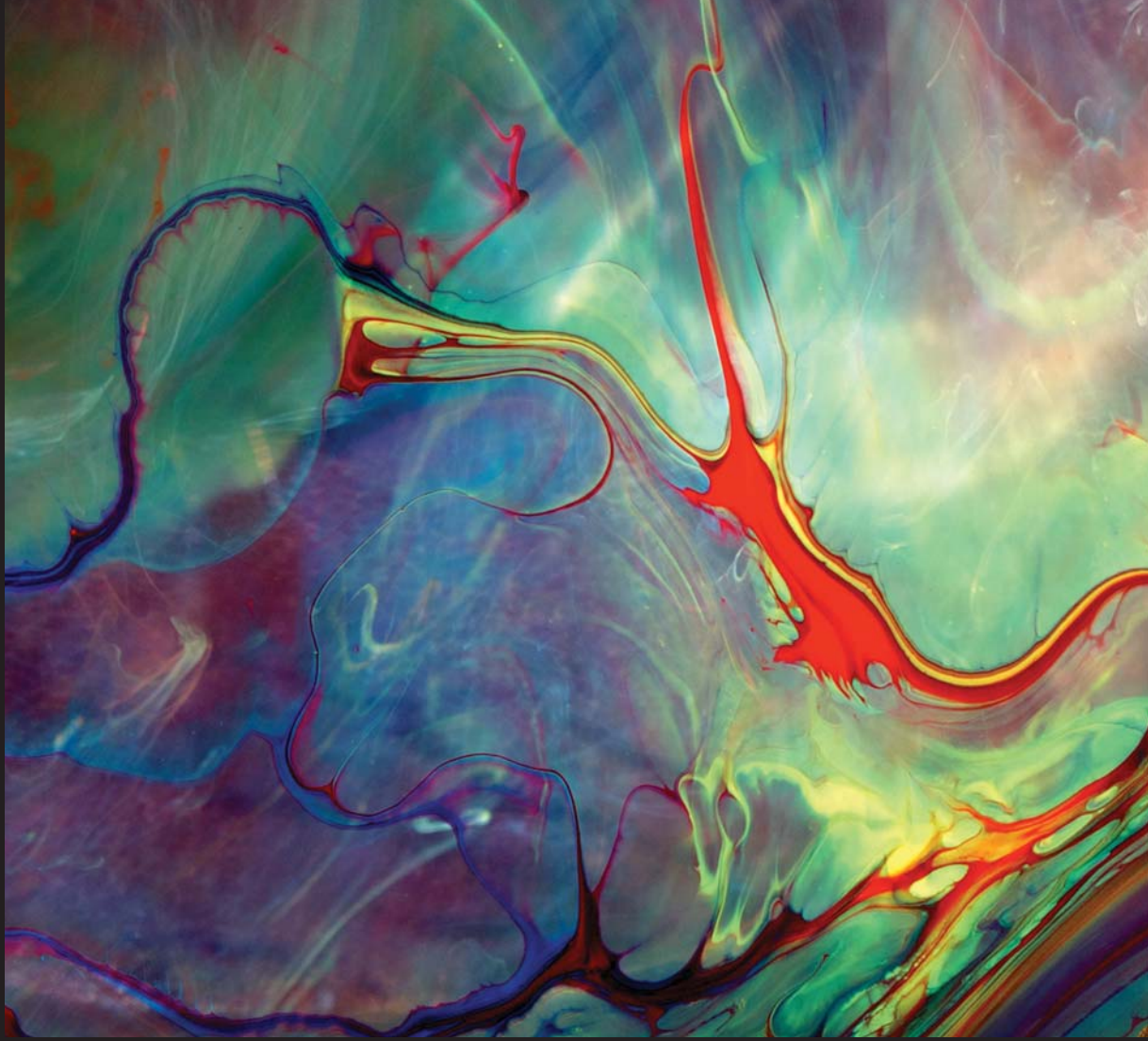




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Introduction

Applied linguistics in the contemporary world

James Simpson

This *Handbook* is a reference work covering key topics in applied linguistics. Each chapter provides an accessible introductory overview of an area of the field. The book is intended for a diverse audience, but is firmly oriented towards newcomers: you, the reader, might be a researcher, a graduate student, an academic wanting to familiarize yourself with the field, or a indeed a language professional looking for a ‘way in’ to one of the many topics encompassed by applied linguistics.

Applied linguistics

Applied linguistics is the academic field which connects knowledge about language to decision-making in the real world. Generally speaking, the role of applied linguists is to make insights drawn from areas of language study relevant to such decision-making. In this sense applied linguistics mediates between theory and practice.

The origins of applied linguistics lie in the mid-twentieth century effort to give an academic underpinning to the study of language teaching and learning. Until at least the 1980s applied linguistics was most closely associated with the problems and puzzles surrounding language pedagogy, learning and acquisition. This focus is still prominent for many: it remains the most active area of applied linguistic enquiry, though the time is past when it could be considered the sole motivation for the field. As chapters in this volume demonstrate, applied linguistics concerns range from the well-established ones of language learning, teaching, testing and teacher education, to matters as disparate as language and the law, the language of institutions, medical communication, media discourse, translation and interpreting, and language planning. Applied linguistics engages with contemporary social questions of culture, ethnicity, gender, identity, ageing, and migration. Applied linguists adopt perspectives on language in use spanning critical discourse analysis, linguistic ethnography, sociocultural theories, literacy, stylistics and sociolinguistics. And applied linguistics draws upon descriptions of language from traditions such as cognitive linguistics, corpus linguistics, generative linguistics and systemic functional linguistics, among others.

Though this is an applied field and an interdisciplinary one, it is not fragmented. The distinctive identity of contemporary applied linguistics can be characterized both in conceptual terms and in terms of its scope and coverage.

The most widely cited definition of applied linguistics comes from Christopher Brumfit, who describes it as: ‘the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue’ (1995: 27). Brumfit’s definition is broad enough to encompass the range of areas of enquiry indicated above. It also firmly distinguishes applied linguistics from other related fields by making it problem-oriented. While language is, of course, fundamental to human life, and surrounds us, the problem orientation helps to delimit the field. That is, the motivation for applied linguistics lies not with an interest in autonomous or idealized language, as with understandings of linguistics which deal in linguistic universals: applied linguistics data is typically collected empirically in contexts of use. Nor is its concern with the entirety of ‘language in use’. It is demarcated by its interest in how language is implicated in real-world decision-making.

Yet though the problem orientation helpfully bounds applied linguistics, the array of issues opened up by Brumfit’s definition can still seem unconstrained, a point made often before. The main ramification is that practically everything in life poses a problem in which language is central: ‘It is hard to think of any “real-world” problems’, says Greg Myers (2005: 527), ‘that do not have a crucial component of language use’, for language is a central issue in most human endeavour. Hence a challenge for this volume is to present a view on the extent of the field. Readers will judge the success or otherwise of this, as I sketch out the sections and chapters below.

The scope of this volume

Each chapter in this volume focuses on a specific area of applied linguistics. The chapters share broadly the same format, covering a history of the area, a critical discussion of its main current issues, and an indication of its emergent debates and future trajectory. Where appropriate, authors discuss the influence of new technology in the area. Chapters conclude with a list of related topics in the volume. Each chapter has a section on further reading: a short annotated list of works which readers might consult for a more in-depth treatment of the area. Finally, bibliographical references appear at the end of each chapter, making them self-contained.

In a collection of such size and diversity, there will be aspects to regard critically. Some readers will doubtless disapprove of the way authors have examined a particular topic. Others will take issue with the organization of the volume. And others still will find that the inevitable gaps are insupportable. Clearly, and despite my intention to cover much ground, certain areas are not as fully dealt with as some might wish. Nonetheless, the five sections of the volume do group into broad themes: here I take each in turn to provide an outline.

Part I: Applied linguistics in action

‘One is tempted to wonder’, says Martin Bygate (2005: 570) ‘what is so special about studying language within real-world problems if the only purpose is to use it as a stimulus for academic reflection.’ The first section of this *Handbook* consists of chapters on a variety of applied linguistics topics which explain ways in which the study of language involves not only the description of real-world matters, but suggestions about how they can be addressed. Hence, in this section above all, the practical general relevance of applied linguistics is apparent, the issues with which it engages are to the fore, and the breadth of contemporary applied linguistics is reflected. Of the areas chosen, some are well-established sub-fields of applied linguistic study, while others have hitherto been considered independent or peripheral. Readers will realize that in this section, chapters would surely have proliferated, had space allowed.

A number of the chapters invoke globalization. Opening the book, *Language Policy and Planning* has a long history in terms of interventions into language practices, as Lionel Wee says, but a short one as an area of academic study. Wee examines the valuable contributions which applied linguistics can make in this difficult area. For Vijay Bhatia and Aditi Bhatia, *Business Communication* refers specifically to English business communication and English for Business Purposes. Positioning the area firmly in relation to the globalization of trade and commerce, they trace the development of an applied linguistics interest in business communication to sociolinguistically-informed English for Specific Purposes (ESP), genre analysis, and communication studies. Mona Baker and Luis Pérez-González adopt an ideologically critical stance towards their topic, *Translation and Interpreting*, noting its social relevance in globalized, postcolonial society.

For most chapters in the section, the influence of new technology is a crucial current concern.

Thierry Fontenelle's chapter on *Lexicography* delves into the fascinating history of the subject. His focus then turns to pedagogical dictionaries for foreign language learners and bilingual dictionaries, and he brings us up to date with informed discussion of the influence of what he rightly terms 'the corpus revolution'. Also concerned with new technology is Anne O'Keeffe: her chapter on *The Media* discusses the applied linguistic interest in print and broadcast genres, and most recently, in what is broadly termed 'new media'.

Celia Roberts, in her chapter on *Institutional Discourse*, describes how institutions are held together by language, and how a study of the language of institutions can afford insights into the way they function. The primary focus of the related chapter, *Medical Communication*, as Sarah Collins, Sarah Peters and Ian Watt note, is the language practices surrounding the doctor-patient relationship, in consultations and other encounters. They attend to the increasing interest in cultural and linguistic diversity, and to the influence of new technology as the computer enters the relationship. *Clinical Linguistics*, explain Michael Perkins and Sara Howard in their foundational survey of the area, involves the study of how language and communication may be impaired. They point to its interdisciplinarity, its connections with social and medical sciences as well as linguistics. Kees de Bot and Nienke van der Hoeven present a cognitively oriented chapter on *Language and Ageing*, covering the effects of ageing on language use and cognitive processing.

Finally, in this section there are few areas where the practical nature of applied linguistics is more apparent than with *Forensic Linguistics*, which, as Frances Rock notes in her chapter, 'permits linguists to make positive contributions to the operation of law and thus society'.

Part II: Language learning, language education

Language learning and language education are at the historical heart and core of applied linguistics, a field with a commitment to mediating between theory and practice (Widdowson 1984). This obligation is clear in the study of language learning, which investigates the two-way relationship between the tangible practical experience of learners and teachers on the one hand, and more abstract perspectives on language and learning on the other. As Cook and Seidlhofer (1995: 10) suggest: 'Teachers like to have a sound theoretical underpinning for what they do: one which does justice to the complexity of language, language learners, language learning, and the social context in which these exist.' Applied linguists with an interest in language teaching will certainly find much of relevance beyond this section: other practically oriented and more theoretically oriented chapters will no doubt inform those involved in language teaching and learning. Inclusion of the topics in this section clears the ground for a

considered reflection of the field for those professionals for whom language learning and teaching are their daily concern.

Language pedagogy is both fast-moving and at the same time subject to shifts of fashion which are confusing for novices and veterans alike. The three opening chapters provide an accessible basis for an informed understanding. The first chapter frames the section: Diane Larsen-Freeman writes about *Key Concepts in Language Learning and Language Education*. Lourdes Ortega's chapter on *Second Language Acquisition* and Scott Thornbury's on *Language Teaching Methodology* complement the opening chapter with, on the one hand, a focus on theory, and on the other, attention to practice.

