so that the
63 American linguistics, for a very important period, was governed by its interest in American
64 Indian languages; and we were discovering things about American Indian languages that were,
65 you know, just blew the minds of people trained in classical languages because they were in
66 Europe and European languages. Then along—1933—a person who was influenced by Sapir
67 when he was a student Leonard Bloomfield , [who] wrote an important book [journal] called
68 *Language*, which influenced the next generation of linguists. And Bloomfield talked about
69 methodology, so he was very much influenced by behaviorists—the early behaviorists—and he
70 tried to make all entities in linguistics operational—all definitions would be operational
71 definitions. And linguistics would become a method of investigating languages, rather than a
72 body of knowledge about learning them. That was brought to its peak by Zellig Harris in 1951, a
73 book called *Methods in Instructural Linguists*, which was kind of the epitome of this idea of
74 methodology—in what you know in languages, what you get by the method you use to
75 investigate it. One of Harris's students was a named [Noam] Chomsky —

76 **CHODOROW:** And Harris was at Penn [University of Pennsylvania]

77 **NEWMARK:** Harris was at Penn, yes.

78 **CHODOROW:** He was still a legendary figure at Penn, even when I got there.

79 **NEWMARK:** He was married to a mathematician [Bruria Kaufman], and some people think
80 that his methods were determined by mathematical models. But one of his students—
81 Chomsky—picked up the idea of mathematical models and applied it to language. The
82 revolution that Chomsky introduced into linguistics really was a revolution—was that method
83 doesn't count; you do what you do in physics and mathematics; you create—you make—
84 abstract models; and then you compare to them to the world and see how they jibe. But you
85 don't start— There's no methodology for arriving at "the facts." It was a complete reversal—
86 turnaround—from what had been developing out in the field of linguistics. So Chomsky writes

87 his major work, as far as linguists were concerned, in 1957—remember, our department was
88 founded in '63-64. In 1961, there was conference at Texas in which all the big shots in
89 linguistics took on Chomsky—exposing him, they thought—at a conference in Texas. And
90 Chomsky just devastated them—just absolutely devastated them. In the meantime, there had
91 been an important review of Chomsky's 1957 book by a guy named Robert Lees, and it was
92 very convincing; it made a very strong case for why this revolution was useful and important—
93 there had been some leftover problems from all the earlier linguistics—and Chomsky's way of
94 looking at things seemed to solve them; and he offered solutions that were very impressive. So
95 by 1963, when I came here, it was clear to me that the Chomskyian revolution had succeeded.
96 And I determined at that point—well, along with many other people—we decided this was to be
97 the greatest university in the world, and it could be the greatest university in the world because
98 we were starting with enormous strength. There was a great deal of money available from the
99 sciences—at the scientists; wonderful scientists here, like Jim [James R] Arnold—had already
100 decided they would turn over their overhead, whatever value they had. Because money was so
101 easy—they would turn over their extra monies to the humanities and social sciences so we
102 could in those fields what we were already doing in the sciences—we were going to start from
103 the top. Well, I'd been a friend of Chomsky's since 1955—

104 **CHODOROW:** Where were you trained, and when?

105 **NEWMARK:** I was trained at Indiana University; got my degree in '55—had gone to Ohio State
106 [University]. And I was very much in the anthropological model—the Bloomfieldian model of
107 linguistics—so it was something of a revolution for me, too, to have to change gears. So, we
108 had all decided we wanted this to be a great university, and we were going to do it by bringing
109 the best people in the world here. So, I resolved to get, of course, my friend Chomsky. And I
110 talked to him about him, and he said—well, it was very attractive, but he really had a very good
111 deal at MIT [Massachusetts Institute of Technology]; and he had a group of colleagues and
112 friends, and unless they came, he wouldn't come. By that time, he was already in the running for
113 the greatest linguist in the world—the most important linguist in the world. His competitor was
114 Roman Jakobson. Jakobson was a friend of his at Harvard [University] and MIT. And Chomsky
115 had a friend, Morris Halle, who was at MIT, and they had been collaborating on work and
116 continued to collaborate; so, Chomsky said if we could get the other—his friends—to come,
117 then he would consider coming—he'd also begun a collaboration with George [Armitage] Miller
118 in psychology. So, I began working on bringing the east coast to the west coast—because the
119 east coast has a fantastic group of intellectual giants, I'd say—here. One of the steps I took was

120 to talk with George Mandler, whom I helped recruit here. And Mandler—what attracted me
121 about Mandler—was he said the first person he would try to bring was George Miller, [whom] he
122 considered great; so that our ideas in psychology and linguistics really seemed to jibe. We even
123 went so far as build a joint building—plan a joint building—together, which now exists;
124 psychology and linguistics in the only place I know in the world are next to each other
125 deliberately—by plan—because we were going to bring Miller and Chomsky and crew. Well, I
126 talked to Halle; Halle said he wouldn't come unless Jakobson came; so I then talked to
127 Jakobson ; and, low and behold—At that time, we had good connections with the Salk
128 Institute—I met Jonas Salk for personal reasons, and [Jacob] Bronowski shortly thereafter—and
129 we talked about bringing Jakobson. Jakobson said he would come only if two conditions were
130 met: one is that he could have something to do with the Salk Institute because he'd have
131 something to do in the summer—he'd have summer pay, essentially, because he had that kind
132 of deal with MIT; and he would only come if his wife, Krystyna [Pomorska], could come.
133 Krystyna was a minor Polish linguist—third wife. And, after all, he was at that point sixty-seven
134 years old, and she was much younger, and he would have to look out for here future. So, we
135 had a very difficult recruiting act—I don't know if you remember all these details—but it was a
136 problem of getting him appointed. The Salk thing came easily; Bronowski was happy to have
137 Jakobson, who was the world acknowledged leader in linguistics. So, the recruitment went very
138 successfully. We had a little problem with Krystyna —the wife—because she really didn't have
139 the credentials to be— She was certainly not enough of a linguist to put in her in linguistics—but
140 had come from a—my initial appointment here was in the literature department—literature—so
141 all my friends were in literature. And they understood the problem of building a great university,
142 and said they would swallow appointing her in literature, if we could possibly get it done through
143 the ad hoc committees and so on. Well, her only publications were in Polish, so one of the
144 problems was to find somebody to read Polish. Fortunately, on the ad hoc committee, there was
145 Jason Saunders, who was then in the Department of—

