

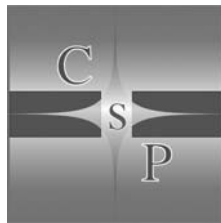
# Making a Difference



# Making a Difference: Challenges for Applied Linguistics

Edited by

Honglin Chen and Ken Cruickshank



Cambridge Scholars Publishing

Making a Difference: Challenges for Applied Linguistics,  
Edited by Honglin Chen and Ken Cruickshank

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## PREFACE

This volume provides compelling evidence of how research by applied linguists is making a difference in the lives of language learners and users differentiated in terms of linguistic background, gender age, psychological factors, degree of agency and level of proficiency; in the practices of educators working in a range of cultural, political, and language contexts; in the endeavours of materials developers; and in the decisions of policy makers as they determine how resources will be distributed. The richness and diversity of the chapters are testimony to the vibrancy of the field of applied linguistics today.

Such variety represents both challenges and opportunities for applied linguists. In their introductory chapter, Chen and Cruickshank argue that the emerging field of applied linguistics, is by its very nature pluricentric, as it responds to a wide range of language issues in a number of contexts requiring the use of different modes of enquiry, different ways of discoursing, and different epistemological assumptions. This poses the challenge of what actually constitutes the knowledge base of applied linguistics and how the field of applied linguistics relates to other fields such as linguistics, psychology, sociology, politics, anthropology and literary studies.

While such multiplicity of applications risks fragmentation, it also provides a context for productive tensions, robust discussion and fresh insights as the various sub-fields rub up against each other. In this volume, for example, ideological concerns about postcolonial constructs interact with the need to consider cultural sensitivities; qualitative and quantitative methodologies complement and extend each other in coming to an understanding of student learning or in informing language policy; theories relating to both innate traits and contextual factors are drawn upon in explaining learner behaviour; contemporary descriptive grammars jostle with context-sensitive functional grammars; and theories of language maintenance challenge policies of assimilation.

The chapters thus represent the profusion of practical activities in which applied linguists engage as they strive to make a difference as well as the challenges confronting applied linguistics as it seeks to establish itself as a coherent and credible field of enquiry.

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<sup>1</sup> The editors' names are listed alphabetically in this edited book.

CHAPTER ONE

CONCEPTUALISING THE FIELD  
OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS  
FROM A BERNSTEINIAN PERSPECTIVE:  
CHALLENGES AND OPPORTUNITIES

HONGLIN CHEN AND KEN CRUICKSHANK

**Introduction**

Applied linguistics has been struggling to define its identity. Applied linguists themselves often are not sure how to determine the scope and domains of the field (Cook 2003). Historically the field has been conceived as the study of second language acquisition and its application to teaching (Davies 1999, 2007; Davies and Elder 2006). More recently it has been seen more broadly as the application of linguistic understandings to a wide range of real-life contexts and issues (Brumfit 1997; Rampton 1997) such as the rapid worldwide increase in migration and reactions to it, the expansion of media and technology, speech pathologies, bilingualism, and policy imperatives at international and local levels.

At the heart of this identity dilemma has been a tension between theory and practice: is applied linguistics parasitic on pure linguistics for its theory? Or is it a field in its own right, generating its own theoretical base? There lacks a systematic approach to analysing the intrinsic features constituting the internal structuring of the field of applied linguistics. In helping us to think about the contribution made by this volume, this chapter draws on Basil Bernstein's sociological theory and, in particular, his concepts of the pedagogic device, knowledge structures and regionalisation of knowledge. These tools provide a powerful conceptual framework for describing internal practices as well as external relations and enable key issues underlying changes in the field of applied linguistics to be delineated. The sociological analysis thus offers a means for

analysing challenges and opportunities facing applied linguists and a way of moving beyond present concerns which may be limiting the growth of the field.

