

## **APPLIED LINGUISTICS AND THE ANNUAL REVIEW OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS**

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### INTRODUCTION

The *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* is celebrating its 20<sup>th</sup> anniversary, and we are happy to report that applied linguistics is still with us. We also believe that the field of applied linguistics is here to stay, much as psychology and English literature are disciplinary fixtures after having developed in the early 20<sup>th</sup> century. The development of a disciplinary field, however, is a messy undertaking, typically driven by needs and purposes that extend beyond individual goals or planned group purposes. In the case of applied linguistics, its continued development can only be channeled and planned indirectly. Moreover, full disciplinary acceptance will only occur to the extent that applied linguistics responds to wider societal needs and its expertise is valued by people beyond the professional field. Applied linguistics, as an inter-disciplinary field, faces the additional challenge of trying to cohere around a set of central notions with which a diverse group of practitioners can identify. So, while some may want an orderly blueprint for disciplinary development and acceptance, and some practitioners may generate discussions around such orderly expectations, none is likely to arise. At the same time, certain events and institutional structures help to shape and form the discipline without recourse to any neat blueprint. Examples include the establishment of the English Language Institute at the University of Michigan in 1941, the establishment of the Department of Applied Linguistics at Edinburgh in 1956, the establishment of the Center for Applied Linguistics in Washington, DC in 1959, the formation of the TESOL organization in 1966, and the formation of the American Association for Applied Linguistics in 1977.

Also among the shapers of this new field are the various journals that have promoted the work of applied linguists and that, as a secondary force, have helped determine what counts as applied linguistics. The first such journal, *Language Learning*, is now in its 50<sup>th</sup> year of publication. The emergence of *TESOL Quarterly* in the 1960s created an important research voice for second language

researchers and practitioners. In the late 1970s and early 1980s, a number of journals more specifically devoted to applied linguistics made their appearance and helped shape a newly forming field: *Applied Linguistics*, *Applied Psycholinguistics*, *Australian Review of Applied Linguistics*, *English for Special Purposes*, *Studies in Second Language Acquisition*, and the *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics (ARAL)*. As the two Editors of the first 20 volumes of the *ARAL* series, we believe that *ARAL* has contributed to the emergence of “messy” applied linguistics as a disciplinary field. In the sections to follow, we examine the complexities and difficulties involved in granting disciplinary status to applied linguistics, the role of *ARAL* as a contributor to the development of applied linguistics, and a small set of predictions for the future of applied linguistics. After twenty years of intense professional development beyond the early decades, applied linguistics is still a discipline in search of broader recognition and internal stability. The difficulties in describing the status of applied linguistics were also apparent at the 1999 *Association Internationale de Linguistique Applique (AILA)* Congress in Tokyo, Japan.

### APPLIED LINGUISTICS: THE ONGOING DEBATES

At the recent 1999 AILA Congress in Tokyo, there were several public discussions of “the field of applied linguistics”: on its scope, on its status, on its emergence as a field, and on its viability as a discipline. There were also several discussions concerning the paradigms that inform the field, the political place of the field in the academic landscape, and the means and content for training the next generation(s) of applied linguists. Not surprisingly, participants in these debates agreed on only a small set of key points and differed considerably on a large number of issues. The commonalities, while few and seemingly meager, nonetheless, provide the anchor for discussing applied linguistics as an inter-disciplinary field. Most applied linguists would agree on the following points:

First, applied linguistics has many of the markings of an academic discipline: professional journals, professional associations, international recognition for the field, funding resources for research projects, a large population of individuals who see themselves as applied linguists, trained professionals who are hired in academic institutions and elsewhere as applied linguists, students who want to become applied linguists, and recognized means for training these students to become applied linguists.

Second, there is a general recognition that linguistics needs to be included as a core knowledge base in the work of applied linguistics, even though the purpose of most applied linguistics work is not merely to “apply linguistics” to achieve a solution.

Third, applied linguistics is grounded in real-world language-driven problems and concerns (primarily by linkages to practical issues involving language use, language evaluation, language contact and multilingualism, language

policies, and language learning and teaching). There is also, however, recognition that these practically driven problems have extraordinary range, and this range tends to dilute any sense of common purpose or common professional identification among practitioners.