146 **CHODOROW:** Philosophy.

147 **NEWMARK:** —Philosophy; and Jason said it was okay. Mostly they were encyclopedia
148 articles. It was pretty hard to get somebody appointed to an assistant professor just on the basis
149 of some encyclopedic articles, but everybody understood the problem—we're going to get
150 Jakobson, after all—a real coup for this university. So we offered her an assistant professorship.
151 Now Jakobson—I could tell wonderful stories about him—but I got to know him very well. He
152 came out here— Before he was appointed here, he came to the Salk Institute for summer, and

153 we spent a lot of time together. And he had decided to come if Krystyna got the job—if Krystyna
154 was also appointed— Oh, there was one more problem—he wanted to have his books with him.
155 He had already—let's see, how was it? MIT had given him a nice space—a nice room—for all
156 his books—he had a very large library—and he would come if we would buy his library, so he
157 could install it in the library—put it in a special place so he could have access to it—and then
158 when he died, the books would be ours; but we would have to pay for that. So, we offered him—
159 we had his books assessed; they were assessed at something like \$3,000—or \$10,000—sorry,
160 \$10,000—

161 **CHODOROW:** Amazing number.

162 **NEWMARK:** Hmm?

163 **CHODOROW:** An amazing number, thinking what it would be worth now?

164 **NEWMARK:** Well—wait. Jakobson then went back to MIT; he signed up for the year after—
165 Oh, he said—by the time we had done all the work of trying to get an appointment for Krystyna,
166 it was now February—and he said, well, February was really too late for him to tell MIT that he
167 wouldn't be back the next year—he had a joint appointment at MIT and Harvard—so he
168 returned to MIT and Harvard. And the next thing I knew, he had said that there was a problem—
169 that MIT had offered to buy his library, and they were going to give him \$100,000 for his library;
170 we had had it appraised at \$10,000. And he said, "But I am not an Armenian rug merchant"—he
171 loved that expression—he was not an Armenian Russian—so he didn't like to bargain. But if we
172 would give him the \$100,000—that if our university would give him that—that would make that
173 possible. So we went to the regents and got a special deal—the regents came up with \$100,000
174 to buy his library—and now, everything's settled, right? Well, next thing we know, he says that—
175 Oh, what he had done is he had taken our offer, gone to MIT, and MIT—in order to keep him—
176 had offered Krystyna an associate professorship. So now he came back to us—not an
177 Armenian rug merchant—and said that "how could he do this to his wife?"—to bring her here
178 and she would have to take a demotion. So, she wanted— We would have to come up with an
179 associate professorship for her. And I think now—I'm a little hazy about what happened—I think
180 what next happened is we—no, we hemmed and hawed and we really worried about this—but I
181 think we actually offered her an associate professorship in the end. I mean, everybody
182 swallowed his pride, and—you know—we were getting Jakobson; and, with him, the rest of his
183 establishment. Because we thought once Jakobson came, the others would come. I think the

184 next step— I remember having a terrible conversation with Krystyna, sobbing and sobbing—
185 Oh, no, I think the next thing was that we offered the associate professorship, and I think they
186 offered her a full professorship at MIT to keep Jakobson. Now, I'm not sure about that last
187 step—whether that happened—but anyway, she called—she was crying on the phone—and
188 said she'd been terribly insulted because now she had talked to the Department of Literature,
189 and they seemed—I don't remember whether they had simply refused to offer her a full
190 professorship or whether it was something about the associate professorship she didn't like—
191 and said she was being treated very badly, and she couldn't possibly come to such a terrible
192 department that's so cruel; so she wouldn't come. Jakobson said, "Well, you know, what can I
193 do? I have no choice." So, he turned down the whole deal, and he didn't come. Now I'm left with
194 nothing. The great dream—that first great dream—was not possible. So, I shifted gears—these
195 are all recruiting problems you're asking about—

196 **CHODOROW:** That's right—this is precisely the story. I mean, it is a vision and an attempt to
197 recruit.

198 **NEWMARK:** So, the next thing was to say, "Well, look, the Chomskyian revolution has won. I
199 can't get Chomsky; I can't get Halle; I can't get Jakobson; I can't get George Miller. What's next?
200 What should I do next?" Well, the way my department sees it, they, I guess, didn't know about
201 all this; and they thought that I had, from the beginning, decided to build the department from a
202 bunch of bright assistant professors—I hadn't—but that's what I was driven to next. And I
203 decided to get the best young people I could in the country. Well, some of the best ones—many
204 of the best ones—were at MIT as graduate students. So, I went to MIT; talked to Chomsky and
205 Halle; [asked] who their best students were—who they would recommend. Well, they gave me a
206 choice of any of them, and any of them would have come. But I decided, at the same time— Oh,
207 I left some things out. The reasons they were interested in me was, originally, the organizing
208 group of scientists had looked at the—who were here and trying to do the initial recruiting—they
209 had looked at what other campuses did for language teaching. And they discovered that if they
210 wanted to do it with humanities, there were a lot of languages that were going have to be taught,
211 and that meant a lot of FTEs [Full-time equivalent] that had to be expended for that—for
212 language teaching. And then they heard— Somebody told them about this wonderful method
213 that linguists had of teaching languages without using faculty FTEs. And it was a program—
214 such a program—that was going on at Cornell [University], so they tried to get the main linguist
215 at Cornell, who's one of Chomsky's competitors. Unfortunately, he lost the race for world's
216 greatest linguist—Charles [F.] Hockett—Who was very much involved in the language