## **Applied linguistics as a mediating field**

Applied linguistics has been faced with the challenges of defining the limits and central concerns of the field (Brumfit 1997; Coupland 1997; Davies 2007; Davies and Elder 2006; Heller 1997; Rampton 1997; Roberts 1997; van Lier 1997). This is partly due to the nature of the field as an applied one and partly due to its earlier association with positivist linguistic paradigms. Pratt (1987) argued that applied linguistics, because of its reliance on such paradigms, was locked into describing diversity as structured and in looking for “underlying orderliness” (59). The extent of applied linguistics’ dependence on and independence from the discipline of linguistics has been a continuing focus, with more recent argument for applied linguistics as “a pluri-centred field” including socially constructed linguistics (Rampton 2002, 1).

Applied linguistics has been defined by the two dimensions suggested by its name: application and linguistics (Davies 2007; Davies and Elder 2006). This definition has given rise to two positions: that of ‘linguistics applied’ and ‘applications of linguistics’. In higher education, Applied Linguistics courses tend to be offered either by Linguistics faculties or Education faculties, reflecting the two definitions of applied linguistics.

What constitutes legitimate activity within applied linguistics is a highly contested issue. Applied linguistics first emerged in the 1940s and 1950s as a response to pure linguistic paradigms (Davies 2007). Earlier characterisations of applied linguistics seemed to align with the ‘linguistics applied’ position. This position drew on traditional linguistics as its intellectual foundations. Language was seen as a natural phenomenon that can be described as an autonomous and scientific system (Corder 1973). Systematic descriptions of language would lead to good teaching practice. By restricting applied linguistics research to a narrow definition of ‘linguistics applied’, the position excludes knowledge making as legitimate activities of the field. As Corder (1973, 10) claimed, “(t)he application of linguistic knowledge to some object – or applied linguistics, as its name implies – is an activity. It is not a theoretical study”. Applied linguists were no more than “a consumer or user, not a producer of theories” (10).

The work of Bernstein (1996, 2000) is useful in understanding the limitations of the ‘linguistics applied’ position. In his theorisation of the

sociology of education, Bernstein's conceptualisation of knowledge structures offers a means of analysing the development of an intellectual field or discipline. He posits the notion of different fields of activity: a field of production where new knowledge is constructed; a field of recontextualisation, where knowledge produced in the field of production is selected, appropriated and refocused to form knowledge; and a field of reproduction where actual transmission and acquisition takes place. In addition, his concept of classification provides a rich description of the metaphorical structuring of space. He refers to classification as "relations between categories, whether these categories are between agencies, between discourses, between practices" (Bernstein 2000, 6). Classification defines and "constructs the nature of social space" (2000, 12), thereby providing a powerful tool for describing boundaries and relations between, and within, disciplines or subjects.

Bernstein's (1999) concept of knowledge structures further illuminates the nature and development of intellectual fields. He distinguishes two forms of knowledge structures that characterise the internal structures of intellectual fields, namely horizontal and hierarchical knowledge structures. In Bernstein's (1999) conceptualisation, hierarchical knowledge structure refers to "a coherent, explicit and systematically principled structure" (161). The knowledge is hierarchically organised with general and abstract propositions at higher levels integrating an expanding range of phenomena at lower levels. The knowledge is cumulative, constantly building towards higher levels of abstraction. The field of linguistics is generally located within a hierarchical knowledge structure with its more scientific approach to knowledge generation. In contrast, horizontal knowledge structures represent serial structures consisting of a series of specialist discourses "with specialised modes of interrogation and criteria for the construction and circulation of texts." (162). This serial organisation of knowledge is generated by a 'collection code'. Bernstein cites the disciplines of humanities and social sciences as examples of horizontal knowledge, with a range of competing theoretical approaches taken by the disciplines (Maton and Muller 2007). In a horizontal knowledge structure, such as applied linguistics, the field's progress is defined as the addition of "new language, a fresh perspective, a set of new connections, and a set of new speakers" (Bernstein 1999, 163). In the case of 'linguistics applied', there is seen to be a proliferation of knowledge-applying sub-fields, each with its own concerns, which develop alongside each other and all drawing on the knowledge-generating field of linguistics.

The position ‘linguistics applied’, with its aim to apply the findings of theoretical studies, creates a disjuncture between theory and practice, giving more control to the field of knowledge-making than to the fields of reproduction and practice. The divide between theory and practice means that there is a strong classification between the fields of linguistics and applied linguistics with strong boundaries established between the knowledge-generating discipline of linguistics and the knowledge-interpreting role of applied linguistics. Social divisions of labour are strongly classified with linguists specialised in theory-making and applied linguists in practical applications.