Fourth, applied linguistics needs to incorporate other disciplinary knowledge beyond linguistics in its efforts to address language-based problems. Applied linguists commonly draw upon, and are often well trained in, psychology, education, anthropology, political science, sociology, measurement, computer programming, literature, and/or economics.

Fifth, following from points three and four above, applied linguistics is an interdisciplinary field since few practical language issues can be addressed through the knowledge resources of any single discipline, including linguistics.

Sixth, applied linguistics commonly includes a core set of issues and practices that are readily identified as work done by many applied linguists (language teaching, language teacher preparation, and language curriculum development).

Seventh, applied linguistics generally incorporates or includes several further identifiable sub-fields of study: bilingual studies, corpus linguistics, forensic linguistics, language contact studies, language testing, language translation and interpretation, language use in professional contexts, lexicography and dictionary making, literacy, second language acquisition, and second language writing research. Some members of these fields do not see themselves as applied linguists, though their work clearly addresses practical language issues.

Eighth, applied linguistics often defines itself in such a way as to include additional fields of language-related studies (e.g., first language composition studies, first language literacy research, language and literature, language pathology, and natural language processing). The large majority of members of these fields do not see themselves as applied linguists, but the broad definition gives license for applied linguists to roam across these disciplines for their own goals.

The commonalities above, in and of themselves, also point out the difficulties involved in defining applied linguistics, determining its scope, identifying its membership, highlighting its practices, and preparing new members for the field. At one level, defining applied linguistics can be relatively easy; one could say that applied linguistics is the field characterized by the above eight common points. At another level, the term *applied linguistics*, raises fundamental difficulties, if for no other reason than that it is difficult to decide on what counts as “linguistics.” Does linguistics incorporate the range of competing theoretical views of language description commonly discussed as linguistic theories? Does linguistics include the work of descriptive grammarians and corpus linguists? Does

linguistics include the work of prescriptive grammarians and stylists? Does linguistics include the so-called hyphenated sub-fields: computational linguistics, critical linguistics, forensic linguistics, historical linguistics, pragmatics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, and so on? Does linguistics center on sentences and smaller structural units, or does it center on discourse patterns and language uses? Perhaps, more importantly, what underlying assumptions are held by competing views of what counts as linguistics? The answer to many of these questions, it would seem, is “it depends.” Given these difficulties within linguistics proper, it is perhaps unfair to expect clean solutions and clear delimitations for defining applied linguistics.

One alternative perspective to adopt in defining applied linguistics is to examine the contributions made by institutional structures (schools, research centers, associations, journals) to knowledge building. They represent important, if sometimes covert, defining structures within a discipline. We believe that *ARAL* has played such a role, and its history is one that parallels the evolution of applied linguistics as a discipline. We therefore see it as a fitting introduction to this exploratory volume to set the stage by examining the contribution that *ARAL* has made to the field of applied linguistics.

### THE ANNUAL REVIEW OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS: 20 YEARS AND COUNTING

#### 1. The background

*ARAL* is twenty years old. This seems an appropriate time to record its history before all the players become inaccessible. The history of *ARAL* is intimately intertwined with the history of the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) and with the history of the journal *Applied Linguistics (AL)*, all of them being of essentially the same vintage. Additionally, several of the key players have been involved in all three activities. We hope that the historical narrative that follows offers a coherent interpretation of the development of *ARAL* and, by implication, of events in the more recent development of applied linguistics as well.