217 program—had been involved in setting it up at Cornell and they asked him to come; they offered
218 the job to him. He turned it down, and he seems to have recommended me. I can't tell now who
219 it was that did that, but my name apparently came up from three different sources from Ohio
220 State—they had already hired Roy Pearce and Andy [Andrew] Wright. I think they talked to
221 people at [University of California,] Berkeley, and a man named [Charles Douglas] Doug
222 Chrétien there—a linguist up there—apparently recommended me; and apparently Hockett. So
223 anyway, I came here in order to set up a language program that would not use faculty. I knew I
224 could do it because—first—I'd seen it done; I'd heard about the stories of how it had been done
225 by linguists during the second World War; and I had taught in a program—taught Albanian—of
226 that sort at Indiana University; and I'd run two language programs for the Peace Corps at Ohio
227 State and at Indiana University. So, I sort of knew of how to do it. And I had very strong ideas,
228 and I had particularly ideas about— When I started to teach languages at Ohio State, I tried to
229 read everything I could in the field about teaching languages, and discovered how little was
230 known and how poor the argumentation was for what people did. People use the kind of
231 language like, "we do it because it works"—but what were the criteria? A man I used to play
232 chess with at Ohio State ran the French program there—huge French program—his criterion
233 was: if he could— If the TAs [teaching assistants] who were teaching languages there—were
234 doing an actual language instruction in his French courses—were doing exactly what they were
235 supposed to be doing at a particular time of day, he would go into a classroom with a stop
236 watch, and time how much time they spent on putting things on the board; how much they'd
237 spent on oral recitation; various aspects of what was then considered to be language teaching.
238 And if they were doing it, he'd say—he'd very proudly announce to me, "See, it's wonderful!
239 They couldn't do this when they started, but now they can do this. Isn't this a wonderful
240 program?" I asked him, "How do your students do when they take their literature courses after
241 this? Are the literature people happy about that?" He said, "No, they're never happy. You know,
242 they're always grumbling. They always say there's something wrong with the language
243 teaching—it's never good enough for them." And I asked him, "Well, how do they do on their
244 national examinations—or sort of national exams?" He said, "We don't give those. We don't
245 believe in those." So he had no criteria, and as I read the literature, nobody had any criteria. So,
246 when I came here, I had been influenced by—now I'm getting off of to the language program—I
247 had been influenced by the University of Chicago. My undergraduate work was at Chicago. I'd
248 been very much impressed by a couple of things. One, by the system of examinations that they
249 had there, where examinations were not directly done in courses, they were done by an
250 independent examination board; and the criteria were passed the examination, not that you

251 pleased the instructor of the course somewhere. I liked that idea—that there would be an
252 independent way of telling whether people were doing well or not. So, one of the things I tried to
253 do, and almost succeeded doing here, was to set up an independent examination work for all
254 courses. It didn't work. Most departments decided they didn't want to participate in that; I was
255 the only department that did. I gave our money to setup an independent examination board—it
256 was never set up—some money was finally returned to the department. And so, we gave our
257 own—we tried to give—national examinations. I don't know whether they still do that now, but
258 we did. So, okay. What was I going to say about the language program? Oh yeah—The other
259 thing that—hmm, can't think where—

260 **CHODOROW:** You had started this by saying how you came to be recommended. It was in
261 relation to the language program—

262 **NEWMARK:** The language program. So, I knew how to setup a language program. I'd
263 followed the model I'd used for Punjabi, with the other languages, with the notion that we would
264 always be overseen—our results would always be overseen by the Department of Literature.
265 Then, we'd have two measures of whether we were doing right. One was whether the people in
266 literature—who took these students from us and did their advanced instruction—whether they
267 thought we were doing a good job, and what they thought we should be doing; and the other
268 was national standardized examinations. Well, departmental walls in the University of California
269 turned out to be a lot stronger than personal friendships that we'd started with. So, while
270 everyone in literature at the beginning thought what we were doing in linguistics was wonderful,
271 and cooperation was going to be complete, we began to find as individuals in their department
272 needed to please their—

[END OF PART ONE, BEGIN PART TWO]

273 **NEWMARK:** The method we used— Do you want me to say anything about that?

274 **CHODOROW:** If it's relevant to the theoretical issues, sure.

275 **NEWMARK:** Well, we broke new grounds in the teaching of languages. The kinds of
276 theories—nothing very secretive about it; nothing very magical about it—we used native
277 speakers of languages to interact with students so that they would learn to speak the language
278 from the first day. So, classes would be held in the language. There would be no attempt to
279 structure the material so that the students would first learn—let's say, present tense and then

280 later past tense and all that—they would learn whatever was relevant for that day in a context of
281 the content—the material covered for that, that was going on for that day—and had
282 unstructured—linguistically—unstructured material. That was a brand-new idea at that time, and
283 hotly—very controversial. I went to a meeting where I presented these ideas one time, and
284 everybody jumped up. I was ruining the field because of implied linguists. What was the use of
285 linguistics in such a program? There was no place for the introduction of linguistic structuring
286 material. Today, all over the world I've been told, that particular idea has caught on. [crosstalk]

287 **CHODOROW:** I can imagine what you would answer—that is, with respect to—of what's the
288 role of linguistics if this is the method you use. But also, I wonder what relationship this had to
289 the Chomsky resolution, if any.