From this divide between theory and practice, between fields of production and recontextualisation, a number of concerns arise in terms of the field status and its development. Firstly, while findings from a knowledge field do indeed have practical implications, the divide between theory and practice fields is not conducive to the development of applied linguistics. The ‘linguistics applied’ position takes as its central concern the reproducing role, making linguistic theories available to lay audiences such as teachers and teacher educators. While applied linguistics has found its own institutional space, its research and theorising presence remains marginal. For a field to maintain its status and value, it should have a greater control over the production of knowledge rather than playing no more than a mediating role (Roberts 1997). Secondly, the strong divisions of labour establish a system of dependence since those who control the knowledge field control the practice. It follows that applied linguists never gain sufficient autonomy to impact on practice on their own terms.

To move forward, there is a need in applied linguistics to articulate the nexus between theory and practice in ways that are dynamic and productive. A number of implications are indicated, which we now pursue in the following section as we examine the second position ‘applications of linguistics’.

### **Applied linguistics as a specialised field**

While application is still the central concern of more recent applied linguistics work, linguistics is by no means the only source of knowledge that has been applied. A movement away from the ‘linguistics applied’ to ‘applications of linguistics’ can be seen in the reconfiguration and rethinking of the intellectual base (Heller 1997) and the role of applied linguistics. This has been represented by greater integration between theory and practice, a greater interplay between fields of knowledge-



making and recontextualisation as well as a greater autonomy of applied linguistics (Heller 1997).

As discussed earlier, theory-practice tensions locate the field of applied linguistics at two extremes: applied linguistics as a practical activity as advocated by Corder (1973) and theoretical activity as advocated by Widdowson (1984, 7):

The relevance of linguistics cannot, I think, be taken for granted because it is not obvious that the way linguists conceive of language is the most appropriate for teaching purposes. I want to suggest that the main business of applied linguistics should be establishing of appropriate concepts or models of language in the pedagogic domain without prejudging the issue by supposing that a relevant model of language must inevitably derive from a formal model of linguistic description.

Widdowson challenged the taken-for-granted role of linguistics. In his view, application implied by the name of applied linguistics should be viewed as an analytical procedure, one which involves “the pursuit of pedagogic relevance and the search for a model which will draw on and appeal to the learner’s experience as a language user” (Widdowson 1984, 20). This view defines the applied and practical dimension of applied linguistics in terms of its value and significance to practitioners. The call for a contextualised language model drawing on human experience as data sources can be seen as a significant attempt to redefine the nature of language and to defend the autonomy of the field of applied linguistics, thereby reconstituting the knowledge base and structures of the field of applied linguistics. A new theory or model is thus legitimated based on its relevance, explanatory power and empirical validity.

Widdowson’s pioneering work sets the central task for applied linguistics and leads to a particularly rich and important line of discussion of legitimisation of the later applied linguistics work as represented in a special edition of the *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* (Brumfit 1997; Coupland 1997; Heller 1997; Rampton 1997; Roberts 1997; van Lier 1997). In accounts of intellectual trajectories of applied linguistics, the development of later applied linguistics work is described as “a productive interdisciplinary dialogue between theory and practice” (Rampton 1997, 4). This articulation of the nexus between theory and practice is also evident in Roberts (1997). For Roberts, applied linguistics should be engaged in a search for “a set of conceptual and analytic tools sensitive to the contexts in which we work” and “responsive to participants’ social engagement in the field” (Roberts 1997, 73). Such tools are capable of providing improved understanding for both

researchers and practitioners, and can thus bring about both practical and theoretical outcomes.

This characterisation of the development of applied linguistics resembles what Bernstein (2000) terms regionalisation of knowledge, which is represented by interconnection between the field of production of knowledge and the field of practice. It is useful at this point to explore further the notions of regionalisation and recontextualisation. Bernstein describes the restructuring of European knowledge in the twentieth century as a movement from distinct singulars or disciplines into integrated regions. Regionalisation of knowledge is represented by a greater integration of disciplinary knowledge brought about by a recontextualising of singulars or disciplines. Regions metaphorically become a structuring space where the field of production of knowledge is brought into close connection with any field of practice. In regionalisation of knowledge, the classification of knowledge becomes weaker and boundaries between disciplines become blurred. Analysis of recontextualising principles may, therefore, provide us with insights into the underlying structure of the field and practices of applied linguistics as a specialised field.

