Introduction to *The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics*

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The Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics is a reference work encompassing the range of research on language-related problems that arise in the real-world contexts where languages are learned and used. Because of the wide range of issues that applied linguists work on, a precise definition of the field is difficult to articulate. In his 2007 *Introduction to Applied Linguistics*, Davies points out that one might be tempted to conclude that "because language is everywhere, applied linguistics is the science of everything," but such a conclusion would be neither correct nor useful (Davies, 2007, p. 2). If applied linguistics is not the science of everything, how is it defined?

Simpson, the editor of *The Routledge Handbook of Applied Linguistics*, defines applied linguistics as "the academic field which connects knowledge about language to decision-making in the real world . . . In this sense applied linguistics mediates between theory and practice" (Simpson, 2011, p. 1). In *The Oxford Handbook of Applied Linguistics*, in place of a definition, Kaplan indicates that "Applied linguistics is a difficult notion to define." He goes on to say that the *Handbook* does not "provide a definitive definition of the field," and then explains the historical origin of the field through the efforts of language teachers wanting to distance themselves from their colleagues teaching literature (Kaplan, 2010, p. vi). These two very recent books provide a wealth of examples of work in applied linguistics, which help to demonstrate the difficulty the editors faced in constructing a usefully precise and inclusively accurate definition of the field.

Davies and Elder, editors of *The Handbook of Applied Linguistics* published by Blackwell, present a definition in concrete terms through multiple examples of the types of problems that applied linguists work on:

> Applied linguistics is often said to be concerned with solving or at least ameliorating social problems involving language. The problems applied linguistics concerns itself with are likely to be: How can we teach languages better? How can we improve the training of translators and interpreters? How can we write a valid language examination? How can we evaluate a school bilingual program? How can we determine the literacy levels of a whole population? How can we helpfully discuss the language of a text? What advice can we offer a Ministry of Education on a proposal to introduce a new medium of instruction? How can we compare the acquisition of a European and an Asian language? What advice should we give a defense lawyer on the authenticity of a police transcript of an interview with a suspect? (Davies & Elder, 2004, p. 1)

These examples of questions that applied linguists address begin to rein in the "theory of everything." In the questions one can see applied linguistics in terms of the areas of research it can encompass. At the same time, however, such questions because of their origin in everyday social practices may not reflect the academic and scholarly dimension of applied linguistics. One can easily find instances where someone offers an improvement for foreign-language teaching, translator training, language-test development, and so forth, having no connection whatsoever to applied linguistics. The definition of applied linguistics then needs

to extend beyond the questions posed because, as Bygate pointed out, "apparently simple questions conceal matters of complexity and sensitivity, which on closer scrutiny raise more general issues, which also characterize the broader field of applied linguistics" (Bygate, 2004, p. 6). Bygate identified five main issues in the broader field including (a) evaluating the appropriateness of the granularity and perspective researchers use to specify a problem under investigation, (b) establishing trustworthiness of data interpretation, (c) creating an appropriate degree of collaboration between researcher and participants, (d) communicating research results to participants in a manner that allows for sufficient follow up, and (e) understanding the best relationship of theory and data collection and interpretation.

These issues underlie the discussion of language-related problems that readers find in the *Encyclopedia*. However, such issues stated generally can be said to underlie any social science more generally. To characterize applied linguistics, one needs to include explicitly the linguistic dimension of the field. The authors of *Mapping Applied Linguistics* accomplish this by defining applied linguistics as a mode of inquiry about language-related problems requiring consideration of "both the social and cognitive nature of language" (Hall, Smith, & Wicaksono, 2011, p. 19). Other ingredients of mode of inquiry are taking into account the needs of clients such as learners, test-score users, and businesses, being responsive to contextual factors affecting research, and engaging in collaboration in the design and evaluation of findings and recommendations (Hall, Smith, & Wicaksono, 2011, p. 19). In short, Hall, Smith, and Wicaksono see applied linguistics as a mode of inquiry engaged with real people and issues arising in a political environment where academic perspectives and research alone may or may not be important in conceptualizing problems and finding solutions. In such an environment, problem solvers must genuinely engage with local knowledge and practice in seeking solutions.