290 **NEWMARK:** A-ha! Okay, at the same time— Okay, so I was throwing linguistics out over
291 there—I mentioned one thing—to teach people to speak languages, we'd have them speak
292 languages with native speakers from the beginning; have people learn to read—very important
293 for the literature—we'd have them read from the beginning, and they'd read ordinary material
294 from the first day. Again, not linguistically structured material, but material—we'd help the
295 students first. You can't just throw something at students and say, "Go!" If you turn on the radio,
296 you don't listen to Polish—you don't learn Polish—by turning on the radio if you don't know any
297 Polish; and you can't learn to read by just reading. So, you need some kind of help. But if
298 material can be natural, authentic – what we call 'authentic material' —real reading material—
299 and you just have to help the student in some way. It's now being done by hypertext for the
300 reading—wonderful programs in reading foreign languages that are very good. At that time, we
301 didn't have that, but we had a kind of equipment—had another way of doing it. But the idea of
302 reading—they should do a lot of reading, which we suggest at least six hundred pages a year at
303 every level of reading material—not only suggest it, but we enforce that; and then speaking.
304 However, we said, does linguistics have a role? You betcha. What linguistics has a role in is in
305 explaining language—not as part of using a language, but as part of your liberal education. We
306 thought that everybody should know how language works in the way that everybody knows that
307 the heart pumps the blood. It's part of what you do; you ought to understand how it works. If you
308 understand about the circulation of blood, then you should understand about the way languages
309 work. But who would teach that? In conventional language teaching, people who teach about
310 language are people who aren't linguists. There are people who happen to know the language,
311 have studied the literature of the language, but they've never studied linguistics, so they're not
312 linguists. So, what we would do—what we did—was to have linguists teaching linguistics—

313 teaching about the language. And we had the learning of the language itself done by these
314 more direct methods. And that was a revolution. They had done some of that at Cornell; they
315 had not done the reading part that we did. The reading part came from an experimental program
316 at the University of Chicago from the 1930's—an enormously successful way of teaching
317 reading. Again, using authentic materials, but with help—the kind of rated readers idea—and we
318 used something like that for our program. So, it was a combination of the Chicago reading
319 program and a kind of Cornell language program. Well, what was the role of linguists? Linguists
320 were to take charge. The first person I hired was Sandy [Sanford] Schane, one of Chomsky's
321 graduate students, who had himself been a French teacher in Detroit—very much interested in
322 foreign language teaching. The idea I'd bring Schane here to take over the French program, and
323 to train what we called graduate assistants—the linguists—who would—linguist graduate
324 students—who would in fact be in the classrooms talking about the language. And what did we
325 have— We had the students read in this language stuff. We had them read—in addition to some
326 parts of conventional French grammar—we had them read things like Chomsky's *Structural*—I
327 can't remember the name of the book. Linguistic Structures? 1957 book [*Syntactic Structures*]
328 —name escapes me. Anyway, we had them read real linguistics. And from time to time, that
329 book was too hard, so the next year we went to Bloomfield's *Language*. But we had them read
330 real linguistics—primary texts—rather than textbooks, for the linguistic part. They learned—
331 They didn't learn enough of the conventional grammar to do well on the kind of standardized—
332 national standardized—examinations, so we began introducing conventional grammar, too. It's
333 pretty easy to teach—it's not very hard—and we thought, if linguists do it, they'll do a better job
334 than the other people; and I think that generally turned out to be true. And finally, our students
335 did very well on these national examinations. Our students typically scored, after one year of
336 language study, well above the norms who had stayed two years elsewhere. That was a normal
337 thing we had. Okay, what else? I didn't tell you about the other recruitment.

338 **CHODOROW:** Now, you've got— Sandy is your first.

339 **NEWMARK:** Sandy first.

340 **CHODOROW:** Right.

341 **NEWMARK:** Then I still had enough of the American Indianist in me to want us to do
342 something with the Indians. And here we were in a place where there were Indians. So, I talked
343 to people who worked with the Indians in this county. There was one guy at San Diego State