The global relevance of applied linguistic concerns is greatly in evidence in this section. Richard Kern, in his chapter *Technology and Language Learning*, describes the purposes for which digital technology has been used in language learning, relating these to features of electronic discourse and the affordances of new technologies. Not least among these is the ability learners now have to engage with communication in a new language and culture. Simon Borg, in addressing the 'diverse global scope' of *Language Teacher Education*, stresses the connections between contexts of initial and continuing teacher education, regardless of the languages at issue or where the activity takes place. Ingrid Gogolin discusses the specific issues of *Bilingual Education* in an increasingly multilingual world.

Nigel Harwood and Bojana Petrić present an overview of *English for Academic Purposes*. They point out that although EAP relates to the very practical matter of assisting learners' study of English, research in the area has contributed to applied linguistic theory more generally. The chapter on *Language Testing*, by Barry O'Sullivan, likewise engages with the practical and the theoretical, including a treatment of validity and test validation, and critical discussion of emerging debates. Amy Tsui's chapter on *Classroom Discourse* explains how discourse analysis is employed to study a range of issues relating to language use in language classrooms.

Finally, in this section Agnes He discusses a view of language in which she considers it not as a body of knowledge but as semiotic resource. *Language Socialization* is concerned with how novices, who might be children, language learners, or new members of communities, are socialized to be competent members in the 'target culture' through language use, and how they are socialized to use language. This is an approach which provides a counterbalance in language pedagogy to more familiar understandings of the nature of language, its learning, and its use.

Part III: Language, culture and identity

Understanding language learning and use involves far more than an investigation of its formal properties. Chapters in this section give voice to the recognition that matters of culture and identity are intertwined with language use, and with knowledge about language. The applied linguistic concern with language in the social world entails an exploration of phenomena, connections and relationships from the micro to the macro scale – from language-related issues of individual identity to those of globalized society.

The study of culture and of identity runs as a thread through contemporary social sciences. The first two chapters of this section, presenting an applied linguistics exploration of the subjects, complement and to an extent contrast with each other. Claire Kramsch, in her chapter *Culture*, discusses the development of an interest in culture in applied linguistics. Bonny Norton's focus is on *Identity* and the individual. In each case, the authors argue against a conception of language as abstract and of language learning as a decontextualized skill.

Claire Kramsch maintains a position whereby language is viewed as cultural understanding. For Bonny Norton, the study of identity affords an insight into ‘the relationship between the language learner and the larger social world’. Closely related concerns are the topics of the next two chapters. In her chapter on *Gender*, Judith Baxter discusses gender, ideology and identity from a sociolinguistic perspective. Roxy Harris’s chapter is on *Ethnicity*, a much-neglected topic in applied linguistics, towards which he adopts a critical stance. The very particular issues relating to the description and use of the group of languages known as *Sign Languages* are the subject of the chapter which follows, by Bencie Woll and Rachel Sutton-Spence.

Globalization is the concern of the next chapters in the section. Language teachers of all stripes will find these chapters relevant and interesting, relating as they do to questions of differences between and within languages, the dominance of one language or variety of a language over others. The position and role of world languages, and the growth of English in particular, is a key applied linguistic concern which relates to English language learning, for example. Andy Kirkpatrick and David Deterding discuss the status, development and future of *World Englishes*. World languages are examined from a more critical perspective by Suresh Canagarajah and Selim Ben Said, in their chapter on *Linguistic Imperialism*.

Global society in the post-colonial age is characterized by international flows of people, bringing the issues of multilingualism and migration to the fore. In their chapter on *Multilingualism*, Jasone Cenoz and Durk Gorter note that ‘a traditional monolingual view has seen multilingualism as a problem’. The alternative view which they outline considers it as ‘a powerful resource for individuals and societies’. Migration is increasingly of interest to language professionals, for example those whose concern is with the teaching of a new language to migrants. The final chapter in this section, *Language and Migration* by Mike Baynham, presents a framework for its study.

Part IV: Perspectives on language in use

Language surrounds us: it is central to psychological and cognitive development, and to social contact, relationships and understandings; it pervades human life. Perspectives on the study of language in use are therefore by definition wide-ranging. The varied and intersecting chapters in this section examine approaches to the study of language use, language development in the brain and the mind, and language in society. The particular aspect of language in use that is the object of enquiry will bear on the view of language itself, and these chapters usefully develop the question of the complexity and multiplicity of what language *is*, and thus foreshadow the final section.

Guy Cook’s chapter on *Discourse Analysis* opens the section. Cook reminds us that an interest in discourse analysis originated ‘in an awareness of the inability of formal linguistics to account for how participants in communication achieve meaning’. As such, it has been highly influential in pushing the entire field of applied linguistics towards its current independent status. Cook ends on a quizzical note, however, contemplating the very identity of discourse analysis as a distinct area of study. Kieran O’Halloran writes on another significant and somewhat contested applied linguistic area, *Critical Discourse Analysis*, the investigation of how ‘language use may be affirming and indeed reproducing the perspectives, values and ways of talking of the powerful, which may not be in the interests of the less powerful’.

Language development as it relates to individual neurological and psychological processes, and to the broader social context, is the focus of the following three chapters. Elisabeth Ahlsén notes that *Neurolinguistics*, the study of language and the brain, is a truly interdisciplinary pursuit, involving neuroscience, psychology, linguistics, speech pathology and biology. Its

relevance to therapy in particular makes it an applied linguistic concern. In his chapter *Psycholinguistics*, John Field explores some familiar territory for applied linguistics, as he examines the cognitive processes at play in language use and acquisition. *Sociocultural and Cultural-Historical Theories of Language Development*, explain Steven Thorne and Thomas Tasker, view mental development as fundamentally constructed through ‘engagement with cultural practices, artifacts, and milieus’. This understanding of language development stresses the relationship between an individual’s development and ‘the social and material conditions of everyday life, including those comprising formal instructional settings’.

Sociolinguistics – the topic of the chapter by Carmen Llamas – is itself a broad field of language study, and concerns language in social contexts, language change and variation, and the signalling and interpretation of meaning in interaction, all matters of central relevance and connection to applied linguistics. Janet Maybin and Karin Tusting write on *Linguistic Ethnography*, a fast-growing area which combines ethnography with linguistics and other strategies to investigate social processes. Perhaps because of its *emic* perspective and sensitivity to contextual features, linguistic ethnography is emerging as a key paradigm for investigating language in use in the world today. Doris Warriner adopts an approach to *Literacy* which also regards language and literacy practices as contextually situated. Such practices – as she says – can be seen not as problems but as resources ‘which might be differentially valued and supported depending on situation, place, audience, and goals’. Finally, in this section *Stylistics* is concerned with the description and interpretation of distinctive linguistic choices and patterns in general and literary texts, as Elena Semino explains in her overview.

Part V: Descriptions of language for applied linguistics

At a time when applied linguistics was still establishing its identity as a field of study, debates emerged about whether ‘applied linguistics’ should in fact be properly thought of as ‘linguistics applied’ (Widdowson 1984). That is to say, how far should *linguistics* provide the basic principles upon which applied linguistics should draw? In the ‘linguistics-applied’ view, the theoretical foundations derive from linguistics: for proponents of this view, linguistic theories came first and were applied – and in the early days, were applied exclusively – to language teaching problems. In short, in the ‘linguistics-applied’ view there is no sense that applied linguistics needs its own theory, for the theories come from linguistics. (See Davies 1999: chapter 1, and Cook 2005, for discussions.) With the widespread acceptance of Brumfit’s formulation – *the theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems* – the sanction for applied linguistics to develop its own models of description is now no longer contended. The central questions for theory therefore become, in Widdowson’s words (1984: 22): ‘how can *relevant* models of language description be devised, and what are the factors which will determine their effectiveness?’ Part V presents descriptions of language for applied linguistics: in each case, authors discuss the concerns that might be addressed effectively with such models. It could be said that applied linguistics is in part defined by its approaches to the description of language: a field which is concerned with real-world decision-making characteristically makes use of empirically secured data and empirical research methods. Nonetheless, in an echo of earlier chapters, readers will note that no one description, model or view of language will suffice for all intentions: one’s understanding of language will depend to an extent on one’s particular concern of the time, and it is for readers to judge the relevance of these descriptions for their own purposes. As Widdowson notes (2003: 14), applied linguistics ‘does not impose a way of thinking, but points things out that might be worth thinking about’.

The section opens with three chapters of importance to language teaching and learning, and certainly with broad general relevance. Michael Swan presents an overview of *Grammar* in its ‘narrow sense’, that is, morphology and syntax. This chapter is followed by that on *Lexis*, by Joe Barcroft, Gretchen Sunderman and Norbert Schmitt, who describe this as the area of language study where form and meaning meet. Speech, argues Helen Fraser in her chapter on *Phonetics and Phonology*, is best regarded as a complex (rather than a complicated) system; she outlines a theoretical approach to the study of speech that is relevant to practice – for example, to language teaching.

Svenja Adolphs and Phoebe Lin provide an overview of the data-driven study of language description that is *Corpus Linguistics*. The influence of corpus linguistics is undisputed: many authors of chapters in this volume describe how the insights gained by the study of machine-readable samples of real spoken and written language have transformed their own areas. In *Cognitive Linguistics*, as Hans-Jörg Schmid and Friedrich Ungerer put it in their chapter, ‘knowledge about linguistic structures is explained with recourse to our knowledge about the world, and it is assumed that language both reflects and contributes to shaping this knowledge’.

The following three chapters present competing accounts of language description. Lynne Young, discussing *Systemic Functional Linguistics* (SFL), explains the view of language inspired by the work of Halliday: language as a social semiotic, a system of meaning-making embedded in social contexts of use. Shigenori Wakabayashi makes the case for the relevance of an area of language description frequently misunderstood as not relevant to applied linguistics – *Generative Grammar*. In some contrast, in *The Emergence of Language as a Complex Adaptive System*, Nick Ellis describes the emergent patternings of language, and how these are revealed when it is viewed as a complex system.

The final chapter in the volume, on *Multimodality*, connects linguistic to non-linguistic dimensions of meaning-making, as Theo van Leeuwen explains how language cannot be adequately understood without taking non-verbal communication into account.

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Part I

Applied linguistics in action

Language policy and planning

Lionel Wee

Introduction

Understood broadly as interventions into language practices, language policy and planning (LPP) has had a long and checkered history. As an academic discipline, however, LPP is relatively recent in origin, having gained momentum from the drives toward nationalism and nation building (Wright 2004: 8).

The focus of this overview is primarily on developments within LPP as an academic discipline. The modern history of this discipline can be described in terms of three main stages (Ricento 2000): (i) an initial stage of optimism in the 1960s and 1970s that the language problems of newly independent states could be solved via the implementation of rational and systematic procedures; (ii) a period of disillusionment in the wake of LPP failures (1980s and 1990s) that opened the way for a more critical and reflexive appreciation of the role that language and linguists play in society; and (iii) in the present period, a growing sense that LPP needs to be reconstituted as a multidisciplinary and politicized approach, since the issues it grapples with are complex and represent interests that can pervade multiple levels of social life, ranging from the individual to the state and across state boundaries as well.

A motif of this chapter is that it is worth viewing this history of LPP as a dynamic interplay between academic concerns, on the one hand, and political/bureaucratic interests, on the other. The benefit of such a perspective is that it provides us with a better awareness of the kinds of constraints faced by applied linguistics as it attempts to engage with 'real world' language-related problems.

So, though it is the next section that specifically delves into the history of LPP, there is good reason, even as we move on to the later sections, to also keep in mind the challenges that arise when attempting to marry more intellectual understandings of language with the practical demands faced by both policy-makers and the people whose lived experiences are affected by socio-political decisions about language.

LPP: a relatively brief history

Developing nation-states, developing LPP

The emergence of LPP as a coherent field was closely tied to the fact that newly independent states in the postcolonial era (mainly Asian and African) were seen as in need of appropriate modernization and development programs. For these states, the concerns were multiple. There was often a desire to reclaim some essentialized national identity and a language that could be emblematic of this identity, as both were felt to have been lost (or least compromised) under colonial rule. The national identity and language, however mythical, usually had to be (re-)constructed in the context of an ethnolinguistically diverse populace.