Defining the Boundaries

A reference on applied linguistics needs to contain entries explicating the domains of language problems addressed by applied linguists, detailing the nature of the complexity and sensitivity underlying the research, while portraying applied linguistics as a mode of inquiry that engages with the people and issues connected to real-world problems. Spanning the problems, it needs to cover the complexity of approaches to the study of language, language use, and language learning that applied linguists take. The search for common ground as a basis for categories and boundaries could be undertaken in a number of different ways, but for the *Encyclopedia*, two basic principles outlined by S. Pit Corder in the early 1970s provided useful guidance.

One principle addresses the boundary question. In *Introducing Applied Linguistics*, S. Pit Corder underscored the delicate analysis entailed in selecting the contents. One needs to decide between, on the one hand, the domains of inquiry that could logically be included within the study of language-related problems and, on the other, the reality of the principal topics that appear at gatherings where applied linguists meet, the areas studied by students who obtain degrees in applied linguistics, and the meaning that the term has "in common usage," as Corder put it (1973, p. 7).

The design of the *Encyclopedia* followed the same principle, but many years hence, the outcome in terms of selection of topics is dramatically different. Corder's introduction is focused on applied linguistics as it pertains to second and foreign-language teaching because that was the domain of language problems investigated at that time. Today, language teaching remains extremely important in the field, but applied linguistics has expanded to encompass the variety of empirical and theoretical perspectives pertaining to language teaching in addition to the many other issues and problems within the domains of

education, professions, government, politics and law, and the general workings of society. The *Encyclopedia* includes topics across these areas.

A second principle of boundary was developed by Corder in response to the need to decide how much content in an applied linguistics reference should be devoted to linguistics. Corder's position was that applied linguistics must include analytic perspectives and knowledge from linguistics. However, unlike a work in linguistics, one in applied linguistics must select "what linguistics is about, as seen through the eyes of the applied linguist" (1973, p. 7), rather than present analytic perspectives for studying language with the purely scientific goal of better understanding language. Many years later, Cook expanded on the need to see linguistics through the applied linguist's eyes:

> Linguistic theory and description cannot . . . be deployed directly to solve the problems with which applied linguistics is concerned. One important reason is the nature of the problems themselves. They, too, like models of linguistics, represent certain perspectives on reality. Applied linguistics is not simply a matter of matching up findings about language with pre-existing problems but of using findings to explore how the perception of problems might be changed. It may be that when problems are reformulated from a different point of view they become more amenable to solution. This changed perception may then, in turn, have implications for linguistics. (Cook, 2003, p. 10)

Choices concerning the coverage of linguistic topics in the *Encyclopedia* were guided by this conception of the linguistics–applied linguistics interface. Within the *Encyclopedia*'s boundaries readers will find entries on linguistics as selected for their relevance to applied linguistics. It includes topic areas on the study of phonetics and phonology, lexis, grammar, pragmatics, and discourse, all seen through the eyes of applied linguists. The area editors selected the topics and perspectives that have been useful for addressing real-world problems in which language plays a central role. In order to reflect the interests of applied linguists, the *Encyclopedia* includes not only areas of language study but also sections on language learning and use.

A third boundary issue presents itself today as applied linguistics embodies a mode of inquiry in addition to areas studied: What research methodologies should be included in the *Encyclopedia*? In the years since Corder's work, applied linguistics has developed language-based methodologies for the study of language that are pertinent to particular types of language problems. At the same time applied linguists draw upon and adapt research methodologies from the social sciences. Issues in research methodology appear throughout the *Encyclopedia*, but three topic areas were developed to focus specifically on research methodology.