344 [University]—he said, "You can't work with them. They're too fierce; they're too hostile." But then
345 I found somebody else who told me about this graduate student from Berkeley who came down
346 here to work with the Indians, who seemed to get along fine with them. I had been in contact
347 with people at Berkeley to try to identify their best graduate students. So, I had one of the best
348 graduate students at MIT, and I now wanted the best graduate student at Berkeley. And they
349 happened to recommend the same person who was working with the Indians here—that was
350 Margaret Langdon —so she was second. She came down—she was happy to come—and very
351 soon after she came, she got married to someone here, so she was happy to be here and
352 happy to be able to work with the Indians. And she has become the dean of American Indians
353 now; she's widely recognized at what she's done. The third person I recruited was— While I was
354 there at MIT, I had been told, "Now if any our graduate students—except one, [Sige-Yuki]
355 Kuroda —you can't have him because we're going to keep him here. So you can't have him."
356 But he was their star; he was the star of stars. And the following year—so he wasn't in that first
357 batch—but the year after, I got a call from Chomsky, and [he] says, "Do you still want Kuroda?"
358 "Yes," said I. And he said, "Well, you know, we found out he's not so good with students; he's
359 not very good with undergraduates." Well, we had a lot of— One of the notions of our
360 departments was we would set up—we'd have two activities in our department. One would be a
361 teaching of foreign languages, and that would be an undergraduate activity. And it would have a
362 graduate activity—in fact, it was a condition of my coming here—that we would have a graduate
363 activity in linguistics itself. And for that, Kuroda—and the fact that he wasn't so wonderful in the
364 classroom—would be of less importance. He would work one-on-one with graduate students.
365 And he came out, and indeed it worked out as I thought. Kuroda was terrible with
366 undergraduates—they couldn't understand him. His English never—he speaks very softly—and
367 his English has never been totally intelligible to undergraduates. So, we just kept him out of
368 undergraduate classes, and had him teach graduate students. And he has produced wonderful
369 graduate students. Again, he has gone on— I'd say he and Langdon have produced the most
370 successful graduate students we've had. Langdon's students have become the main American
371 Indianists at Berkeley and at UCLA [University of California, Los Angeles] that are the centers of
372 our community study. Ron [Ronald W.] Langacker also had a student who's become one of the
373 main people at the University of Arizona. So, we now— Our department has produced the
374 major—most of the major—American Indianists in the country. The next person I recruited—with
375 Kuroda I recruited another person—and he was a sort of boy genius; summa cum laude;
376 valedictorian of a huge class at the University of Illinois—not just from linguistics—he was just

377 the smartest guy at the University of Illinois—twenty-whatever it was at that time—21,000
378 students or 27,000 students—huge campus—and he was the best. And he came—very young.

379 **CHODOROW:** It was who?

380 **NEWMARK:** Ronald Langacker.

381 **CHODOROW:** That was Ron? His brother is chairman of physics at Penn.

382 **NEWMARK:** Oh, I didn't know that—interesting, I didn't know that. But he was very, very
383 bright. And has since become one of Chomsky's competitors for title of—well, world's greatest
384 linguist, that wouldn't quite fit him—but as a theoretician, he has another way of doing
385 linguistics. What happened after—I think this is—well, I have to do one more person—but then,
386 I'll do the post-department. What's happened now is linguistics—the hegemony of MIT and
387 Chomsky in linguistics began to fall apart by the 1980s; and there were a number of competing
388 people and a number of competing directions in which linguistics was going. And one of those is
389 now the direction that Langacker is the leader role—goes all over the world to talk to people
390 who— One of the things Chomsky wouldn't talk about at the beginning was semantics, meaning
391 it was too messy. That was an inheritance from Bloomfield and Zellig Harris, who also had
392 nothing useful to say about meaning. And so, a very important part of language was simply
393 ignored up until the 1970s and 80s, where it began to come back in. And Langacker is one of
394 those people who insists on the importance of meaning, and analysis of meaning, and what that
395 has to do with the structure of language. But going back now to recruitment—the next person to
396 come along was Ed [Edward S] Klima. Ed Klima had become very important in linguistic theory
397 for some work he had done on negatives in languages. And I had gotten interested in him—he
398 as at MIT—but I had been told that he was not recruitable because he was too much imbedded
399 in the MIT thing. But I invited him out for a conference here—we had a couple of important
400 syntax conferences, mostly organized by Ron Langacker, in fact. And Ed Klima was one of the
401 people invited to come. He came; he had a look at black horse farms; and he found a house
402 there that he thought was the ideal place to live in the world. So, he approached me and said,
403 would we have any interest in him coming here? And I was very interested—it was very easy—
404 he wanted to come, we wanted to have him—so he was our next recruit.

405 **CHODOROW:** His particular specialty?

406 **NEWMARK:** Syntax.

407 **CHODOROW:** Syntax.

408 **NEWMARK:** Syntax. And he's very, very smart; very, very smart guy. So ,whatever he does—
409 What happened to him—he married Ursula Bellugi, who, then, we were able to get her a job—I
410 think she got it on her own; I don't remember doing anything with that—but at Salk Institute. So
411 now, she and— Ed Klima and Ursula Bellugi—have one of the most important centers—maybe
412 the most important center—for the study of sign language in the world. And that's worked out
413 very well. And we also became important. Because of Ed and Ursula, our department can
414 produce most of the major people who work in sign language.

415 **CHODOROW:** And that's a field that developed when it was finally discovered that that was
416 real language, and that its characteristics were such that you could really study it, is that right?

417 **NEWMARK:** That's right. And that was very much the work of Ed and Ursula and their
418 students—that kind of understanding of what was going on in sign language. It has transferred
419 to David Perlmutter—who came later—but David is now interested in, and it seems to me that's
420 now one of his major fields of work. Do you have any questions?

421 **CHODOROW:** Within the context now of sort of the evolution of the Chomskyan revolution,
422 where you have now competing theories, and you have insistence that you pay attention, for
423 example, to meaning, which complicates things in various ways. Where does the department
424 stand in relation to that? And did that take place really only in the eighties or was that already
425 evident in the seventies?

426 **NEWMARK:** Well, I was thinking about those dates as I was saying them. I have to really re-
427 think that and go over it in my mind. See, in Europe, the study of meaning was never given up.
428 They always thought American—what we called American structural linguists—was very
429 deficient in its attention to meaning, and they were going ahead—They always studied meaning;
430 they were one of the – well there's a whole bunch of people I could mention, but I don't want to
431 take us off course. It was never given up there. And for a long time, American linguists refused
432 to read anything that Europeans wrote, and Europeans refused to read anything that Americans
433 wrote. And it wasn't until after the war, for sure, that there began to be some—after the Second
434 World War—that there became to be some reading; even later than that—I'd say 60s-70's.
435 Chomsky—I remember being in Holland in the sixties—in '57—and they thought Chomsky was
436 just in for dead. The main linguist of Holland, a man named Antoine Riclien [?] gave lectures—
437 gave a whole course—an anti-Chomsky course—at University of Amsterdam, showing

438 Chomsky's failures. People were attacking him all over the world, and emphasizing meaning.
439 But it wasn't until Ron Langacker, George Lakoff at Berkeley, began to—brother of Sandy—

440 **CHODOROW:** I've read a lot of his stuff.