#### 2. The history of AAAL

At the TESOL conference in San Juan, Puerto Rico, in early May of 1973, a small group of people came together (not in a formal sense, but in a casual series of informal hallway and dinner conversations) to discuss the desirability of forming an American Association for Applied Linguistics (originally conceived of as an Association of Applied Linguists) and a journal for the field. (For a listing of key dates in the history of applied linguistics, see Kaplan 1997:19.) Among the people involved were Edward Anthony, Thomas Buckingham, Peter Collier, David Eskey, Robert Kaplan, Joe Darwin Palmer, Bernard Spolsky, and Peter Strevens. It seemed clear to that group that the need for such an organization existed. In the

1970s, applied linguists really had no professional home in which to meet and to discuss their work. The Applied Linguistics Interest Section (not created until 1975) in TESOL suffered (as it perhaps still does) from inadequate budget and inadequate presentation, meeting, and discussion time within the framework of the annual Teachers of English to Speakers of Other Languages (TESOL) conference, being in competition with a growing number of other Interest Sections and activities of the association. (It must be noted that the *T* in TESOL stands for *Teachers*; thus, TESOL was and remains primarily a teachers' association, not a scholarly, research oriented body.)

There was, in addition, a serious fragmentation of the field because those applied linguists working in the context of teaching English as a second (or foreign) language (TESL/TEFL) came to the TESOL conferences, but those working in other areas did not. Instead, they often attended meetings of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages (ACTFL); the then Association of Teachers of English as a Second Language (now Administrators and Teachers in English as a Second Language [ATESL]; a section of the (then) National Association for Foreign Student Affairs [NAFSA], now NAFSA: Association of International Educators); the Conference on College Composition and Communication (CCCC); the Linguistic Association of Canada and the United States (LACUS); the Linguistic Society of America (LSA); the Modern Language Association (MLA); the National Association for Bilingual Education (NABE); the National Council of Teachers of English (NCTE), The Speech Association of America (SAA), not to mention a number of associations of teachers of particular languages (e. g., French [AATF], German [AATG], Japanese [ATJ], etc.). Applied linguists also regularly attended non-associational structures such as the Georgetown University Roundtable on Languages and Linguistics (GURT). But even in the reasonably 'affluent' 1970s, the notion of attending more than two conferences a year was prohibitive both in terms of financial support and in terms of time away from primary responsibilities. In addition, there was a strong sense among applied linguists that the United States ought to belong to the *Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliqué* (The International Association of Applied Linguistics); none of the associations mentioned above were eligible for such membership. Some 100 applied linguists across the United States were polled, and there was a clear sentiment for the establishment of such a new association. (Initially, the Center for Applied Linguistics served as the official American representative organization associated with AILA from AILA's inception in 1964 to 1978, at which time AAAL assumed this role.)

As a result of these pressures to organize, a more general open meeting was convened in conjunction with the Summer Institute of the Linguistic Society of America (LSA) in Ann Arbor, Michigan, on 3 August 1973. The reaction at the open meeting was somewhat less enthusiastic, and the following day, at the business meeting of the LSA, a resolution was passed requesting the LSA Executive to study the possibility of convening a subsection concerned with applied linguistics within the LSA. At the regular annual business meeting of the LSA on

29 December 1973, the matter was discussed again; the LSA Executive suggested that applied linguists were welcome at LSA meetings so long as they adhered to its quality standards. It was further agreed that there would be no special section of the LSA for applied linguists; it was also decided that, for at least two years, no further action would be taken and that the receptivity of the LSA to the idea would be re-evaluated on the basis of the experience of those years. (In fact, the matter was overtaken by time and allowed to lapse for lack of interest on the part of the LSA Executive.)

During that two year hiatus, the constitution of TESOL was amended (1975) to permit the existence of special interest sections. Among the first special interest sections to be established was one in applied linguistics; Bernard Spolsky was appointed first chairperson of the group. Subsequently its next five elected chairs were, in chronological order, Robert Kaplan, David Eskey, Thomas Buckingham, Joe Darwin Palmer, and Eugene Brière. For a time, it was hoped that this interest section would obviate the necessity for a separate organization. The LSA did, in fact, also include, in its annual meeting in San Francisco in December 1975, a section on language acquisition intended to serve the needs of applied linguists. The TESOL Applied Linguistics Interest Section also mounted a special program segment at the New York convention in 1976, at the Miami convention in 1977, and at the Mexico City convention in 1978. The first two of these program segments were largely concerned with English for Special Purposes and were organized with the close cooperation and assistance of the British Council.