Creating Areas

The *Encyclopedia* is composed of 27 topic areas, each of which was developed by an area editor or area editors with the appropriate expertise to identify the specific topics and perspectives relevant to applied linguists. Throughout these topic areas, the entries reflect domains of language problems and practice in the following: (a) education, including second/foreign-language education and language issues as they pertain to learning school subjects; (b) society; (c) professions; (d) government, politics, and law. Many of the examples used throughout are English because of the pervasive use of English in applied linguistics, but entries also include examples from languages other than English.

The 27 topic areas were developed within four broad categories defined to ensure appropriate coverage through assignment of an editor or editors to develop that area. The first category, that of areas of research and practice, includes areas in which real-world problems

cluster, research methodologies are shared, and results exist. Many professionals in applied linguistics would associate their particular expertise with one or more of these areas. The second category, analysis of language and communication, contains entries reflecting applied linguists' perspectives on linguistics. The third category, approaches to language use and second language acquisition, includes entries pertaining to methods of analysis arising from particular areas of applied linguistics. And fourth, the category of research methods contains entries on the empirical and analytic methodologies applied linguists adopt and adapt from other social science disciplines.

Areas of Research and Practice

This section of the *Encyclopedia* includes areas of applied linguistics that have developed around particular problems where language expertise is needed to understand and address issues. Continuing the trend set by Corder's presentation of applied linguistics many years ago, the *Encyclopedia* contains a large section on **language learning and teaching**. Entries include descriptions of the knowledge pertaining to the formal study of an additional language—one that is developed after the home language. The problem of learning non-primary languages is a challenge for people worldwide, who tackle it for a wide variety of reasons. Area editor Lourdes Ortega defined the entries in this area to include research aimed at better understanding of both learning (from the student's perspective) and teaching (from the teacher's perspective).

Whereas language learning and teaching are concerned with language study, the entries in the **bilingual and multilingual education** area cover issues concerning the use of two or more languages for instruction across subject areas. In contexts of bilingual and multilingual education, students learn through more than one language in school in order to develop their academic language competence in more than one language and to afford status and maintenance of more than one language in society. The study of **bilingualism and multilingualism** (i.e., multilingualism outside the school setting) involves another set of issues, because it is affected by different factors and can take place in a wide range of situations. The area editors Jasone Cenoz and Durk Gorter designed these areas and commissioned a revealing set of entries covering the issues.

An area of extensive study in settings where bilingual or multilingual education takes place is the development of **literacy** in school and other settings. Although the study of literacy is the concern of many researchers in education beyond applied linguistics, Eva Lam conceptualized this area of the *Encyclopedia* from the perspective of applied linguistics by including facets of the study of literacy relevant to settings of language contact. Moreover, topics include the changing face of literacy as it is affected by globalization and information and communication technology, both of which have changed literacy demands. This section therefore spans literacy in school settings and other areas of society.

The topic area of **language policy and planning** covers the theory, research, and practice of language policy making or deliberate planning. The editor, Joseph Lo Bianco, points out that, despite the long-time reality of societal multilingualism and some form of implicit language policies and planning, only relatively recently have these activities become the object of academic interest. Such interest and input are warranted in view of the consequences of language policy and planning for affected individuals, through policy implementation in education, professional settings, and government.

Another area of applied linguistics, **forensic linguistics**, has developed around the connections between language and the law. Krzysztof Kredens has commissioned a set of entries that introduce and explain two areas of forensic linguistics: the linguistic study of legal texts and processes as well as the provision of linguistic evidence in legal cases. The latter area in particular continues to grow as a result of migration and communication

technologies, both of which create situations for language contact. Legal cases are often based on efforts to obtain human rights which can include language rights.

Translation and interpreting is another area rapidly expanding because of increased language-contact situations, such as new multinational economic and political entities (e.g., the European Union), where access to high-quality communication is expected by participants who are dealing with sophisticated and important topics. These purposes for communication among people of diverse languages are supported technically by the communication infrastructure made possible by the Internet, but the achievement of actual communication is often the result of work by translators and interpreters. Claudia V. Angelelli, Nadja Grbic, and Brian Baer have gathered entries that express today's complex interface between communication needs, technologies, and translation and interpreting.

