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Berkeley, California

Class of 1931 Annual Oral History Interview on University History

Susan Ervin-Tripp
A Life of Research in Psycholinguistics and Work for the Equity of Women

Interviews conducted by
Shanna Farrell
in 2016

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Susan Ervin-Tripp, 1994
Photo courtesy Paul Bishop

Professor Susan Ervin-Tripp was born in Minneapolis, Minnesota in 1927. She completed her undergraduate education at Vassar College where she studied art history. She earned her doctorate in social psychology from University of Michigan. Her dissertation was on the link between bilingualism and cognition, which led her to a career in psycholinguistics. She worked on the Southwest Project in Comparative Psycholinguistics and studied languages like Navajo, Spanish, and Tewa and their effect on cognitive performance. She came to the University of California, Berkeley in 1958 as a visiting professor in the Psychology Department before moving to the Speech Department (which is now the Rhetoric Department). She was an early adopter of technology as she used audio and video recordings, as well as computer data, for her research on children's language in the 1980s. She has had a guest lectureship at Harvard University, done work at Stanford University at their Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, presented at multiple international conferences and participated in a 1985 Scientific Exchange program with France. Before retiring from UC Berkeley in 1999, she helped make significant advanced for women's equality on campus and was involved in multiple efforts to create such change. She also worked as the University Ombudsman.

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Introduction to Interview of Susan Ervin-Tripp

by Dan I. Slobin, Professor Emeritus of Psychology, UC Berkeley

Throughout her long and productive career, Susan Ervin-Tripp has repeatedly been a path-breaker. And the paths that she helped explore have become well-traveled roads. It is remarkable to see so many innovations in one life story: psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics, embracing new directions in the study of first-language acquisition as well as bilingualism; repeated applications of new technology: computers, tape recorders, video recorders, wireless microphones; design of new methods of transcribing and documenting the many layers of speech interaction; cross-linguistic and cross-cultural research, with attention to both individual and interpersonal dimensions of language. Along with these contributions to the scientific side of her profession, Ervin-Tripp has given equal attention to the institutional and political dimensions of academia, focusing on the treatment of women and minorities. Wherever possible, she used her academic skills as a psycho- and sociolinguist to provide a scientific foundation to her advocacy. Indeed—now well into her eighties—she remains the conscience of the departments and institutions that have been her home.

In this interview, full of insights, she quite modestly speaks of these accomplishments—actually never praising them as accomplishments, but rather simply saying, in effect, “That’s who I am. These are the things that I felt I had to do.” This modesty has made it possible for her to be a strong voice that has to be listened to. Along with this, there goes an openness to the ideas and values of others that has made her accessible to students and colleagues who have sought encouragement, training, and involvement in academia and in society. And, more generally, a concern for underdogs and dispossessed everywhere.

She speaks often, in these retrospections, of her involvement with me, as the junior colleague in the study of child language and of language and cognition. In over fifty years of association she has been a personal and intellectual companion. We first met through correspondence, when I was still a graduate student at Harvard and she was a Berkeley faculty member in the Department of Speech (now Rhetoric). It was 1962 and she had been commissioned to write a rare review of the emerging field of psycholinguistics for the *Annual Review of Psychology*. At the time, I was at Jerome Bruner’s brand-new Center for Cognitive Studies. This was where the deep-seated behaviorism of the times was being shaken by attention to cognition, to the human mind and not just to rote learning and reflex patterns. Because I knew Russian, I had translated and summarized Soviet research on psycholinguistics. At the time, work in the USSR went beyond our beginning explorations of the field. Sue knew of my access to Russian publications and invited me to contribute to her chapter. We met the next year, in 1963 in Washington, DC, at a congress of the International Association of Psychology.



Here she is on a panel with Roger Brown, referred to often in the interview for his role in opening up the field of child language investigation—not just for her, but for me, since I was a participant in the research group that she speaks of. She and I ended up being co-authors of that chapter (published in 1966),¹ and co-investigators and co-teachers at Berkeley in the decades that followed.

As she relates in the interview, I came to Berkeley as an assistant professor in 1964, at the tender age of 24. She was 37 and has always been like an older sister to me. She's vague about how she came to Psychology from Speech. In fact, as I recall, Psychology had a long-standard informal policy to hire only men. I remember asking older colleagues why it was that half of our grad students were women, but none of our faculty; and, as Sue reports, they argued that women can't follow up on academic careers because they need to marry and raise a family. But by 1971 the barrier had been broken when Psychology hired two women assistant professors—finally—and simply because they had been the best candidates in the searches for their two fields. At that point I gathered a group of young faculty members to go to the Dean to inform him that a well-known psychologist, a tenured professor in Speech, should be transferred to Psychology. The times had changed and Sue joined the department where she belonged. She and the rest of us have benefited ever since, both for her participation in teaching, research, and administration, and for the many PhD candidates whom she was able to train and advance into careers. She has always been appreciated by students, from undergraduate to post-doctoral, for her attention to their development and her help in moving them on in their studies and beyond.

Let me go back to Sue's role as an innovator of research uses of new tools, since this is something she seems to toss off lightly in the interview. The history of science is a story of new

¹ Ervin-Tripp, S. M., & Slobin, D. I. (1966). Psycholinguistics. *Annual Review of Psychology*, 17, 435-474.

discoveries as well as a story of the tools that make discoveries possible. In the early 1960s Sue was one of the few researchers who saw the potential of portable audio recorders. Until then, everything we knew about child language was based on handwritten notes, generally by parents. These notes could not include detailed data on parent-child interaction; they could not be checked for accuracy; they cannot indicate much about the child's phonology and intonation; and they did not contain enough examples of child utterances to allow for statistical analysis. Sue's audio-recorded data were path-breaking in themselves, but at the same time she was the only one of the early investigators who realized the utility of the computer. As she reports, data had to be entered on punch-cards and the researcher had to understand computer programming. But Sue did all of this, and found a programmer and a keypunch machine, developed a scheme for coding relevant grammatical information, and carried out the first scientific, objective analyses of patterns of emerging grammar in toddlers. However, as Sue remembers in the interview, it was still not possible to keep a detailed record of what could not be audio-recorded: gaze, gesture, use of objects, movements of participants. So, again, she was quick to seize on the first portable video recorders (though they were heavy, bulky, requiring separate reel-to-reel recorders, microphones, tripod). SONY introduced the first domestic videotape-recorder in 1965, and The Institute of Human Development at Berkeley acquired this equipment in 1966. Sue was a pioneer in taking this new equipment into homes, where she recorded family conversations. This window into everyday communication contributed to the development of the new field of sociolinguistics, extending study of the adult-child dyad to the family, and extending dialog to multiparty interactive discourse. She went on to record groups of children, with a wireless microphone built into vests that each child wore, and a multi-channel transmitter that fed into a stereo tape-recorder. To make sense of these complex data, Sue devised a multilevel transcription format, rather like a symphonic score. Sociolinguistics went beyond parent-child dialog into the pragmatics of communication. No wonder that Sue, at some point, was the president of the International Pragmatics Association.

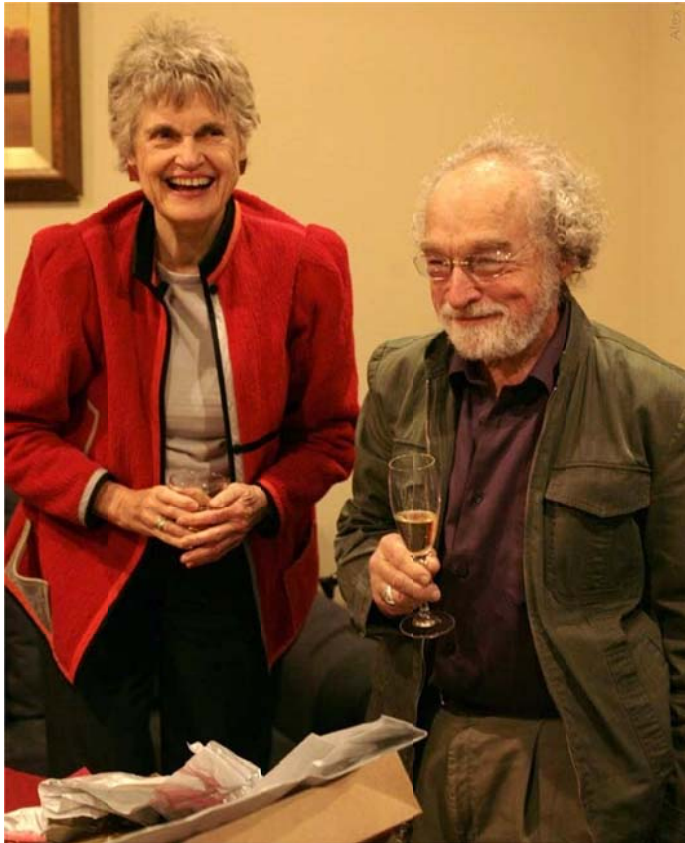
All of this went on—pace the old fellows in the faculty—while Sue was raising three children. In fact, I'll never forget the graduate seminar we were teaching together when her third child was born. Sue simply went on teaching, and the seminar met in her living room as she nursed the baby in her lap.

It's clear from the interview that she was a role model for women students and faculty. And not only a role model, but an advocate at the level of the University and the State of California. Together with three of her former students, I edited a Festschrift in her honor, published in 1996.² It begins with a dedication from *Proverbs* 31:26: "She opens her mouth with wisdom, and the teaching of kindness is on her tongue." The title contains one of Sue's key words, *context*, which was the guiding theme of her 1994 Distinguished Faculty Lecture to the entire campus community. One might look at her life story as a continuing concern for the contexts in which human beings learn and interact, permeated by a deeply-felt moral imperative to remove obstacles to growth and development, and a pervading sense of justice and fair play.

² Slobin, D., I., Gerhardt, J., Kyratzis, A., & Guo, J. (1996). *Social interaction, social context, and language: Essays in honor of Susan Ervin-Tripp*. Mahwah, NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum Associates.

Late in her eighties at the time of the interview, all of her concerns remain active in her mind. She is frustrated by the unwritten books and partially-analyzed data that remain. We can be grateful that this interview leaves a vivid story of her remarkable career and life. And I am grateful that she and I have spent our professional lives in the same place.

Here we were together in 2009 in Oakland.



**Dan Slobin
Berkeley
January 17, 2017**

Interview 1: May 17, 2016

01-00:00:00

Farrell: This is Shanna Farrell with Susan Ervin-Tripp on Tuesday, May 17, 2016 and this is session number one. Susan, can you start by telling me where and when you were born and a little bit about your early life?

01-00:00:22

Ervin-Tripp: Well, I was born in 1927 in Minneapolis, Minnesota. My family came from—oh, everybody went through Pennsylvania at some point. Scotch-Irish sort of people. My father's family had moved to Saint Cloud, Minnesota, which is a small town north of Minneapolis and my mother's family lived in Des Moines, Iowa. My paternal grandfather ran a flour mill. I've seen the flour bags called Ervin's Best Flour. I'm not too clear what my mother's father did. I think he was a businessman. He was in banking. Anyway, they had enough money so that both my parents went east to college. My father went to Williams and my mother went to Vassar and that's how they met.

When they came back to the Midwest they decided to live in Minneapolis. I think they wanted a bigger place to live. So my father, as far as I can remember, worked as a salesman of chemicals. He went around selling chemicals. My guess is it's probably what killed him because he died of cancer later. He worked for a chemical broker and they brokered for places like DuPont and Dow and so on. But anyway, my parents were both well-educated and they had business friends mainly around Minneapolis and they did a lot of entertaining. So there was always a lot going on at our house. They were educated. I always think of my father sitting by the fireplace reading. That's what he did in the evenings. I would read to my mother while she sewed. I had an older brother who played the piano every morning. I still have him present when I go to concerts because I think of him playing the piano every morning. He was the musician and I was the artist. So we sort of divided things up in the family. But we used to go to the library. When I was growing up we went to the library. We got a lot of books. So I did a lot of reading and one of my childhood friends says I was a bookworm.

In the summers we went to Saint Cloud, to a lake house that my father's family shared and so we read there and we swam and played tennis and so on and then I also went to summer camp for a good deal of my childhood, for a couple of weeks or so every summer. Because it was really hot in Minneapolis.

Now, when I was growing up middle class women generally didn't have jobs. The only person that could have been a role model for me was my mother's older sister, who didn't marry. She was a very interesting woman, Aunt Louise Moore. She studied women's working conditions in factories and so on and she had a job for Francis Perkins in the labor department. She was in the US Labor Department Women's Bureau. In fact, I came across publications of

hers in various journals about women's work. But, of course, she was living in the east so I didn't see her much until later in my life. But my guess is that she contributed financially to our family, to the private schools we went to and so on, because she didn't have children.

Anyway, I went to a public school in grade school. I think in that era, in the Depression, women worked as secretaries or teachers. And so smart women were teaching. We had really good teachers. This was a school with quite a range economically. There were a lot of kids on relief in the school. So I went to the public school in the neighborhood and walked to school. It was about eight blocks. Then I went to junior high, I think probably by bicycle. In junior high then we had sewing and cooking classes. I don't know how kids learn that now. Maybe they don't. But it's interesting that they had that then.

So the other thing that I did was on weekends—we lived within a plausible distance of a museum that was a wonderful place to visit and I also took art classes there on the weekends and I did that all through high school. I took art classes there. In high school I was in life classes, where I remember doing pencil drawings and charcoal drawings of nudes and so on, which is sort of amazing when you're in high school. But I really liked doing that.

When I got to high school my brother had gone to the boys private school in the city, in Minneapolis, and then I went to the corresponding girls school, which was called Northrop Collegiate School. We probably had a carpool for that because it was really far away. So that would have been ninth grade. What I remember of that was the history teacher, Chambers, Ms. Chambers, and the art teacher, Ms. Duncan. Because it was a girls school they didn't have trigonometry or physics. They had chemistry, not physics, and higher algebra but not trigonometry. This is when we're thinking now about the STEM fields. I'm sure my brother's school had those things. But he had the other side of the problem, which was his taste was for music and languages and not football. So people were prejudiced against him. He later became the headmaster of a school and he compensated for that. He changed things in his school so they didn't have this sexist view.

So there I was in the high school and there were a lot of activities like drama. I remember starting a fix-it club. [laughter] One of the things that was funny in our family, we knew how to fix things. My brother complained when he went to Harvard that nobody he knew knew how to fix anything but he did. Isn't that funny? That's a sort of family style.

01-00:07:50

Farrell:

Who was the one who taught you how to fix things?

01-00:07:53

Ervin-Tripp:

My father.

01-00:07:55

Farrell: Your father?

01-00:07:55

Ervin-Tripp: Yeah. I did a lot of things with my father. In the summer I went fishing with him and I used to catch frogs and help him. He fished with frogs. I fished with angleworms. No, I remember that. We went swimming. My father's family had a house by a lake near Saint Cloud and we went there every summer and so I remember the fishing [laughter] and the swimming are the main things, and the tennis.

01-00:08:34

Farrell: Can you tell me both of your parents' names?

01-00:08:37

Ervin-Tripp: Kingsley Ervin and Marian Moore Ervin.

01-00:08:42

Farrell: And how about your brother's name?

01-00:08:43

Ervin-Tripp: Kingsley, Junior.

01-00:08:44

Farrell: Kingsley. Okay. Did your parents encourage you to do art and your brother to do music?

01-00:08:53

Ervin-Tripp: Partly. I also had piano lessons. He was three years older than I was and I think he was so far ahead of me. In fact, he played the piano all his life and he played the organ, too. He said he liked the organ because it uses your whole body. Get a lot of exercise. But he used to play the organ in a church when the organist was away and so on. So he really liked that. He sang in the church choir. I never did anything like that. I think a lot of families have that sort of division of labor. Yeah. I have a lot of drawings and paintings I did from that era. I did portraits of my family and so on. I didn't particularly continue it in adult life but that's what was going on in my growing up.

01-00:09:45

Farrell: What was it about art that interested you?

01-00:09:52

Ervin-Tripp: Well, I liked looking at it. I remember going to art museums a lot in Minneapolis and I just liked drawing. I used to draw pictures of my teachers and so on. [laughter] That is very funny. I remember once drawing a picture of my teacher as a skeleton or something. [laughter] I would sit in class and amuse myself by drawing what I saw. So I did a lot of drawing in that era. I don't do it now but when I was growing up I did. I think I continued that into college, at least. I don't know how far it went.

01-00:10:37

Farrell: Do you have a sense of how the Depression affected your family?

01-00:10:42

Ervin-Tripp: Well, we did get financial help. I think, as I say, I think it was mainly from my mother's sister. But I don't know who else. But I found a little bit when my father died and I helped with looking over the finances. I wasn't aware of it before, that we'd had some help. But my father always had a job. We had household help. We had a cleaning woman and we had a live-in maid who was a country girl. In those days I think country girls liked it. They got fed. So you didn't have to be paid much. You were taken care of.

01-00:11:30

Farrell: So your aunt lived east and it sounds like she was an academic?

01-00:11:36

Ervin-Tripp: Well, she worked for the government.

01-00:11:38

Farrell: She worked for the government. Okay.