441 **NEWMARK:** —began to take meaning seriously, and find a way of—talking about a way—that
442 at least looks rigorous. Bloomfield had always attacked the people who talk about meaning as
443 *mentalists* and *mentalism* was a nasty word to use when you meant that people just sort of had
444 ghosts running around in their heads. They attacked them because they weren't rigorous—they
445 didn't think rigorously. Chomsky made it possible to detach operationalism from rigor; so,
446 Chomsky's rigorous without being operational. For Bloomfield, Fieldings, and Harris, scientific
447 rigor and scientific operationalism were the same; and Chomsky separated them. Then other
448 people—not Chomsky—managed to find ways— Actually, somebody in England—John Lyons,
449 who had been at Indiana University when I was there—had gone back to [University of]
450 Cambridge [Christ's College] and published a very important book in semantics [*Structural*
451 *Semantics*], and showed how one could talk about some kind of rigor about semantic
452 relationships. Then other people found other ways, and that seems to have developed nicely.
453 Things that we never did here, because we didn't think they were very rigorous in those early
454 days, were social linguistics.

455 **CHODOROW:** Which has been done at Penn by—I want to say, Labov .

456 **NEWMARK:** Bill [William] Labov.

457 **CHODOROW:** Yeah, Labov, who's still working and producing in his seventies.

458 **NEWMARK:** He was the first social linguist to use, what I would call, rigor; a kind of statistical
459 rigor. He had been a physical chemist or organic chemist, and well trained in statistics, so he
460 introduced statistical methods into linguistics in a better way than had been done before. And I
461 did try to recruit him, and failed. He was at Columbia [University] at the time—is he back at
462 Penn now?

463 **CHODOROW:** As we looked forward to the fact that someday he was going to retire, even
464 though he was seventy-two or three and still going, when we looked at who we might recruit to
465 replace him, because everybody said, "You are the center of this kind of work." Everybody said
466 they can only look at his students—the only ones who are any good—and none of them are as
467 good as he.

468 **NEWMARK:** That's right—absolutely right.

469 **CHODOROW:** And when you see something like that, you have to ask yourself how real the
470 original. Is it a case that the original accomplishment—Labov's own accomplishment—has
471 something defective in and of itself? Or is this a field in which a very smart idea gets played out
472 in effectively one generation and need not be repeated, or doesn't propagate other smart ideas
473 that occupy other generations?

474 **NEWMARK:** Well, your analysis is not bad. I have another idea. I think a lot of what happens
475 in science is governed by fashion. And one of the fashions of this century—a person who really
476 did, in some ways, a lot of harm—was [Albert] Einstein; because everybody wants to be an
477 Einstein; everybody wants to have a breakthrough discovery that puts them above everyone
478 else. And Chomsky certainly did that; Bloomfield probably did that; Labov, in his own way, did
479 that. But wanting to be another Labov— I mean, the reason you can't find anyone after him is
480 because—they do the work that needs to be done, the way physicists continue to use the work
481 that Einstein started, but how do you find another Einstein? How do you find another Labov? I
482 don't think that you can say it's the triviality of the idea. But it's just— We follow leaders and
483 don't get another breakthrough.

484 **CHODOROW:** You did a wonderful job of summarizing what was happening. And I knew that
485 your field was one that was in revolution when you founded that department, which basically—
486 and hadn't been completed—it had been started in '57, but it certainly wasn't completed in '62
487 or '63.

488 **NEWMARK:** '60-'72.

489 **CHODOROW:** Well, when you started up the department—

490 **NEWMARK:** '63.

491 **CHODOROW:** —yeah, in '63—there were still many people attacking the idea.

492 **NEWMARK:** Oh, yes.

493 **CHODOROW:** I mean, it was a revolution that we now, in retrospect, know took place, but it
494 wasn't so clear then.

495 **NEWMARK:** It became clear in 1967.

496 **CHODOROW:** '61.

497 **NEWMARK:** '61 for the Americans. It was still being attacked in Europe until '67. In '67, there
498 was a congress—the International Congress [International Congress of Linguists (CIPL)] —held
499 at MIT, actually—in which one candidate for the title of *World's Greatest Linguist* included
500 people from Italy, France, Holland, England—I don't remember Germany or Russia at that
501 time—but they stood up, and they attacked Chomsky; very violently; very scurrilously
502 sometimes. There was a session held on Chomsky; and Chomsky stood up after—I think it
503 was—eight people had talked; took them and one by one; and left them devastated—he just
504 devastated their arguments. He's the world's greatest debater—he is incredible. Watching a
505 performance of Chomsky is really a unique thing. I went to hear him talk at UCLA; huge
506 auditorium full of people—noisy people; Chomsky starts talking—you could have heard a pin
507 drop. He speaks in a very quiet voice, but he's devastating—he is incredible. He's been
508 nominated for all kinds of awards—he's won many awards—but he's really an extraordinary
509 person.

510 **CHODOROW:** So, in '61, he essentially knocked down his—

511 **NEWMARK:** The American poses.

512 **CHODOROW:** —the American poses. In '67, he—

513 **NEWMARK:** Took on the world.