Such a situation already carried the potential for inter-ethnic tensions as competing ethnic loyalties had to be measured against any proposed candidate for national language status. But since a significant legacy of the colonial rule was an educated elite class with affiliations towards the colonial language, this meant that in addition to the need to manage ethno-linguistic diversity, there was also the need to stem any potential conflict arising from class divisions. As a consequence, while it was essential that these states worked to forge some sense of national cohesion, it was equally imperative that they aimed to raise the general level of education and welfare amongst the citizenry.

The well-intentioned desire to contribute towards programs that could help cultivate national solidarity whilst also improving on standards of education and creating opportunities for economic growth led linguists to position themselves as expert consultants with the state as client. What this means is that LPP practitioners tended to see themselves as devising maximally rational and efficient 'solutions' to the language 'problems' faced by these states (Haugen 1966; Kloss 1969; Rubin and Jernudd 1971). Thus, LPP was described as (Das Gupta and Ferguson 1977: 4–6):

those planned activities which attend to the valuation of language resources, the assignment of preferences to one or more languages and their functional ordering, and developing the language resources and their use in a manner consistent with the declared objectives identified as planned targets ... successful language planning, or degrees of it, can be understood in terms of the efficacy of planned policy measures as well as the target populations' propensity to comply with the public policies pertaining to language planning.

As a result of this desire to design programs that could contribute to public policy objectives, a series of technical concepts and distinctions were constructed that aimed to provide linguists with the theoretical vocabulary to systematically approach and diagnose LPP-related issues. Examples include:

- (i) The idea of a *rational model* (Jernudd 1973), where alternative ways of tackling a problem were carefully compared before settling on the optimal choice. This approach assumed that LPP issues could be approached in terms of a cost-benefit analysis.
- (ii) The distinction between *status planning* and *corpus planning* (Kloss 1969): the former was concerned with official decisions about the appropriate use of a language. The latter was concerned with developing the 'nuts and bolts' of language itself (its vocabulary, forms of pronunciation and syntax), so that a language could indeed serve its designated function.

- (iii) The distinction between processes of language *selection*, *codification* of the selected language as standard or correct, *elaboration* of the language form where necessary, and *implementation* to ensure that the standards were properly adopted (Haugen 1966). These processes were typically understood to apply sequentially, so that LPP would be pursued in a manner that was organized and systematic.

And understandably, the preferred method for data gathering during this period was the sociolinguistic survey. Given that LPP practitioners were mostly working at the level of the state, the scale of the envisaged changes made the choice of survey a practical one, as far as the tracking of language attitude and use amongst a large population were concerned. Information gathered via the survey was also more amenable to quantification, and relative rates of success could then be presented in a manner that was digestible to policy-makers.

There is no disputing the fact that these concepts and distinctions, even today, continue to serve as valuable tools when thinking about LPP. This is because, at bottom, LPP involves making decisions about the desirability (or not) of promoting some language practices over others. And all such decisions require some appreciation of the possible relationships between forms of language and their uses, and the ways in which these relationships might be influenced.

What was problematic in this period, however, was the absence of a critical orientation that might have otherwise prevented a number of assumptions from going unquestioned, such as the notion that each nation-state would be ideally served by having just one national language; the concomitant implication that multilingualism is potentially problematic and ought to be minimized; and the belief that a developmental model designed for one societal context could be applied to another despite significant differences in socio-cultural and historical specificities.

As a consequence, these assumptions often guided the enthusiastic articulation of solutions designed along technocratic lines, when it would perhaps have been more helpful to ask if the framing of what counts as an LPP problem was itself in need of interrogation. I say ‘perhaps’ because, to be fair to these early attempts at LPP, it is not clear what kind of impact such a critical orientation – had one been present – would have had on decision-makers involved in the management of state objectives. There was always the possibility that in challenging or deconstructing a state’s framing of problems, linguists could simply have found themselves deemed largely irrelevant to the needs of these newly independent states.

Looking within

By the 1980s and part of the 1990s, however, it became difficult to deny that many of the state-level LPP projects were failures: either the desired outcomes were not achieved, or worse, social and ethnic unrest continued to rise in many states despite the careful implementation of programs. LPP practitioners were then more reticent about acting as advisors to the state. As Blommaert (1996: 203) puts it:

The grand projects in third world nations more or less disappeared during the 1980s, either because of manifest failure, or because of a lack of interest, resources, or political importance. Language planning experts reoriented their work away from the creation of policies and plans towards the implementation of experimental and mostly small-scale (nongovernmental) projects, and towards assessments of past experiments and current situations. The enthusiasm for language planning as an academic subject faded in the wake of the collapse of state systems and economies in the third world.

This withdrawal of LPP practitioners from the role of expert consultant was accompanied by an internal criticism of the field itself. In an incisive paper, Luke *et al.* (1990: 27) suggested that LPP had been overly concerned with maintaining a 'verner of scientific objectivity' and had 'tended to avoid directly addressing larger social and political matters within which language change, use and development, and indeed language planning itself are embedded'. Luke *et al.*'s point is that by viewing LPP as an essentially technocratic process of efficiently administering resources so as to achieve specific goals, little consideration had been given to questions of how such processes might help sustain dominance and dependency relations between groups. In other words, by not adequately attending to the socially and politically contested nature of language, LPP initiatives, rather than solving problems, may in fact have simply exacerbated old problems or even created new ones.

In a similar vein, Tollefson (1991) introduced a distinction to characterize what he saw as two major approaches to LPP: the neoclassical and the historical-structural. The major differences between the neoclassical and the historical-structural approaches are as follows (from Wiley 1996: 115):

- 1 The unit of analysis employed: While the neoclassical approach focuses on individual choices, the historical-structural pays attention to relationships between groups.
- 2 The role of the historical perspective: The neoclassical is more interested in the current language situation; the historical-structural, in contrast, emphasizes the role of socio-historical factors.
- 3 Criteria for evaluating plans and policies: The neoclassical is primarily amoral in its outlook; policies are evaluated in terms of how efficiently they achieve their goals. The historical-structural is more sensitive to issue of domination, exploitation and oppression.
- 4 The role of the social scientist: Consistent with its amoral outlook, the neoclassical assumes that the social scientist must and can approach language problems in an apolitical manner. On the other hand, the historical-structural views political stances as inescapable so that 'those who avoid political questions inadvertently support the status quo'.

The neoclassical approach thus tends to emphasize the rational and individualistic nature of choices. As an illustration, individuals may choose to learn a new language because of certain perceived benefits such as access to better jobs. Or they may decide that the time and money spent on learning a new language may not be worth the potential benefits, and hence may not make the effort to expand their linguistic repertoire. Whatever the outcome, the neoclassical approach treats these as decisions that are freely and rationally made. But Tollefson emphasizes that we need to also ask questions like 'Why must that individual expend those particular costs? Why are those particular benefits rather than others available to that individual? What are the costs and benefits for other people in the community?' (Tollefson 1991: 32). These kinds of questions require attending to the socio-historical contexts and constraints inherited by individuals and *mutatis mutandis*, communities.

LPP in the 1960s and 1970s had tended to work within the neoclassical approach, where, as we have seen, language-related issues were treated as problems that could be rationally and logically solved by adopting the appropriate language policy. The individuals, families, or communities that were the targets of LPP were, by the same token, assumed to be likely to respond in a neoclassical fashion. Consequently, a major problem was that it had neglected to take into consideration the effects of socio-historical factors in constraining the nature of choices.

Tollefson's position is that the neoclassical approach had been all too dominant in LPP, and this state of affairs needed to be changed to show more sensitivity towards the historical-structural approach. This latter approach pays more careful attention to the kinds of interests that particular policies may serve. LPP that is informed by the historical-structural approach would then aim to 'examine the historical basis of policies and to make explicit the mechanisms by which policy decisions serve or undermine particular political and economic interests' (Wiley 1996: 32). This understanding of LPP would have the advantage of helping practitioners be more cognizant of the possibility that planning bodies involved in policy-making may reflect the interests of dominant political groups, and that this may work against any desire to achieve a broader and more equitable distribution of social and economic resources.

As a result of these critical reflections about the flaws and limitations of LPP, energies were instead directed more towards analyzing language-related decisions in a variety of spheres. In addition to those decisions initiated by governments (Pennycook 1994), there was stronger interest in the schools (Corson 1989; Heller 1999), in the workplace (Gee *et al.* 1996), and there was also a greater focus on the ways in which public debates about language are initiated, resisted or resolved (Blommaert 1999; Cameron 1995; Milroy and Milroy 1999). And perhaps paradoxically, the challenges involved in trying to better understand the complex and often conflicted nature of language in social life helped contribute to the invigoration of LPP.

Renewing LPP

In the present period, LPP has seen renewed interest and activity. A significant part of the excitement stems from the appreciation that linguists need not be apologetic about representing group-specific interests; they simply need to be clear about the nature of their involvement. Another reason for the excitement comes from the realization that LPP is even more complex than has been realized so far, and that if it is to be relevant as a field of applied linguistics, it will need to draw upon the insights of multiple disciplines.

Once it became understood that LPP is always going to be inextricably intertwined with the advancing of specific interests, linguists were able to engage in various LPP-related activities with a clearer appreciation of their roles and responsibilities. 'Scientific objectivity' no longer means being blind to class interests or political factionalism. Rather, it means being aware that by acting as expert consultant to a group, community, institution or state, a linguist has to be clear and comfortable with the goals of the client. Scientific objectivity, in this case, arises from the linguist utilizing his/her expert knowledge about sociolinguistic processes and the ways in which linguistic and non-linguistic variables interact, so as to better advise the client. This does not mean passively accepting a client's goals: it is possible to argue that a consultancy also opens up the opportunity for both the linguist and client to learn from each other. And this process of exchange may lead to an evaluation of the goals as well as a richer understanding of the social nature of language. For example, in their own experience with medical health professionals, Roberts and Sarangi (1999: 474) suggest that it might be useful to adopt a stance of 'joint problematization', where the emphasis is one of 'participatory and action-oriented research'. The advantage of this, as Roberts and Sarangi (1999: 498) point out, is that:

In presenting findings in a non-conclusive way, social scientific researchers, including discourse analysts, can distance themselves from a problem-solver role by underscoring the fact that practical solutions are not in a one-to-one relationship with research-based

knowledge. In other words, knowledge generated through research needs to be recontextualized in a reflexive way by the practitioners.

In other cases, a linguist may have a very personal commitment towards specific community goals. This could be because, having conducted fieldwork in a particular community, a linguist might form a strong attachment to that community and a desire to help improve its wellbeing. In such a case, the linguist is essentially acting as not just expert consultant, but also as advocate. One example is the Master-Apprentice Program that was developed by Leanne Hinton (see Hinton 1997) in 1992 in California. The program aims to prevent, as far as possible, the indigenous Native American languages from dying out. The program pairs master speakers (the tribal elders) with language learners in learning situations with relatively modest outcomes. Apprentices are not expected to develop the same level of fluency as the masters, since many of the masters themselves may have not used their own languages for quite some time. Rather, it is hoped that by the end of about three years, apprentices will be able to hold simple conversations. As Grenoble and Whaley (2006: 63) point out:

The program does not attempt to revitalize speaker bases and make the target language a fully used system of communication in all aspects. Instead, it is a realistic, practical approach in situations of severe language attrition where it is most probably impossible to build a new speaker community.

The complexity (Spolsky 2004: 39ff) comes from the awareness that LPP can operate at units of varying sizes, including the individual, the family, the social group, the school, the state and the diasporic community. LPP also involves ‘a wide range of linguistic and non-linguistic elements’, such as age, ethnicity, education, economic progress, gender, religious beliefs, among many others. Furthermore, LPP is not limited to just named varieties of language (‘English’, ‘Spanish’, ‘Malay’) but can involve smaller bits of language (pronunciation, punctuation, word choice) and also bigger bits as well (forms of discourse). To make this complexity more tractable, LPP needs to consistently distinguish between the language practices of a community, the language beliefs or ideology, and any efforts to modify or influence the practices (Spolsky 2004: 5). The first two components are always present in any community, since people will be using language for the conduct of activities, and people will also have various beliefs about language. The third component may not be present, since there may not be any actual efforts made to influence language practices. Under such circumstances, ‘ideology operates as “default” policy’ (Lo Bianco 2004: 750).