Firstly, the delimitation of the objects of study may be seen as one recontextualising principle in legitimating the field of applied linguistics. Brumfit (1997) points out that for a field to exist, it has to explain certain phenomena. In his view, a central focus of applied linguistics should be on “theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue” (93). This working definition has been widely drawn on to define what constitutes a legitimate domain for applied linguistics work (Davies and Elder 2006; Davies 2007). In a similar vein, Rampton (1997, 4) defines applied linguistics work as “the empirical investigation of fundamental communicative processes with a commitment to using research knowledge to improve communicative relationships in everyday life”. This definition of the object of the study highlights the status of applied linguistics as a specialised field and has seen the expansion of applied linguistics to a wide range of research sites. The scope of the field has moved beyond the traditional configuration of second language acquisition and English language teaching. It has now broadened to include language-related problems people encounter in the world. This includes research into such areas as language and ageism (e.g. Coupland 1997), policy issues (e.g. McKay 2009), bilingualism (e.g. Willoughby 2009), bilingual education (e.g. Lambert 2009), academic discourse (e.g. Price 2009), gender issues (e.g. Appleby 2009), and Alzheimer discourse (e.g. Ramanathan 2008). Pennycook (2006) pushes

the boundaries further in his review of critical applied linguistics drawing on a range of theoretical and empirical domains such as language testing, literacy and language policy and planning, translation, and discourse analysis. Such hybridisation of interests and concerns captured in this book illustrate the diverse range of activities in which applied linguists are engaged and their role in making a difference to people's lives through "practical and contextual investigations and applications of language" (Coupland 1997, 96).

Secondly, the selection and legitimisation of the field's intellectual foundations may be seen as another strong recontextualising principle. A field draws on an integral set of frameworks, models and theories about specific phenomena. Brumfit (1997) argues that what enables us to identify and elucidate a problem area of language use, to provide an improved understanding, and to offer solutions relies largely on how language is perceived. In justifying and legitimising the applied linguistics work, a socially contextualised approach to language is brought to the centre stage of applied linguistics, one which construes language "not as grammar but as a repertoire of ways of speaking shaped through the part it plays in social action and communicative conduct" (Rampton 1997, 3). This contextualised applied linguistics locates language in its broad social cultural contexts and connects with practitioners' experience. Moving away from the idealised and autonomous model of linguistics, the social and contextualised applied linguistics provides powerful conceptual bases on which to make sense of social reality, everyday practices and social relations embedded in language as well as to elucidate many language-based problems encountered by practitioners.

The discourse of interdisciplinarity features prominently in discussions of the intellectual foundations of the field of applied linguistics (Heller 1997; Rampton 1997; van Lier 1997). A contextualised applied linguistics by nature requires cross-disciplinary perspectives involving integration with elements from psycholinguistics, education, sociolinguistics, anthropology and psychology. The past decade has seen the linking of cross-disciplinary traditions in response to a diverse range of activities in which applied linguists are engaged. A number of papers in this book address cross-disciplinarity in new and coherent ways. For example, Poynton and Lee (2009) take an epistemological approach to explore 'appraisal' in systemic-functional grammar; Appleby (2009) takes up issues of gender and English language teaching; and Cao (2009) applies ecological approaches to second language acquisition studies. The issue of interdisciplinarity will be further discussed in the following section. The diversity of research objects and procedures means that the knowledge

structure of applied linguistics is mediated by a weaker classification principle with less clearly defined objects of and open procedures for study (Bernstein 2000).