In all of the areas outlined above, professionals rely on language **assessment and testing** for a variety of purposes. This area in itself encompasses a complex set of issues, research methodologies, and practices. Carol A. Chapelle and Lia Plakans have identified the basic areas of this domain, in which the purpose is to gather systematically language-related behaviors to be used in making inferences about language ability and capacity for language use on other occasions.

Another strand that runs throughout each section of the *Encyclopedia* is how the **technology and language** connection expands, creates, and redefines the problems of concern to applied linguists. The area editor, Thomas Cobb, has assembled entries describing how technology is used in language tasks, many of which involve language teaching and learning. Although computer technology comes into play in many of the entries throughout the *Encyclopedia*, this topic area highlights the complexity of technology issues in a new generation of applied linguistics.

Like technology, **language for specific purposes** is an area of inquiry that spans the entire *Encyclopedia*, but is sufficiently integral to merit an area containing entries that develop the specific purpose–language interface itself. Thomas A. Upton and Ulla Connor have gathered entries that focus on analysis and teaching of language in a manner that meets specific language needs of non-native speakers of the language. Specific language needs cut across academic, vocational, and professional contexts.

Analysis of Language and Communication

The analysis of language and communication underlies language problems such as how to teach an additional language, how to improve translation using computer technology, or how to conduct an analysis that is useful as linguistic evidence in a legal case. The *Encyclopedia* therefore includes sections covering issues of analysis in each of the areas of language relevant to applied linguistics. The concerns in applied linguistics require certain perspectives on language and therefore the entries in this category have defined language and selected perspectives on analysis "as seen through the eyes of the applied linguist," as Corder put it.

In view of applied linguists' concern with language in use, at the broadest level of analysis, language is studied in relation to the **culture and context** in which it is used. Area editor Karen Risager has included entries in this section that reflect the cross-disciplinary influence on the study of culture and context in applied linguistics. Disciplinary perspectives include anthropological linguistics, cultural linguistics, postcolonial studies, and cultural studies, which are used to shed light on concepts such as ethnicity, nation, citizenship education, and intercultural competence as they pertain to applied linguistics.

The primary unit of analysis in applied linguistics, **discourse**, is central to most applied linguistic investigation, and therefore discourse is integral to many of the entries. In this topic area, compiled by Sigrid Norris, entries define discourse as well as the key concepts

applied linguists use to study discourse. Hand in hand with discourse, **pragmatics** is studied to reveal how language users make and interpret meaning in context through language and accompanying nonverbal signals. Marta González-Lloret has included in this topic area entries that explore the aspects of pragmatics that are important in applied linguistics research. Because pragmatics intersects with the technical affordances language users have at their disposal, communication technology comes into play in a number of the entries in this area. However, because of the extensive use and effects of technology in communication, an area devoted to **multimodal communication** has also been compiled. Sigrid Norris developed this area composed of entries that demonstrate the unique and important interface between technology and the linguistic choices language users can make as well as how those choices are realized in technology-mediated form. Entries also cover analytic approaches to the study of how language users make meaning through a combination of language and other semiotic systems.

Grammar is the area of study most central to linguistics, and therefore this is the area in which an enormous set of possibilities exists for inclusion in the *Encyclopedia*. In keeping with Corder's principle of making selections through the applied linguist's eye, Karin Aijmer has crafted a set of entries that covers the important issues and perspectives on grammar in applied linguistics research. In dealing with grammar in the real world, for example, applied linguists need to distinguish "descriptive" and "prescriptive" grammar. In their work on language use, applied linguists are much more concerned with functional grammar, and conversation grammar in particular, than with theoretically abstract formulations of grammar.

Lexis is another area that has been studied from many different perspectives in linguistics, and therefore here too the area editors Brent Wolter and Paul Meara have carefully selected those perspectives on lexis that pertain to applied linguistics. They have identified an important applied linguistic view as one that sees vocabulary in connection with the linguistic context in which words are used and understood. Such contexts are needed to account for the vocabulary choices made by language users in real time. In fact, through the entries in this section readers will see how linguistic description from an applied linguistic lexical perspective makes it difficult to sustain a division between lexis and grammar.