This appreciation that LPP must acknowledge the ideological basis of language practices has led to greater convergences with work coming from linguistic anthropology, since it is the latter that has contributed much to theorizing the processes by which language ideologies come to be formed. It should be clarified here that the anthropological notion of ideology is not to be simply equated with false beliefs. Rather, ideologies here refer to the specific social positions that individuals/communities/institutions all inevitably occupy, and which mediate the understanding of sociolinguistic facts. In other words, ‘the very real facts of linguistic variation constrain what linguists and native speakers can persuasively say and imagine about them’, but at the same time ‘there is no “view from nowhere” in representing linguistic differences’ so ‘those representations, in turn, influence the phenomena they purport to represent’ (Irvine and Gal 2000: 78–9).

Sensitivity to the contestable nature of language decisions has also meant a greater need to attend to the variability and context when studying LPP. This in turn has led to a widening of

the methods that might be considered useful to LPP. Because language ideologies are highly variable and context-dependent, data gathered via the analysis of narratives, ethnographic approaches, and historically sensitive comparisons (Heller 1999; Milani 2007; Pennycook 1998; Philips 2000, among others), all came to be considered relevant to the study of LPP, in addition to surveys. This is not to deny the value of larger scale statistical data, but such data are primarily ‘synoptic’ representations that abstract away from specific situational details (Bourdieu 1977: 107). They need to be complemented by richer understandings of the roles that actual language practices and the valuations accorded to them play in the lives of individuals and communities.

Paralleling this interest in ideology, Lo Bianco (2004: 743, italics in original) has suggested that in addition to corpus and status planning, LPP also needs to recognize *discourse planning*, which refers to:

the influence and effect on people’s mental states, behaviors and belief systems through the linguistically mediated ideological workings of institutions, disciplines, and diverse social formations. Although discourse is quintessentially dialogical, and by definition permits contest and negotiation, *planning* discourse refers to the efforts of institutions and diverse interests to shape, direct and influence discursive practices and patterns.

This suggestion that attention be paid to discourse planning is obviously entirely congruent with the call by Luke *et al.* that LPP needs to be more appreciative of the fact that there is no such thing as a purely objective or interest-free policy. All such initiatives represent specific agenda, covertly or otherwise (Shohamy 2006). A discourse orientation can thus highlight the ways in which problems are framed, the interests served in such framings, and the possibility of alternative framings (Lakoff 2004; Schön 1993).

Finally, works drawing together the insights of scholars with backgrounds in economics, political philosophy, political science, social theory, as well as linguistics, are slowly becoming more regularly produced (Brown and Ganguly 2003; Kymlicka and Patten 2004; Rappa and Wee 2006). This is a particularly important development that should be further encouraged, since it promises to benefit these contributing disciplines as well as enrich our understanding of LPP. For example, while linguists can hope to learn more about the political complexities that inevitably accompany language in social life, political theory, too, can grow from taking greater note of the complications posed by language, since linguistic diversity ‘has received relatively little attention from political theorists’ (Patten and Kymlicka 2004: 1). In fact, De Schutter (2007: 1) has pointed out that unless there is greater cross-disciplinary work, there is a danger that debates in political philosophy will end up ‘steering its own independent course apart from existing debates over language policy’.

The developments described here are critical because they put LPP in a position to better handle a number of important challenges, and it is to a discussion of these challenges that we now turn.

Challenges for LPP

It would not be an overstatement to suggest that LPP is in fact gaining in practical importance and urgency because of the way the world is developing. As a branch of applied linguistics, there is much that LPP can do to make a contribution to debates and discussions about the role of language in a fast-changing and increasingly culturally complex world.

One significant challenge for LPP is to find ways of addressing multiculturalism. Much of the recent theorizing regarding multiculturalism and the politics of identity has come from philosophically inclined political or legal theorists (Benhabib 2002; Ford 2005; Kymlicka 1995; Taylor 1994) rather than linguists. While such theorizing is undoubtedly valuable, it is usually based on an ‘outdated empirical understanding of the concept of language itself’ and tends to be ‘unaware of important sociolinguistic and other research on these matters’ (De Schutter 2007: 3). Where LPP is concerned, the most prominent response has been to call for the adoption of language rights (May 2001; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 1995). The general motivation behind the proposal for language rights is to ensure that an identifiable group – usually a discriminated or stigmatized ethnic minority – is granted specific forms of protection and consideration on the basis of their associated language. The concept of language rights has had enormous appeal, finding a broad swathe of support amongst linguists, sociologists, political philosophers, policy-makers and community activists (Kymlicka 1995; May 2001; Phillipson and Skutnabb-Kangas 1995). However, this actually makes it all the more critical that language rights be subjected to careful scrutiny (Blommaert 2001; Stroud 2001). For example, while language rights may be useful as a short-term measure, it is not clear that they are tenable in the longer term. One reason for this is that there will be parties who have a vested interest in maintaining their (usually hard-won) language rights, and their motivations – such as the desire to cling to political power or to continue enjoying the benefits afforded by such rights – can be quite independent of how effective such rights may actually have been in dealing with discrimination. This means that LPP needs to better understand the pros and cons of language rights, and where necessary, explore alternative ways of responding to multiculturalism. This requires combining the insights of social and political theorists with a more sophisticated appreciation of the nature of language (Makoni and Pennycook 2007; see also discussion below).

The interest in multiculturalism and language rights gains further resonance because of complications posed by the commodification of language. As Budach *et al.* (2003: 604, upper case in original) point out:

in a new world dominated by service and information economies, globalization engenders a seemingly paradoxical valuing of community and authenticity ... In the new economy ... the value of community and authenticity takes on a new shape in which COMMODIFICATION is central. At the same time, commodification provokes a potential uncoupling of language and community.

Speakers and communities are likely to be increasingly caught up in the contradictions between treating language as a mark of cultural heritage, and as a skill or resource to be used for socio-economic advancement. And this can have interesting repercussions on specific implementations of LPP. For example, in Singapore, the policy of multiracialism aims to guarantee equal status amongst the three official ethnic mother tongues: Mandarin (for the Chinese community), Malay (for the Malay community) and Tamil (for the Indian community). However, the state has recently argued that, in addition to heritage reasons, Mandarin should also be learned in order to take advantage of China’s growing economy, thereby actively conceding that instrumental value is an important motivating factor in language choice. As a result, Mandarin is now becoming so popular that a growing number of non-Chinese parents want schools to allow their children to study the language. This new emphasis on Mandarin as a language commodity has led to concerns within the Chinese community that the language is being learnt for the ‘wrong’ reasons: the language is being treated less as

an emblem of local ethnicity and more as an economic resource for conducting business negotiations with China. More generally, these developments potentially undermine the multiracial logic of the policy, since the equal status that all three mother tongues are supposed to enjoy is compromised by the fact that neither Malay nor Tamil can be claimed to enjoy the same level of economic cachet as Mandarin (Wee 2003).

Thus, another important challenge for LPP is to take better account of the fact that traditional notions of ethnicity and nation do not fit easily with the multilingual dynamics of late modern societies, which are increasingly characterized by a pervasive culture of consumerism (Baudrillard 1988; Bauman 1998), where ‘people define themselves through the messages they transmit to others through the goods and practices that they possess and display’ (Warde 1994: 878). In this regard, Stroud and Wee (2007) have suggested that the concept of sociolinguistic consumption should be given a more foundational status in language policy in late modernity, suggesting that this might offer a more comprehensive account of the dynamics of language choice and change.

Finally, one of the most pressing challenges facing the world today is that of global migration and the related issue of ensuring the wellbeing and dignity of individuals as they move across the globe in search of a better life. As many states work to accommodate the presence of foreign workers, asylum seekers and other aliens within their territories, the need to come up with realistic and sensitive language policies will require the input of LPP specialists. If such input is absent, there is a danger that language policies may unfairly penalize the very people they were intended to help. Maryns (2005) provides one such example in her discussion of a young female from Sierra Leone seeking asylum in Belgium. Even though applicants are given the opportunity to declare what language they want to use for making their case, Maryns (2005: 300) notes that:

Actual practice, however, reveals serious constraints on language choice, and these constraints are language-ideologically based: only monolingual standard varieties qualify for procedural interaction. This denial of linguistic variation leads to a denial of pidgins and creoles as ‘languages in their own right.’

The effect of ideology of monolingualism is to deny pidgins and creoles any legitimate presence in the asylum-seeking procedure despite the fact that for many asylum seekers, such mixed languages might constitute their most natural communicative codes. Thus, the move to a foreign country is not simply a shift in physical location; it is also a shift into a location where linguistic codes are differently valued. And the asylum seeker is expected to accommodate the foreign bureaucratic context despite the communicative problems this raises. Maryns (2005: 312) points out that:

The asylum seeker has to explain her very complex and contextually dense case, addressing an official with different expectations about what is relevant and required in a bureaucratic-institutional context. The bureaucratic format of the interview and the time pressure under which the interaction takes place offer very little space for negotiating intended meanings.

In the particular case that Maryns observed, the female applicant’s (2005: 313) ‘intrinsically mixed linguistic repertoire’ (West African Krio) was displaced by the bureaucracy’s requirement that interviews and reports utilize only monolingual standards. The interview was conducted in English and a subsequent report written in Dutch, neither of which were languages

that the applicant was comfortable with. As a result, details of the applicant's narrative were omitted or misunderstood, and the applicant had no opportunity to correct any inaccuracies. Thus, the state representatives officiating over asylum-granting procedures often conduct interviews with asylum seekers in contexts where the linguistic codes being used are not likely to be shared by those whose communicative needs are greatest. Notice that the problem here goes much deeper than making available different languages, such as Dutch, English, Xhosa or Bantu. It involves a general reluctance to treat certain codes as being *proper languages* in the first place because of their mixed heritage. On this basis, mixed codes become stigmatized and are automatically ruled out of official consideration despite the fact that these codes are precisely what might be needed in order for asylum seekers to gain a fair hearing.

Even when a migrant has been granted permission to stay, challenges to LPP remain. For example, most Western countries have assumed that migrants will assimilate into their new societies by learning the dominant language (and its associated culture). But this assumption is increasingly being challenged by the fact that 'the size of minority residential communities' makes it possible 'that many of their members will be able to live out their lives using only, or predominantly, the minority language', and also by the 'tendency of migrants to maintain closer and more regular connections with their countries of origin' (Ferguson 2006: 7).

The future of LPP

The closing observation in the previous section highlights an urgent need for LPP to start rethinking the ontological nature of language, and seriously evaluate the material implications. For too long, LPP has worked with a relatively convenient conception of language as a stable and identifiably bounded entity corresponding to established language names, despite being aware that this overlooks 'the problematic history of the construction of such languages' (Makoni and Pennycook 2007: 11).

Consider a brief example (from Makoni and Pennycook 2007: 9). Sir George Abraham Grierson's linguistic *Survey of India*, which was completed in 1928, had to face the problem of deciding on the boundaries between languages and dialects. To do this, Grierson openly admitted the need to invent language-names while ignoring the complexity of actual language use (1907: 350, quoted in Makoni and Pennycook 2007: 10):

nearly all the language-names have had to be invented by Europeans. Some of them, such as Bengali, Assamese, and the like, are founded on words which have received English citizenship, and are not real Indian words at all, while others, like 'Hindostani', 'Bihari', and so forth, are based on already existing Indian names of countries and nationalities.

The significance of this is that 'these were not just new names for existing objects ... but rather the invention and naming of new objects. The naming performatively called the languages into being' (ibid.). This does not mean that LPP should dismiss language names as mere fiction. As a metalinguistic label, it very possibly orients the language practices and social evaluations of speakers towards each other, and conversely, towards those whom they might consider non-members of the group. But LPP needs to start being more attentive to the problematic ways in which specific language practices get categorized under particular labels (including that of *non-language*), and the attendant impact of such categorizations on the social trajectories of different individuals and communities.