01-00:11:39

Ervin-Tripp: Yeah, she had an apartment in Washington. Well, before that she lived in Poughkeepsie and studied—that was when they had textile factories up in there. She studied some of those. Her sister lived in Poughkeepsie so she had reasons for being there. One of the odd things about my mother's family was that my mother's mother was a Christian Science practitioner. I interviewed my mother once and she said that some people would die on the porch of their house. That people would come to their house. I recently went through letters from the family, from her family. One of the things that happened was when people got ill you prayed for them and there were a lot of letters about "pray for so and so." My grandmother was named Susan and she had a daughter named Susan, my mother's older sister, and so I was named after two people. Aunt Susan died of breast cancer when her children were young. Her husband wanted to go to the doctor and she wouldn't let him. She was going to recover by prayer and it didn't work. So those children lost their mother. There were three children who lost their mother. When my parents got married my father insisted that my mother not be a Christian Scientist, so we didn't have to deal with that directly in my family. But she probably was corresponding about these. The thing I remember when they visited was that it was okay to get your leg set if you broke your leg. But, you see, cancer was different.

01-00:13:33

Farrell: Were you raised in any particular faith? What role did religion play?

01-00:13:39

Ervin-Tripp: My father was a vestryman in the Episcopal Church. We went to church every Sunday and I went to Sunday school and so on. I remember sitting in church reading the prayer book and studying everything. I treated it as another reading adventure. [laughter] My brother sang in the choir. I think I was quite

religious as a child. When I was at summer camp I had visions and so on. That was my childhood.

01-00:14:14

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about your decision to go to Vassar? I know your mom and your aunt went there. But what was it about Vassar that drew you to that school?

01-00:14:24

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, I know there was a valedictorian in my high school that got scholarships to everything. My mother went to Vassar and her sister went to Vassar and I had family living in Poughkeepsie. The one who died lived in Poughkeepsie and that family was there. So I never thought anything else about it. It was sort of a natural thing to do and I was what's called a legacy. One of the interesting things we did for some reason was my mother drove my brother and me east when I was thirteen. We went all over the east. We went to Poughkeepsie, I'm sure. We went as far south as Williamsburg. We did. We went to Washington. We saw historical places. My brother was sixteen. He was quite disgusted that I stood and recited the Gettysburg Address at Gettysburg. He thought that was a very childish thing to do. [laughter] But we went to Salem and learned about witches and so on. That certainly wasn't a college trip. That was too early for that. But I think we had been to Poughkeepsie.

Anyway, that had very high ratings so there was no reason not to go there. I have only the best to say about women's colleges. I think it was a wonderful experience. I went back recently. My granddaughter goes to a grade school in Poughkeepsie and so we went up there one time when I was visiting. It's co-ed now, which I can understand, because it was isolated and they probably weren't having as many students as they wanted. But the glorious thing about its being a women's college was no men were allowed above the first floor. We would come home from classes and talk about it. I just remember these wonderful midnight conversations. The dormitories were a place where you continued your education. I think that's a wonderful way to do it. In Berkeley, I think people probably don't. They're spread out. I don't know that that happens. I thought that was a glorious thing. We also knew the faculty. They had families. I have some pictures we took of our favorite faculty members. I took courses in eleven departments. I just had a glorious time. I audited courses. Like I audited a music class and I learned all about how Bach fugues were constructed and so on. So I could sit in the music class and listen to gorgeous music.

The economics department was especially good. Mabel Newcomer was very well known. Nowadays she'd be in a major university but because it was a women's college—universities weren't hiring women. And so there they were in these women's colleges. We had very good English teachers. I remember John Malcom Brinnon was a poet who taught us. He had us read *The*

Communist Manifesto freshman year. [laughter] We read a lot of poetry and we had poets visiting us. I remember that. We had a lot of famous people come and visit.

01-00:17:54

Farrell:

Yeah. I read your Vassar Alumni Quarterly piece that you had written for them, that Edith Sitwell and Stephen Spender and Simone de Beauvoir and Dylan Thomas came. Can you tell me a little bit about what that was like to now have this influx of really intelligent people in your life?

01-00:18:14

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, they came and gave talks and so on. They weren't around for long. But we got to go hear them and ask them questions and so on. So it was very exciting. Poughkeepsie is only, I forget whether it's an hour or two hours by train—

01-00:18:33

Farrell:

Two, yeah.

01-00:18:35

Ervin-Tripp:

—to New York City. So I used to go down on weekends and go to art galleries and so on. So it had the other advantage of being near places like that. But anyway, we had these wonderful visitors. Now, the other thing was that we had spectacular faculty who were refugees from Europe. What happened when the Jewish refugees came to the United States was that they spread out. Like I mentioned Köhler, who was a very famous gestalt psychologist, was in Swarthmore, I think. We had Richard Krautheimer, who was just a fantastic guy who knew about five languages. He taught baroque art. He taught all kinds of things about art history. And Katzenellenbogen. We had these fantastic people. Agnes Claflin taught modern art. But I loved those classes. I just remember taking every possible art history class and enjoying it so much. As I say, I took courses in eleven departments. [laughter] It was really a great smorgasbord and I just enjoyed it very much.

01-00:20:09

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit more about what you enjoyed about single-sex education?

01-00:20:18

Ervin-Tripp:

One of the things was that nobody was prejudiced against you for being smart. There wasn't this thing about trying to act like a dumb blond or something. My mother told me to dumb myself down so I'd be more attractive. People believed that. Of course, the worst thing would be to be smarter than some man you were going out with. So there was this whole pressure on women. That was the thing about men. But the other side of it was you got to have every major role and you got all the jobs. I was working on two newspapers. I was a reporter. There were two newspapers at Vassar and I was on both. These newspapers are online. So I am able to look myself up and see what I was saying. And the *Miscellany News*, which still exists, was run by a board

of student editors and so we got to do all the putting the newspaper together and all the fun things, writing editorials and everything. I loved that. I had started a newspaper when I was eight once and so I was really into newspapers. So I really enjoyed that part of it.

In high school I started a branch of Student Federalists. I was in high school, I graduated in 1945 from high school, and it was during the war and we were worried about what was going to happen after the war politically. And so one idea was to have a world federal organization. That was before the United Nations had gotten started. And the League of Nations was sort of defunct. That was a bit of a flop. Anyway, we thought a world federalist organization was the idea and student federalists was the student affiliate. I started that in high school and then when I went to Vassar I continued it. But it also involved going to national meetings in various places. I went to Chicago to a national meeting and the year I graduated from high school I was in Washington at a summer meeting and I was doing federalists and I stayed with my Aunt Louise there. I continued that at Vassar. So I was busy there.

01-00:23:00

Farrell:

You were working on the newspapers and I had read that you did some door-to-door political activities in '48, and these conversations that you were having. What were some of the things that you learned from Vassar that you took with you later on?

01-00:23:19

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, writing, of course. While I was at Vassar I wrote two art history papers that we published in Vassar magazines. One of them was called "Mannerist Aspects of Modern Painting." Mannerists were artists after the Renaissance. I don't remember what the mannerist aspect was. Dali, I suppose. [laughter] That's a mannerist. But I was interested in making the connection, which was an idea, to connect modern with earlier art. I really loved taking those art history classes.

My friend, Eve Borsook, who continued in art history and moved to Italy. She's lived in Florence ever since and she's published things in art history. But we wrote an article together. The first one, the mannerist paper, I published in the *Vassar Review*, which was a magazine at Vassar. See, I was at Vassar after the war, from '45 to '49. They brought to Washington, DC a collection that was in the salt mines in Germany of art that the Germans had protected in the salt mines. They showed it in—I've forgotten which of the major art galleries in Washington that was. But anyway, my friend Eve Borsook, who later became an art historian professionally, she lived in Florence all her life, the rest of her life, she and I went to Washington and we went to this show. So you took the trains in those days. I probably stayed with my aunt. Maybe both of us did. We wrote it up. So we wrote this article on the Kaiser Friedrich exhibit that was published in a magazine called the *Vassar*

Brew. So I had two articles published by the time I graduated from college. The great mystery to me that I can't really figure out is why I switched fields.

01-00:25:55

Farrell: I was going to ask you that.

01-00:25:57

Ervin-Tripp: You're going to ask me that. But I've asked myself that and I don't really completely understand that, except there was this political side of myself. I don't know. I started a debate team and I was on all these newspapers and so on. Krautheimer was quite angry with me about this. In fact, later on he moved to an art institute sort of graduate thing in New York. I think he got tired of having good students quit the field. I remember having a discussion with him and I said that the war had upset me and I was going to go into a field that could help prevent wars or something crazy like that. I thought the social sciences might be a way to do something good for the world and I thought of art as just a pleasure. It's odd. I really can't reconstruct that because it seems so strange. But I had these different aspects of myself all going way back. I think I thought I was going to accomplish something good for the world in the social sciences. [laughter] It's funny when I think about it.

01-00:27:25

Farrell: Do you think that had anything to do with post-World War II and the larger cultural climate at the time?

01-00:27:32

Ervin-Tripp: Possibly. Yeah, yeah.

01-00:27:37

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit about your move to grad school and why you decided to go to grad school after Vassar?

01-00:27:47

Ervin-Tripp: The reason I didn't do much psychology in college was that the department wasn't really very good. They had a good child study program and I took one course there that was quite interesting. I remember one of the things the teacher had us do was to observe children and write up what had happened and what we had learned by watching them. And, of course, a lot of what I did later was like that. I think I was quite surprised by how much you could see by just observing interaction. I remember when he asked me about it. I was quite speechless because I found it so hard to explain why I had been so moved by this experience. So it had a very strong effect on me.

Anyway, I applied to both Harvard and Michigan and I got in both. I had scholarships to both. Fellowships I guess they were. I went to Michigan because of group dynamics. I thought it would be really interesting to study the dynamics of groups. So that's what I did. I went to Michigan and most of the courses I took were reading old stuff. [laughter] I did do a study of a group. I went to a co-op house. I must have recorded that. That was maybe

when I started learning how to record things. I did some sort of paper on that. The other thing that had an important later effect on me was that I took a course in projective tests. We learned how to do Rorschach tests and all kinds of tests. There was a test by McClelland where you looked at pictures and then you told a story about the pictures.

So for my term paper for that class I went out to—there were many Nisei at Michigan. They had come from California because of the war. They had come out of the relocation camps. So there were Nisei students there in Ann Arbor. I must have had somebody working with me because I didn't speak Japanese. I had them tell stories about these pictures in Japanese and in English. I must have had a Japanese speaker translate the Japanese for me. I remember that my French friend, my best friend in college was a French woman named Jacqueline Bourguignon. I didn't tell you about my friends in college.

01-00:31:20

Farrell:

Yeah, you're welcome to. We're not too far past that.

01-00:31:23

Ervin-Tripp:

Yeah. Well, my senior year we lived on a corridor where we all had single rooms with all our friends. We all lived in the same corridor. One of them was Emily Knapp, who got married at Christmas of our senior year. Emily Knapp Pitkin. She came back to graduate. Her husband was an anthropologist. And then another one was Jacqueline Bourguignon, who had a room next to me on that corridor. She was French and she married an American psychiatrist and lived in Cambridge. She told me she felt like she was two people when she was speaking French and English. She felt like she was two different people. That was the key to my dissertation. And this Nisei study kind of came out of that idea that bilinguals are two different people.

Jacqueline Kennedy went to Vassar. She was a freshman when I was a senior. One of the things, it was nice. Now they don't do it. They eat in some central place. But we had all our meals in our dormitory and we worked. We helped out. She waited. I remember having my breakfast served by Jacqueline Kennedy. [laughter] That was back when it was all women. They don't do that anymore. I still remember all those good discussions.

01-00:33:15

Farrell:

Those discussions later influenced your work, it sounds like.

01-00:33:21

Ervin-Tripp:

Yeah. Well, the language thing. Of course, as I say, I was studying four languages so I was interested in the idea of bilingualism and that language influences how you think. Now, one of the teachers that was very influential on me at Vassar was Dorothy Demetracopoulou Lee. Her son teaches here in economics. I went to a talk of his to the emeriti and I brought him a bunch of photographs from when he was a little boy and we had all had a picnic with his family. I have a friend who was very close to that family. Anyway, we all

took pictures and I gave it to him. But she was majoring in anthropology and I wasn't. But I took a lot of courses with Dorothy Demetrocopolou Lee. And Dorothy Demetrocopolou Lee was a Whorfian. She believed that language influences culture. I don't know whether we read any Whorf. I remember reading Malinowski but I don't know whether the Whorf translations of Carroll were out yet. But anyway, we knew about Whorf. That turns out to be important later on. But she was one of the people who had a big intellectual influence on a bunch of us. Virginia Lewisohn was one of my close friends. She was an anthro[pology] major and went out later to do field work with the Navajo.

01-00:35:20

Farrell:

You ended up at Michigan. Why did you decide Michigan over Harvard?

01-00:35:29

Ervin-Tripp:

Because of group dynamics. I was interested in group dynamics and at that time Kurt Lewin had set up a group dynamics group at Michigan. Now, I'm not sure what happened, whether he had died by then or what. But anyway, I went to Michigan and I took courses there, statistics courses and group dynamics courses. But I only stayed for the two years of residency that was required and I moved to Washington and continued my work there. I had finished my coursework. I moved to Washington, which was much more interesting to live in than Ann Arbor. I went to Howard University Library to study. In the Library of Congress I did some work, too. I was doing my graduate stuff. But I got jobs there. I had a job at the American Psychological Association. I assisted them for a while. Then I got a job with a bunch of sociologists from Columbia who had started a bureau of social science research and they were doing international studies in different countries and I was helping with the analysis of that material. One of the people there was Ivor Wayne, who was a Czech. Somehow I got connected with the local linguistics society and I used to go to meetings of the local linguistic society. So it was a very stimulating place. They had concerts at the Library of Congress on Thursday nights. I remember going to concerts there. It was a great place to live.

01-00:37:48

Farrell:

What kind of concerts did they have? Was it classical music?

01-00:37:53

Ervin-Tripp:

Classical music, yeah. The Budapest String Quartet I remember hearing there and so on. Yeah.

01-00:37:58

Farrell:

What was it about group dynamics that interested you?

01-00:38:06

Ervin-Tripp:

It's funny because all that changed so through time. Of course, I actually later did do a lot of recording of interaction between people. Now, I wrote a term paper there. I should have looked at that because I haven't thought about it in

so long. I wrote a paper about interaction in a co-op house. Of course, this was a bridge into the language research I did later. The pragmatics research I did later. It's interesting. I hadn't thought about that. But for some reason the group dynamics people at Michigan weren't as interesting as I'd expected them to be. And I think Kurt Lewin was gone. That's sort of my sense. Seymour Martin Lipset was there.

Anyway, I decided to finish up my work in Washington and since I was going to do my dissertation on French speakers I could collect a lot of them around Washington. There were lots of war brides around. That project involved having two sessions six weeks apart with each person. The first one was either French or English and the second one was the other language. I found these French people. Walking around in Washington I could tell when people were speaking French because when you speak French you purse your lips and you can see the lips.

01-00:40:00
Farrell:

Pause that for a second. Okay, this is Shanna Farrell back with Susan Ervin-Tripp on Tuesday, May 17th, after an interruption from a fire alarm and a visit from the fire department. Okay. So when we left off we were talking about you finishing up your coursework at Michigan and moving to Washington, DC because there was more data to collect there. Can you tell me a little bit about when you first got to Washington, DC and what you were doing when you got there?

01-00:40:30
Ervin-Tripp:

Well, I got a job. I had to get a job. I got a job with the American Psychological Association. I can't remember what I did for them. But that was one thing. Then I got a job with the Bureau of Social Science Research, which was doing this analysis, sociologists doing an analysis of foreign data, various, I think, opinion polls in foreign countries and things of that sort. I don't remember too much about it. I remember the people there. There was Robert Bower. He was the director. And then there was Ivor Wayne, who was a Czech. I think he was my link to the local linguistics things but I'm not sure. Somebody got me involved in visiting with the local linguistics society.

Then I had a bunch of other friends. I don't quite remember how I connected with them. Washington was a fun place to live if you were single because Georgetown was full of houses where there were lots of bachelors living together in a house and so on. I had a little apartment. I knew a lot of people and I had a very good time there. One of the things I did was that I was a member of a psychology discussion group. I don't know how I met all these people. But I was sociable. This discussion group, we had talks and we had discussions about different things. So I had a lot of people I knew there. I was living there for several years. So I was really lucky because I arrived at a particular point in history where the Social Science Research Council, where I had applied to get some support from them, and what happened was that I got

a Social Science Research Council pre-doctoral research training fellowship and it ran from '53 to '55. I noticed they may not be doing this so much anymore. They do more area studies. But they were setting up interdisciplinary committees and later on I was on their psycholinguistics committee. But what they were doing then was setting up psycholinguistics. John Carroll was involved in that. Charles Osgood, who was a psychologist. And then there were some linguists. I just happened to be there and I was relevant.

So what happened was that I had this fellowship and they were setting up the field of psycholinguistics and I got invited to go to the summer research seminar in psycholinguistics, which in 1953 was held in Bloomington, Indiana. Now, what happened there was I took courses. I took some courses in linguistics. I hadn't studied linguistics so this was all news to me. Of course, I'd studied a lot of languages so it was easy for me. One of the things I remember is sitting in Bloomington in a phonetics class at 7:30 in the morning making funny sounds. It seems so funny at 7:30 in the morning to be imitating the teacher making funny sounds, because we were learning to do phonetic transcription. That summer there was this committee of people who put together a supplement to a linguistics journal and to a psychology journal. The psychology journal was the *Journal of Abnormal and Social Psychology*. It had a supplement that summer which was on psycholinguistics. I had two publications in it. one of them I did with Charles Osgood and it was called "Second Language Learning in Bilingualism" and I wrote another one called "Information Transmission with Code Translation". Actually, I had published an article with Robert Bower of the Bureau of Social Science Research about translation, so I was doing publishing then.

But the thing that was wonderful was this SSRC committee, in launching the field of psycholinguistics, they had meetings in various parts of the country that I got to go to.

01-00:45:37

Farrell:

Sorry.