It became clear, however, that these various efforts did not serve the broader needs of the applied linguistics community and that a new independent organization was desirable. At the TESOL Convention in Miami in April 1977, a round table discussion of the 'scope of applied linguistics' was convened. The participants in that roundtable were H. Douglas Brown, S. Pit Corder, Paul Holtzman, Robert Kaplan, Tony Robson, Bernard Spolsky, Peter Strevens, and G. Richard Tucker. In addition, Thomas Buckingham and David Eskey, acting as the officers of the Applied Linguistics Interest Section of TESOL, collected in advance a series of statements on the scope of applied linguistics from well-known scholars in the field. (In addition to roundtable participants, those invited included Edward Anthony, Russell Campbell, Francisco Gomes de Matos, Stephen Krashen, and John Oller. All the papers of the roundtable were published as Kaplan [1980]; a paper by David Ingram of Australia was added.)

At the conclusion of the several presentations, there was again an open discussion of the desirability of forming a new association. That discussion was quite positive, and out of it grew a mandate to move forward with the notion. During the summer months of 1977, an executive committee (Randall Jones, Robert Kaplan, Wilga Rivers, Bernard Spolsky, G. Richard Tucker) and several interim committees were formed. A formal constitutional convention was convened in conjunction with the ACTFL Conference in San Francisco on 24

November 1977, and the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) came into existence; Wilga Rivers was elected its first president (Roger Shuy was VP; Bernold Spolsky was S/T; Executive Committee members were Charles Ferguson, Betty W. Robinett, Albert Valdman, and G. Richard Tucker). AAAL became an affiliate of AILA soon after AILA held its fifth triennial world congress in Montreal in August 1978.

As a kind of footnote to the discussion, James Alatis (then Executive Secretary of TESOL) was strongly opposed to the formation of a new association. He rightly feared that a new association would draw applied linguists away from TESOL. Over time, his fear has been justified; applied linguists have largely deserted TESOL (and many of the other associations mentioned above). In the early years of its existence, AAAL elected to meet annually with the LSA, but that proved—for a variety of reasons—to be an unsatisfactory arrangement. In 1991, in New York, AAAL began to meet contiguously with TESOL; that arrangement continues at the present time (Kaplan 1998).

### 3. The history of two applied linguistic journals

There could not have been so much activity surrounding the creation of a new organization without comparable discussion of the vehicle(s) through which the new association was to voice its views. Among the various conversations that took place at the critical Puerto Rico TESOL conference in 1973, some dealt directly with the question of a journal (largely those involving Peter Collier). At the time that those discussions were being held, the British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) had been in business for some five years, but it did not yet have a journal of its own. About 1976, serious discussions began toward the creation of a journal of applied linguistics. These discussions, always centering on Oxford University Press (OUP), involved J. P. B. (Patrick) Allen, Simon Murison-Bowie (then of OUP), Robert Kaplan, Bernard Spolsky, Henry Widdowson, and others. The notion was to create a ‘transatlantic’ journal serving the needs of both AAAL and BAAL.

*Applied Linguistics*: The journal *Applied Linguistics* (AL) was founded in 1980. It was jointly sponsored by AAAL and BAAL, was published by OUP, and has regularly had joint editors, normally one from North America and one from the UK. In the late 1970s, some individuals at OUP felt the need for a journal to support the kind of applied linguistics textbook publishing effort under way at OUP.<sup>1</sup> The only journal OUP had in the general area was *The English Language Teaching Journal* (ELTJ), which, while being the most respected and oldest journal for language teachers, did not address the more theoretical bases of the profession. At the time, OUP also distributed the *International Review of Applied Linguistics* (IRAL), but this journal has not consistently served the wider applied linguistics community.

At the time when these discussions were taking place, OUP had for a number of years worked with J. P. B. Allen (for example, on the *Edinburgh Course in Applied Linguistics*, 4 vols., 1972–1977) and H. G. Widdowson (for example, *Teaching Language as Communication*, 1978), and both of them indicated an interest in editing a new journal of the sort being discussed. The aim of that journal, as stated on the inside back cover of Vol. 1, No. 1, and still regularly noted in every issue, was:

...to promote a principled approach to language education and other language related concerns by encouraging inquiry into the relationship between theoretical and practical studies. The journal is less interested in the ad hoc solution of particular problems and more interested in the handling of problems in a principled way by reference to theoretical studies...