Another important recontextualising principle that has contributed to the evolution of the field of applied linguistics is the delineation of the disciplinary procedures of inquiry. As discussed earlier, Bernstein (2000) sees fields such as applied linguistics functioning as a pedagogic device regulating the production, transmission, and evaluation of its knowledge base. In moving towards delineating a greater sense of its own identity, the field of applied linguistics needs to take greater responsibility for generating its own knowledge structures and establishing evaluative procedures for what counts as legitimate research. It needs to attend to how its knowledge base is recontextualised by practitioners (Bernstein 2000). In applied linguistics, specialised procedures are endorsed in some areas, notably traditional second language acquisition, together with a diverse range of methodologies and methods that embrace multiple perspectives. The agenda for a socially contextualised applied linguistics research has led to an epistemological shift from descriptivism to constructivism and a methodological shift from textual analyses into social and ideological analyses (Coupland 1997).

Together the aforementioned recontextualising principles contribute to our understanding of the evolution of the field of applied linguistics. This has seen the move of applied linguistics from a peripheral sub-discipline into a specialised field “merging with other modes of inquiry which share a concern with what has become a leading question in social science” (Heller 1997, 80).

## Opportunities and challenges in applied linguistics

In this section, we draw on Bernstein’s concept of horizontal knowledge structure to examine challenges facing applied linguistics in terms of its advancement. The concerns for applied linguistics have been **internal** in seeking to define the coherence and nature of the field (Candlin 1990, 2001; Davies, 1999; Pennycook, 2006; Widdowson 2005 to name but a few); they have been **external** in the working out of the value and status of the field in terms of linguistics and other disciplines. The third area of concern has been the link with real-world problems and issues: the extent to which applied linguistics can *make a difference* in impacting on the issues and concerns of language users and also how applied linguistics can mediate between these issues and disciplinary expertise (Widdowson 2005).

The first issue, of the ‘pluricentric’ nature of applied linguistics has often been characterised as one of its strengths. Rampton (2002) argues that this has given applied linguistics an “epistemological reflexivity” coming from its “precarious position in the academy and the need to both differentiate and justify itself to linguists” (Rampton 2002, 10). Bernstein (2000) would argue that applied linguistics represents a regionalisation of knowledge through the recontextualisation of various disciplines and that the resultant horizontal structure of knowledge means that it is much more responsive to fields of practice. There have been many claims for the coherence of ‘principled interdisciplinarity’:

It is perhaps uncontroversial to claim that applied linguistics, in becoming more interdisciplinary, is better prepared for the principled handling of a range of distinct types of real world issues and more critically aware of its methodologies (Bygate and Kramsch 2000, cited in Widdowson 2005, 23).

Several writers such as Pennycook (2005) eschew attempts at coherence whilst others such as Widdowson argue for coherence in terms of methodological approaches (Widdowson, 2005). We hope that the present volume can provide some small contribution to this issue.

### **Coherence of the field**

We have made a conscious decision not to organise the book in terms of the usual domains such as language teaching, language assessment and testing, language policy and planning and discourse analysis. Although there are recognisable sections, there are also important links between chapters and there are themes that run through the book. The first five articles by Poynton and Lee (2009), Ellwood and Laws (2009), Price (2009), Appleby (2009), Crichton and Scarino (2009), all draw on a range of fields and disciplines in their studies. Poynton and Lee (2009), for example, argue against overreliance on linguistic categorisation and the problem of extending linguistic description into work on discourse and context/ situation. They highlight the need to take into account work in media studies, feminist theory, pedagogy and cultural studies. The following five chapters by Nakane and Ellwood (2009), Ko (2009), Averianova (2009), Azuma (2009) and Yamada (2009) are responding in different ways to changes and developments and issues in language use. Nakane and Ellwood (2009), for example, explore the meanings and interpretations of silence in discourse; Averianova (2009) looks at electronic discourse and its use or lack of use in English language teaching. The next group of chapters, by Edge (2009), Stracke (2009), Cao

(2009), Fraser (2009), Cheng (2009), Collins (2009) and Burden (2009) could be titled 'Beyond English language teaching'. One perceived criticism (or strength) of applied linguistics has always been seen as its link to English language teaching. The growth of applied linguistics, however, has seen the application of understandings developed from this area of study to other areas such as language and the law, discourse and conversation analysis and translation studies. The final group of chapters by McKay (2009), Lambert (2009), Willoughby (2009), Bradshaw (2009) and Borland and Mphande (2009) could be seen as a section on language policy and planning. The chapters present different takes on micro- and macro- approaches to their topics which echo methodological choices in previous chapters. Borland and Mphande (2009) use a 'micro-level' research approach in their study of African migration and settlement to impact on what they call 'meso-level' language policy: state governments and their agencies.