01-00:45:39

Ervin-Tripp:

So there were a lot of meetings. There were conferences on aphasia, on word association, on bilingualism. I got to go to the bilingualism meeting, which I think Wallace Lambert from McGill may have organized. But I gave two papers there. One of them was called "Identification in Bilingualism" and the other one was called "Some Relationships Between Cognition, Feeling, and Speech". Those papers later appeared in a book of mine. So that was really wonderful. I was meeting all kinds of interesting people and being sociable. I found that a lot of fun. So there were lots of things to talk about.

Now, in 1955 I had completed my dissertation as part of this SSRC thing. I was on the staff of the Southwest Project in Comparative Psycholinguistics,

which ran from 1954 to 1959. It probably says in one of those articles who funded all that. But anyway, we developed a field manual that Jack Carroll edited. The field manual was to try out all these materials. We studied Navajo, Spanish, Tewa, Hopi-Tewa, Hopi, Zuni. We had all these languages that we were comparing. There was this idea that language might have an influence on these cognitive performances. So we did the field manual. We did materials on synesthesia, on word association. We did semantic differentials, which was Osgood's thing. We did stuff on bilingualism. We collected color names. We studied color discrimination.

Osgood had developed a theory of connotations in which he did correlations. What you did was you had antonyms and then you placed something you were doing, the connotations of on these antonyms and then he did a statistical analysis, correlational analysis, and found that there were three dimensions in English connotations that I think were good/bad, strong/weak, and fast/slow. Anyway, he wanted to find out if this was true in other languages. One of the things I did when I was working the Navajo is I spent a lot of time eliciting stuff from Navajos. I had to elicit antonyms. That was really fun. I just had so much fun with that. It was so interesting. We lived in a town where there were enough Navajo monolinguals so that we could get really good data on monolinguals. So we had monolinguals and bilinguals.

I was out there two summers. The second summer I collected the antonym data, the Navajo data. Other teams were working in other places. Joe Casagrande, who was on the staff of the Social Science Research Council, and he was an anthropologist and he was working on Navajo, too. Herbert Landar was another assistant like me and a graduate student. He was a linguist. We wrote a paper together on Navajo color names. That was just amazing, those two summers. I took part in some Hopi dances. The whole experience was mind boggling. It's something that's remained in me as a major, major life experience.

01-00:50:03

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit more about how you went about eliciting antonyms?

01-00:50:13

Ervin-Tripp:

I must have worked with the interpreter to develop a way to ask what is it if it isn't x? If it's bad, what is it if it isn't bad. That's interesting. We must have had a way of doing that. I'm not sure that I can remember.

01-00:50:39

Farrell:

Do you remember how you were recording your data at that time?

01-00:50:43

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, at that time we probably had reel-to-reel tape recorders. I still have some of that old equipment in the back cupboard somewhere. The quality of those reel-to-reel recorders was very good. Radio stations use those. They

used great big reels. We had smaller ones that were more like six inches in diameter or eight inches. Of course, we had to have electricity. I had a portable tape recorder, too, so they must have been battery operated. Yeah. I still have one of those. I remember I had a leather case for it and I carried this recorder around. It had five-inch reels. So that's the way we did it. They made very good recordings, those reel-to-reel recorders.

01-00:51:47

Farrell:

Do you have a sense of why the Southwest Project chose Navajo, that population?

01-00:51:54

Ervin-Tripp:

We went to a place where there were still a lot of native speakers of indigenous languages. I think because the Southwest is arid, the whites didn't drive them out. They drove them out where I come from in Minnesota. There were still indigenous communities there. The Hopi and the Hopi Tewa and the Zunis had villages and the Navajos were spread out and they had their own hogans and lived. They did herding. Kluckhohn. Kluckhohn was involved in helping us. I think he had done some work in that area.

01-00:52:51

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about how that study was received or how it influenced—I know that it was an emerging field at the time, but how it influenced the field later. Do you have a sense of that?

01-00:53:11

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, that's interesting because later, much later, I was on the review committee for grant applications in psycholinguistics. It became a field and people were teaching courses in it. One of the things that's kind of a funny thing about it was that at that time there were three fields that fit together. That all changed later. The linguistics of the time has been superseded. Then they had information theory, which had to do with looking at sequential probabilities in a text. There were people who were studying that, which we, of course, didn't do very much with in Navajo. There were the linguists. Yeah, linguistics changed because Chomsky came along around then and did some changes in linguistics. So all of those fields got altered. And psychology, of course, it's hard to imagine but when I first came here psychologists were mainly doing word association studies or rat studies. There was very little study of complex human thinking. They really didn't have a psychology prepared for the complexity of language. I think that was just part of why Carroll was attracted to it. I think he figured if you were going to explain language you had to make psychology more complicated. So it all changed. That was Skinnerian psychology back in those days. Word associations. It's really funny to look at what got published in those days.

01-00:55:04

Farrell:

Before that you had written some articles for the newspaper and then in art history. But what was that transition like for you to write now in the social sciences?

01-00:55:19

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, of course, I had done term papers and I had done a paper at Michigan that was on the group dynamics of a co-op. But that wasn't published. So we did term papers all the time in college so it wasn't really so new.

01-00:55:40

Farrell:

Wasn't much of a transition between—

01-00:55:40

Ervin-Tripp:

Yeah. I finished my dissertation on French bilinguals and found there were significant differences in how they talked about aggression and women's ambitions and how they talked about—depending on language. How they talked about autonomy. French are more autonomous. So I finished that. By then it was 1955. I had finished my dissertation and so I was applying for jobs. One of the things I did, which I'm really glad I did, which was I took the paper that I had written on identification in bilingualism and I sent it out to all the people who had written on identification, including Eleanor Maccoby and various people. I heard from Harvard, from Harvard School of Education, and John Whiting was interested in having me come there. Because I had used projective tests and I'd done these studies in the Southwest, and because I was interested in identification—Eleanor Maccoby was around there then—he invited me to come to Harvard and he gave me an office in Palfrey House. Whiting was an amazing man. He was a wonderfully stimulating person to work with. He and his wife were getting set up. They hadn't done it yet but they were going to do a six culture study on child rearing and they had a lot of people who knew about child rearing. I think that's how Eleanor Maccoby got involved in that. They had a lot of people coming and going. Whiting was the kind of guy who learned by talking with people. He had a rule at Palfrey House that when we had lunch, we would have lunch together, and we had a big seminar room like this where you'd come in and you'd bring your lunch and then you'd talk. People gave talks about what they were working on. It was a working lunch. So it was very stimulating. I learned a tremendous amount from him and from the people who came to those lunches. It was very good.

I was teaching half-time. The job I had was in the school of education. Whiting was in the school of education. I had a half-time job there as a lecturer. I was teaching statistics to kindergarten teachers, which is something else again. It was very funny. I think maybe I was teaching child language, too. I also had a half-time job working with a guy named Fletcher Watson, who had a grant to study children, how they acquired information by doing experiments. He was trying to teach children to do experiments and looking at how they interact in the process. I was his research assistant basically and we

set up these experiments. Anyway, I was doing half-time with Fletcher Watson.

I was there at Harvard and I did a lot of writing. Oh, the other thing was that I met people around there. For instance, Roger Brown. I think I sat in on some of his classes. And he was at that point setting up a big project that he did on children's language, on Adam, Eve, and Sarah, I think they were called. He was going to collect data on children's language. I used to go Sundays with him. We would lie out in the grass and talk. I lived in Cambridge. I got to talk about child language a lot with Roger and I did a study on word association development in terms of how the grammatical knowledge of the children influenced their associations. Anyway, by 1960 I had published five articles from the Navajo study and from my dissertation and from the Fletcher Watson study on children's reasoning.

What happened then was that Deese, who was then the word association guy in that psycholinguistics group, told me that there was a visiting job in the psychology department at Berkeley that I could apply for. That's what I did. I was already writing a lot of stuff. So when I came here, those were, more or less, in press.

01-01:01:26

Farrell:

Backing up a little bit. Can you tell me about some of the differences between Michigan and Harvard? What you had experienced between the two different universities? Were they teaching you different things or were there different schools of thought? Kind of, well, we use this method or we use that method or what they encouraged?

01-01:02:00

Ervin-Tripp:

That's interesting. Of course, Bruner was just setting up his Center for the Study of Cognition. So Skinner was sort of getting replaced by then by people who were interested in cognition. And certainly Brown was doing that. Of course, I was doing very different things. I wasn't doing things particularly about children when I was at Michigan. I was doing these group dynamics with the students, college students, and taking my methods courses in how to do surveys and how to do statistics and so on.

01-01:02:54

Farrell:

Were there overlaps between what you were doing at Harvard and Michigan as far as what you were studying or learning how to do? Or were you taking what you had learned at Michigan and applying it at Harvard?

01-01:03:04

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, I was teaching at Harvard.

01-01:03:05

Farrell:

Right. So were you applying—

01-01:03:06

Ervin-Tripp:

When I was teaching statistics I must have been applying what I had learned. Clyde Coombs was the guy who was teaching statistics at Michigan. He was a very good teacher. Teaching statistics to nursery school teachers was a very funny experience. When you have two distributions, you're comparing one of them, you have a notation. They couldn't learn it. It was really funny. [laughter] Anyway, it was an odd experience.

01-01:03:45

Farrell:

At that period of time were there a lot of women in the field? Did you have a lot of female colleagues?

01-01:03:59

Ervin-Tripp:

It's odd. I wasn't thinking about that at all. There's always a lot of women in psychology. When I came here that whole topic came of interest. But I don't remember paying much attention to it before.

01-01:04:22

Farrell:

At any point did you feel like you had, when you were at Michigan or in Washington or at Harvard, were you held to a different standard because you were female?

01-01:04:38

Ervin-Tripp:

The thing was that I had been so lucky all along. I got all these fellowships when I was in Washington and I was working with that group, all those interesting people, anthropologists in that study and so on. I think I maybe mentioned in the *Items* article who else was a doctoral student working. I can't remember whether there were other women involved or not.

01-01:05:18

Farrell:

Okay. Yeah, I can go back and—

01-01:05:19

Ervin-Tripp:

Somehow I didn't think of it as an issue. Maybe it's because I'd always been in women's schools so it hadn't been an issue so I didn't think of it as an issue.

01-01:05:33

Farrell:

Yeah. It looks like you had a lot of male colleagues but not a lot of females at that point.

01-01:05:38

Ervin-Tripp:

That may be.

01-01:05:40

Farrell:

One last question I have about the Southwest Project is—well, maybe two. You said that it was a really influential experience. Can you tell me a little bit more about why it was so influential?

01-01:05:57

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, it was so influential partly because I had never had a kind of immersion experience in another culture that way. I just found that, subjectively, a very powerful experience and I could understand why people loved being anthropologists. They were having this almost like conversion experience. You have to get yourself to thinking like a different person and I liked that. Of course, I had been studying bilinguals so I had sort of been through that experience with French. It was more dramatic when you're thinking about Navajo. I read everything I could find about Navajo. I felt very lucky to be in that situation. It sort of remained with me as a unique experience.

01-01:07:02

Farrell:

Did you take any methods that you used in that study or even skills that you developed later into your work?

01-01:07:08

Ervin-Tripp:

Probably, yeah. Of course, what was funny was we were in an anthropologist's playground but we were using psychological methods. That was sort of funny. [laughter] We were asking people to do pretty silly things.

01-01:07:26

Farrell:

Then you came to Cal as a visiting assistant professor in 1958. Were you actively looking for a job at that period or you had heard about something opening?

01-01:07:44

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, my job at Harvard was definitely a temporary job. I was a lecturer.

01-01:07:53

Farrell:

So it had a finite deadline?

01-01:07:55

Ervin-Tripp:

It didn't go anywhere. [laughter] At Harvard it was very clear they had these lines. If you were an assistant professor you went up to become an associate and so on. So I knew all about that. I had to be thinking about where I could enter into a regular academic job someplace. I knew that my job at Harvard was temporary. Besides, it was only half-time.

01-01:08:30

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about moving across country and what your first impressions of the Bay Area were?

01-01:08:40

Ervin-Tripp:

I drove all the way from Cambridge. That is so interesting. I went to a music festival in western Massachusetts and I drove west and I camped out. I had camping gear. I got that idea that I could camp out and I stopped at a surplus store and bought myself a tent and a sleeping bag. I had cooking stuff. I remember I had a lot of adventures camping out crossing the country. In Illinois I stopped in what looked like an isolated farmhouse. It was empty. Nobody was there. I had put my sleeping bags in the woods and then the

sheriff came because it turned out that the farmer there was a mortgage jumper or something. [laughter] There was always some story. They thought I knew this farmer. It was quite funny. But they thought it was very strange that anybody would want to camp out. Farmers don't camp out. Anyway, I drove across the country. The most beautiful place to camp out was in Colorado. I camped out in woods and so on. It was delicious. I went through Minnesota, I think, on my way west.

01-01:10:27

Farrell: Did you stop and see your parents?

01-01:10:26

Ervin-Tripp: My father died when I was a junior in college. My mother actually moved to Poughkeepsie my senior year. She was living in Poughkeepsie and then she moved to New York after that. She got an apartment in New York and a job at Bonwit Teller. She worked at Bonwit Teller and now that terrible Trump has torn Bonwit Teller down. Anyway, I came out here and got an apartment. That's a whole other story.

01-01:11:16

Farrell: Do you want to keep going or is this a good place to stop, do you think?

01-01:11:20

Ervin-Tripp: Yes, it might be a good place to stop. I can think about that.

Interview 2: May 25, 2016

02-00:00:12

Farrell:

Okay, this is Shanna Farrell with Susan Ervin-Tripp on Wednesday, May 25, 2016, and this is our second session. When we left off last time we were talking a little bit about you coming to Cal, but I wanted to back up a little bit and talk some more about your time at Harvard, where you were doing a half-time lectureship in the School of Education, teaching child language. Can you tell me a little bit more about your time there, and some of the work that you were doing?

02-00:00:44

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, I can't remember all the teaching, but I think I did child language, because it was a school of education, so that would've made sense. But the people that I knew there were Roger Brown, who was just beginning to get into child language, and he had a lot of PhD students who he put to working on child language, so that was very important. Eric Lenneberg was there also. There were a number of people who were around. It turned out that Noam Chomsky had just published *Syntactic Structures* just before I left, and I remember hearing him in Sanders Theater there, and he looked like a teenager. It's hard to think that now, but, of course, that made a huge splash and had a great effect on child language work. I met a lot of people through those meetings that the Psycholinguistics Committee, the Social Science Research Council had, so I knew a lot of people, and one of them told me that there was a job in Berkeley. I made arrangements to come out here, and it was a visiting position. I drove across the country, did some camping out on the way.

I was in the Psychology Department for a year, and I don't have much memory of what I was teaching, but they told me that they were not interested in hiring a psycholinguist, which is sort of funny since they hired one a little while later. But when I was in Berkeley that year, I sought out the linguists, and I went to talks in the Linguistics Department, and I met a lot of people in Anthropology, too. John Gumperz, who was then in Near Eastern Languages, before he moved to Anthropology, I knew him, and he suggested that I apply in the Speech Department, that they might have a position for somebody with my background. So that was very helpful. I also met that year people in the Research Institutes. There were a lot of interesting people, such as Jeanne Block and Nancy Bayley, who was nationally known for her studies of children. She was in The Institute of Human Development. I didn't notice that they weren't on the faculty, but there were a lot of very good people in the Institutes.

Now, I went to the Speech Department and got a job there. One of the reasons that I could teach there was that they were responsible at that time—I don't know whether anybody does this now, but there was a freshman composition class that everybody was required to take, and what they had in the Speech

Department was English for Foreign Students. That was sort of fun for me to teach, because there were all these students with different kinds of accents and so on. I was teaching English to students who were basically becoming bilingual. I was in that department for many years, until I had tenure.

Now, at that time, one of the good things about that department—they didn't have a graduate program, so all the courses I taught were at the undergraduate level, but they gave me a lot of liberty to teach what I wanted, and I taught courses on communication, on child language, and I even remember teaching about animal communication. I remember talking about von Frisch, who did studies of bees, and whales. I remember having a lot of interesting discussion in classes about animal communication. I had interesting students from other departments. I had students from anthropology and psychology and all over the place, and linguistics. I taught a course there to Peace Corps volunteers on how to teach English as a second, or, you know, how to teach language. That was kind of fun, because they were bright students.

Now, what else was happening on campus at that time was there were a lot of people interested in language who were getting together. There were colloquia. The person I remember doing a lot of organizing with those colloquia was Sydney Lamb, who had gotten a PhD in the Linguistics Department, and he was an interesting person. He was working on machine translation and on a stratificational theory of grammar, and he was a very good organizer, so he would have colloquia at various times with interesting people. There were lots of contexts. Eventually, one of the things that happened—I know my husband had this happen in the Physics Department—they would have evening seminars at people's houses. Well, we did that. We had gatherings of people interested in language at people's houses. Slobin remembers it being at Gene Hammel's house, and I remember when it was at John Gumperz's house after he got married, and he lived on Bonnie Lane. We had certainly monthly meetings, and the people who were at those meetings were Dell Hymes from Anthropology, and John Searle from Philosophy. He was a speech acts person, and that had some influence on my work. There was Julian Boyd from the English Department. Then Slobin by then was in the Psychology Department. He told me the way he got hired was—the custom in hiring then was to call up your friends and say, "Have you got any good men?" And so they called Roger Brown, I guess, and said, "Have you got any good men?" At that time Dan hadn't done his dissertation yet, but they hired him. [laughs] He didn't give a job talk or anything. He talked about that at his retirement party. It was very funny.