The idea was tested out on a number of linguists and applied linguists, seeking geographic as well as professional spread, and testimonials were solicited. A proposal to publish the journal was approved by the Delegates of OUP (a board of university appointees chaired by the Vice Chancellor). From the earliest stages of the journal, OUP sought to link subscription to *AL* to membership in professional associations. The British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) was the first organization to enter into such a relationship, and the American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) soon followed, so that Vol. 1, No. 1, published in the Spring 1980, was jointly sponsored by those two bodies. As a consequence of that relationship, Bernard Spolsky (then on the faculty at the University of New Mexico) joined J. P. B. Allen and H. G. Widdowson as editors. An editorial board of 22 academics (representing Australia, Canada, Finland, Germany, Israel, Poland, Singapore, Sweden, Switzerland, the United Kingdom, and the United States), plus two representatives of OUP (Simon Murison-Bowie was one), was formed. Both AAAL and BAAL had the right to nominate a board member. The board remained essentially unchanged for the first seven years of its existence, though Alan Davies and Elaine Tarone replaced J. P. B. Allen and H. G. Widdowson from Vol. 6. Beginning from Vol. 8 (1987), a number of administrative changes were introduced. Bernard Spolsky resigned as editor and was replaced by a reviews editor; Kari Sajavarras, from Finland, was the first holder of that post. The original 22-person board was replaced by an Advisory Board consisting of the BAAL and AAAL representatives (initially John Trim and Susan Gass, respectively). Christina Whitecross at OUP became the publisher. An eight-person editorial panel was appointed. From Vol. 6 (1985) the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA) added its formal support to the journal; that support was duly approved at the 1984 AILA Congress in Brussels.

From the beginning, *AL* has published a number of seminal articles for the applied linguistics field. In Vol. 1, No. 1, the article “Theoretical bases of communicative approaches,” by M. Canale and M. Swain appeared, and a number



of other key articles have been published over the years. Through a balanced mix of articles, reviews, and thematic issues, *AL* has mapped the development of the discipline in a serious and non-trivial way.

*Annual Review of Applied Linguistics: The Annual Review of Applied Linguistics (ARAL)* has had a rather different history. In 1978, when AAAL was created and discussions of a journal were being widely held, Henry Birnbaum (now deceased, originally a mathematician, later a United States government science administrator and ultimately international advisor to the President of the University of Southern California) suggested to Robert Kaplan that no scientific field could long survive without an annual review of research. The idea captured Kaplan's imagination. He held conversations with a number of people, and eventually asked Randall Jones (Brigham Young University) and G. Richard Tucker (by then Director of the CAL) to join him as the first editors of an annual review. Having an editorial board, a general plan for the journal evolved—a full review of the field every fifth year and special topical issues in the interim years. Kaplan approached Rupert Ingram, then owner and publisher of Newbury House, with the idea. Ingram was interested. The editorial board decided on approximately a dozen topics to be covered in the first volume—bilingualism, computer-assisted instruction, language testing, macro-sociolinguistics and micro-sociolinguistics, notional-functional teaching approaches, pidginization and creolization, structural-cognitive teaching approaches, psycholinguistics, second-language acquisition, sign language, and theoretical issues in sociolinguistics. The editorial board identified a number of authors to be invited to submit contributions in these areas, and contributions were ultimately received from Jenny Barnett, H. Douglas Brown, Alfonso Caramazza and Michael McCloskey, Joshua Fishman, Francisco Gomes de Matos, Matthias Hartig, Lilith Haynes, Braj Kachru, Rachel Mayberry, John Oller, Frank Otto, Jack Richards, and Loreto Todd. The editor, Robert Kaplan, wrote the introduction to the first volume, as he did for the next nine volumes.