In the topic area of **phonetics and phonology**, John Levis and Murray J. Munro have identified entries that cover applied linguists' use of analytic perspectives on the physical aspects of speech production in addition to the functional and systemic organization of sounds in particular languages. Analysis of speech is critical for the study of such areas of applied linguistics as second language learning and teaching and language assessment. These and more phonology-related problems are included in this area.

Approaches to Language Use and Second Language Acquisition

This category contains entries on particular approaches used to study problems of interest to applied linguists, which pertain to language use and acquisition of an additional language. Each of these areas represents a way of approaching a language-related problem which requires the analyst to take a particular view of language. The research methods connect with one or more other disciplines such as sociology, psychology, or rhetoric. Entries explain epistemological bases, disciplinary links, research methods, and findings.

An empirical, and oftentimes quantitative, approach to the study of language in texts, **corpus linguistics** aims to describe linguistic choices that language users make in constructing their oral and written communication. In contrast to native-speaker intuition or clinically elicited samples of language, the basis for linguistic generalizations made by corpus linguists is linguistic patterns found in large collections of relevant language samples. The source of the data is the basis for claims that findings are authentic and generalizable.

As a consequence, such linguistic descriptions are taken to be useful to applied linguists who are concerned with language as it is used in authentic communication. Michael Stubbs and Dorothea Halbe have gathered entries that explain issues, practices, and findings from corpus linguistics.

An empirical, qualitative approach to the study of language, **conversation analysis** investigates how language users organize naturally occurring social interactions in order to accomplish social actions through talk and bodily conduct such as hand gestures and eye gaze. Rather than generalizability, the claim is that such research provides an accurate description of how language is used to accomplish human social action in specific contexts. Johannes Wagner and Kristian Mortensen have collected entries that present findings from research on conversation analysis in addition to the use of those results and the philosophical basis of this line of inquiry for many areas of applied linguistics.

In contrast to the descriptive stance of both corpus linguistics and conversation analysis is the explicitly ideological basis of **critical discourse analysis**. Critical discourse analysis is an analytic perspective requiring selection of texts for analysis with the aim of demonstrating how the linguistic choices made by authors and speakers create or continue social inequality. The lens for analysis of such texts therefore includes preconceptions about who holds power over whom, in addition to how power might be redistributed. Such an analysis requires effective analysis of the role of language in perpetuating the status quo. Angel Lin has outlined this area through entries that explain the basis for critical discourse analysis as well as describe the analytic methods and findings in some example problems where it has been applied.

Beyond critical discourse analysis, **language ideology** plays a role across applied linguistics, as researchers choose problems to work on and perspectives to use in their analysis. As Cook put it, "Applied linguistics is not simply a matter of matching up findings about language with pre-existing problems but of using findings to explore how the perception of problems might be changed" (Cook, 2003, p. 10). The process of formulating and changing perceptions of problems highlights the ideological nature of some of the choices that researchers make. The entries in this topic area were defined by Patricia Friedrich, Aya Matsuda, and Janina Brutt-Griffler to explain the various dimensions of language ideology and their consequences for applied linguistics research and practice.

One fundamental ideological choice in research on language use is highlighted in the study of **World Englishes**, the varieties of Englishes that are used internationally by people for whom English is not their native language and who do not live in the traditional centers of English use. The applied linguist's study of the actual varieties of Englishes, in contrast to the linguist's study of the idealized native speaker, is highly relevant for issues such as language teaching, language assessment, and language technologies of concern in other areas of applied linguistics. Aya Matsuda, Patricia Friedrich, and Janina Brutt-Griffler developed this section with entries that describe areas of research in World Englishes and their intersection with specific language-related problems.