So I was seeing a lot of the linguists on campus, and at the same time also I was very busy writing up the data I already had. I think there was one summer where I wrote six articles. So I had a very busy time. I wrote an article about the connotations of gender, the semantic connotations of grammatical gender, and another one on teaching and recall in bilinguals that was from data I'd gotten in Boston from Italian bilinguals. The gender one was a sort of filler for

the recall one. I had them name pictures in either their subordinate or dominant language and then recall them in either their subordinate or dominant language. So what you could find was that when people named pictures in their subordinate language, they remembered them better than... If they named them in their dominant language, then if you asked them to recall their subordinate language they were just hopeless. They couldn't remember them. So one of the implications was that they do a lot of naming to themselves in their dominant language, even when they're naming things in their subordinate language. So that helps the recall in the dominant language.

Anyway, the filler task was making judgments about things that had—you know, in Italian, as in all the Romance languages, even more in Russian, I guess, you have all these genders that are on things that are inanimate. So why is a table and chair feminine in Romance languages? Anyway, what it turns out is that there are some connotations of that grammatical gender, that it brings with it the connotations of male and female, difference on strength and whatever else you differentiate sex on, and it's kind of funny when you think about it. If you speak a language where the gender of a chair is masculine, then a chair may be stronger than if it's a Romance language. [laughs] But I did that on these Italians in Boston, so that was one of the papers I wrote. And then I wrote the paper on the Navajo data that I did on semantic shift in color naming, and the Navajo data on word associations. I had three papers on children's scientific reasoning that came from the Fletcher Watson project at the School of Education. I was writing everything up. It turns out Fletcher Watson was an astronomer, and I was puzzled as to why these papers had my name only on them, except for a footnote, and astronomers don't know how to do experiments, so I was the one that did the experimental research. [laughs]

I also wrote a paper that summer with a Berkeley student that I had done a study with on changes with age in connotations. My first paper on child language at that time was on a study of associations. We had done word associations, for some reason, with the children in that study in the School of Education, and I had age differences in word associations. It turns out those were quite interesting. What happens is that young children do what we call syntagmatic associations, like blue/chair, and older, they do paradigmatic associations, like blue/red. That tells you something is happening with their grammatical structure, that it's getting organized into classes and so on.

02-00:12:04

Farrell:

Do you think that had anything to do with brain development, too? Or was it just—?

02-00:12:08

Ervin-Tripp:

Never thought about that.

02-00:12:11

Farrell:

Or was it—it was just—

02-00:12:12

Ervin-Tripp: If I had come to the Psychology Department when it had so much brain research going on, probably I would've thought about that. [laughter]

02-00:12:20

Farrell: Yeah. Were those patterns that you were seeing being repeated many times?

02-00:12:27

Ervin-Tripp: Oh, yeah.

02-00:12:28

Farrell: Oh, interesting. Were there any language associations with that? Was it pretty consistent across languages that that would happen?

02-00:12:38

Ervin-Tripp: The paradigmatic—? I don't know that I did any studies in children speaking other languages on that. Somebody must have, but I can't remember whether I ever did that. It's conceivable that I did it in Europe, but I don't recall. It's the sort of thing I might have done.

02-00:13:00

Farrell: Do you have a sense of what the paradigmatic shift meant for people?

02-00:13:08

Ervin-Tripp: I think it just meant that the structure of grammatical classes was becoming more important in the way they organized language, and so belonging to the same grammatical class, when you think about it— I mean, your senses are syntagmatic, and so the sentences you hear come with words in different classes after another. This structure of paradigmatic comes from having developed a set of internal classes. And that shows something about age change and the way they have their language organized in their brain.

02-00:14:04

Farrell: Yeah. Do you think that also had any effect on communication between adult and children, if they're organizing things differently?

02-00:14:14

Ervin-Tripp: Hm. I don't know. [laughter] It's conceivable. I don't think I've thought about that. Now, I was doing that child language work, and so then I made a grant application to the National Institutes of Mental Health to collect new data on child language. So that's how we got—and I got Wick Miller, who was a graduate student in the Linguistics Department, to work with me so that we could do transcription of the phonetic features and so on. He had an office—the Center for Human Learning got set up around that time, in 1959, and the chair of that was Leo Postman, who was in the Psychology Department, and he was the editor of the *Journal of Verbal Learning and Verbal Behavior*. His journal was beginning to have a little more psycholinguistic content, and, actually, the Center opened in 1961. It was in a lovely old building on the east side of the campus. It's now demolished and there's a parking lot there near the law school. [laughs] But apparently College Avenue went in and there

were a lot of private homes along College Avenue. College Avenue continued. You know, it was only when the campus got built up that they— When I came to Berkeley, people at the Women’s Faculty Club told my mom to drive along College Avenue until they got to the club. So there were people who still remembered when College Avenue continued that far.

02-00:16:06

Farrell: Oh, interesting. That’s really interesting.

02-00:16:10

Ervin-Tripp: She was a bit confused by that. [laughter] But anyway, in 1961, that center opened, and a lot of research was done in these centers. You see, there was the Institute of Human Development, and the Center for Human Learning, and Wick Miller had an office at the Center for Human Learning, and, of course, we didn’t collect data in those places. We actually just listened to tapes. Ours, that first year, it was one of the largest grants in the Center. We found five families who were willing to have us tape record their children in their homes, and so that’s what we did. Then we started reporting on the findings of this study. We wrote a survey. One of the things that we did together was we wrote a survey of 104 papers on language development for the *Handbook of Child Psychology* in 1963. There was a lot of research being done then already about language development. In 1961, the SSRC sponsored a conference about child language that the Harvard people came to. Ursula Bellugi and Roger Brown then published a collection of papers from that conference, and we did a paper on the development of grammar for that publication, and it was the first report on our—Miller—our work on child language. And also, Eric Lenneberg that I’d known at Harvard, he published a book in which I wrote a paper called “Imitation and Structural Change,” and that paper still gets cited a lot, because I discussed how I thought child language learning took place, and the role that imitation played. It’s interesting, it still gets cited. I think it’s amazing how things can survive time.

02-00:18:31

Farrell: I want to back up a little bit and ask you more about recording children in their homes. So that was, I feel like—

02-00:18:41

Ervin-Tripp: Well, that was audio recording.

02-00:18:42

Farrell: Right. So what—

02-00:18:44

Ervin-Tripp: Can’t really video record then. I remember that. [laughs]

02-00:18:47

Farrell: What made you interested in using audio recordings initially?

02-00:18:51

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, it was kind of obvious that if you wanted to find out how children were talking you had to record it. I mean, now, some of the earliest work on children's language by linguists, they transcribed it, but they weren't looking at interaction particularly, and, I guess because of my social psychology background, I was interested in the context of interaction. I wanted to make sure I had what they actually said, we could get the phonetics of it, and we could find the context. You'd get a whole conversational sequence, and find out if they were imitating something from before, and things like that. But somehow it never occurred to me not to use a recorder.

02-00:19:39

Farrell:

What was the process like to find those five families? Do you remember?

02-00:19:45

Ervin-Tripp:

No, I don't. I think they were mostly on the faculty, or in the university somewhere. I mean, one of the problems—I went to a talk that Eve Clark gave about child language at one point, in which she talked about how children learn their vocabulary because their mother models it to them. Well, she did her research the same way we all did with graduate student families, but it turned out by then, by the time she gave that talk, Bambi Schieffelin had gone to some island in New Guinea and found that people didn't do that. It turns out there are social class differences that are really quite powerful, and I've written about that, that it turns out that the idea of modeling language to your child and having a conversation with a young child is peculiarly upper middle class. It's not something that's general. You see a difference in the amount of vocabulary children have when they come to school, according to the practices in the home. So it's quite important, that factor of actually noticing what was going on. Now, we weren't interested, at that point, in those class comparisons. Somebody later did a study where they actually left a bugging device in different families, and they got data all day long in different households, and then went back and tried to find out what the context was. But they found a lot of social class differences.

02-00:21:17

Farrell:

Did it take time to build rapport between when you had the recording device out? Were people comfortable already, or did you have to work on that a little bit?

02-00:21:30

Ervin-Tripp:

I don't remember that being a problem particularly, because people would volunteer for this, because they were interested in knowing something about what their children said. My house is full of tape recordings [laughter] from my children, too.

02-00:21:42

Farrell:

How were you going about recording the data, or what your findings were? Were you using computers at this point?

02-00:21:48

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, that's what Wick Miller was doing. Actually, he was one of the first people to use—you know, people don't realize that at that time we didn't have the computers we have now. The data from that study was put on punch cards. I don't know if you know what a punch card is, but it was a piece of cardboard with holes in it, and when you put it in the computer, it converted it into stored information. But at that time, the computers we had, we had monitors that could read what was in the computer, but the data got into the computer from punch cards. [laughs] It's sort of amazing to remember. But those old data are sort of hard to get at now. I have trouble getting at them, although a lot of those old data are— One of my former students in the Speech Department, it turns out, he set up a databank called CHILDES that has adult conversation and also the child conversation in CHILDES, and it's available to—you know, you sign in. It's quite amazing. A lot of my later data is in his collection.

02-00:23:18

Farrell:

Where on campus was that being processed, the punch cards and—?

02-00:23:22

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, Evans Hall had a huge computer in the basement, and that was the first one I remember. And then, later on, when that Center for Human Learning turned into the Institute for Cognitive Studies—and it changed its name and its content and so on. At one point it was in Barrows Hall, and we had one room with a computer in it there, and we had our—what did we call it? You had a monitor that was connected to that, probably with wires. I mean, we had wires running all over the campus, I think. We had these monitors. We didn't have independent— It's interesting how that's all changed, hasn't it?

02-00:24:17

Farrell:

When you say “huge computer,” can you describe the scale of that?

02-00:24:22

Ervin-Tripp:

It would be several times this room. It was just gigantic. The basement of Evans Hall. I mean, you walked around the exterior. The one in Barrows was smaller. I mean, computers then were, you know, maybe half this table or something.

02-00:24:45

Farrell:

Were you working with any engineers to write programming or code or software to process the data?

02-00:24:51

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, I learned Fortran when I was at Harvard, I think. At some time I learned some, but I didn't have to use it later. Now, Sid Lamb, you see, was doing machine translations on—he knew a lot about that, but I never had to learn anything, except how to—I did put my data in the computer. I remember bringing my cards over to one of the science departments, and they had a card reader still, and we got it in the computer that way, in the new computers.

02-00:25:24

Farrell:

What did you end up doing with the tapes that you were collecting in the homes of the children?

02-00:25:29

Ervin-Tripp:

I probably still have those. One of the things I've learned about tapes is that the old reel-to-reel tapes are still good. Radio stations use those. I found a tape recently that was the interpreter in my Navajo study, and it was just like yesterday. It was good. But what was really bad was the era of cassettes. Cassettes were awful, and they deteriorated very fast. We had reel-to-reel tapes that were maybe—mine were six inches, five inches, something like that in diameter, and they kept— In fact, later on I remember taking a lot of our tapes and putting them in the computer to be used for research, tapes that my students had gotten and so on. We had a big archive of conversational material, and I did a lot of research out of that later. Now, we were doing child language then, but I hadn't forgotten the bilinguals, and in the Bay Area there were lots of Japanese bilinguals, so I always wanted to do my dissertation study with monolingual comparisons, and so I got a grant from the National Science Foundation to do a study with Bay Area Japanese bilinguals, and I got somebody in Japan to collect monolingual comparison data. And we did sentence completions and associations and stories, the way I had done—I think we had different kind of stories. They weren't the TAT stories. Anyway, we had picture stories.

I had a lot of data from that Japanese study, and there were two interesting kinds of subjects in that study. One group were Issei, first-generation immigrants, and they tended to be Japanese war brides. There were a lot of American servicemen in World War II who married Japanese women. I'd had some of those from World War I in my French study. No, maybe that was World War II, also, in Washington. That was one group. They were called Issei, first-generation immigrants, and then there were Kibei Nisei. Now, the Kibei Nisei were Nisei who had been born here, but they went back to Japan during the war and lived with their grandparents or whatever. They were very fluent in Japanese, but they had learned English first, and many of them had gone to school here first. By the way, I learned in this that there was a lot of segregation in communities in California. It wasn't against the law until fairly late. It was surprising. Anyway, the Nisei gave similar word associations in both languages, but the Issei didn't. So the Nisei were basically American when they went to Japan, and their Japanese was kind of patched onto their English, I guess, in terms of their meanings. The stories were very different in the two languages, and I think the fact is that the stories are influenced very heavily by the cultural environment, and they're much more subject to beliefs and ideas about the two cultures. And I also had another control in that study where I asked people to simulate how a Japanese would give an answer, and that's very difficult to do, it turns out.

02-00:29:41

Farrell:

How would you do that?

02-00:29:43

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, I'd say pretend you're American, giving answers. Anyway, I was trying to control for what they called set, their belief that they should tell a Japanese type of story in Japanese and an American type of story in English. And I wanted to see if they could do that under instruction. It's not so easy to do.

02-00:30:10

Farrell:

Were they able to, or not really?

02-00:30:13

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, not really. The paper I wrote around that time that got cited the most was a paper I wrote for the *American Anthropologist* called "An Analysis of the Interaction of Language, Topic, and Listener," and that described how the setting—I think one of the things that was new about it was that I set up a lot of parameters that I used in my research for many years. So there was setting, participant, topic, and function, and each of these was related to linguistic forms, and I could show how each of them had an impact on linguistic form choice. That paper still gets cited. It grew out of a session at the anthropology meetings in December 1963, and it was later published as a book called *Ethnography of Communication*, and it was a meeting that Gumperz and Dell Hymes ran, and they edited this book called *The Ethnography of Communication*. Now, that session, if you remember what else happened December 1963, what I remember about that session was we heard the news about Kennedy there at that session, so that was pretty amazing.

02-00:31:46

Farrell:

What are your memories of that, of hearing the news at the conference?

02-00:31:52

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, everybody was very shocked, and we had to go find out how that ever happened. You know, it took a long time for people to figure out how it happened. Of course, there was videotape. I mean, there was television by then, and so people had some kind of information from that. And, of course, people still doubt whether the commission that looked into it found the real facts.

02-00:32:22

Farrell:

How did the conference end up influencing your paper?

02-00:32:29

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, everybody was giving talks about similar subjects, so I could get a lot of information from the talks that other people gave. We were all interested in these issues of how setting and function and so on influenced form. I'm sure that it had an impact. I mean, it'd be interesting if I had the original and a later version to see. You know, that's one way to find out about that. I'm not sure I have both. Now, another thing was happening around that time was that the Social Science Research Council, which had had the Committee on Language and Psychology, or Psycholinguistics Committee, and set up the field of Psycholinguistics, they formed a committee to set up sociolinguistics, which,

of course, is even more appropriate to the Social Science Research Council. I remember that the original people on it, a lot of them were kind of macro sociologists, and they were interested in things like how many bilinguals show up in the census and so on. It had a side that had to do with the macro issues of language. By the way, one of the things that, when I taught a bilingualism class, I looked up some of the census figures: it turns out German was one of the biggest languages in the United States. I mean, there's a town in Texas where everybody speaks German, and so on. They came over in the mid-nineteenth century and set up colleges, and all kinds of things happened to the German community. I mean, we don't think about that out here because it's all Spanish now, but it's an interesting history, if you look at the census records and which languages were being used.

They set up a Sociolinguistics Committee in the SSRC, and it was chaired at various times by Charles Ferguson and by Dell Hymes. Ferguson was a linguist who had started the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, and it was very important in the development of sociolinguistics. He later came to Stanford, and Dell Hymes also chaired that committee at one point. It had sociologists and anthropologists, and by the time I was on it they were dealing with not just the macro things but with micro-sociolinguistic things, face-to-face interaction. One of the ways that that committee affected me was that Slobin and I got a grant from that committee, and from the National Science Foundation, to do a project at Berkeley. By then, we had a lot of students, and there were students in anthropology especially who wanted to go to other cultures and do their dissertations on language development in these other cultures. We got money enough for thirty-two students to come in the summer, who were mostly anthropologists, who were going to collect comparable data in other societies. We got a lot of distinguished visitors. We got a lot of famous people to come from all over the world to come and give a talk to our people. Dan Slobin wrote a field manual for this cross-cultural study.

The project had three foci. It was going to do a cross-linguistic study of development: of the semantic development; phonological development; grammatical development. This is the thing we usually study when we study language development. It was going to study also social functions and social rules of language use in children, so it had a sociolinguistic side to it. It had a sort of psycholinguistic developmental side and a sociolinguistic side. And then people were interested in community beliefs and practices regarding language. Now, people started to write articles about this by then. I remember articles about Pacific Islands peoples, about their beliefs and practices with language, so there was a lot beginning to appear on this subject. This field manual and all its visit of experts that contributed to it allowed us to put all that in place. My guess is it got used not just by those students but by other people. You know, that's the sort of thing that happens with something like that.

02-00:37:31

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about how community beliefs and practices affected language? Just explain that a little bit more?

02-00:37:40

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, you may not believe that parents should talk to children. I mean, you know, we had these cases where children, in fact, learn language from older children. I mean, you know, there's a lot of interesting things that go on about beliefs and practices, and what kind of language you should use in what setting. That's also something people have a lot of beliefs about. Children have to learn to use the right kind of language in the right setting.

02-00:38:08

Farrell:

How does that differ from social functions and social rules, the social part? Or is that a subset of the social part?

02-00:38:20

Ervin-Tripp:

Oh, well, I suppose that was more focused on the children, and what they were told they had to do. I don't know. I guess that would be the case. Now, one of the things that was nice about being on the Sociolinguistics Committee was that I got to go to lots of good meetings, just as I had with the other committee when I was their assistant. There were conferences on the ethnography of speaking. There was a conference on conversational analysis, and there was a conference on ethnomethodology. The sociologists were getting into language a lot, and they had these theories about how to do it. I got exposed to a lot of that by these conferences the Committee sponsored.