Similar considerations apply to concepts such as community, identity, and practice (Heller 2008), which have for too long tended to be treated as 'stable and bounded' rather than

‘shifting and dynamic’. These are concepts that figure, in one way or another, in LPP studies, and unless they are reconceptualized, LPP will continue to be encumbered by ‘some of their built-in limitations in current confrontations with the way things are unfolding in the world around us, confounding our attempts to understand them’ (2008: 505).

Concluding remarks

It is appropriate to end this chapter by returning to the theme of how LPP practitioners should engage policy-makers and the general public. The critical reevaluation of concepts such as language, community and identity is part and parcel of the intellectual maturity of the field. But translating the insights gained by this maturity into relevant practical implications is a difficult enterprise. This is because there is an inevitable lag between the scholarly critique of concepts and the ways in which these are apprehended by the broader community. And if policy-makers and members of the public are still operating with less nuanced understandings of such concepts, these could make them less receptive to LPP initiatives that are grounded in more critical orientations.

This is not to say that linguists should be considered final arbiters of appropriate LPP initiatives (recall the reference to Roberts and Sarangi’s notion of ‘joint problematization’). But it does mean that linguists need to be more strategic about how they position themselves as participants in language ideological debates. Specifically, they need to ask how they can resist the pressure to oversimplify their own expert knowledge of language whilst still remaining relevant to the ‘real’ world.

Related topics

bilingual education; ethnicity; institutional discourse; language and migration language learning and language education; language testing; linguistic imperialism; multilingualism; world Englishes

Further reading

- Blommaert, J. (ed.) (1999) *Language Ideological Debates*, Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter. (This edited collection provides an excellent overview of some of the processes by which public controversies and political debates around language come to be shaped.)
- Cameron, D. (2000) *Good to Talk? Living and Working in a Communication Culture*, London: Sage. (Cameron’s work presents a highly readable and insightful account of LPP – although this is not a term that is used in the book – in the call center industry and its connections to the broader global economy.)
- Makoni, S. and Pennycook, A. (eds) (2007) *Disinventing and Reconstituting Languages*, Clevedon: Multilingual Matters. (This is an important book that reminds us of the need to rethink our assumptions about language and the implications for applied linguistics.)
- Spolsky, B. (2004) *Language Policy*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. (Spolsky provides an invaluable introduction to key concepts in the study of LPP, conveying the complexities of the field in a highly accessible manner.)
- Tollefson, J. W. (1991) *Planning Language, Planning Inequality*, London: Longman. (This is a theoretically rich and ethnographically sensitive book that gives a special focus to language education policies affecting migrants.)

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Business communication

Vijay Bhatia and Aditi Bhatia

Introduction

Business communication, as used in this chapter, refers to English business communication and English for Business Purposes (EBP), and represents a development that integrates three main areas of study. The first significant area is English for Specific Purposes (ESP), which draws its strength from linguistics, particularly from sociolinguistics, through the analyses of functional variation in language use, and curriculum studies. In fact, the ESP tradition can be considered an outcome of analysis of various forms of academic and disciplinary discourses within the framework of register analysis, and more recently, genre analysis (Swales 1990), which may be considered the second major area of study that has influenced business communication. The third main tradition, which has significantly influenced current thinking in business communication, is communication studies, which has several dimensions, some of which include organizational communication, management communication, and corporate communication, all of which are often grouped under professional communication. Unlike ESP, which draws its inspiration from language description, none of these rather different sub-areas of communication studies have been seriously influenced by studies in discourse and genre analysis until recently. Instead, they have traditionally drawn their strength from various communication theories. The focus in these individual dimensions of professional communication has been primarily on text-external factors, including context. It is interesting to note that of these major traditions, two at least, i.e. ESP and communication studies, developed almost independently of each other, and remained so for a long time, the latter focusing primarily on first language users, and the former targeting second or foreign language users. Register and genre analysis developed when the field of applied linguistics became seriously interested in all forms of academic and professional genres, including those associated with business contexts. However, in recent years, it has been taken more seriously by both the traditions, that is, ESP as well as communication studies, especially professional communication, management communication, organizational communication and, certainly business communication. This can be represented and summarized as follows (Figure 2.1):

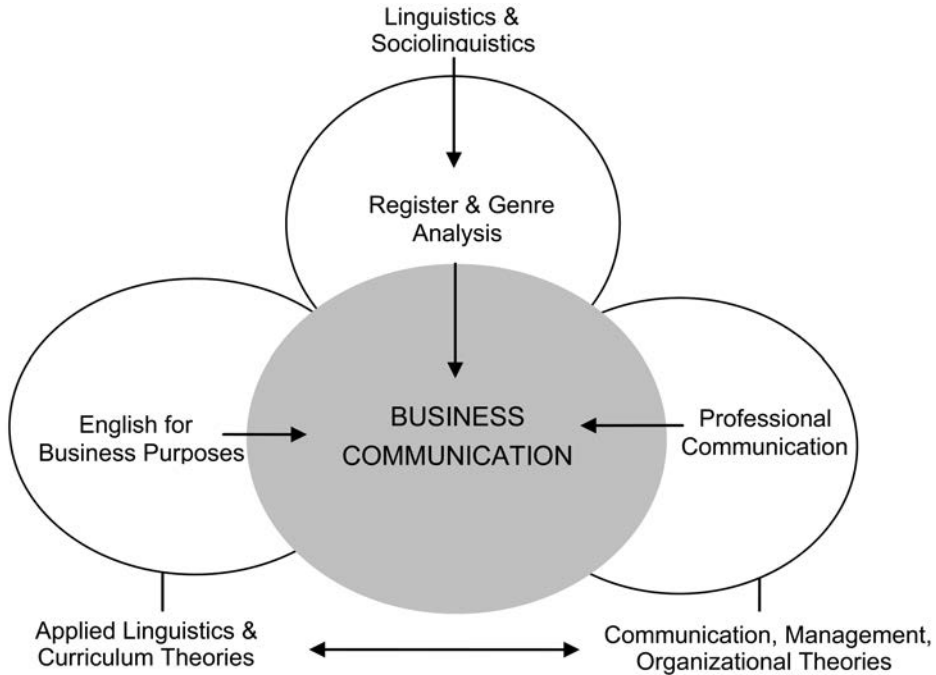


Figure 2.1 Dynamics of business communication: motivation and inspiration

We would now like to give more substance to this view of business communication as emerging from the recent works published in these three rather distinct areas of study and application. Let us begin with English for Business Purposes.

English for business purposes

Ever since English became the primary language of international business, research in the nature and function of what has come to be known as Business English has flourished. Approaches to course design and materials development in ESP in general, and English for Business Purposes in particular, have been overwhelmingly driven by descriptions of restricted uses of language, initially identified as register (Halliday *et al.* 1964) with emphasis on ‘textualization’, and then as discourse (Widdowson 1973) with emphasis on coherence and organization, and in more recent years, as genre (Swales 1990; Bhatia 1993), with emphasis on wider context and conventions of language use (see Bhatia 2004: 12 for a detailed account of the development of genre analysis). In the last two decades, genre analysis has become one of the most favoured approaches to the design of ESP syllabuses and materials.

ESP drew its inspiration from the work of Halliday *et al.* on functional variation in English, which put forward the notion that ‘language varies as its function varies; it differs in different situations’ (1964: 87). They pointed out that a variety of language distinguished according to its use was *register*. Halliday and his colleagues rightly indicate that register could be differentiated as sub-codes of a particular language on the basis of the occurrence of lexicogrammatical features of that register. Thus according to them, it was possible to characterize the register of business by identifying the use of an above-average incidence of a specific set of

lexico-grammatical features in that register. Subsequently, there have been several studies identifying and describing typical characteristics of various academic and professional registers, such as scientific English, business English, and legal English. Originally, much of the work done on the functional variation in English focused on scientific English, particularly in academic settings.

English for Business Purposes (EBP), also known as Business English, became an independent area of study in the early 1990s, primarily as a consequence of the globalization of trade and commerce, which made it necessary for business people to move out of their home grounds and operate across territorial, linguistic, cultural as well as socio-political boundaries. This new business environment achieved further incentive through the massive influx of multimedia that seeped into the traditional business world, with the result that the business people found themselves operating in a vibrant international marketplace, which was so different from their more traditional base. Computer-mediated communication, in certain respects, was considered a sub-field of business communication; however, the blending of multimedia in the traditional business environment is deteriorating this distinction, as mediated communication 'is infused into nearly any business communication context, perhaps even coming to dominate certain areas as public relations' (Jackson 2007: 10).

This kind of merging of disciplinary boundaries also brought the predominantly American business communications research tradition into close contact with the EBP/ESP tradition, which was typically British and European (Dudley-Evans and St John 1998). There were obvious advantages in identifying and analysing ESP registers and using them as input for various kinds of ESP courses. Swales, referring to the early work of Halliday *et al.* (1964), further points out:

[T]he 1964 'manifesto' offered a simple relationship between linguistic analysis and pedagogic materials ... there was no strong emphasis on the need for practitioners to have ... content knowledge of the fields or professions they were trying to serve ... The early LSP practitioners were thus well equipped to carry out relatively 'thin' descriptions of their target discourses. What they principally lacked was a perception of discourse itself and of the means for analyzing and exploiting it – lacunae that were largely rectified by the 1980s. (Swales 2000: 60)

The inspiration for ESP courses continued to come from studies of functional analyses of subsets of English, which gradually developed as discourse analysis, and later in the 1980s as genre analysis. In more recent years the frameworks and methods of language description have become increasingly sophisticated, focusing more on context, rather than just the text. This has prompted investigations into variations in professional discourses, emphasizing genres and genre systems, mixing, embedding and bending of genres, further leading to critical examination of professional practices. Also, with the emphasis on text-task relationships, the focus shifted to the achievement of successful outcomes in professional activities, rather than just on the writing of a grammatically correct and acceptable text. Livesey (2002) puts emphasis on language not simply as an instrument or tool for accomplishing particular managerial objectives, but as the very means for expressing identity. He further says:

Formal and surface features of texts are thus brought together with narratives of context derived by the authors from their study of historical materials. Both text and researcher are embedded in different cultural contexts, which constitute 'horizons' of meaning that are never precisely the same ... Fusing the text's and the researcher's 'horizons', however,

leads to a creative-critical moment of understanding. This reveals the ideological meaning of particular texts and the sectional interests that they serve.

(Livesey 2002: 7–9)

Communication thus is not simply a matter of putting words together in a grammatically correct and rhetorically coherent textual form, but more importantly, it is a matter of having a desired impact on how a specifically relevant professional community views it and how the members of that community negotiate meanings in professional documents. In this sense, written communication is more than knowing the semantics of lexico-grammar; in fact, it is a matter of understanding why members of a specific business or disciplinary community communicate the way they do. This may require, among a host of other inputs, the discipline-specific knowledge of how professionals conceptualize issues and talk about them in order to achieve their disciplinary and professional goals. Often it is found that outsiders to a discourse or professional community are not able to follow what specialists write and talk about even if they are in a position to understand every word of what is written or said. Being a native speaker in this context is not necessarily beneficial if one does not have enough understanding of the more intricate insider knowledge, including conventions of the genre and professional practice. Widdowson (1998: 7) highlights this aspect of communicative efficiency when he indicates that genre analysis seeks to identify the particular conventions for language use in certain domains of professional and occupational activity. He further points out that it is a development from, and an improvement on, register analysis because it deals with discourse and not just text. It seeks to reveal how lexico-grammatical forms realize the conceptual and rhetorical structures, modes of thought and action, which are established as conventional for certain discourse communities. Genre analysis thus is about the conventions of thought and communication which define specific areas of professional activity.