In view of the central importance of second language teaching and learning in applied linguistics, approaches are needed pertaining specifically to language acquisition. A wide variety of approaches have been undertaken; their key concepts and practices are described in entries in two topic areas of the *Encyclopedia*. In one, the area editor Amy Snyder Ohta has commissioned entries on **social, dynamic, and complexity theory approaches to second language development**. In the other, the area editors Marianne Gullberg and John Williams have commissioned entries on the approaches taken by research on **cognitive second language acquisition**. Entries in the latter area explain researchers' investigations of how the human mind processes language during learning in order to organize and learn the new language. The former includes research that situates human language development within a social interactive process which affects broader aspects of human cognition and

personality. Together these areas of the *Encyclopedia* depict the directions resulting from years of research on second language learning.

Research Methods

Theoretical, analytic, and empirical methods appear throughout the *Encyclopedia*, but in view of the central problem-solving activity of applied linguistics, the *Encyclopedia* organizes and provides greater detail on the nature of the particular research methods that are used in applied linguistics. Most advanced degree programs preparing students to study language problems in the real world would expect students to be familiar with three clusters of research methodologies—analysis of discourse and interaction, qualitative research, as well as quantitative and mixed methods research.

In the section on **analysis of discourse and interaction**, Rodney H. Jones has delineated the domain of research methodological issues, concepts, and practices used primarily in the analysis of synchronous conversation as opposed to monologic text. Entries cover research approaches to investigating how language users select language to construct their social identities, relationships with one another, and realities.

The **qualitative methods** topic area designed by Linda Harklau and Meryl Siegal demonstrates the ways in which qualitative principles and practices shared with others in the social sciences are used in applied linguistics. Entries show how researchers use codes, labels, categorization systems, and narratives, for example, in studying problems in applied linguistics in addition to illustrating the types of problems that are investigated. Qualitative approaches, for example, have helped to document the detail associated with individual language learning and use in a manner that is not revealed in quantitative research.

The topic area of **quantitative and mixed methods** research designed by Joan Jamieson and Kim McDonough demonstrates how quantitative methods from the social sciences are used to address a range of applied linguistics problems in areas such as the study of the effectiveness of particular language teaching practices or the language needs of prospective employees in a business. In addition, it includes entries that explain basic concepts on quantitative research as it is used in applied linguistics. Quantitative approaches have been an important source of new knowledge in applied linguistics as it has been used for describing relevant situations of language use in addition to testing hypotheses about the nature of language use and learning.

Applied Linguistics in the Future

Defining the boundaries of applied linguistics will continue to be a challenge in the future as language contact, language learning, and language technologies expand. More and more people, either by choice or by need, migrate to live in a location where they need to be able to use an additional language. Such movement creates issues that will continue to be recognized as important: How can such transitions be made in a manner that affords new residents and their children a genuine opportunity to succeed? With concerns for human rights more widespread today than ever, such questions demand serious, well-informed attention. Even for people who remain physically within their first language context, their physical linguistic landscape is likely to change as a result of the movement of others; moreover, the Internet will continue to create opportunities for connections across time and space in a manner that will continue to change the way people communicate. The language–technology interface is an area of constant evolution as new forms of communication are taken up by individuals who invent new uses for them. The opportunities for studying human communication will continue to expand. These continuing changes in the external conditions of language use will be accompanied by expanded approaches to

research in applied linguistics, connecting to fields such as neuroscience, computer science, rhetoric, and political science.

Because of the dynamic nature of applied linguistics, the *Encyclopedia of Applied Linguistics* was designed to accommodate such changes in the future. The online format of the *Encyclopedia* will allow for updating and reshaping twice a year. This process of evolution will be guided by the international community of applied linguists that has engaged so productively in shaping the first edition in addition to new applied linguists with new ideas to offer. Numerous suggestions for additional entries have been received, and the first update is under way as research has continued apace during development of the *Encyclopedia*. We are dedicated to keeping the *Encyclopedia* current, and to making it available in different formats, to meet the needs of scholars and students in applied linguistics in addition to those who work with language-related problems beyond applied linguistics.

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Suggested Readings

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