Now, by 1974 I got invited to the Center for Advanced Studies in the Behavioral Sciences at Stanford, and that was wonderful. By then I had a bunch of children, and I had to— so I stayed living in Berkeley, and I commuted to Stanford. And I remember that sometimes I spent the night there with friends, or I slept in the couch in my office there. The thing that was interesting about that was the fascinating people there, and I spent a lot of time trying to get more women to be invited for it, but we had good library access at Stanford, and I think somebody went and got the books for us. We had freedom to write full-time, and a lot of people wrote books there. We had a lot of colloquia, and everybody there gave talks all the time, and there were visitors and so on, so it was very stimulating. The main paper that I wrote there was a paper called "Is Sybil There?", which was about requests, and— When I came back, I was in the Psychology Department, and so I wasn't teaching English as a second language, and I had graduate courses in the Psychology Department, so that was the main change. But my grants were still mainly to the research institutes.

In 1974, I organized a panel at the American Anthropology meetings, and we brought together a bunch of scholars on language socialization—Ochs and Schieffelin were on it, and Claudia Mitchell-Kernan. We brought that out. Mitchell-Kernan and I edited that as a book, and it was called *Child*

Discourse, and that was published in '77, but it had a bunch of papers on children's language in different societies. My paper in that was called "Wait For Me, Roller-skate," and it was about requests. I was interested in doing some research on requests, and so I applied for a grant to study children's interaction, and I was focusing on requests, primarily. So that was when I got NIMH, and I got money from NSF, and I got videotapes from a lot of families. My recollection is that it was interesting to have families that had several children, because I was interested in interaction between children, but we also had them invite their friends over. So I had a lot of material on it. I have requests between children, and requests to adults by children. It was important to have contrasts like that if you're studying a particular function. But one of the things we did was we got all this videotaped data, and we got it transcribed, and I remember that we had a coding frame for coding all these, so within the texts, in the computer, we had lines that had coding of different categories of requests, and who it was addressed to, and things like that. And so we were able to compile all that and do analysis of it.

I wrote a lot of papers on requests after that: "How to Make and Understand a Request" I wrote in 1981, and "The Structure of Children's Requests" in '84, and "Ask and It Shall Be Given to You" in '92. I was writing a lot of papers about the request study, which was the last major grant that I had. I did a lot of papers and talks on requests in the next years, and my last paper on child language was in somebody's *Festschrift* in 2012, and in that one I was showing that some of the syntactic changes, like the use of subordinate clauses, was related to the speech act. I remember Eve Clark was studying temporal clauses at one point, and she had children tell stories to get them to use temporal clauses, but it turns out in texts that the first temporal clauses come in in requests, like, "Can I use that after dinner," or "After we have dinner," or something. It was something modifying, putting a temporal surround on when they wanted to have something or use something or do something. So I was always of the opinion that you had to find a pragmatic context for when structures come in, that that's very important, because it's not random.

Now, one of the blessings of being a professor is that you get sabbatical leave, so I had my first sabbatical leave in 1964, and we went to Geneva, because my husband was a physicist, and he wanted to work at CERN, center for nuclear physics in Geneva, and I had my first child there. We lived in downtown Geneva, and I used to go visit the Piaget Group in Geneva, and I managed to do some research on children in the area, including other sabbatical children who were becoming bilingual. So we went back there on later sabbaticals, and my children—we had three children, and I remember particularly one visit where we lived on a farm outside Geneva, and the older children went to the village school. The little one was too young. He liked bouncing in the haystack. [laughter] And so I was quite ruthless about taping all their interactions. They would bring friends home from school, and I was taping their interactions. I got a lot of material on their acquisition of French,

and their switching between French and English to each other and so on. So I have a lot of data from my own children.

02- 00:46:29

Farrell: How did they respond to that, when you were—?

02- 00:46:32

Ervin-Tripp: They thought it was normal. I mean, you know, kids think things. In fact, my oldest child tried to tape record his little brother. They thought it was quite a normal thing to do.

02- 00:46:44

Farrell: What was it like using video then? Because you were an early adopter of that, it seems like.

02- 00:46:55

Ervin-Tripp: I'm not sure. I don't remember using video in the European stuff. I think that was audio. Yeah, I don't remember that being video. That's interesting.

02- 00:47:07

Farrell: But even when you were using video—

02- 00:47:09

Ervin-Tripp: I must have made notes about what was going on, or something like that. I can't remember quite how I managed that. I should look at that and see. But I'm pretty sure I wasn't— Because I don't have videos of the farm, yeah, so that's the proof I didn't have it, yeah.

02- 00:47:26

Farrell: Oh, okay, just the audio, yeah. When you were using video—

02- 00:47:31

Ervin-Tripp: We had portable—we had little microphones you could attach to people, and so there must have been transmitter mics at some point. I mean, yeah, that's interesting. I don't remember too clearly, but I must have had that, because I remember I had data from children in a tree and so on, so they must have had transmitter mics.

02- 00:47:55

Farrell: Yeah. When you were using video, was there a difference in getting people comfortable with video cameras? Because, I mean, now video cameras are everywhere, so people are used to being recorded, but then it's a new thing, and it's this object in the room. Was that ever an issue for you when you were doing your research?

02- 00:48:12

Ervin-Tripp: Well, I think when they agreed to be in the project they knew about that. In fact, they kind of liked it. I mean, you know, people like having videotapes of their families. I recently sent a bunch of transcripts to some of these families when I ran into them.

02- 00:48:31

Farrell:

Was it harder to get people to sign onto doing the video?

02- 00:48:36

Ervin-Tripp:

I don't remember it being a problem, really. But maybe I've forgotten, it was so long ago.

02- 00:48:45

Farrell:

Back to Geneva, can you tell me a little bit more about the Piaget Group, what they were doing with their—

02- 00:48:51

Ervin-Tripp:

Sinclair was there, Hermina Sinclair. Well, of course, Piaget had talked about early child development, and we all knew that work. It was interesting talking with them about relation between language and the other aspects of cognitive development, which is what they were studying. I gave a lot of talks in France and so on during those years, so I must have talked with a lot of people about all those things. Yeah. In '85 we were in Paris. We came back to Paris, and I had a US–France Scientific Exchange and a Cattell Fellowship for that trip. Now, let's see. In 1974, I gave a talk at a conference in Puerto Rico. It was a conference of teachers in English to speakers of other languages, and I wrote a paper called "Is Second Language Like The First?" that brought together bilingualism, child language, and sociolinguistics, and that was a lot of fun to write. That one was a popular paper that was published in a journal for teachers of English to speakers of other languages.

Now, in 1977 I got a chance to go on a trip to China with a bunch of scholars, and that was organized by Ferguson. I was the only woman in the group, and I was the only one who didn't speak Chinese, [laughs] which was pretty funny. But they provided me with interpreters, and I actually recorded a lot of that visit. I ended up giving the tape recordings to the Asian Center. We visited classrooms a lot. I remember the classrooms—it was quite fascinating to see the teaching methods that were being used in China. We visited some classrooms where they were teaching English, too. I wrote up a lot of that, but I meant to write a book about it, which I haven't done, one of my unfinished jobs, because I have a lot of material from that visit. They used to have formal delegation meetings. We would all get together, and some dignitaries would come and greet us, and so on. But one of the things that's fascinating about classrooms was watching how they taught Chinese writing. They used as many senses as they could. They would write the Chinese writing on the blackboard, and then they would do it in the air, and everybody would do it in the air, and they would chant the name of the stroke. Chinese has strokes, and they would chant the strokes in the air. You get hearing and vision and kinesthetic, too. So I thought it was wonderful. You know, they tell people now that if you're reading in a library, if you write notes the kinesthesia of writing leads to better memory than if you type. Isn't that interesting? I mean, there's something about body movement that helps your memory. But that

was a fascinating trip, and so we could see language in a different context there.

02- 00:53:21

Farrell: How did you originally get involved with the China Delegation?

02- 00:53:24

Ervin-Tripp: Well, Ferguson invited me to be on it. I think he thought— I mean, we'd known each other since Washington, and then—I think he thought it would be a different perspective on—because these were people who taught Chinese, mainly, and that I would have a different perspective on what was going on. I wrote a lot of notes about it. Now, my last major grant was on requests. I think I already mentioned that. And so— [pause]

02- 00:54:39

Farrell: Yeah, it says the last major grant that you got was to study children's interactions, with particular attention to requests, from NIMH and NSF, and that you did more—

02- 00:54:50

Ervin-Tripp: That's when I did the videotaping.

02- 00:54:54

Farrell: You wanted to see how several children socialized in the family.

02- 00:54:58

Ervin-Tripp: Yeah, so I wrote "How to Make and Understand a Request" in 1981, "The Structure of Children's Requests" in '84, "Ask and It Shall Be Given Unto You: Children's Requests." I did lots of papers on requests in those years, and so that was sort of the last thing I did in terms of research.

02- 00:55:27

Farrell: At that point you had moved to the Psych Department, in 1975, is that correct?

02- 00:55:33

Ervin-Tripp: Mm-hmm, mm-hmm.

02- 00:55:35

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit more about your move from the Speech Department to the Psych Department, how that came about?

02- 00:55:42

Ervin-Tripp: Well, I think Dan Slobin played a role in that maybe, and by then I had tenure, and had advanced pretty far. They worked out some kind of deal where they transferred my FTE from one department to the other. I don't know that that actually makes any difference. I think I had embarrassed the Psychology Department with the work I was doing about sexism in the department, too, by then. [laughs] I mean, I first got involved in that in the research we did in '69, I guess. So, you know, that must have played a role, too.

02- 00:56:32

Farrell:

Yeah, and we'll get more in depth in that later. But on that note, how were you received when you moved to the Psychology Department?

02- 00:56:48

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, it didn't have an effect, particularly have any. You know, it was a big department by then. I still can't remember what those three divisions in the department were. The main difference was that I had more psychology majors. Actually, the courses I was teaching there, I was teaching a course on bilingualism, and that was the most fun, I think, of—I did teach child language. I had to split that with Dan, because he wanted to teach about child language, too. So I think we had a seminar together, but he taught the upper division course on child language, and I taught the course on bilingualism, and I had so much fun with that. And the reason it was fun was that it was part of—the University then had a program called American Cultures. I don't know whether that's still a requirement, but it was required that undergraduates take a course on American cultures, and there were all kinds of—many departments had some sort of American Cultures course. I don't know how many units in American Cultures they had to have, but it was a distribution requirement. I went to a summer thing on American cultures to learn what I was supposed to do in this class, and one of the things you had to do was to teach about some underprivileged group, so that meant that when I taught about bilinguals I couldn't just talk about the German immigrants. I had to discuss the difference between the Cubans and the Mexicans and so on. It was really fun to set up that course. We talked about how you become bilingual, and we talked about the sort of sociology of bilingualism, and who's bilingual, and why. I mean, it was really great fun to put together that course.

One of the things that was assigned in the class was for students to do an empirical study and report it to the class and write a paper and so on, and so I was learning from these students. It was fascinating, because what happened was that the students had to take this course, and so they weren't psychology majors. You know, they came in from all—at that time, a lot of them were in engineering. You know, I had a lot of Chinese American and Chinese immigrant engineering students. They had to take this, too. So they looked around, and since they were bilingual, they thought a course in bilingualism would be interesting. I had these people who were not psychology majors, but who had interesting personal lives. They did these term papers about their own families, and their own communities. I had fascinating term papers, and they gave talks in the class about it. I was learning from the students. And one of the studies we did was of students who had lost the family language, and why. That's when we discovered the importance of the monolingual grandmother. I mean, it was really interesting, the histories of these students, and what they reported happened in their families. We collected data on what languages were used when, and so on. And, of course, what happens is if you have several children the parents go out and get jobs where they have to use English, and then the oldest child learns English in school and brings it home,

and gradually the home language gets lost. The adults tend to think it's good for the children if they speak English to them, so— it isn't particularly. [laughs] In fact, you find out that the best thing to do in that situation is keep the family language—I mean, have the situation split between home and outside.

02- 01:01:12

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit more about the monolithic grandmother. Is that because—

02- 01:01:17

Ervin-Tripp: Monolingual grandmother. [laughter]

02- 01:01:18

Farrell: Monolingual. Monolithic!

02- 01:01:20

Ervin-Tripp: She can be monolithic, too!

02- 01:01:22

Farrell: The—does—

02- 01:01:25

Ervin-Tripp: Because she doesn't speak English, this erosion—you know, as often the mother and father go out to work, and so you get this erosion, and the oldest child is in school, and they bring English home. They think it's good for the children to learn English before they go to school, so gradually the home language erodes.

02- 01:01:47

Farrell: Does the grandmother provide a root?

02- 01:01:50

Ervin-Tripp: Well, the grandmother, because she doesn't speak English, and she's respected, she forces them to keep Chinese. You know, some families care about that. Like, I remember Laura Nader, they used Arabic at home, and so, you know, she didn't know how to read it, but she knew how to speak it. So I think that families who think about that will keep the family language.

02- 01:02:18

Farrell: Did you get a sense how the meaning of that changed over time? I know from friends of mine that I have who are bilingual that when they were young it was just a part of life, you spoke two languages. When you got older, and you were more socially aware, or socially self-conscious, that would change, and they would want to speak English, the dominant language.

02- 01:02:43

Ervin-Tripp: Because of their peers at school.

02- 01:02:44

Farrell: Exactly, because they didn't want to be bothered, but then later on, as adults—

02- 01:02:50

Ervin-Tripp: They were sorry. [laughs]

02- 01:02:51

Farrell: Exactly. Did you get a sense of—

02- 01:02:53

Ervin-Tripp: Well, yeah, that's what was happening? That's why we studied that in the class, because that had happened, and, yeah, that's— actually, I looked at a lot of those data for the Festschrift paper I wrote for Eve Clark, that last paper, and I looked over the data about that, and it was quite interesting. They said that children in bilingual families tend to have as good English comprehension as monolinguals, but they said the best situation is to use the family language at home. Often kids go to bilingual school. That's another good situation. Ron Unz interfered with that in California. But bilingual schools are a very good idea. I sent my children to—my youngest child was—we were going to go to France soon after he started school, and so I sent him to a French bilingual school here in Berkeley before we went to France so he was ready. I think that's good.

02- 01:04:16

Farrell: Can you tell me a little bit more about your experience working with students? So when I had spoken with Dan Slobin, he said that he really admired the way that you worked with students, and that you were always extraordinarily good at working with students, either one-on-one or in small groups. Can you tell me a little bit about your time working with students, and what it was like to kind of mentor them?

02- 01:04:50

Ervin-Tripp: Well, I had a lot of students working on my projects, of course. I mean, I had to have people doing transcription, and so these research projects always had a lot of graduate students involved. I mean, after the Wick Miller thing, I wasn't doing children young enough to need somebody who was skilled in phonology, although I did have one project where I got a student who was a graduate student at San Francisco. [laughs] He did very good transcription. That's odd. I don't really have a vivid memory of— I mean, I had the students who were working on projects, and we had a lot of project meetings, and so that's— I mean, other than that, we both taught graduate courses, and so on, so I don't know that there was any difference.

02- 01:06:02

Farrell: Was working with students something that you enjoyed, something that kept you interested and—?

02- 01:06:05

Ervin-Tripp: Oh, yeah. Yeah, because, well, I needed students for this work, and, of course, I wanted them to go out and do research, too. That's why we had graduate students, of course. I mean, that's what I didn't have in the Speech

Department; I didn't have graduate students. I appreciated having graduate students when I came to Psychology.

02- 01:06:35

Farrell:

You had talked a little bit about meetings that would happen at home, a lot of the conversations that would happen.

02- 01:06:47

Ervin-Tripp:

Oh, you mean these sort of groups of scholars, yeah. People did a lot of that. My husband was in a physics group that used to meet at somebody's house at night.

02- 01:07:00

Farrell:

How do you feel like that enriched—

02- 01:07:01

Ervin-Tripp:

It's interesting, because it was like adult education. I mean, they would get—the people in the department would get together, and that's what we were doing. We were getting people from different departments together who were interested in these topics about language, and people would tell what they were working on. I mean, there's a group in Linguistics that studies indigenous languages, and they have meetings all the time about their indigenous languages at night. You know, they would meet at people's houses. They're still doing that.

02- 01:07:37

Farrell:

How do you feel like that enriched your work?

02- 01:07:40

Ervin-Tripp:

Oh, well, I mean, that's what a university is for. [laughs] You're supposed to be learning. I mean, the teaching of students is only part of what you do. You're learning all the time, so this way you're learning from your colleagues, and that's very important.

02- 01:07:58

Farrell:

How do you feel like campus culture has changed in terms of that type of academics?

02- 01:08:04

Ervin-Tripp:

That's interesting. I don't know, because I'm not involved in campus culture now, particularly. I don't know whether it's changed. I mean, everybody's listening to their cellphone instead of talking to each other? [laughs] That might be.

02- 01:08:24

Farrell:

Were you still involved with that before you—you retired in 1992, right? Were you still involved in all of that before you retired?

02- 01:08:33

Ervin-Tripp:

I retired in '99.

01- 01:08:34

Farrell: Ninety-nine, okay, okay.

02- 01:08:35

Ervin-Tripp: Yeah, I had cancer at the time, so I retired.

01- 01:08:38

Farrell: Was that still going on, leading up to your retirement, the working groups?