In 1985, a misunderstanding with Newbury House caused Kaplan to enter into discussions with Cambridge University Press [CUP]. All subsequent volumes of *ARAL*, beginning with volume 5, have been published by Cambridge University Press. Unfortunately, the first four volumes are no longer available. The ongoing relationship with CUP has been quite successful though the nature of *ARAL* does cause some marketing problems. *ARAL* looks like a journal and is produced by the journals division, but it is an annual and not really a journal. This has led to some regrettable confusion. *ARAL* has, for quite a number of years, been made available at reduced rates to members of AAAL, BAAL, and TESOL. Somewhat more than 1,000 copies of *ARAL* are sold annually by CUP (including back issues).

The *ARAL* Editorial Board has, over the years, made several strategic innovations; the journal would have a running bibliography of all works cited, a topical index (a listing that has begun to serve as a definition of the scope of

applied linguistics—see Grabe and Kaplan 1992: 3–4), and a contributor index. (As the series grew longer, certain compromises have had to be made to prevent the three indices from overwhelming the volumes.)

*ARAL* would always publish only solicited articles (no unsolicited contributions), and—since all articles were, by definition, review articles accompanied by extensive reference lists—it would not publish separate book reviews. The primary focus of the review articles was to be on critical research in the preceding two to three years, but with the assumption that reference lists were free to cite seminal works in the area regardless of date of publication. Reference lists have always consisted of annotated and unannotated entries. The series would publish in American English, but it would strive for broad international representation. Beginning with Volume 6, each issue has carried a running index of authors cited and subjects covered; because the author index and the subject index became overwhelming, only the preceding five years' citations are available in any given volume after number 7. A contributor index was also added beginning with volume 5; it now lists contributors from the preceding decade. It was the intent that these several indices would become citation indices for the field.

The first issue appeared in 1981 with a title showing the preceding year (1980). Beginning in 1994, the cover date was adjusted to reflect the year of publication rather than the year covered in the research (e. g., Volume 13, published in 1993, carried the cover date 1992, Volume 14, the transitional issue published in 1994, carried a cover date of 1993–94, and Volume 15, published in 1995, carried the cover date 1995). (Incidentally, 1981 was the only year in which a hardback version was published.) From Volume 1, the first issue, through Volume 8, Kaplan, with the able assistance of his wife, Audrey Kaplan, produced camera-ready typescript copy. It was not until Volume 9 that manuscript preparation was shifted to electronic word-processing. Over the years, there was only one single issue (Volume 8) which utilized a guest editor; Christopher Brumfit edited that volume, a special issue on Communicative Language Teaching. Otherwise, the full editorial responsibility rested with Kaplan as the editor-in-chief through 1991.

The Editorial Directors, meeting annually in face-to-face conversation, usually during the AAAL or TESOL conferences, identify the focus of each volume, the topics to be covered, and the individuals to be solicited to contribute, based on discussions of ideas circulated in advance by the editor-in-chief. The Editorial Directors are thus always working with three years of *ARAL* each time they meet—one that is about to appear (or has just appeared), one that is well along in the editorial process, and one that is in its formative stage, two-years out.

Gradually, the role of the Editorial Directors has evolved, and the members of the Board have changed—fixed terms were instituted beginning with volume ten. Over the years—in addition to Jones (who withdrew after Volume one), Kaplan, and Tucker—Alison d'Anglejan, J Ronayne Cowan, Charles

Ferguson, William Grabe, Braj Kachru, Mary McGroarty, Merrill Swain, H. G. Widdowson, and Janice Yalden have at various times served as Editorial Directors for varying periods of time. Grabe, Kaplan, Tucker, and Widdowson, have served for the longest terms. The composition of the Editorial Directors has always striven for international representation and gender balance. In 1989 (Volume 9), an Editorial Advisory Board was added, normally consisting of approximately 10 internationally recognized scholars. The first advisory board included Aura Bocaz (Chile), Moira Chimombo (Malawi), Michael Clyne (Australia), Biodun Goke-Pariola (Nigeria), Andrew Gonzalez (Philippines), Sayyid Hurreiz (Sudan), Peter Nelde (Belgium), Bernard Spolsky (Israel), R. N. Srivastava (India), and John Kwock-ping Tse (Taiwan). The function of the advisory board has been to suggest areas and contributors for scholarship to be covered.