There are interweaving themes throughout the book. One concern is the issues surrounding the conceptualisation and importance of context. The concern with context in many chapters in this book arises from attention to real world issues and a focus on the specific phenomena. Context cannot be defined simply as a set of variables such as language, place, culture or surroundings, but is much more dynamic and interactive drawing from philosophy and the cognitive and social sciences (Duranti and Goodwin 1992). For Ellwood and Laws (2009), Price (2009), Crichton and Scarino (2009) and Appleby (2009) the complexity and dynamics of identity, gender intercultural understanding, and diverse voices are understood and explored in their contextual realisation. Cao (2009) argues that the Willingness to Communicate (WTC) construct can only be understood in its situated nature using an ecological approach.

We can also see a linking thread in terms of methodological approaches. The chapters by Cao (2009) and Fraser (2009) both take what could be called mixed method approaches. Fraser, in a study of listeners' perceptions and comprehension of accents, argues for both qualitative and quantitative data, because of the importance of affective variables. Cao triangulates student reports of factors affecting WTC behaviour with classroom observations and microgenetic analysis of classroom participation. The five chapters which complete this volume comfortably move between micro- and macro-level research tools. The logic and coherence in the choice of the research tools lie in the nature of the research problem. The coherence of applied linguistics can then be seen to be then not so much in the use of "specific well-tried methodology ...

taken off the shelf” (Barton and Hamilton 1998, 58) but in the nature of the methodological decisions made in addressing research problems.

### **Relationship of applied linguistics to linguistics and other areas of knowledge**

The delineation of the field of applied linguistics has been the focus of many journal articles. How useful is it to map the lines between linguistics, applied linguistics and other areas of study? As discussed above, this is often the theme of discussions around ‘linguistics applied’ and ‘applied linguistics’, with values being attached to various positions. In some ways, Bernstein’s (1999) approach could be seen as essentialising but also provides a way to move beyond the debates. His construct of horizontal knowledge structures construes applied linguistics as a serial organisation of knowledge with progress coming from the addition of fresh perspectives, new connections, new speakers and new ways of speaking.

Perhaps this can be seen most clearly in the evidence, both implicit and explicit, of Vygotskian and post-Vygotskian work on many of the chapters in this book. Edge takes sociocultural theory (Engestrom et al 1999; Wenger 1998; Wertsch 1991) and uses it in his study of language teacher professional development. Ko (2009), Averianova (2009) and Yamada (2009) in their chapters draw on notions of scaffolding (Bruner 1975). Research insights are recontextualised to provide the fresh perspectives and new language Bernstein was describing.

### **Impact of applied linguistics and its ability to respond to issues of language users**

A constant concern in applied linguistics has been the relevance and impact of applied linguistics on policy and practice. Clyne (2007) analysed the lack of impact of applied linguistics since the 1990s in Australia on the general public and policymakers “to help them understand the power of language and overcome the monolingual mindset” (2). An equal concern has been the ability of applied linguistics in responding to issues faced by language users in terms of research. How constrained are we in terms of research focus and funding? To what extent are applied linguists responding to the needs of language users in the development of research and production of knowledge? In Bernstein’s terms, to what extent do linguists and languages users have control of the distributive rules? Increasing control by governments in many countries of research funding

and research agendas has hampered researchers' ability to respond to emerging needs.

The chapters in this book address many emerging concerns and issues in terms of language users. Cheng (2009) examines the nature of Hong Kong Mandarin in postcolonial Hong Kong; Burden (2009) discusses an 'audit culture' of economic rationalism in Japanese universities; Crichton and Scarino (2009), Price (2009) and Appleby (2009) explore issues of the construction of culture and gender in a range of contexts; Borland and Mphande (2009), Bradshaw (2009), Averianova (2009) and Willoughby (2009) focus on emerging languages and emerging issues in language use. Many of the chapters also point to reasons why the insights from applied linguistics may be having less impact on policy and practices than could be wished for. McKay (2009) traces the shift in government policies to English language literacy as opposed to bilingualism from the Australian policies in the 1990s. Borland and Mphande (2009) also refer to shifts in policy thinking and development. One theme underlying several of the chapters is the development of economic rationalist approaches to government policy and practice in the 1990s (Marginson 1993). Applied linguists increasingly see their role as 'making a difference'. The chapters in this book derive from the 2007 Applied Linguistics Association of Australia conference in Wollongong. One forum at the conference on testing for citizenship was reported widely in the media enabling participants to disseminate their research findings. Despite the difficulties, the role of applied linguists in impacting on practice and policy has remained important.