02- 01:08:43

Ervin-Tripp: Well, that's interesting. I don't know how long it went on. I don't have a vivid memory of that. That's interesting. Of course, you know, you talk about cellphones; they're also talking to their computer. I have friends who don't use a computer because they don't like that. But yeah, people used to go into each other's offices and talk to each other all the time. I don't know that that happens now.

02- 01:09:15

Farrell: I think during our pre-interview, you had talked about how you consider yourself to be a type of interviewer. Can you tell me about how you developed your interviewing skills over the years?

02- 01:09:29

Ervin-Tripp: Well, you know, I was just thinking about the difference in the approach to research of people who— You know, my background is more like a journalist. I mean, I started at a newspaper when I was eight, and I was always working on newspapers. Writing papers is sort of spreading the news. But I was thinking about the difference from the scientists who have some particular goal, and they spend their life searching, trying to solve that problem, and so they zero in on it. It's interesting, because I don't have that sense of goal directiveness. I think that maybe that is a difference. My guess is even within the Psychology Department there's a difference between people in that. It probably has to do with the fact that my background is in art history, rather than in biology. [laughs] So that's a descriptive field, and history is like that. So it's interesting to think about the difference between the sciences and humanities that way, because I'm interested in writing up these papers about what we found, but I realized as I was looking back over it that I didn't have a big goal that I was targeting everything toward, and that's a difference from somebody who's got a good scientific mind.

02- 01:11:18

Farrell: Do you think if you were to go back and do it again that you would think about being more goal-oriented? Or it just wouldn't have made sense?

02- 01:11:27

Ervin-Tripp: You mean I pick some problem I'm trying to solve and I would do everything to solve that problem, instead of roaming around having different problems? [laughs] That's interesting. I don't know whether that's just preselected by personality or whether it's a result of training.

02- 01:11:47

Farrell:

I know that you met a lot of people along the way, and you've talked a bit about your colleagues. Can you tell me what some of the major things that you learned from the people with whom you've worked over the years, and how you brought that into your work?

02- 01:12:20

Ervin-Tripp:

That's interesting. I don't know that I've ever thought about it that way. Huh. I don't know how to answer that exactly.

02- 01:12:35

Farrell:

Or I guess maybe if there was a time where a talk you went to or a conversation you had with a colleague maybe changed the way you thought about something, or maybe inspired some of your work?

02- 01:12:55

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, I'm sure that was happening, because I was going to all these talks all the time, and so we must have—you know, all those discussions I had with Roger Brown back at Harvard inspired my interest in child language. I don't know how he got interested, since he was a social psychologist. Why he was interested in language is not clear, but—I was always curious about what other people were doing. When I was living in Washington, I was in a discussion group of psychologists, and I was in a discussion group of linguists, and so on. We were always talking about new research and so on.

02- 01:13:59

Farrell:

On the note of new research, where do you see the field of sociolinguistics heading, or what direction would you like to see it head in?

02- 01:14:17

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, a lot of the work was done by linguistics like Labov. He did wonderful work on social differences, class differences, and so on in language use. He studied the interaction of teenagers, and he found— well, he was an expert in phonology, so he could hear differences in the kind of linguistic features that people had, and you could see—you know, if you're good at that, you can hear how it changes with who they're speaking to, and all those things I was talking about, about function and the goals of the interaction and so on, and how people would change how they talk, depending on who they're talking to and what they're trying to accomplish. But he was very good at that. There weren't so many people around here doing that kind of thing. I don't think that— It takes a particular kind of interest to do that.

02- 01:15:50

Farrell:

I know we're going to talk about this a little bit more next time, but can you tell me a little bit about your retirement, and kind of what led up to that, and what you've been doing since?

02- 01:16:03

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, you know, we're supposed to retire earlier than people do, [laughs] to make room for the younger people. I retired in '99 because I was ill, and I was

spending a lot of time getting treatment. I had cancer. Now, what some people do, which I think the University was very smart—they set up this thing called professor in the graduate school, so some people are sort of half-retired. I noticed in my department there's a number of them that do that. I think that means you teach a seminar or a graduate seminar or something like that. The good thing about that is that what you miss most when you retire is smart graduate students, and having somebody to bounce ideas off. That's a structure that helps with that problem. But I had a lot of, you know, work that I could still do, and I haven't collected any new data in quite a long time. I've been working on the files of the— when I was moving offices, I found a lot of files of material on the committees I was on, and so on, on women in the university and so on, so I have been working on that primarily. I haven't been doing much writing about the older stuff. You slow down, and your memory gets bad. [laughter]

02- 01:18:07

Farrell:

I know over the years that you've gotten a lot of grants and fellowships, but do you have any recollection, or did you have any experience with as UC budgets have ebbed and flowed, how that either affected your work or the department?

02- 01:18:27

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, it's interesting. You know, I think historically people got some of their research money from inside the University, but—I mean, the Research Committee has some funds—but as things have gone national, people have tended to get their money from outside, and that's encouraged. As I remember—I don't know whether it's still true, but there was a certain fraction of the budget that went to compensate the University for secretarial help and the other things that you're using space and people and whatnot. So there was some fraction that was taken from each grant for that purpose. But I don't know how it is now. I mean, you know, a lot of it was the evildoings in Sacramento, where they cut the taxes and cut the money available for the University. I don't know how people are solving that now.

02- 01:19:46

Farrell:

And is there anything else—

02- 01:19:48

Ervin-Tripp:

Also, it happens that Congress has been cutting the science budget of the federal government, which certainly would've affected me.

02- 01:20:00

Farrell:

In the nineties, do you have a sense of how the dotcom bubble influenced? I know that sort of helped the economy, but did you feel the effects of that at all in the nineties? Not really.

02- 01:20:13

Ervin-Tripp:

No. [laughs]

02- 01:20:15

Farrell:

How about different governor or presidential cycles? Not even just funding, but what different areas of interests were in the field, if that changed at all?

02- 01:20:35

Ervin-Tripp:

I don't think anything. It's interesting, I don't— well, of course, the public policy about bilingual education has changed a lot over the years, so that has had some effect. But it really alarms me to see how they're not willing to spend money on research. I think they're going to be very sorry. It was just in the news this morning about the research on mosquito-carried diseases.

02- 01:21:24

Farrell:

The Zika, yeah, exactly. Is there anything else that you want to add or talk about in terms of your work and your research?

02- 01:21:37

Ervin-Tripp:

No, I think I'm—

02- 01:21:40

Farrell:

Okay. Next time we'll talk about all your extracurricular work and all these kinds of things. Thank you.

Interview 3: June 2, 2016

03-00:00:19

Farrell: Okay, today is Thursday, June 2, 2016 and this is Shanna Farrell with Susan Ervin-Tripp and this is our third session. Today we are going to talk a little bit about equity issues. I'm wondering if you could start by telling me a little bit about your early experiences going to an all-women's high school and college.

03-00:00:42

Ervin-Tripp: Well, there were lots of women teachers in those places and certainly I was never conscious of anything inequitable. [laughter] I think I didn't think about it at all. When I went to the University of Michigan for my PhD I don't remember noticing anything peculiar. And, of course, the experience I had with the Social Science Research Council was very friendly. I went to lots of meetings and got to know a lot of people and never had any sense there was a problem.

I think the first time I ran into anything structural was at Harvard when I was teaching in the Harvard School of Education. They wouldn't let women in the front door of the faculty club. We had to come in the side door. There was a reserve in the library that women couldn't go into, which was sort of odd because sometimes I had material in the reserve. When one of my students graduated I wasn't allowed to march with the graduation. So I thought, "Well, this is just because Harvard was a men's college." We had Harvard and Radcliffe, so they were peculiar about that.

When I came to Berkeley in the psych department I didn't really notice that—there were women visitors and there were women in the research institute. I really was unconscious of the bias that they had.

03-00:02:15

Farrell: When you were at Harvard and you weren't allowed to go into the reserve library, how did you deal with that?

03-00:02:20

Ervin-Tripp: I don't even remember.

03-00:02:23

Farrell: Did you probably have somebody else go in there and get your work for you?

03-00:02:24

Ervin-Tripp: Maybe, maybe. It was very bizarre. [laughter]

03-00:02:28

Farrell: Did that affect your—

03-00:02:31

Ervin-Tripp: I don't think it was something that affected me very strongly. It's just odd.

03-00:02:36

Farrell: That was at that time just sort of normalized because that's how everything was?

03-00:02:41

Ervin-Tripp: Well, I just thought it was a relic of Harvard being a men's college. We had rules in Vassar. Men couldn't go above the first floor and so on. I think they need to have some more like that. We have all these sexual problems now. I think it would be just as well. I don't know that that happened in libraries. Maybe it did. [laughter]

03-00:03:03

Farrell: Did you see that kind of thing happen in other places around Boston?

03-00:03:09

Ervin-Tripp: I didn't think about it. I wouldn't have had much exposure, I don't think. Because I was teaching at Harvard so that's where I was putting things on reserve and so on.

03-00:03:19

Farrell: When you came to Berkeley you were aware of the psych department problems? That they weren't hiring women?

03-00:03:28

Ervin-Tripp: I wasn't aware of it.

03-00:03:29

Farrell: You weren't aware of it. Okay.

03-00:03:30

Ervin-Tripp: No, I didn't become aware of it until later. I just knew they wouldn't hire me. They told me it was because they didn't want any psycholinguists, which was sort of funny since they hired one a few years later. But anyway. what got me aware was Elizabeth Scott. She was an amazing woman who was in the statistics department. Now, Elizabeth was a woman who had wanted to be an astronomer and her office was full of celestial images. She in fact wrote forty-two papers in astronomy. Because women were not allowed in the major telescopes—I suppose they were up there at night and they thought it was dangerous for women or something. There was a famous woman who kept winning prizes in astronomy and it's because she married an astronomer and he let her up to see the skies through the telescope. [laughter] But Elizabeth, anyway, she was in statistics. She was a very smart woman. I found out she wrote forty-two papers in astronomy, so that's kind of amazing. I think she used statistics on astronomical events.

Soon after I was here Elizabeth, for some reason, was showing that there was a decline in women on the faculty, from 9.3 percent in 1938 to 3.6 percent in 1968. That's the ladder faculty. You distinguish between lecturers and people in the ladder from assistant to full professor. Now, some of that you could blame on the GI Bill, because that brought in a lot of men from a wider range

of social classes and so on, because the GI Bill just increased the number of men who were on the faculty. But the women were retiring without replacement. You could look at those figures and see that some departments had had women and then they didn't because they didn't replace the ones that retired. Most of the women who were on the faculty at that time were lecturers.

Now, what happened was that we had a visitor in the history department in 1968 named Natalie Zemon Davis and she was a very political person. She said, "You ought to form a faculty women's group and start doing something about this." She was a believer in activism. That's when we started the women's faculty group and some time later it was changed to be called the Association of Academic Women. We get a lot of contact in the Association of Academic Women with the chancellors and various things that we did.

Now, you have to remember that the period of the fifties and sixties was a very political activist period. All the stuff was happening about affirmative action in the South and so on. We kept signing petitions and marching and so on. I went on marches. I remember taking children, my children in strollers on marches. There was a lot of political expression going on then.

In 1963 Congress passed the Equal Pay Act and in 1964 Lyndon Johnson signed the Civil Rights Act. Women got into that act. A southerner put women in there. Some people thought it was a poison pill so they wouldn't have to pass equal rights for blacks. But anyway, it got in. In 1968 the Office of Civil Rights got a field staff and the enforcement in universities was from the Department of Health, Education, and Welfare. So that was something that was quite important and we knew about it.

Now, the other important figure in this was Herma Hill Kay. She's a professor in the law school and she knows a lot about discrimination law. She was very tuned into all this that was going on. She was on the policy committee of the academic senate in Berkeley. Now, Herma was the one that brought up to the policy committee that there ought to be a study. Maybe she brought some of Elizabeth Scott's figures in. She said, "We ought to do a study of the status of women on the Berkeley campus and see if we're conforming to federal law." The senate set up a committee that was chaired by Elizabeth Colson of anthropology. Anthropology, by the way, was pretty good. They had more women in anthropology than in most of the social science departments. And Elizabeth Colson and Betty Scott. The members of the committee, Herbert Blumer of sociology and Frank Newman of the law school, and I was on it, on that committee of the senate. Now, that was an amazing experience. I did some of the research and worked with them on setting up questionnaires and so on because of my background in doing questionnaires in social psychology.

One of the facts that I learned on that project was that no ladder faculty women had been hired in psychology since 1924. I remember sitting with the

old catalogues and going through the catalogues and looking at who was in each department in each year in the catalogues because there was some file in the library of catalogues. I was kind of amazed to see that there hadn't been a ladder woman on the faculty since one was added in '24.

You looked at the figures that Betty Scott put together from that study, and in department after department, the ratio of women decreased as the job title went up. It suggests that women weren't getting tenure, either, if they got in. So if you considered the PhD ratio for a field in the major universities as the availability pool for hiring, then you could compare. For instance, 21 percent of the doctorates in the best English departments in the country were women, but in our faculty we only had 4 percent women. Sociology and psychology, 24 percent of the doctorates were to women at that time and neither sociology or psychology had any women ladder faculty at that time. In zoology 29 percent of the PhDs were going to women and they had zero women faculty virtually. In both psychology and sociology no woman had been recruited to the faculty since 1923 or four. So it was pretty bad.

03-00:11:12

Farrell: I want to ask a couple of questions about the women's faculty group founding. So Natalie—

03-00:11:22

Ervin-Tripp: It was mostly lecturers.

03-00:11:22

Farrell: Mostly lecturers.

03-00:11:24

Ervin-Tripp: That's where most of the women on the faculty were.

03-00:11:25

Farrell: Okay. How did you get involved?

03-00:11:30

Ervin-Tripp: Well, I knew Natalie Davis. I don't know how I knew her. I think her brother-in-law was an anthropologist and I knew the anthropologists. My best friend was an anthropologist. So I don't know. People got to know each other somehow. [laughter]

03-00:11:52

Farrell: Did you also know Elizabeth Scott personally?

03-00:11:53

Ervin-Tripp: Oh, well, I didn't know her before all this stuff came out.

03-00:11:59

Farrell: Okay. What were some of the conversations in 1968 like in the women's faculty group? What were some of the issues that you were discussing then?

03-00:12:09

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, I mean, if you think about the things we had to bring up through the years, we got involved in things like maternity leave. Nepotism was one. I mean, the whole thing about whether two people could be hired from the same department. I remember one time, I think it was later, it was when I was commuting to Palo Alto, but I remember thinking about this. If you looked at couples who were both academics, it turns out the man was in the better place and the woman had to commute. The whole thing was really a mess. I remember when they hired the Lakoffs in the linguistics department. They got one position and they gave half to Robin and half to George. [laughter] It was really hard to deal with those issues. So there were a lot of things. Whatever people were concerned about.

03-00:13:20

Farrell:

Because around this time, too, you had children, as well. Do you remember what the maternity leave policy was then?

03-00:13:26

Ervin-Tripp:

I don't know that they had any maternity leave. I'm not sure. I think I took a semester off for one of my children. I had one, the first when I was on sabbatical leave. The second one I vaguely remember taking a semester off.

03-00:13:44

Farrell:

You didn't get paid during that period of time?

03-00:13:46

Ervin-Tripp:

I don't remember.

03-00:13:48

Farrell:

Was Laura Nader on the women's faculty group, as well?

03-00:13:53

Ervin-Tripp:

Yes. [laughter] All the people knew her. Yeah. There might be some non-activist people but my friends were—

03-00:14:10

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about when the Equal Pay Act was signed? Do you have a sense of what the reaction was like to that on campus?

03-00:14:26

Ervin-Tripp:

Oh, the Equal Pay Act?

03-00:14:33

Farrell:

Yeah, in '63.

03-00:14:38

Ervin-Tripp:

Was I here then? Yeah.

03-00:14:42

Farrell:

Yeah.

03-00:14:43

Ervin-Tripp:

Yeah. Yeah. See, that's one of the reasons why Herma set up this committee. That was really to find out what was happening on campus that was relevant to all this stuff. That report, that was something like seventy-two pages, that report. It was a huge report. Oh, one of the things we found was the departments that had large numbers of women faculty, like nutrition and design, that were mainly women, they were soon abolished. [laughter] and in every department there were more women undergraduates than graduate students and more women getting PhDs than were on the faculty. There was obvious attrition. This report, this seventy-two page report, had these tables showing all this. Scott's report was reprinted by the Congress in a volume called Discrimination Against Women. It was reprinted in 1971. So it got a lot of circulation.

I mean, this was happening all over the country. I have a lot of material from Michigan. We had a meeting at Cornell about it. There were things happening all over the country. So it was a major thing. And her report was used as a model for how to study this in other campuses. It was very important.

In 1973 she did two major reports for the Carnegie Commission that got to be very well known. One was a study of the correlation between publication and—what predicted salary. Well, it turned out, lo and behold, well, publications predicted salary. If you're a woman it didn't predict salary as well as it did for men. The same achievements led to significantly lower salaries for women than for men. These discrepancies increased as you went up the ladder. So that's a problem. In fact, the interesting fact is it's still true. That's really been startling to me to realize that. They did a study in my department recently. Statewide did some kind of salary equity study and for some reason, maybe somebody in the department thought there was something fishy, they did a study in our department, in the psychology department, and found that, lo and behold, men were getting paid more for women. Now they don't measure the number of publications. They do citation index or some kind of measure. But men were getting paid more than women at the same level. There have been a lot of studies like that around. Like there was one that I thought was kind of amusing somebody did about how you got tenure. It turned out if you're trying to get tenure it's a mistake to write articles with men because you get less credit for them. [laughter] The women who wrote articles with women or by themselves were more likely to get tenure than women who had a male co-author. It's still going on. Well, you see in the paper everyday something about Silicon Valley. Yeah, it was—

03-00:18:33

Farrell:

Did that—

03-00:18:35

Ervin-Tripp:

The result of this report, which I remember how exciting it was to talk about in the senate—I know people who were men in the psych department then and they don't know why that happened. It was happening everywhere. The

sociology department it was also true. They weren't different from anybody else. But anyway, the result of this was that the Berkeley Senate made a new standing committee on the status of women and then it was later changed to be the status of women and ethnic minorities. It was called the SWEM committee. They just changed the name this year and it's got a very complicated name which nobody will remember. It's called something like the Committee on Equity and Inclusion in Campus Climate. [laughter] It doesn't even have a memorable abbreviation the way SWEM did. I don't know who was thinking when they made that. Hannah Pitkin was the first chair of that. She was in political science. Then I was the next chair and I was the chair again in the eighties.