Genre theory has thus become a favourite tool for the analysis of professional and academic discourses (Swales 1990; Bhatia 1993). In more recent years, genre theory has become increasingly multi-perspective (Bhatia 2004) through an integration of a number of different methodologies (Zhang 2007), such as textography (Swales 1998), interpretive ethnography (Smart 1998), corpus analysis (Pinto dos Santos 2002; Nelson 2006; Fuertes-Olivera 2007), participant-perspectives on specialist discourses (Louhiala-Salminen 1996; Locker 1999; Rogers 2000), cross-cultural and intercultural perspectives (Bilbow 1999; Gimenez 2001; Vergaro 2004; Planken 2005; Vuorela 2005), multimodal analysis (Brett 2000), and observation analysis (Louhiala-Salminen 2002), to name only a few. The implication for ESP/EBP thus is that text-based analyses within register or genre analysis have become increasingly inadequate in explaining and accounting for the typical use of language in various business contexts.

The other significant development in ESP and EBP was the analysis of the needs of the specialist group of ESP/EBP learners (Munby 1978; Chambers 1980; Jacobson 1986; Coleman 1988; Nickerson 1998). The rationale for needs analysis was that since ESP learners have a limited set of requirements for which they often use English as a second language, there was no use giving them extensive courses in all forms and functions of English, which can be time-consuming, difficult, and ineffective. It was possible to design short-term courses in the teaching of English to meet their specific needs more economically and effectively. In terms of teaching methodology, one of the typical characteristics of many of the EBP courses has been the appropriation and often integration of specific disciplinary approaches. In the case of EBP, for instance, one of the most useful and popular trends has been the use of the case study method, which many consider an integral part of all EBP programs (Westerfield 1989;

Esteban and Cañado 2004). Similarly, the role of new media and technology can hardly be overlooked.

Variations in business discourse

ESP has always been identified in terms of disciplinary variations, so that English for law, English for science and technology, English for marine engineering, etc., have been some of the successful and pragmatically effective labels. In recent years, ESP practitioners have been motivated to go a step further to investigate the role of sub-disciplinary variation in order to sharpen the focus in specific ESP courses. English for Business Purpose courses, for instance, have been further classified on the basis of variations in the use of language across sub-disciplines of business, that is, economics, marketing, management, and accountancy. The assumption that every discipline has its own repertoire of typical genres, which are unlikely to be used by members of other disciplinary or professional communities, seems to be well established in recent genre-analytical literature (Swales 1990; Bhatia and Candlin 2001; Bhatia 2004). This is due to the fact that each discipline has its own typical ways of constructing, interpreting, and using genres, defining membership characteristics of such communities, specifying and validating evidence to construct valid and acceptable arguments and make sustainable claims within their specific contexts (Bhatia 1999a; Hewings and Nickerson 1999; Hyland 2000). All these factors contribute to the determination of typical ways of thinking and behaving in specific disciplines or sub-disciplines. Assumptions of this kind may lead one to say 'He behaves like an accountant', or 'That's very typical of a marketing person.' Specialists within broad disciplines, such as law and accountancy, have a general affiliation to a professional community, and they generally operate rather distinctively within their own disciplinary frame. However, they may also create disciplinary conflicts within the general community of professionals, if they operate in an interdisciplinary context, which quite often is the case when in a business meeting we have an engineer, a lawyer, and an accountant. Just as it is true of such broad disciplines, to a somewhat more limited extent, it is also true of sub-disciplines, such as, accountancy, marketing, management, and economics (Bhatia 1999b). The sub-disciplinary distinctions across these areas may be as valid as the ones we see across major disciplinary cultures. To give more substance to this claim, we would like to refer to an extensive study of disciplinary variations in business education undertaken by Bhatia and Candlin (2001). The main purpose of this study, which was undertaken by a group of researchers from five Hong Kong universities, was to determine the nature of the competing interdisciplinary discursive practices (modes of discourse and genre presentation, student and teacher expectations in interdisciplinary academic contexts, individual study patterns, patterns of assessment, etc.) in an attempt to understand the extent to which disciplinary specialists (both students and teachers) were aware of the subject-specific frames that underlie their practices, and also to what extent they were responsive to the interdisciplinary requirements of their students' communicative performance.

The findings of this study clearly established that there were some fundamental and pedagogically important sub-disciplinary differences that influenced the teaching and learning of academic discourses particularly relevant to EBP or business communication programmes. Although there were considerable overlaps in business discourses of various kinds, there were nonetheless distinctive generic characteristics, which were reflective of the requirements of the different sub-disciplines.

The study also revealed that there was an initial general perception on the part of many of the stakeholders that the tasks, such as projects, presentations, essays, reports, and other

written assignments, case studies, and analysis of business situations that students had to carry out during their academic study were similar across different disciplines. The subject teachers had the impression that such tasks involved applying theory to the real world to solve a particular business-related problem; however, there were clearly significant disciplinary and sub-disciplinary differences, which represented different perspectives and hence warranted different approaches to business studies. The tasks in Accountancy were mostly calculations-based essays or reports, often emphasizing individual work and analytical skills, but de-emphasizing the application of theory. In Economics, on the other hand, there was a greater emphasis on theory, writing essays, drawing diagrams, and interpreting graphs; tasks often focusing on the 'real world' of supply and demand. In Management the tasks were frequently case studies, projects, or essays, with greater focus on definitions and on argument. In Finance the focus was also on calculation, but this was all done within the framework of case studies and essays. Finally, in Marketing there was a greater focus on projects, collaborative work, and applying theory to investigating the needs of customers, with some use of calculation. The distinctive character of such disciplinary tasks, as revealed in that study, can be visually represented as follows (Figure 2.2).

An interesting issue for us is to what extent these sub-disciplinary variations are likely to create academic problems for students in their academic study. Bhatia and Candlin (2001), in their study, raised this issue in their discussions with teachers and students. Teachers' views, in terms of disciplinary variation, and the ability of students to handle this within and across subject boundaries reflected interesting disparities. Many staff members commented that they were not actually aware of common concepts appearing in other disciplines and of being treated differently in terms of application/concept, etc., as subject teachers only prepared their own courses and did not generally collaborate with other subject teachers. Others felt that

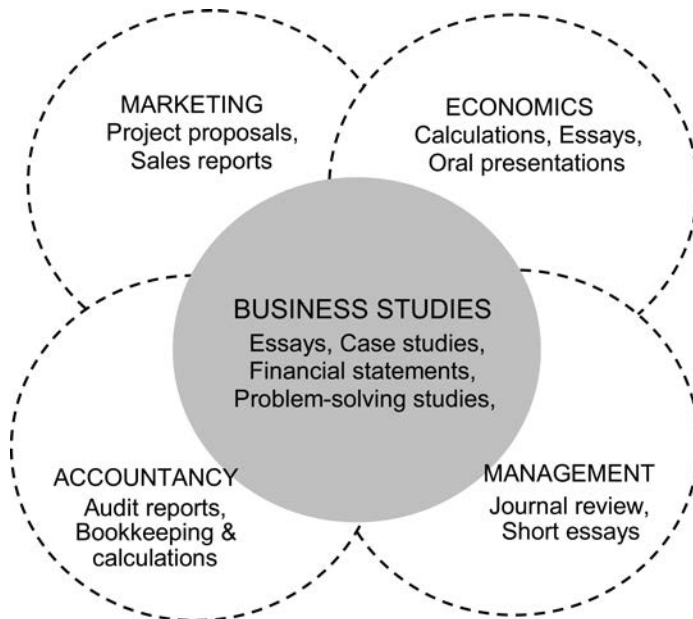


Figure 2.2 Academic task demands in specific business disciplines

there were no great differences across the demands of the different disciplines and students knew how to adjust from one to another. They speculated that students generally compartmentalized the subject and particular skills of a discipline, and probably did not carry skills, style or methods over to another discipline.

On the other hand, some teachers pointed out that the boundaries across sub-disciplines were not distinctive, and that students were sometimes confused about overlapping concepts. For example, it was easy for students to confuse the management concept of corporate strategy (the long-term overall aim of a company) with the marketing concept of strategy (marketing a product or service). There was a common perception that students in their initial years had problems in adapting from discipline to discipline as it required a lot of effort, and that no one actually explicitly pointed out the differences in disciplinary demands to them. However, some of them believed that as they progressed through the programmes, especially in the second and the final year, they started handling these differences in the language and terminology of various disciplines.

There are a number of ways these generic variations can be studied. The variations can occur within a specific domain, or across several domains. In order to handle domain-specific genres, Devitt (1991) proposed the notion of *genre set* to refer to a range of texts that a particular professional group produces in the course of their daily routine. She discussed the case of *tax accountants*, who in their daily work produced a limited range of generic texts, some of which might include various kinds of letters such as an opinion letter to the client, a response letter to the client, a letter to tax authorities, all of which are considered distinct, but at the same time intertextually linked to each other. The typical set of products resulting from these tasks formed a genre set. The genres comprising a set are individually distinct, but at the same time, intertextually linked. The texts from a particular genre set also display typical patterns found in similarly produced texts by other fellow professionals in the same field. This rather limited set of generic texts resulting from a narrowly defined professional activity represents the participation of only one side of the professional output. The professional activity might also involve a number of other participants from within or outside the profession, texts, or other semiotic constructs, but the concept of genre set seems to include one side of the professional practice. As Bazerman mentions,

The genre set represents ... only the work of one side of a multiple person interaction. That is, the tax accountants' letters usually refer to the tax code, the rulings of the tax department in this case, the client's information and interests, and these references are usually presented in highly anticipatable ways appropriate to the genre of the letter, but the genre set is only the tax accountant's participations, as intertextually linked to the participations of the parties.

(Bazerman 1994: 98–9)

To extend the concept of genre set in an attempt to account for the full set of genres, Bazerman (1994: 97) proposed the concept of *systems of genres*, which refer to all 'the interrelated genres that interact with each other in specific settings'. He pointed out:

The system of genres would be the full set of genres that instantiate the participation of all the parties – that is the full file of letters from and to the client, from and to the government, from and to the accountant. This would be the full interaction, the full event, the set of social relations as it has been enacted. It embodies the full history of

speech events as intertextual occurrences, but attending to the way that all the intertext is instantiated in generic form establishing the current act in relation to prior acts.

(Bazerman 1994: 99)

The notion of a system of genres is thus a useful development on the earlier notion of genre set, and is a very useful tool to investigate intertextually and interdiscursively (see Bhatia 2004, 2008a, 2008b, 2010 for a detailed account) related text-genres embedded within a specific professional activity. Generic versatility also functions in yet another way. Genres generally operate across disciplinary boundaries, so that we find a constellation of reporting genres of various kinds, some of which include newspaper reports, business reports, science reports, medical reports, police reports, technical reports, all of which display interesting generic similarities. However, it is also necessary to consider variations within a broad discipline.

For example, one may find interesting variation in business reports in terms of their sub-disciplinary frames. Some variations include:

- Investigation report (suggesting solutions for existing problems)
- Performance report (evaluating an individual product, service or activity)
- Progress or status report (reporting development as part of a project / activity)
- Process report (reporting on how-to aspects of projects or activities)
- Feasibility report (reporting on chances of failure or success of projects)
- Sales report (reporting on periodic sales figures, may include market analysis)
- Field trip report (recording business activities at various locations)
- Annual report (reporting on overall perspective on an organization)
- Audit report (indicating economic efficiency).

An interesting aspect of such variation is that just as it is possible to view individual genres as part of a specific disciplinary domain, it is equally possible to view some other aspects of these very genres displaying overlaps across a number of sub-disciplinary domains. Therefore, the reality of the situation can only be captured by a much more complex and perhaps dynamic picture displaying similarities as well as overlaps within and across disciplinary frames and discursive practices (Bhatia 1999a). It is thus possible for us to view any one of these reporting genres, business reports, for example, and identify similarities as well as distinctions across more specific realizations of this genre. Obvious examples will include sales reports, progress reports, project reports, audit reports, financial reports, and annual reports, to name a few. The differences between these are less discernible in terms of broad communicative purposes but more in terms of the nature of activity, task, or sub-domain they serve, but all of them are valid instances of business reports.

As mentioned in the beginning, although there was no direct relationship between the first two main dimensions, that is, communication studies and ESP, there have always been impressions of overlap between these in terms of their concerns, methodologies, materials and applications. Williams *et al.* (1984) regard these two traditions as two halves of a single profession, in that both were concerned with the teaching and learning of effective communication through English in business contexts.