With the completion of the eleventh volume (1991—jointly edited by Kaplan and Grabe), Kaplan resigned as editor-in-chief (though he remained on the editorial board through Volume 20, at which point he retired from service to *ARAL*) and was succeeded by William Grabe as editor-in-chief. Grabe, in turn has served ten years as editor-in-chief and, with this twentieth volume, relinquishes that role to Mary McGroarty.

#### 4. Topics covered in *ARAL*

The shaping influence of a broader interpretation of applied linguistics is partly reflected in the thematic volumes produced in the *ARAL* series, and also the themes repeated over ten-year cycles. For example, the first ten years covered language and language-in-education policy (Volume 2), discourse analysis (3), literacy (4), multilingualism (6), language use in the professions (7), communicative language teaching (8), and second language acquisition (9). In the second decade, a number of basic themes were revisited: language policy, literacy, discourse analysis, and multilingualism. In addition, a volume was developed to examine technology and language and two volumes were devoted to language teaching concerns. An effort was made to plan for a language-teaching-related volume to appear every fifth year (beginning with Volume 8). Beginning with Volume 15, a plan has been developed to produce overview volumes with a greater consistency of topical coverage; so overview Volumes 15 and 19 both include sections on second language acquisition, language assessment, and language uses in various professional and public contexts. This consistency of topical coverage also meant that *ARAL* does not need to publish separate thematic volumes on second language acquisition, language assessment, or language use in professional and public contexts. Rather, the inclusion of these topics in regular overview volumes ensures a more frequent updating of changes and innovations in these areas, particularly since overview volumes are now to be published every four years rather than every five years.

Aside from the general field coverage of applied linguistics projected by volume themes and overviews, the specific topical coverage of the volumes is

meant to reflect evolving perspectives among applied linguistics. This currency of topics is reflected in the subject index at the back of each *ARAL* volume, providing a snapshot of the issues addressed in the prior five years. Because the *ARAL* subject index changes completely over a period of five years, shifts, trends, and continuities in applied linguistics can be explored in one way by comparing the subject indexes from Volumes 9, 14, and 19, for example. Of course, a similar content analysis approach could be applied to other key applied linguistics journals, and a multiple journal comparison might be instructive for the field.

We have argued in this section that *ARAL*, along with a few other publications, has had and is having a consistent shaping influence on the field of applied linguistics. This influence is not one that can be readily demonstrated in any simple way since such a demonstration would belie the complex and messy nature of a disciplinary field's development and evolution. The topics emphasized in *ARAL* over the past two decades reflect the central sub-fields that are typically included under applied linguistics in discussions and debates. The related fields that are only sometimes incorporated into applied linguistics definitions by applied linguists themselves have also received a lesser recognition in *ARAL* volumes. By this reasoning, second language acquisition, language testing, language policy studies, multilingualism, literacy, and language uses in professional and public contexts are all fields firmly within the discipline of applied linguistics (in addition to language teaching and language-teacher training). Other fields may also be located within applied linguistics, but perhaps less clearly so by this reasoning. A further corollary implication is that applied linguistics is not a cover term simply for language teaching and language-teacher training.

### THE FUTURE OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS

Applied linguists of most persuasions tend to shy away from speculating on the future of applied linguistics. However, the opportunity to influence and shape the thinking of others often falls to those who are willing to prognosticate (and who do so fairly effectively, if not completely accurately). So, in closing, we will offer a small set of tentative indications on future directions in applied linguistics research. In doing so, we wish to call attention to the fact that we are perhaps better qualified to write the history presented here (having lived it); scholars working on the cutting edges of the field should be invited to write about its future.<sup>2</sup> Having made our apologies for reading the future, we see four trends increasing in the coming years.