03-00:19:55

Farrell:

How did you become chair originally?

03-00:19:56

Ervin-Tripp:

There's a committee of the senate on personnel or something. I forgot. Committee on committees, it's called, and they are the ones that choose who will be on committees and who will be chair of committees. I think the fact that I had been on this report group made me appropriate for that. But that was very interesting to do.

03-00:20:26

Farrell:

What were some of the issues that you were working on while you were chair?

03-00:20:31

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, one of the things we did was we consulted with departments that had bad records about what they could do about it. I remember one of the things we did also was see that there were affirmative committees in every department that would do something about getting more women and minorities as graduate students and in the faculty. I think there were students on the ones that had to do with recruiting students. I think we thought about that a lot, about what we can do in different departments. And there were some departments that were sort of naughty departments [laughter] that I remember we called in and put them on the carpet about how come they didn't have any women faculty and so on.

03-00:21:19

Farrell:

What were some of the ways that you advised them on how they could improve?

03-00:21:25

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, there were a lot of committees. Like in psychology there was a committee on women and psychology. There were lots of things going on in these different fields. I was away for a year in '74-5 at the Center for Advanced Study. But when I was there I was spending a lot of time getting women to come to the center because they had very few women. In '83-85 I was chair again and at that time I was chair of the statewide committee on

affirmative action. We had called our committee the status of women because of that report but other campuses tended to call their committee affirmative action. We did a big salary equity study somewhere in there, too, beside trying to help people to get—well, one of the things we did about hiring is we persuaded departments that whenever they had to hire they should review the lecturers. There was a one-time review of all the lecturers, I think, to see if they would be appropriate to be on the ladder faculty. And, of course, that was related to whether they had a position open. You have some problems in tailoring the openings to the people you want to hire and so there was a lot of that going on. They were discussing the joint hiring of couples, the whole issue of part-time appointments. Some women wanted part-time appointments. I was in some women's discussion group of sociology, I remember. Anyway, there are some women who have always been half time and wanted to be half time.

03-00:23:53

Farrell:

Do you have a sense of why they wanted to be part-time?

03-00:23:58

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, they wanted to have families and they thought that it was easier to be half time.

03-00:24:02

Farrell:

What was the feeling of—

03-00:24:04

Ervin-Tripp:

But they didn't have half-time positions on the ladder, then. They started having them.

03-00:24:09

Farrell:

What was the feeling on campus about hiring couples?

03-00:24:14

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, that was a big problem because they thought couples would skew the vote when it was a tenure vote and so on. But all you had to do was get the partner not to vote. [laughter] It's sort of funny when you think about it because it's so simple. I didn't have a problem because my husband was in a different department. Of course, the Lakoffs, and there were probably other couples in the same department.

We set up family leave and we had part-time appointments and we had an ombudswoman as an appeal channel and so on. Well, I was going to say something about these women's groups on campus.

03-00:25:05

Farrell:

Yeah. Absolutely.

03-00:25:05

Ervin-Tripp:

The women's faculty group met several times a month in the big din—there's a big separate sort of dining room at the women's faculty club and they used

to meet several times a month there. I remember people would bring up their problems and we would give them advice and so on. We had people come and give reports about what they were working on. It was quite a varied thing. But we would meet several times a month and we alternated the day of the week we would meet so that it would adapt to people's schedules. This was a group that did a lot of representing of women on campus. For instance, they wrote a letter to the—in my files I have a lot of this correspondence. The women's faculty group wrote a letter to Chancellor Heyman when he was appointing a faculty assistant on women. We wrote a letter about discrimination on the privilege and tenure committee. We did a lot of work on particular tenure cases. There were some battles in the law school over Eleanor Swift's case and in the math department over Jenny Harrison's case and we got involved in that. Also, we testified in the state legislature. I did testimony in the state legislature. We did a lot of writing to legislators who were interested in these topics, like Mervyn Mymally and Yvonne Braithwaite were at that time the main people who were working on issues of discrimination, various kinds.

03-00:26:55

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit more about the Eleanor Swift case and the Jenny Harrison case?

03-00:27:00

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, ha-ha, the Jenny Harrison case was interesting. Jenny, she was in the math department. She had a lawsuit about it. I remember we had a support committee and we used to meet a lot on that. One of the things that came up was that the letter that the chair wrote soliciting—when you write letters to colleagues in other institutions soliciting evaluations, “Should this person get tenure?” the chair wrote a really different kind of letter than he wrote for the men. In her letter he asked whether she was likely to become a world famous mathematician. He set the goal higher than he did for male candidates. I remember seeing that. I vaguely remember that I wrote a letter to the *Chronicle of Higher Education* about that and how one had to be careful about these letters, that they weren't discriminatory. But it's kind of amazing. She did win her lawsuit. There was a support committee. There was a statewide support committee. I don't remember the particulars of Eleanor Swift's case as well because I wasn't on that committee so much.

03-00:28:46

Farrell:

What were the functions of the support committees?

03-00:28:51

Ervin-Tripp:

Of course, in lawsuits what can you do? In her case, I mean, I'm a psycholinguist so I could say something about those letters. But I think we provided moral support. I don't know whether we had to provide other support. We also were interested in seeing what the legislative implications were because we were interested in testifying in Sacramento about laws.

03-00:29:34

Farrell: Yeah. When you would testify what was that like or what were you testifying about?

03-00:29:39

Ervin-Tripp: Well, we were testifying about discrimination. I remember testifying about women in textbooks. [laughter] That was interesting. Because women, how they were represented in textbooks, we were interested in. I remember testifying in Sacramento when they removed affirmative action from—there was some point more recently when they removed affirmative action for students. You remember the right wing wanted to do that and I remember testifying about that.

03-00:30:15

Farrell: In support or against the removal of affirmative action for students?

03-00:30:20

Ervin-Tripp: What?

03-00:30:22

Farrell: What was your position on what you were testifying for?

03-00:30:27

Ervin-Tripp: Well, I was against removing it. It's still a problem. We had other things going on, like things about maternity leave and so on. Governor Reagan was the governor then. He vetoed childcare centers on campus.

03-00:30:50

Farrell: Yeah. What was the reaction like to that?

03-00:30:52

Ervin-Tripp: We had childcare centers for students, I remember, graduate students. The students had problems if they had families. How could they go to class? So there was some argument about that. Typical Reagan.

03-00:31:13

Farrell: There was also the League of Academic Women.

03-00:31:14

Ervin-Tripp: Braithwaite. Braithwaite was involved in that. She was interested in the sex ratio of graduate students and things that would help them, like having campus childcare and so on. Braithwaite.

03-00:31:25

Farrell: Okay. Can you tell me a little bit about the League of Academic Women?

03-00:31:33

Ervin-Tripp: You see, that was a contrasting group. The League of Academic Women included students and it was specifically activists. The women's faculty group would write letters to the chancellor and so on and they would sort of work within the system. But the League of Academic Women was specifically

intended to be political. The students were mainly from political science and sociology. I noticed there weren't any psychology students. They were not, unlike me, believers in political action. The League of Academic Women did political stuff. We did testify and we wrote people a lot and so on. And one of the things we did, we collaborated with other groups. For instance, AFSCME. I remember that was one of the things that was very surprising to me, was that they had discrimination in dormitory workers. I don't know how we became aware of that. But women dormitory workers are paid less because they were expected not to be able to lift heavy things. So they were paid less. I remember we asked whether they had a test for lifting abilities, because some men can't lift things. [laughter]

03-00:33:02

Farrell:

What was the reaction to that?

03-00:33:05

Ervin-Tripp:

It was interesting. We brought in a motion to the academic senate, that there shouldn't be discrimination in the payment to dormitory workers. [laughter] I don't remember what happened about that. We had a committee actually. I remember talking about that with some senate committee that I was involved with. But one of the things that was interesting about that period was that we were doing a lot of meeting with other groups, like with AFSCME. I remember going to meetings in Stephens Hall with minority organizations. That was important because SWEM was supposed to be dealing with both women and minority issues. The other women's group was a statewide group we had called WAGE and that grew out of some of these court cases. But we had meetings. I sometimes went to meetings on other campuses. There was a lot going on.

03-00:34:17

Farrell:

What were those meetings like on other campuses?

03-00:34:19

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, they had the same problems we had. We were trying to compare notes about what you could do.

03-00:34:34

Farrell:

Were there any things that you thought were successful that you used? Do you remember?

03-00:34:31

Ervin-Tripp:

No, I don't particularly remember the details of that. No. No. You have to remember that there was a lot happening nationally around this time. Like, for instance, NOW was founded in 1966 and a group that I had a lot to do with was called the Women's Equity Action League. Bernice Sandler, I corresponded with her a lot. She was involved in that. They had a newsletter and their job was to pressure the government agencies about enforcement of the anti-discrimination laws. For instance, in 1970 WEAL and NOW got together to file complaints against 150 educational institutions, that was in

1970, as violating the Equal Pay Act and the non-discrimination act that had been put in in the sixties.

Congress, in 1972, started paying more attention to higher education and they specifically added Title IX, that you weren't supposed to discriminate in higher education. Now, when you talk about Title IX they usually think about sports. I was on this committee about sports, which is sort of funny because I didn't know anything about sports. But those were the education amendments. The review cases were in that office in HEW and one of my vivid memories is somebody coming out from that office and meeting at somebody's house from political science. We met at her house and talked about what was happening here.

Because for quite a long time there was a lot of back and forth because the women's groups and the minority groups didn't think that the affirmative action program of the campus was strong enough and so there was a lot of dispute back and forth. The Office of Civil Rights would send it back and say, "You got to fix this or that." There was a lot of going back and forth over those years. So LAW filed a civil rights complaint with the office of civil rights in 1970. They were the ones that were supposed to enforce it with educational institutions. That was because educational institutions were federal contractors. We had lots of federal contracts. In fact, I remember when I used to apply for research grants. That's a federal contract. All the researchers on campus had federal contracts. In the nineteenth century apparently a lot of researchers got their money from the state but by this time, the twentieth century, it was in the federal money.

03-00:38:00

Farrell:

That's actually a question I have, about when you're applying for grants did you ever see any differences in your success in getting grants based on gender?

03-00:38:12

Ervin-Tripp:

Oh, that's interesting. I never thought about that.

03-00:38:17

Farrell:

Yeah, the League of Academic Women made me think about that.

03-00:38:22

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, I always got the grants I applied for so I never felt I had a problem.

03-00:38:27

Farrell:

You don't have any memory of that coming up at any of the meetings?

03-00:38:30

Ervin-Tripp:

No.

03-00:38:32

Farrell:

Okay.

03-00:38:36

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, I'll tell you, there was an issue early. When I first applied for a grant on this campus I got Jones, Professor Jones in our department to be co-author because unless you had a particular kind of position on the faculty you couldn't apply for a grant. So that was a problem. My very first grant I had to get a co-PI but he was irrelevant really. He was appropriate because he studied children but that was in that first grant I did on child language. Later on I got grants through the Center for Human and Learning. But I remember that was one of the problems. Like lecturers couldn't apply for grants. That was one of the difficulties that we were trying to deal with who was capable of applying for the grant. Because that's pretty important in your academic career if you're in a field where you have funded research.

03-00:40:07

Farrell:

Absolutely. Yeah. Who are some of your male colleagues that were supportive?

03-00:40:13

Ervin-Tripp:

I had supportive male colleagues. Of course, my psycholinguistic colleague in psychology, Dan Slobin, was very supportive. And John Gumperz. He was the one that suggested I get a job in speech. All those guys, all those linguists and anthropologists I knew were supportive.

03-00:40:46

Farrell:

Were there any colleagues that you had that were unsupportive?

03-00:40:50

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, of course, I never have found out what was going on behind the scenes in psychology. There's still some people surviving that era and I've tried to find out. I think there was some men in the psychology department that thought women were a problem because of whatever, they would be distracted by families or whatever. Some people mentioned some names of the senior psychologist. I had no direct experience with any of that.

They had filed this complaint in 1970 and the contract compliance office came on campus in the spring of '71. That was a pretty exciting time. They wanted to look at personnel files and the university didn't want to give it to them because they were confidential. There was a big fight about that. So there was a lot of back and forth in that period between the federal agencies and so on. In late 1973 there was a threat that if the university didn't cooperate more there would be delay in giving contracts. [laughter] That's called the contract compliance office. So it was a fight.

Now, people who signed up on these complaints, like the League of Academic Women and so on, must have been known to the administration because I got scolded because I was associated with everything. [laughter] I was called on the carpet. Martin Trow was the head of the policy committee in the senate and he scolded me for having signed a complaint. [laughter] Well, I gave a

talk once called “The Inside Track and the Outside Track” and what that was about was some people like Betty Scott were very scrupulous about sticking to the senate as a way of getting things done and I was too political for that. I couldn’t stick to the senate. I testified in Sacramento and signed complaints and did things like that. Anyway, what I told this policy committee, when Trow called me on the carpet, I said, “In the Middle Ages when peasants had to complain they went over the nobles to the king so that’s why I complained to the government, because the senate wasn’t solving the problem.” [laughter]

03-00:43:48

Farrell:

Do you remember how he took that?

03-00:43:50

Ervin-Tripp:

I don’t remember how they took that. So anyway, the federal investigators came on campus and there was a preliminary affirmative action program that got set up. Now, I remember meeting with those investigators. We set up a preliminary affirmative action program in the spring of 1971. It started with non-academic positions. Those were included, too. Affirmative action affected all the jobs on campus. There were timetables and so on for meeting. The usual problem with establishing availability pools and looking at the correspondence between availability pools and what you achieved. Of course, in the academic world that was the PhD pool. So a coordinator of affirmative action was appointed in the following spring and they set up a system of monitoring. That was a big fight. I have a whole lot of correspondence about that in that period. Each department got information about the availability pool and different age cohorts. So might or might not want to hire a very aged PhD. So they were trying to get a rough approximation of what they should find if they did a good job of searching and that that was the availability pools. Some of those charts in Betty Scott’s report were like that. Mentioned those figures on the PhDs in English in major universities and so on. That’s availability pool if you’re looking for an assistant professor.

The administration appointed an academic assistant for affirmative action and an academic assistant for the status of women and they both reported to the vice chancellor. There was a period when we had two people in the administration working on these issues.

03-00:46:14

Farrell:

What changed when you had two people working on them?

03-00:46:21

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, I think they probably got the departments to be a little more active about it all. Wouldn’t you think? I think if you have somebody in the administration doing it, they would feel there was a fire behind them.

03-00:46:41

Farrell:

Did you feel like having a couple people with that role was effective?

03-00:46:46

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, part of their job was to help departments figure out how to find people and do effective searching and so on. I remember talking a lot with the chancellor's assistant on the status of women. Somewhere in that time we got the idea of doing the reviews of all the lecturers and so on. I don't remember if that was after that or before it. The more people you have thinking about a problem the more solutions you come up with.

The most important change probably about hiring was open advertising. It's hard to believe but they didn't advertise jobs. There was no public advertising of positions in the old days before 1970. It was considered inappropriate to apply for a job. I can't remember how I came as a visitor, whether somebody wrote them to recommend me or what. You weren't supposed to apply for a job. It was sort of like an arranged marriage. For instance, one of the reasons that I knew about this was that Dan Slobin told me how he had been hired. The chair of psychology called, I guess it was probably Roger Brown in the Harvard social relations department and said, "Have you got any good men?" This sounds funny. Dan got hired without giving a job talk and before he'd even chosen a thesis topic. Isn't that amazing? [laughter] So he was promised this job. He did a fast thesis basically so he could come. [laughter]

03-00:48:57

Farrell:

Quite different from now.

03-00:48:58

Ervin-Tripp:

That's, of course, why they weren't hiring lecturers, because they were doing it that way. What did they call those people who do arranged marriages? This is sort of like that. One of the things I found in my files was a huge amount of correspondence about the university affirmative action plan between '71 and '73. There was lots of detailed criticism. The women's groups were sending in criticisms and there was lots of back and forth about what should be in it and what sort of person should be hired and things like that. By 1974 they had set up goals and timetables by department. Of course, they couldn't solve it all immediately so there were timetables about how long it was going to take to solve it. I was having a lot of correspondence about it in October of 1974. I sent HEW three-and-a-half pages of detailed criticisms of the UC plan just to help them know how to complain about it back. [laughter]

03-00:50:28

Farrell:

Do you remember what some of those criticisms were?

03-00:50:30

Ervin-Tripp:

No. I could find it if I went in my files and looked. I didn't do that.

03-00:50:38

Farrell:

Did they take any of your comments and implement them?