In conclusion, the discussion so far illustrates how Bernstein's thinking can be employed to offer better understanding of the changing nature of the field of applied linguistics. It can also provide the means to move beyond present concerns which may be limiting the growth of the field. Conceiving the field of applied linguistics as a pedagogic device enables us to identify the underlying principles which structure the development of applied linguistics. The concepts of regionalisation of knowledge and horizontal structure provide us with a means of identifying opportunities and challenges facing applied linguistics, and issues regarding the further advancement of the field. We hope that the book achieves some of the aims discussed in this chapter



## About the book

This book is a collection of papers which include contributions of applied linguists working in such areas as language teaching and learning, policy development, discourse analysis, language development and bilingualism. Together they showcase that language is at the core of our experience and that applied linguists can play a key role making a difference in people's lives.

Based on the narratives of English language teachers working in East Timor, **Appleby's** chapter considers some of the ways ESL teachers are trying to manage the contradictory tensions between gender inequalities and cultural sensitivities both within the classroom and beyond. She highlights the importance of these teachers not reinforcing and imposing ethnocentric and colonial hierarchies which construct a dichotomy between the 'enlightened' west and the 'non enlightened' non west.

**Averianova's** chapter discusses the linguistic specificities of electronic discourse and the implications this has for computer mediated communication. The author stresses the importance of introducing non-native English speakers to the linguistic and iconographic features of this electronic discourse and discusses the ways of responding to some of the discursive challenges that EFL/ESL learners may encounter in electronic communication.

Using both qualitative and quantitative methods, **Azuma's** chapter explores the similarities and differences in the interpretation of particular idiomatic/figurative expressions by native and non native speakers focusing on both Japanese and English speaking students.

**Borland and Mphande's chapter** discusses the significance of meso-level language planning processes to enhance the quality of status planning focused on interlingual communication for new migrants. Through accessing data from available data bases and from data collected from a range of qualitative interviews, the authors show how sociolinguistic complexity, coupled with the effects of disrupted education and displacement to various transition countries results in the creation of important challenges in providing appropriate access to language services for speakers of diverse languages from the emerging African community.

**Bradshaw's** chapter uses Australian census data to document the age profiles of immigrant communities in Victoria, with a specific focus on Italian speakers. Through data from focus groups, the author highlights the language support needs of elderly community members. She focuses specifically on their needs in medical contexts. Through highlighting the community size, age profile and English proficiency of established

communities, planners can provide more relevant and targeted language support services.

**Burden's** interest in cross-curricular student evaluations of teachers has emerged as a result of his own experiences as an ESL teacher in a Japanese University. His chapter questions whether or not student evaluations of teaching surveys (SETS) disadvantage teachers and his findings suggest that evaluations by SETS do not represent the multidimensional nature of teaching but rather a very narrow culturally determined set of likes and dislikes.

In her chapter, **Cao** draws on Bronfenbrenner's ecological perspective of human development, which sees development as influenced by both individual traits and by situational factors, to explore the extent to which learners demonstrate a 'willingness to communicate' (WTC) in 'English as a second language' classrooms. Through self reporting and oral tests, Cao considers the factors which facilitate and prohibit this willingness to communicate.

Through research conducted with ten undergraduate students at a Hong Kong Polytechnic University, **Cheng** explores the interlanguage phonology of an emerging variety of Hong Kong mandarin.

In the past few decades, English has gained dominance in many Asian countries, including China. In his chapter, **Collins** evaluates the adequacy of ten popular and widely used English grammar books in both schools and Universities in China. Collin suggests from his analysis of these books that the authors need to become more familiar with contemporary descriptive grammarians to provide a more accurate account of the English language to students in China.