In the future, the field of applied linguistics will be defined by greater uses of technology and computer applications. Computer literacy will become an essential component of training for new applied linguists. These computer uses will be seen in new statistical approaches, computer-based testing and language learning, connectionist research on learning, technology and literacy development, corpus linguistics research and lexicography, and translation research. Tied to computer uses and technology applications will be changes in testing that better

reflect recent views on validity and performance assessment. Assessment practices will take on new dimensions with the development of appropriate technology resources that are not yet ready for application or that have not yet been developed in practical ways. The rapid growth in computational power available to everyone will bring these changes about sooner rather than later. Technology resources will also influence task designs for research studies in a wide variety of ways and for a broad range of research purposes, some of which cannot even be envisioned at the present time.

A second major trend that has begun and will increase will be a move toward a more powerful version of descriptive linguistics as the central linguistic resource for research. The development of corpus linguistics is now revealing facts about language use and language variation across registers that are essential for addressing practical issues but that may be largely incompatible with many current theoretical models in linguistics. Applied linguists, who must be anchored in a 'realistic' linguistics that is discourse based, contextually framed, and grounded in attested occurrences, will move back toward analyzing new data rather than arguing new theory (though theory building is certainly possible within a descriptive-data framework; cf. Widdowson, this volume). Goals will center around understanding new facts about language rather than having language facts forced to fit preconceived theory. In the face of this disjuncture, descriptive linguistics, with its new power to enhance our understanding of language uses, will provide more fertile ground for applied linguistics. The return to descriptively powerful research will be enhanced by computer applications; by studies of language uses in legal, medical, scientific, and business contexts; by research at the discourse level (as the basic analytic unit); and by the power of descriptive analysis to provide relatively theory-neutral data for future linguistic theorizing.

A third important trend will be the increasing importance of evaluation and assessment practices. The centrality of construct validity as a driving force in language testing is already spreading beyond the boundaries of testing and into other areas of applied linguistics. In second language acquisition, there is a growing recognition that validity of task and test data is a central concern—researchers need to collect and interpret responsible evidence in support of theoretical claims (Bachman and Cohen 1998, Clapham, this volume). The critical importance of careful and thorough evaluative practices is relevant to language policy and planning efforts as well. Takala and Sajavaara (this volume) argue strongly for the central role of evaluation in the planning and implementation of language policies. The importance of evaluation practices is also being felt in classrooms and in curriculum planning. National standards efforts and the increasing demand for standardized assessments in many states in the U.S. and elsewhere highlight validity and reliability issues that will directly impact instructional practices and learning processes (Brindley 1998). Evaluation and assessment issues are no longer only the concern of language testers, and sophisticated evaluation and assessment practices will be a key concern for all future applied linguistics research.

A final area in which applied linguistics will change in new ways is in student learning. This trend will manifest itself both for all students learning languages and for undergraduate and post-graduate students studying applied linguistics. Language students will become familiar with new technologies for learning. They will become more engaged in autonomous learning while also working collaboratively within groups. They will have greater access to resources to support their learning, and they will receive more rapid feedback on their learning progress. All of these features of language learning will be even more prominent among programs that train applied linguists. Students of applied linguistics will need to master a wide range of technological skills as central components of their training. They will need to work collaboratively on research projects, as inter-disciplinary cooperation and the common use of research teams become essential to deal with larger problems implicating a broader range of disciplines and human resources. Students will engage in research practices that require strong knowledge of both quantitative and qualitative methods and their complementary contributions to knowledge making. Students will need to engage in field-work projects as applications take on larger roles than do standard knowledge-bases in training programs. Of course, these student of applied linguistics will also need current and broad knowledge of linguistics and, in all likelihood, of at least one related field. While these demands on new students may seem daunting, they are probably no more demanding than new and increasing expectations in other disciplines. It is an exciting time to be an applied linguist, and also an exciting time to learn to become one.

We believe that *ARAL*, under the guidance of its future editors and editorial directors, will continue to chart the field, to contribute to its development, and to serve as an important resource both to practitioners and to future applied linguists.

## NOTES

1. We are deeply indebted to Simon Murison Bowie (personal communication) for much of the information contained in this brief sketch of the history of *Applied Linguistics*.
2. We will together undertake one more volume, outside of *ARAL*, intended to move toward a definition of the field by giving full play to its scope (Kaplan, to appear).

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