514 **CHODOROW:** —took on the world.

515 **NEWMARK:** He's wonderful.

516 **CHODOROW:** It's really a remarkable story because there a few professions within which
517 one—academic professions—in which one person can do that. It's heroic, actually.

518 **NEWMARK:** And what happened— We don't know what would have happened if he had
519 devoted himself exclusively to linguistics. He has never given up linguistics; he's continued to
520 make little revolutions of his own. He has repudiated his earlier work; every five years or so, he
521 repudiates everything he's done before. He says, "You know, I had it all wrong. This is—" So his
522 latest repudiation has fewer takers than before—he still has the MIT group around him—but
523 much of the rest of the world now rather ignores his—

524 **CHODOROW:** Sort of epicycles.

525 **NEWMARK:** Very interesting. What's also happened is that, at one time, his political interests
526 became greater and greater. For example, he would only come here to talk—invited him many
527 times—he would only come here to talk if there was a political event that he could talk at. If we
528 could arrange something where he would talk about—one time, Vietnam; had many other
529 interests—Palestine. Something he felt strongly about. If there could be a political rally, then
530 he'd come to that, and incidentally, would talk about linguistics with us. But that's the only way
531 we could get him out here. And I think that's— He has a very quiet home life. He's a very nice
532 man—he's a family man—and he spends his time on his family, with political activity, and with
533 linguistics—that's it.

534 **CHODOROW:** One of the things that's striking in listening to you is that there are also very
535 few fields in which one would even have the concept of the best—the world's best—anything.

536 **NEWMARK:** Well, that's partly me—

537 **CHODOROW:** Okay.

538 **NEWMARK:** —that's partly me talking. I want this to be the world's best university. Well—the
539 way I really looked at the thing—I had the Einstein complex; I grew up with that where, if you
540 weren't Einstein, you were nothing. You didn't want to be a Babbitt, that you knew. So, what's
541 the alternative to Babbitt? You'd be an Aerosmith or an Einstein; and I wanted to do that. I
542 wasn't interested in coming here to be at one more university. I had a perfectly good job—
543 excellent job—where I was. I was twice at jobs at Harvard to take over their actually English
544 language studies in the Department of Education. And I turned that down. It would have been, in
545 some way, better jobs, but I always had utopian ideas here. I think they paid off in some way—
546 we don't have a utopia here; never got that—but we got to be a lot better than if we'd had no
547 utopia.

[END OF PART TWO, BEGIN PART THREE]

548 **NEWMARK:** ...and had students who would choose courses according to how many units of
549 credit they needed to graduate—not because they were interested in the courses, not because
550 they were good courses—but because they offered the right number of units; and I was
551 appalled at that. I had come from Chicago, where every course was equivalent to every other

552 course. You didn't take courses for X number of credits. You took them because they're
553 important to take; important for what you ought to learn. So, there were a number of us who
554 came from the University of Chicago who had University of Chicago backgrounds, and we were
555 in quite a great deal of agreement that that's the way it should be here. When I was chairman of
556 community courses, I, Andy Wright, and Mel—

557 **CHODOROW:** Mel [Melvin] Green?

558 **NEWMARK:** No. The one in charge of deep sea drilling—Mel—from SIO...Mel [Melvin]
559 Peterson—were on the committee, and we decided all courses would have equivalent credit.
560 We had to decide how many courses students should take. And we looked at Swarthmore
561 [College] on how many hours a week should a student devote to education. And we all had
562 some sense—there had to be some kind of decision made about this because we didn't want
563 our students in class all the time. We didn't want them doing schoolwork to the exclusion of
564 everything else in their lives. They ought to some time for free reading and some recreation. But
565 we wanted them to be fairly rigorous; it had to be rigorous because we were training for the
566 sciences partly. So we looked at Swarthmore, and they had a kind of thirty-two hour week; and
567 we looked at MIT, and they had something like a sixty-five hour week. And we decided that we
568 didn't want to MIT, and we didn't want to be Swarthmore—we couldn't be Swarthmore because
569 we had to do the sciences—we didn't want to be MIT because we wanted the students to have
570 a liberal education. So we settled for forty-eight hours. We decided that could be done; we
571 worked it out with the scientists that that could be done if we had—if a student would take four
572 courses a quarter. And so we gave every course—we had four equal for every student—would
573 take four courses a quarter of equal credit—no units assigned to that. That had a very
574 interesting effect. That number got reinterpreted statewide—university-wide. They simply took
575 our number, and they set four— Somehow the registrar worked out—

576 **CHODOROW:** Four, four credit courses, in effect.

577 **NEWMARK:** Yes, they said they were four, four credit courses. Okay, four, four credit courses
578 are supposed to be four hours a week. Well, we only met our courses three hours a week.

579 **CHODOROW:** Right, I remember this.

580 **NEWMARK:** Okay. What happened, as a result, is statewide gave our students credit for
581 taking sixteen units a quarter. What that got translated into was the number of FTEs we earned.

582 That in turn came back to this campus, we got credit for it that enabled us—I think this may
583 come—I don't know if it's a relationship—that enabled us to move FTE money to high paying
584 jobs. Only at the very beginning of this campus were we allowed to recruit from the top. After
585 that, we were supposed to be like every other campus.

586 **CHODOROW:** Settle to the average.