Business communication

Business communication in its present form combines the strengths of both these traditions to look for effective and efficient ways of training uninitiated learners into the intricacies of

business communication, both written as well as spoken. Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson (2002), introducing the special issue of *International Review of Applied Linguistics (IRAL)* on Business Communication, define it as talk and writing between individuals whose main work, activities, and interests are in the domain of business and who come together for the purpose of doing business, which usually takes place within a corporate setting, whether physical or virtual. The label 'Business Communication' thus seems to be best understood as a discipline integrating communication in business, including organizational and management contexts, and other ESP-based approaches to the teaching and learning of English for business purposes. Suchan and Charles (2006: 393) explain that the 'lack of a research identity' and the copious multi-disciplinarity is a consequence of the significantly different departments and schools, such as English, business and management, speech communications, and even information technology. They argue that

These different disciplinary homes result in our using theories, frameworks, and information sources that lack significant overlap. This lack of overlap contributes to the shapelessness of our field and makes it difficult for us to define to our stakeholders and ourselves the work we do and the value it provides.

(Suchan and Charles 2006: 393)

However, interdisciplinarity across seemingly diverse disciplines must not be seen as undermining the contribution that each discipline makes towards a better understanding of the nature and function of communication in professional and corporate settings. It is, instead, recognition of the complex and dynamic nature of the discursive realities of the corporate world that are more accurately understood through multiple as well as complementary perspectives. Despite growing criticism that business communication research lacks a 'comprehensive theoretical grounding' (Shelby 1988: 13) and instead draws its findings from many different places, Rogers (2001: 16) argues that 'there are signs that we're growing more comfortable with our plurality, even beginning to acknowledge some of its value'. She also claims (2001: 15) that convergence is not an entirely foreign concept as far as business communication research is concerned, as academics in this discipline have been 'navigating multiple disciplines and diverse methods for some time now. In fact, our diversity in backgrounds, cultures, approaches, and institutions has become central to our identity.' The ability of business communication to draw from different fields only emphasizes its 'unique place at the intersection of business and communication' (Reinsch and Lewis 1993: 450). Similarly, Ulijn *et al.* emphasize the need for new approaches to the study of globalism, organizations, and communication. They rightly say that

multiparadigmatic approaches facilitate the work of scholars who find both value and disappointment in various theoretical perspectives but who understand the need to acknowledge and integrate multiple approaches in an effort to clarify complex and obscure human and organizational phenomena.

(Ulijn et al. 2000: 310–11)

A special issue of *Management Communication Quarterly* (1996) demonstrates that there is a wide scope for dialogue and possible cross-fertilization across disciplines, even if some of them (e.g. organizational communication) are seen to be more dependent on a symbiotic relationship with the corporate world (Mumby and Stohl 1996).

In this context, it is interesting to note that Rogers (1998: 80), who has a background in management studies, in her discussion of national agendas in business communication found at least five key concerns. First, it was felt that teaching and research in business communication must go hand-in-hand, which has also been a main concern in ESP/EBP. Second, it was found that to enhance business practice, research must focus on authentic texts, which has also been a consistent argument in ESP/EBP ever since the 1970s. The third concern was that research must be multidisciplinary, just as ESP is. The fourth concern was that one must take into account research in cross-cultural communications and intercultural negotiations. Rogers concluded that language learning, linguistic analyses, and discourse patterns are some of the main areas of research and investigation. In her subsequent study, Rogers (2000) says that in text-based genre analyses there is a strong tendency to conceptualize communicative purposes in terms of the strategies of the speakers or writers, but she argues that such purposes cannot be fully understood without some understanding of how these purposes are interpreted by members of the specialist community, for which she recommends user-based analyses. Rogers (2000: 426) thus extends the boundaries of genre analysis to take it beyond the text to context and audience response, looking for the relevance of user-based analytical tools to analyze a small corpus of CEO presentations in the context of earning announcements. It is hardly surprising then that in much of Rogers' work we find a fine integration of not simply the two strands of Business Communication, that is EBP and Professional Communication, but also that of genre analysis. Similarly, Charles (1996: 20) makes a necessary attempt to fill in the gap between a contextual business approach and a linguistic text-based approach. Her work on business negotiations examines the particular ways in which the extra-linguistic 'business context shapes negotiation discourse, and thus creates a mutual interdependency'. Relatedly, Nickerson (1998), in her survey of the impact of corporate culture on non-native corporate writers working in a multinational and multilingual context, also adopted an interdisciplinary approach which incorporated not only ESP research but also organizational theories that account for the general patterns of communication found within multinational corporations.

Yet another methodological procedure, which allows one to incorporate intercultural and cross-cultural variations in business communication, has, once again, its roots in both professional communication and ESP/EBP. Gimenez's study on cross-cultural business negotiations focuses on cross-cultural negotiations and communication styles, and he discovered that some of the 'cultural differences seemed to be overridden by the status-bound behaviour of the negotiators' (2001: 188). On the other hand, Vergaro (2004) undertook a contrastive study to investigate the rhetorical differences between Italian and English sales promotion letters, which are considered standardized, ritualistic or even formulaic. Her main concern was to explore how information was presented and what rhetorical strategies were used to obtain compliance by a given readership in a given culture. She used pragmatic and ethno-linguistic research by contrastively analyzing a corpus of authentic Italian and English business letters. Similarly, Planken (2005) studied how facework was used to achieve interpersonal goals in intercultural sales negotiations by undertaking linguistic analyses of 'rapport management', which, in a negotiation context, is aimed primarily, but not exclusively, at building a working relationship. Coming from the communication angle, Varner (2000: 44) views intercultural communication differently from intercultural business communication. He mentions that in intercultural business communication the business strategies, goals, objectives, and practices become an integral part of the communication process and help create a new environment out of the synergy of culture, communication, and business. He further argues that:

as the study of culture is not an end in itself, so communication is not an end in itself. In intercultural business communication the communication has a business purpose. The channels, levels of formality, use of technology, content and style of delivery, are influenced by cultural and business considerations. The objectives of the business, the level of internationalization, the structure of organization, will help determine the intercultural business communication strategy.

(Varner 2000: 48–9)

Bhatia (2004, 2008a, 2010) argues that the study of conventional systems of genres (Bazerman 1994) often used to fulfil the professional objectives of specific disciplinary or professional communities may not be sufficient to understand the complexities of business communication. He argues that a comprehensive understanding of the motives and intentions of business practices is possible only if one goes beyond the textual constraints to look at the multiple discourses, actions and voices that play a significant role in the formation of specific discursive practices within the institutional and organizational framework. He develops the notion of ‘interdiscursivity’ as a function of appropriation of contextual and text-external generic resources within and across professional genres and professional practices. Devitt (1996: 611) argues that ‘we need to find ways to keep genre embedded and engaged within context while also keeping our focus on learning about genre and its operations’. Devitt (2004: 188) also adds that ‘to teach students the rhetorical and cultural significance of one genre will require teaching the significance of its genre set and the place of that genre within that set’. Similarly, Bremner (2008: 308) favours a more comprehensive understanding of interdiscursive voices in any system of activity. He points out that genres are interconnected in wider systems of activity, and they influence each other in the system. He says that:

A key feature of intertextuality to consider, then, is that it is not simply a link between texts, but a phenomenon that helps shape other texts: as genres combine to achieve different goals, they contribute to the development of new genres as they are recontextualised (Linell, 1998). Thus the generic, linguistic and rhetorical choices that a writer makes will be influenced by the texts that precede or surround the text under construction, and will in turn have an effect on the final textual product.

(Bremner 2008: 308)

Louhiala-Salminen’s (2002) work is also important in that, in order to look at the full potential of who contributed what in which context, she closely observed a business manager’s professional practice in a Finnish multinational corporation by tape recording most of the discourse activities during the day, and accessing copies of all the written materials. She supplemented this data with interviews in order to understand some of the typical features of the discourse activities in a multinational corporation.

Concluding remarks

We have presented in this chapter the current view of business communication as a truly interdisciplinary area of study and application, which may be viewed as an integration not only of two of the rather distinct approaches to the teaching and learning of English used in the professions, that is ESP and professional communication studies, but also as seriously nurtured by multidimensional and multi-perspective analyses of systems of business genres (Bhatia 2004). We have also made an effort to point out that advances in the field of genre

analysis, particularly the effort to go beyond the textual artefacts to investigate context of various kinds, including intertextuality as well as interdiscursivity, are crucial to a comprehensive understanding of business communication. Babcock and Du-Babcock (2001: 373–6) nicely sum up the intercultural variables we have discussed in the preceding paragraphs, when they point out that:

Language can be seen as the gateway to culture as it frames the nature of cultural exposure and contact as well as how information is filtered through the perceptual screens of all communicators ... language shapes how international business communicators perceive cultural influences and cues in different communication zones as they engage in the international business communication process.

(Babcock and Du-Babcock 2001: 373–6)

It may also be said at this stage that research in areas such as the relationship between discursive activities and professional practices in most disciplinary, professional and institutional contexts (Bhatia 2006, 2008a, 2008b) is still in its early stages, and a lot more work is needed before we can find convincing answers to the question that Bhatia (1993) raised, that is, ‘why do most professionals use the language they way they do?’ For instance, we still have no comprehensive understanding of ‘what makes a novice accounting student into a good accountant’, or ‘how do we identify, train, and appraise a good manager, marketing executive, or a public relations expert?’ One may also raise a number of other similar questions, such as the following:

- What is the role of language in the development of specialist expertise in a particular professional field?
- What are the core competencies that are needed to make a person a competent professional?
- Are these competencies teachable?, and
- Is it possible to assess the acquisition of such expertise?

Although we seem to be a long way from any kind of definite and convincing answers to some of these questions, and a lot more work is needed, we seem to be heading in the right direction.

To conclude, we would like to suggest a few directions in which research in the future is likely to go. In our view, there is a need to integrate English for Business Purposes with current research in business communication, as these are simply two sides of the same coin. This will also help us to have a more comprehensive view of business communication. In addition to this, the field of business communication can be enriched by integrating insights from and about business practices, which can and have, in recent genre analytical studies, been successfully undertaken with insightful conclusions. If we can continue to explore some of these perspectives, we feel that we will be very close to demystifying some of the hitherto hidden complexities associated with acquisition of specialist business and disciplinary competence.

Related topics

English for academic purposes; institutional discourse; language education; language learning

Further reading

- Bargiela-Chiappini, F. and Nickerson, C. (eds) (2002) *Writing Business: Genres, Media and Discourse*, London: Longman. (This book offers a comprehensive account of business discourses in specific and yet diverse business contexts, integrating insights from discourse analysis and business practices.)
- Bhatia, V. K. (2004) *Worlds of Written Discourse: A Genre-based View*, London and New York: Continuum. (This volume offers a comprehensive genre analytical framework for the study of discursive and professional practices in a number of different business and disciplinary contexts.)
- (2006) ‘Discursive practices in disciplinary and professional contexts’, *Linguistic and Human Sciences* 2(1): 5–28. (This paper argues for an integrated view of management and discourse analytical theories for the study of business and other disciplinary practices.)
- (2008) ‘Genre analysis, ESP and professional practice’, *English for Specific Purposes* 27(2): 161–74. (This paper explores professional practices through discourse and genre analysis.)
- Smart, G. (2006) *Writing the Economy: Activity, Genre and Technology in the World of Banking*, London: Equinox Publishing. (An engaging and well-researched analysis of an important banking institution.)

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Translation and interpreting

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Introduction

Translation and interpreting are forms of linguistic mediation that involve rendering written or oral text from one language to another. As language-based activities that have practical implications, they are often seen as falling within the remit of applied linguistics. Following a brief introduction and historical survey of the field, this chapter focuses on some of the main issues that have interested both translation scholars and applied linguists in recent years. It does not engage with the use of translation in language teaching (for an authoritative overview of this issue, see Cook 2009).