As internationalisation is becoming an objective of all higher education institutions, **Crichton and Scarino** argue in their chapter that all students need to develop the ability to contribute to intercultural construction. Based on a collaborative study, involving three disciplines at the University of South Australia, the authors explore the processes of experimentation, interaction and reflection undertaken by three lecturers in their mission to connect the international with the intercultural for their students within their specific disciplines. Within this chapter, the authors highlight the importance of dialogue as central to the process and substance of internationalisation as intercultural work is concerned with how people make and interpret meaning.

**Edge** argues that if the theorisation of practice that TESOL teacher educators so consistently recommend to teachers is central to the TESOL profession, then it should be valuable as an evaluation of his own praxis. In this chapter using a socio cultural perspective, Edge theorises about the

practice of a form of peer supported professional development that he has been working on for some years.

Through their research on ‘youth at risk’, **Ellwood and Law’s** consider the ways in which students either take up or fail to take up dominant discourses of schooling. The authors highlight how discursive constructions of these young people either facilitate or restrain their capacity for agency and change.

Employing both quantitative and qualitative research methods, **Fraser** demonstrates how the attitudes and abilities of the ‘listener’ can influence their perceived understanding of a ‘foreign’ accented speaker. She argues that more attention needs to be paid to the social factors, such as levels of prejudice, when exploring the intelligibility and comprehensibility of accented speakers.

Through audio and video data of adult Korean speakers, **Ko** uses contemporary conversation analysis approaches to provide a description of how argumentative talk is sequentially structured and interactively managed in classroom ‘talk-in-interaction’.

There has been a current and wide spread view within the Australian policy environment about the value of imposing English to aid the assimilation of marginalised groups, both migrants and Indigenous Australians. This notion undervalues important factors, such as, the role that language plays in identity, culture and learning. In his chapter, **McKay**, argues that the recognition of Indigenous languages enhances rather than detracts from English language literacy programs.

By focusing on the perceptions of talk and silence held primarily by Japanese students but also by teachers and lecturers from two ethnographic projects, **Nakane and Ellwood** challenge notions about the silence and passivity of East Asian students in Western classrooms. The authors show both how these students have strong desires to speak and also present readers with innovative and new approaches to silence in classrooms.

**Poynton and Lee’s** chapter provides a critical analysis of ‘appraisal theory’ developed over the last 15 years within the framework of Systemic Functional Linguistics (SFL). According to SFL, in order to understand human language and how it works, language needs to be understood as socially situated. The authors of this chapter question the appropriateness of the expansion of this theory from its original use in mapping clause level grammar to the role it now plays in work on discourse and context/situation.

Through using the case study of an international student whose essay needs to be resubmitted, **Price** describes the process by which this essay attains acceptability. The focus of his chapter is not on the process by

which the student learns to conform to the essay writing conventions of her faculty but rather on how in a globalised world, with an increasing focus on internationalised education and the dominance of English, these academic conventions are often fluid and subject to negotiation and change.

The focus of **Stracke's** chapter is a discussion of communicative validation. Communicative validation, as a methodological step, involves sharing ones understanding and interpretation of the data with the participants/interviewees to make sure that they agree with the researchers' interpretation and analysis of what they have said. Stracke argues that communicative validation adds value to the rigour of interview data analysis and also allows for further research insights, in this case, about the impact of an innovative learning environment (blended language learning) on teacher development.

**Yamada's** chapter explores the generic structure of a tape recorded supervisory conference involving a supervisor and a Japanese student developing his undergraduate thesis. This chapter seeks to explain the underlying genre of a supervisory conference in the Japanese university context and the extent to which the student is guided into a new academic genre by his supervisor.

**Willoughby** claims that while the linguistic situation of migrant families with deaf members has received some attention recently, the factors which influence the strategies which families use, remains largely under-researched. Through seven detailed case studies of migrant families with deaf children, Willoughby explores how language choice is negotiated within these families. She considers, also, the extent to which sign language is an accessible choice for these families. Willoughby's chapter concludes with some policy suggestions which would lead to better communication outcomes for migrant families with deaf children.

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