587 **NEWMARK:** But—we had this credit we got—FTE credit we got—for these non-existent class
588 hours—for these fictional class hours—translated into money that we could use to bolster
589 faculty salaries. So we were able to offer high-level jobs beyond that first bunch, and that—you
590 know, I can't take all the credit for this because I didn't plan it. But that decision enabled us to
591 extend our recruitment from the top policy beyond the first stairs. And so we were always to be
592 pay higher— [crosstalk]

593 **CHODOROW:** In fact, that is a policy which—when I was dean in the eighties—we were still
594 using and able to use, for example, in building Japanese studies. We hired four senior people.

595 **NEWMARK:** Terrific.

596 **CHODOROW:** And the history and sociology and philosophy of science—four or five senior
597 people. And it was, I thought—I never knew the mechanism—I knew that I was getting the
598 approval for the department. The theory of it was the 'Roger Revelle built-from-the-top-down'
599 idea. I knew that he had had a deal at the beginning of the campus—

600 **NEWMARK:** With Clark Kerr.

601 **CHODOROW:** —with Clark Kerr. But I thought that we then had settled into the average—
602 we had—but we had settled into what you're saying is our average.

603 **NEWMARK:** That's right.

604 **CHODOROW:** Which was different from other averages; not all averages are equal.

605 **NEWMARK:** We essentially— This was supposed to be translated to departments into
606 courses in a way that no professor could require more than twelve hours total work from a
607 student, because we wanted to keep that forty-eight hour thing—totally ignored. The sciences—
608 they assigned whatever they wanted to. In some courses, they assigned six hours of work
609 rather than twelve. I don't think it averages out. I don't think we ever got to our forty-eight - I

610 wish we had gotten to our forty-eight work. I think in the sciences, we got beyond that; maybe in
611 music, we were beyond that; but in most fields, I think we never did that. People didn't assign as
612 much outside work as they were supposed to.

613 **CHODOROW:** Very good. Bring this to an end. I want to thank you very much. This was
614 illuminating in a whole bunch of ways. But your position in linguistics relative to literature,
615 relative to the language teaching, and to linguists itself, was peculiarly important—important in
616 understanding that whole area—realm—of the intellectual fabric of the place. It's interesting, by
617 the way, that at Penn, computer science has until recently been dominated by a group around
618 Mitch [Mitchell] Marcus, who is, in effect, a computer scientist linguist—although trained as a
619 computer scientist, not as a linguist—working with linguists and the cognitive psychologists on
620 language issues; and applying algorithmic and statistical techniques to language history now.

621 **NEWMARK:** That's right.

622 **CHODOROW:** Especially in relation to the intents by the Russians to trace back through
623 linguistic structures to an *outré* language, which—

624 **NEWMARK:** Does he buy that stuff?

625 **CHODOROW:** No. He and [Mark] Liberman have basically destroyed it.

626 **NEWMARK:** Which Liberman?

627 **CHODOROW:** It's Mark—I'm also having a problem with this name—I was going to say
628 Liberman—I think it's Mark Liberman at Penn but—

629 **NEWMARK:** [California State University,] Fullerton?

630 **CHODOROW:** Uh-uh. His name is Mark, but I may have the last name slightly wrong. And
631 they have basically demonstrated that there is no statistical significance to those findings of
632 relationships that are essentially the building stones of that theory that you can go back to what
633 they call *no stratum*, right? Our language.

634 **NEWMARK:** It's amazing how many people bought into that. I had a terrible argument with
635 someone else—a faculty ophthalmologist—who thinks "well, you know, it's possible." And it fits
636 in nicely with his ideas of— [crosstalk]

637 **CHODOROW:** That gets into now the question of whether language is innate. If language is
638 innate—I was talking about this with Steve earlier—if language is innate, it would arise in many
639 places independently—in many circumstances independently.

640 **NEWMARK:** Well, you don't have to have language being innate. I mean, there are other
641 neuromechanisms—working methods—that may have evolved, so you don't have to say-a la
642 Chomsky—that there is a language organ. He says it's an organ in the brain. But you can talk
643 about mechanisms that could have produced language.

644 **CHODOROW:** Well, one thing that's interesting about the whole theory is that—that is, about
645 the theory about the innateness or non-innateness—is that if it were innate, then you would
646 expect some language ability commensurate with the intellectual ability, if you can speak of it
647 that way, of all animals. So that you should have, in effect, strata of linguistic performance from
648 the lower animals all the way up to the human.

649 **NEWMARK:** Do you know about the field of Zoosemiotics?

650 **CHODOROW:** No.

651 **NEWMARK:** Do you know – does the name [Thomas] Sebeok mean anything to you?

652 **CHODOROW:** Yeah, sure.

653 **NEWMARK:** Okay. Well, Sebeok —my teacher, he was my teacher—has collected just what
654 you're talking about—examples of animal communication, language-like communication from all
655 kinds of species that are at all levels. Now, none of them approaches human language, but how
656 far away does it have to be to approach?

657 **CHODOROW:** Right.

658 **NEWMARK:** What would be the stage just below language, which is what would be nice for
659 you—

660 **CHODOROW:** That's right.

661 **NEWMARK:** —for what you're talking about.

662 **CHODOROW:** That's right.

663 **NEWMARK:** What would that be like? What would count? Do you count the complex bird calls
664 or complex chimpanzee calls, or do you not? Well, part of it has to do with definition, even to
665 talk about the word language as an object—there's something wrong with it. You know maybe
666 there is no object in language, maybe there are languages, but maybe nothing – well, if you try
667 to define language, for example, you have a lot of trouble. As with any other kind of every day
668 concept. Even the word 'is', I laugh when I see people attacking, "Go ahead, define is" [*laughs*]
669 Good luck!

670 **CHODOROW:** [*laughs*] Good! Let's go to lunch.

671 **NEWMARK:** Okay.

[END OF INTERVIEW]