03-00:50:41

Ervin-Tripp:

[laughter] Well, we had a lot of back and forth correspondence with HEW, with the contract compliance people. I assume this was happening on all the campuses, that the aggrieved parties were in correspondence with the government. That's why you have that kind of law, so that aggrieved parties can complain. There was a lot happening during that time. For instance, I thought it was kind of funny. I got put on the Title IX committee in 1972 to '74 and that was the one—people always think of Title IX as being the sports part of it. That was a general inclusion of women in non-discrimination in educational institutions. I think people noticed it most because of the sports. I guess it affected my personal life. My daughter, she was born in '66, and she was applying for some summer sports program at Strawberry Canyon and they gave a list of all the different sports she could engage in and she says, "Oh." She'd like to do wrestling. I put her name down for wrestling. I didn't read to her the fact that a lot of these sports, some were for boys and some were for girls and wrestling was only for boys and I didn't tell her. So she put her name in for wrestling. [laughter] Then I was able to complain to the person who organized this program that they weren't allowing for girls possible taste for wrestling. That was the one. I remember bringing this up when I was on this Title IX committee and there were some guys from—they were obviously people from the sports departments there. They said, "Preadolescent girls are growing faster and they're very strong so there's absolutely no reason to keep girls out of wrestling when they're preadolescent." [laughter]

03-00:53:04

Farrell:

That's funny.

03-00:53:07

Ervin-Tripp:

I thought that was so funny. But the thing that was fascinating about that committee was, for example, in intercollegiate sports, it turned out the males in intercollegiate sports, so there was some fancy way they got hotel rooms or something. The women who were in intercollegiate sports had to stay with families. The men, there was some kind of fancy dinners they got to keep them well stoked. There was a lot of money put in. They had paid coaches and the women had volunteer coaches from the physical education staff. It was just crazy how different it was. It was really an eye-opener. Dymally brought a bill into the state legislature requiring non-discrimination in the athletic programs. See, we were in touch with those people in the state legislature. [laughter] Dymally was very good.

Now, there were some lawsuits that occurred in this time period, too. The League of Academic Women brought a class action lawsuit in 1972 on behalf of twelve women. I think there was a law firm in San Francisco, whose name I can't remember right now, but there was one that was especially interested in this kind of stuff. And they got involved. It's kind of risky for an academic woman to do that because if they lose, why, it sort of goes down on their record they're a troublemaker and so on. Oh, I mentioned that Eleanor Swift

and Jenny Harrison got involved in these lawsuits. And the League of Academic Women had its own affirmative action plan that they communicated to the government.

Now, this all came up in court, this lack of an affirmative action plan. Judge Renfrew, who was the US court district judge, gave UC 120 days to have a program. That was March of 1972. So that was a time when there was a lot of pressure on the university about it. The *Chronicle* had an article saying that the judge delayed his ruling until June when the HEW report had been finished. Oh, my. There was a lot going on.

One of the things that was special about this period was that we got to work with different sectors of the university. That senate committee that investigated the dorm workers was one example. That committee discovered that there was lots of sex discrimination in the custodial worker categories. We talked with the unions a lot and worked with the unions and that was interesting to do. The women centers, T-9, had lots of talks and lots of things going on and they had students and staff and faculty come. We had solidarity across categories I think a lot more than we have now. I thought it was a really interesting period. It was also a time when they were setting up women's studies. They had a women's studies program in 1970 and it became a department in '91.

03-00:57:29

Farrell:

Did you play a role in setting that up?

03-00:57:33

Ervin-Tripp:

I don't remember whether I did. There was a committee that was involved in that. There was some opposition to it. When they finally set it up the people in it had shared appointments with other departments. I don't know. Maybe they didn't trust Women's Studies to hire the right people or do promotions correctly or what the idea was, why they had to have shared appointments. For instance, I think Barrie Thorne was in sociology and she was also in Women's Studies. There were a lot of examples of that.

I taught a course once in women's studies. That was kind of interesting. The women's studies majors, some of them were pretty radical. I had a course on social science methods and one of the women wrote a term paper. I always had people do studies in my courses and give a report on it. One did a report on sadomasochism. She was a woman who had metal all over her. [laughter] Anyway, it was an interesting experience. But I only taught in there once so it was my only experience.

The other thing we did was we did a lot of work with minority organizations. The senate changed its name very soon from—I think it was after a year it changed from the Status of Women to the Status of Women and Ethnic Minorities. We felt strongly about that because we didn't want any sort of

division and competition about it. We met regularly. There were a lot of minority organizations. Every minority had its own organization. I used to go to these meetings in Stephens Hall to coordinate plans with them. It was an interesting period because just as women's studies was started there was an ethnic studies program that started in 1969. Because of the stuff that was happening in the South there were protests. People marching around all the time. When they tried set up ethnic studies I remember that—I had an office in Dwinelle, in the speech department and there were people marching through Dwinelle. There was a third world liberation front and lots of things were happening then. Black studies was started in 1970. So it was sort of on the same time schedule as the women's studies program was happening.

Now, you have to take into account what the political scene was in Berkeley around that time. There were lots of protests going on in Berkeley in the early seventies. There was a People's Park Protest about the use of land. I don't know what's being done with that land now. What's on People's Park now?

03-01:01:00

Farrell:

They are still trying to figure it out. It's kind of a thing that has never really been resolved.

03-01:01:08

Ervin-Tripp:

Oh, that's so amusing.

03-01:01:10

Farrell:

Yeah, there have been several plans proposed but nothing has really happened.

03-01:01:14

Ervin-Tripp:

My goodness, after all these years. Now, in the seventies the governor was Governor Reagan and he said Berkeley was a haven for communist sympathizers, protestors, and sex deviants. [laughter] Because of all these protests that were going on he called out the National Guard in April of 1970 and he tear-gassed the campus. Now, I remember this very distinctly because I was pregnant that year and I came to campus and I remember I was going to my office. My office was in Dwinelle. I remember being stopped by a national guard guy. He had a gun with a bayonet on the end and he pointed the bayonet at my pregnant belly, which is a rather unforgettable experience. I asked him if it was okay for me to go to my office. [laughter] It was just amazing.

Now, this was a time when I was testifying in Sacramento and the state senate Education Committee had hearings on discrimination and so I testified in that April. I remember going to Sacramento when I was pregnant. There were a lot of women students who went up with me. I remember that. We talked to Yvonne Braithwaite and Mervyn Dymally and so on. Well, this stuff hasn't finished. It still goes on.

03-01:03:11

Farrell: With the political scene in Berkeley do you remember if women's rights were part of the free speech movement at all?

03-01:03:24

Ervin-Tripp: Well, it's interesting because there was all that demonstrating about minorities and so on. That march through Dwinelle Hall. Huh.

03-01:03:42

Farrell: Were you involved with the free speech movement at all?

03-01:03:48

Ervin-Tripp: I can't remember. It was mainly students. I remember there were times when we had strikes on campus, when we stopped teaching. I remember teaching in fraternity houses or something because I didn't want the students who wanted to be in class not to be able to. But we could demonstrate by not going to the regular classrooms. All these problems still persist. For instance, we still have discrepancies in pay. We certainly have problems about hiring. I think one of the best ways to test that is, one of the ways they do, is they create vitaes that look female or look male or look minority and look non-minority and then they get different groups to evaluate these vitaes. It turns out that the women evaluate men's vitaes better than women's vitaes. This is what Claude Steele found out, that is called stereotype threat. If you give a math test to girls and tell them that women do badly on math they all do worse. People in minority groups have the same beliefs about minorities that non-minority people do. So you get this kind of discrimination going on and on. It's really a problem. As I said, we found out in our department, we couldn't figure out why, but the men were getting paid more than women at the same level of skill. It's a big problem. I don't know if I mentioned that study about coauthoring.

03-01:05:58

Farrell: You did.

03-01:05:58

Ervin-Tripp: I did. I thought that was so funny.

03-01:06:00

Farrell: So all this work that you were doing in the late sixties and throughout the seventies. Do you have a sense that that changed things in the eighties and nineties?

03-01:06:11

Ervin-Tripp: Oh, yeah. Certainly the university looks different now than it did then. I haven't seen the figures about the availability pools and that stuff. We know there's still a problem about pay. Whether the hiring rates correspond to availability pools I don't know. And, of course, the whole thing about education and minority education is a really complicated issue because it has to do with the money problems. Do you know what it used to cost to go here? Fifty-three dollars a semester. It's scandalous. Well, that's partly Prop

Thirteen in the state but it's a problem all over the country because the tax system has gone downhill.

03-01:07:11

Farrell: So a lot of these issues are structural. Did you see the essence of that structure change at all over time? Did you see the way in which the system was set up become different or evolve?

03-01:07:37

Ervin-Tripp: They still do. That's what Claude Steele was doing. Wasn't he vice chancellor for inclusion? I think there must be more attention to these issues because they put it into the main structure of the university. It's sort of startling if you think the president of the university's a woman.

03-01:08:09

Farrell: That's true. Yeah, that's true.

03-01:08:12

Ervin-Tripp: They haven't solved the problem of sexual harassment but that's a toughie. But I think co-ed dorms are a mistake.

03-01:08:22

Farrell: Actually, on that note, do you remember a bit issue of sexual—

03-01:08:26

Ervin-Tripp: I wrote a letter about that, by the way.

03-01:08:28

Farrell: Co-ed dorms?

03-01:08:29

Ervin-Tripp: We had a big splashy case that a lot of women faculty got involved in when there was a bunch of drunk football players assaulted—this was way back. They assaulted somebody. I wrote a letter about all this that got published in the *Los Angeles Time* and I ran into it in my files. But it's just a problem that persists.

03-01:09:06

Farrell: Well, do you remember what the letter was about?

03-01:09:08

Ervin-Tripp: You still hear this about the context of sports, that they are much too tolerant. They think it's the privilege of somebody who's a good football player.

03-01:09:29

Farrell: Do you remember any issues with sexual harassment that would come up then? Was that part of the conversation?

03-01:09:37

Ervin-Tripp: Oh, yeah. Yeah. When I was ombudsman I got some cases. There was a lot of discussion about procedures. It's still a problem. If you look at what's been

happening here in the last year. Because of tenure it's very hard. I don't know about football players. That's another kind of protection. But the problem with the dean. If you're high up in any institution you're protected. And, of course, we have tenure protections and the procedural protections for getting people punished who have tenure is a problem.

03-01:10:30

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit more about your time as ombudsman? And, actually, can you define the roles of an ombudsman? I feel like that's a term that people hear all the time but aren't quite familiar with what that actually is.

03-01:10:46

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, apparently it was a term that was developed in Sweden or someplace like that for having a place where a citizen could complain about the government. It's a sort of a sideways way to get at power. I found it interesting to do because you did find out something about how the place was organized. I can't think of any particular major things that came out of that. We had faculty ombudsmen then. I'm not sure they do now. They'd have staff ombudsmen. I can't tell from the description on the web whether this is faculty or staff or what.

03-01:11:33

Farrell:

I think it's staff. It's a staff position.

03-01:11:36

Ervin-Tripp:

Yeah. They thought it was expensive having a faculty ombudsman because they had to pay the salary of a faculty member. The thing that was interesting about it, though, was that you found out a lot about what was going on. There were some amusing things I found out. I had one client who hated his major and so he was flunking everything he could in his major because his family made him take it. This was an Asian student. I had student assistants and the Asian student assistant told me that Asian families choose the major for students. That's why when you go to concerts here and there are these marvelous Asian musicians, it turns out they're not majoring in music, because they want them to get a job that'll pay a lot. [laughter] Maybe they're trying to flunk computer science. I got a lot of kind of odd bits of knowledge out of my job as ombudsman. [laughter]

03-01:12:49

Farrell:

Do you remember how long you were ombudsman for?

03-01:12:53

Ervin-Tripp:

I don't think those jobs are very long. You had to learn some ropes because you had to learn if it was this or that problem and this is where you'd go. So it was kind of an interesting way to find out. It was like being an investigative reporter. You found out how the system worked. But it was mainly for students. The idea was that students who had grievances had someplace to go with their grievance who was not somebody with power over them.

03-01:13:24

Farrell:

In 1995 you gave a talk called “Women Activists of the Seventies: Multiple Routes to Affirmative Action.” Can you tell me a little bit about how that talk was put together?

03-01:13:39

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, that was sponsored by the Center for Higher Education and they had a conference on the history of women in the university. Something went haywire. They never published the papers and I thought they were going to but they never did. This paper was kind of sitting around. That was in '95.

03-01:14:02

Farrell:

Can you tell me a little bit about what it was—

03-01:14:04

Ervin-Tripp:

It was an opportunity for me to write up a little bit of this history and so it's mainly what I've been talking about today. The way I saw it, there were these different routes to get change and one of them was the political route and one of them was the route through the powers that be in the senate and administration. I think I mentioned that Betty Scott worked through the administration and I did both and got scolded for it. [laughter]

03-01:14:46

Farrell:

What was it like to reflect while you were putting together this talk?

03-01:15:03

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, let's see. I'm trying to remember whether I had already started sorting out my files and was running into all these records. Bringing in feds.

03-01:15:30

Farrell:

When you gave the talk what was the reaction of the crowd like?

03-01:15:36

Ervin-Tripp:

Oh, this was a meeting on women in the university. I think it was sponsored by the Center for Higher Education as a matter of fact. They tended to sponsor a lot of things. There were a lot of women in the audience and so they were interested. It's too bad I didn't do something about publishing it. It's too bad.

03-01:16:03

Farrell:

So you're often cited as somebody who made—because you were involved with so much that you were one of the people who really helped put equity at the forefront of the administrative agenda. Do you have a sense of how you've influenced women who have come after you in being active for themselves?

03-01:16:25

Ervin-Tripp:

One of the things that's happening that's interesting is Mary Ann Mason, she had an administrative position with graduate students in the graduate division at one point. Her husband taught at San Francisco campus. She got interested in what's the relation between being a mother and what it does to your career at various stages. She's still talking about that. She's published a book on it

recently and she's looked at the—the funny part of it was it helps you if you're a father, it damages you if you're a mother to have children. Yeah.

03-01:17:32

Farrell: You were a working mother and you were active in all these issues and you brought your kids to some of the protests. Do you have a sense of how that influenced them?

03-01:17:47

Ervin-Tripp: Oh. Well, the boys are both married to professional women. And, of course, I think it's generally true now that men take more of a role in childcare than they used to. So that's good.

03-01:18:13

Farrell: Do you find that both of your kids are politically engaged at all?

03-01:18:19

Ervin-Tripp: Oh. I have a picture of my son with his baby on his back marching in an AFCSME demonstration or something like that. [laughter] That's just opposite my desk.

03-01:18:41

Farrell: In more of a reflective sense, what was it like to do this equity work over the years? Did you have a sense that you were doing important work and that you were making changes?

03-01:18:59

Ervin-Tripp: Oh, yes. It's very gratifying because when you see changes and you've had a part in bringing it about it makes you feel good. Yeah. So that's what's been so upsetting to discover that it's still a problem. It's interesting. I don't know what to do about that.

03-01:19:17

Farrell: Oh, actually, can you tell me a little bit more about your retirement, so what you've been up to since you've retired?

03-01:19:27

Ervin-Tripp: Well, the main thing I've been trying to do is to write all this stuff up. I found in various office moves that I had four or five file drawers of material on this. I turned most of my professional papers in to the Bancroft storage. But in the course of going through all this stuff I kept running into all these letters about women and the political stuff scattered through all this. So I put it all together and I've been trying to organize it and hoping to write it up. Your memory gets bad as you get older so it's kind of hard to do. I should have done it earlier.

03-01:20:30

Farrell: Can you tell me about your involvement with campus, how that's continued since you've retired?

03-01:20:39

Ervin-Tripp:

The psychology department has a women's group. The women faculty have meetings and I have come to some of those. I think it's good. There was some reason why they felt that they were having special problems and so they organized their own group and they had their own social media and so on. I've been to some of those. But I also come to professional talks and I come to lots of cultural events on the campus. It's wonderful living near campus because we have these good concerts and things of that sort. I come to campus quite a lot.

03-01:21:31

Farrell:

Have you kept in touch with your colleagues since you've retired?

03-01:21:36

Ervin-Tripp:

[Dan] Slobin particularly. A few of the others I see sometimes. But my husband's been ill so my social life has kind of dwindled. When I first came to campus it was interesting. There was a lot of social life among the faculty. The chancellor's wife had a party for wives of professors. It's all changed now, of course, because there are more professional women. The division of labor isn't the same as when I first came to campus. You don't see this kind of socializing as much as you did.

03-01:22:36

Farrell:

In terms of sociolinguistics can you tell me about where you hope the field will go in the coming years? Or maybe avenues that you feel like should be explored?

03-01:23:00

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, I was once president of the International Pragmatics Association. I used to go to those meetings but I can't get away now because of my husband. It's very interesting because what people do in that field is look at differences. It's sort of anthropological, in a way. We have to look at differences between how language is deployed in different societies and have different cultural beliefs and so on. I got into that partly from looking at children. But also there are cultural differences between adults that we need to know more about. You think about this issue of non-discrimination between ethnic groups. Well, there are cultural differences in groups. There's all kinds of interesting differences that we ought to know about. It's like learning different languages. So I know that will keep going on.

03-01:24:28

Farrell:

What has your work here at Berkeley meant to you, both academic and equity?

03-01:24:41

Ervin-Tripp:

Well, I have a lot of curiosity. My work's allowed me to follow my curiosities. It's interesting because depending on what field you're in—I suppose if you were an artist you'd say you were developing your artistic

skills and so on. I don't know. I guess when you're doing research there has to be some skills you develop about how to find things out.

03-01:25:22

Farrell: Is there anything else that you want to add? It's okay if there's nothing else. I just wanted to give you—

03-01:25:35

Ervin-Tripp: No, I don't have any more. I've said enough. [laughter]

03-01:25:37

Farrell: Okay. Well, thank you very much.

End of interview.