Increased globalization, growing mobility of people and commodities, and the spread and intensity of armed conflicts in recent years have established translation and interpreting more firmly in the public consciousness. As both facilitators and beneficiaries of increased global interconnectedness, translators and interpreters have become important economic players in the services sector worldwide, with surveys forecasting an average annual business growth of 5–7.5 per cent between 2005 and 2010 (CSA 2004; EUATC 2005) and the global translation industry turnover expected to exceed €12 billion in 2010 (ABI 2002). Recent comparable reports on the interpreting industry estimate the global outsourced interpreting market at \$2.5 billion, \$700 million of which is generated by the burgeoning field of telephone interpreting (CSA 2008). At the same time, translators and interpreters have become more widely recognized as important political players, with their involvement in Kosovo, Iraq and Afghanistan in particular receiving widespread media attention.

Economic clout and political impact aside, the growing pervasiveness of translation and interpreting in all domains of private and public life has also heightened the need for a better understanding of their social relevance. Against the backdrop of the growing dominance of English as a lingua franca, translation and interpreting have become central to promoting cultural and linguistic diversity in the information society and in the development of multi-lingual content in global media networks and the audiovisual marketplace. They have also become central to the delivery of institutional agendas in a wide range of settings, from supranational organizations to judicial and healthcare services at community level. The importance of translation and interpreting as tools of empowerment is further evident in the

emergence of new forms of intersemiotic assistive mediation; these include subtitling for the deaf and hard-of-hearing and audio description for the blind, both of which aim to facilitate access to information and entertainment for sensory-impaired members of the community.

Historical overview

The study of translation has a very long history, going back several centuries to scholars like Cicero, Horace and Jerome, all of whom commented extensively on strategies of translation (e.g. word-for-word versus sense-for-sense). But the academic study of translation and interpreting dates back only to the middle of the twentieth century. Initially focusing on short, often decontextualized stretches of text, much theorizing during the 1950s, 1960s and 1970s revolved around elaborating taxonomies of different types of equivalence that may hold between a source text and its translation. Largely understood as a semantic category in the 1950s, equivalence was first defined as

a process by which a spoken or written utterance takes place in one language which is intended and presumed to convey *the same meaning* as a previously existing utterance in another language. It thus involves two distinct factors, a ‘meaning’, or reference to some slice of reality, and the difference between two languages in referring to that reality.

(Rabin 1958: 123, *emphasis added*)

The notion of equivalence here is similar to that of synonymy, except that one applies to items in two different languages and the other to items in the same language. As a semantic category, the notion of equivalence is static – it is not dictated by the requirements of the communicative situation but purely by the semantic content of the source text.

Partly in response to developments within linguistics, which for a long time was the main source of theorization about translation, the treatment of equivalence as a semantic category soon came to be regarded as untenable. One of the first alternatives to be offered was a definition of equivalence not as a question of ‘how close’ a target text is to the same reality portrayed in the source text but rather as how close it comes to reproducing the *same effect* or response in the target readers. This approach originated with Bible translators: Nida (1964); Nida and Taber (1969); and Larson (1984). The idea of equivalent effect proved equally problematic, however, since no reliable way could be found for measuring effect in readers. Not only is it impossible to know how two people are likely to respond to a given text, but even the same reader will respond differently to the same text on different occasions. Some scholars later attempted to salvage something of the potential usefulness of the idea of ‘equivalent effect’ by limiting it to ‘similarity’ in a very immediate sense. For instance, Hervey and Higgins (1992: 23) suggest that the translator of a portion of a source text which makes the source reader laugh can attempt to produce a translation which makes its own reader laugh. As they themselves go on to explain, this is ‘a gross reduction of the effects of a text to a single effect’.

An alternative which gained much ground in the 1970s and 1980s was *equivalence of function*. Scholars such as Reiss (1971) and House (1981) tried to categorize the range of possible textual functions or communicative purposes and suggest ways in which equivalence may be achieved in relation to the most prominent function in the source text. House’s model of quality assessment, for example, draws on Halliday’s notions of ideational and interpersonal functions and involves three steps: drawing a textual profile which characterizes the function of the source text, drawing a similar profile for the translated text, and comparing the two to

identify any shifts in function. The result is a statement of the relative match of the two functional components (the ideational and interpersonal).

Apart from the obvious problems of defining a single function for a text, this approach is divorced from the realities of translation in that it assumes that the function of the target text has to be equivalent to that of the source text. But in the professional world it is common for clients to request rough translations which allow for a basic understanding of the content of source texts (e.g. contracts or judgments) but are not meant to serve an equivalent (regulatory or argumentative) function in the target context. In response to this challenge, new approaches emerged in the 1980s, particularly in Germany, which pointed out that the reasons for commissioning or initiating a translation are independent of the reasons for creating the source text. What matters, therefore, is the function of the translated text, not that of the source text. Equivalence here becomes a function of the commission accompanying a request for translation (Vermeer 1989b/2000). Scholars like Vermeer therefore talk of ‘adequacy’ with regard to the commission or purpose of translation, rather than equivalence, as the standard for judging target texts. Nord (1991) takes this further by suggesting that it is not the text itself that has a function – rather a text acquires its function in the situation in which it is received.

As can be seen from the development of thinking about equivalence, by the late 1980s studies of translation had begun to widen their scope of analysis considerably: they gradually moved outwards from the word to the sentence, to structures above the sentence, to the text as a unit of analysis, and finally to the text as a cultural artefact that functions in a specific context of situation. By then, too, the text had come to be seen as an instance of interaction that embodies the values a given culture attaches to certain practices and concepts. Cultural studies and literary theory in particular came to exercise considerable influence on the study of translation from this non-linguistic perspective (Venuti 1995; Hermans 1996; Tymoczko 1999). As far as linguistics is concerned, scholars of translation also began to draw on an expanding array of theoretical strands and fields – including but not limited to critical discourse analysis, pragmatics, sociolinguistics, conversation analysis, psycholinguistics and semiotics (Saldanha 2009). The work of Hatim and Mason (1990, 1997) proved extremely influential in widening the remit of linguistically informed studies of translation and interpreting, in particular by engaging with issues of ideology and positioning.

Corpus linguistics has provided a robust methodology for studying translation since the mid-1990s (Laviosa 2002). The application of corpus-based methodologies in translation studies uniquely involves comparing a computer-held corpus consisting exclusively of translated text and one consisting exclusively of non-translated texts (or utterances) produced *in the same language*. Such comparison aims to demonstrate the distinctive nature of translation as a genre in its own right by identifying recurrent patterns in the language produced by translators (Baker 1996; Laviosa 1998; Olohan 2003) and interpreters (Pérez-González 2006a). Baker (1993) first proposed that translation is subject to a set of constraints which inevitably leave traces in the language that translators produce: the fact that a translated text is constrained by a fully articulated text in another language, for instance, constitutes a major and unique constraint. This builds on the work of Frawley (1984), who suggested that the confrontation of source text and target language during the process of translation results in creating what he called a ‘third code’. In other words, the language that evolves during translation and in which the target text is expressed is a kind of compromise between the norms of the source language and those of the target language. But corpus-based studies of translation go further, by suggesting that, for example, translators have a tendency to make explicit what is either implicit in the source text or would be implicit in a non-translated text in the same language. Along these lines, corpus-based studies undertaken by Burnett (1999) and Olohan and Baker (2000) have

since revealed a much higher tendency to spell out the optional *that* in reporting structures in translated English text compared to non-translated English text belonging to the same genres. Similarly, Olohan (2003) found a noticeable tendency to avoid contractions (as in *won't* instead of *will not*) in translated vs non-translated English text.

Since the 1990s, many studies have focused on the role played by ideology and power in shaping translational behaviour. The extent to which translational behaviour lends support to or undermines the use of language as an instrument of ideological control is becoming a recurrent object of enquiry in studies informed by critical discourse analysis; Saldanha (2009) offers a detailed overview of such advances. Other research strands drawing on the social sciences attempt to account for the impact of mediators' view of the world on their translational behaviour by exploring the narratives to which they and their communities subscribe (Baker 2006). Such studies interrogate the way in which the professional conduct of translators and interpreters is negotiated against the backdrop of existing norms of translation as a social institution, and have challenged the widely held perception of translation and interpreting as routinized, uncritical activities.

Current research issues in translation and interpreting

Translation and interpreting as institutionalized and institution-building practices

Koskinen (2008: 17) argues that institutions, which she defines as forms of 'uniform action governed by role expectations, norms, values and belief systems', can be studied on different levels of abstraction. This section focuses on two types of institutional settings: local/national organizational systems and supranational bureaucratic cultures.

With increased globalization, migration and other forms of mobility, encounters between representatives of institutions and lay citizens requesting a range of services have come to be heavily mediated by interpreters and translators. Bilingual courtroom proceedings in English-speaking countries, for instance, are characterized by sophisticated use of questioning strategies by barristers; the effectiveness of such strategies is heavily dependent on the interpreters' mediation, as demonstrated in a number of studies (Berk-Seligson 1999; Hale 2001; Pérez-González 2006a). Recognizing the potential impact of interpreters on the judicial process, the legal profession has attempted to regulate the interpreters' role by means of codes of practice that require them to refrain from explicating or clarifying those elements which are deliberately left ambiguous, implicit or unclear in the counsel's original formulation. Similarly, interpreters involved in doctor-patient interaction and interviews of asylum seekers and political refugees are expected to align themselves with the interactional goals of their respective institutions, rather than with the individuals requiring institutional assistance. Interpreters have been shown to reinforce institutional discourses and agendas by enforcing certain interactional patterns, such as rigid question-answer exchanges that prevent political refugees from launching into a narrative of their personal tragedies while their asylum claims are being assessed (Jacquemet 2005), and by exercising their discretion in organizationally sanctioned ways. Medical interpreters, for example, tend to elicit from the patient and pursue issues that they regard as diagnostically relevant and excise those parts of the patient's response that contain subjective accounts of their concerns (Bolden 2000).

Despite ongoing efforts to limit the interpreter's latitude, work on institutional interpreting, including research informed by various strands of linguistic theories, has shown that even interpreters bound by the strictest codes of ethics often fail to provide the sort of straightforward, unedited renditions which their organizational co-interactants expect (Berk-Seligson

1999; Angelelli 2004). For one thing, lack of syntactic and semantic equivalence between languages, together with the stress under which interpreters operate, often lead them to inadvertently alter the tenor of the original utterance, for example by downgrading the suggestive and intimidating nature of key questions and statements. At the same time, even conference interpreters working in a highly formal context have been shown to depart from their canonical roles as conduits and speak in their own voice in order to defend themselves against charges of misinterpreting by other interactants wishing to use them as scapegoats (Diriker 2004). In the light of such findings, the overall field of interpreting studies, it has been argued, should refrain from ‘comparing the propositional meaning of utterances and their interpretation’ and seek instead to challenge the conceptualization of the role of interpreters as neutral conduits by describing ‘the behaviour of all parties in terms of the set of factors governing the exchange’ (Mason and Stewart 2001: 54). Such arguments have paved the way for the emergence and consolidation of dialogue interpreting, a distinct sub-field within interpreting studies which has enhanced the study of mediation in institutional settings. Dialogue interpreting approaches face-to-face encounters as three-way interactions, understood as a series of triadic exchanges between the institutional representative, the client and the interpreter (Mason 2001).

The power imbalance inherent in interpreter-mediated institutional encounters makes politeness theory an attractive framework to draw on. Interpreters occasionally need to mitigate the face-threatening acts of an interactant – for example, when a powerless speaker refuses or fails to comply with the requirements of the institutional representative. They also need to protect their own face, perhaps by distancing themselves from the contributions of one or more speakers. Such dialectics of interactional status and face-saving work has also been explored through investigations of turn-taking management and the use of hedging, down-toning or amplifying interactional devices. Here, Goffman’s (1981) ‘participation framework’ has proved helpful (Wadensjö 1998; Roy 2000) and has also been applied in studies of sign language interpreting (Metzger 1999). Documented shifts in footing reveal the interpreters’ alignments in relation to other interactants and highlight their role as institutional ‘gatekeepers’ (Wadensjö 1998). In managing the exchanges between lay people and institutional representatives, interpreters perform a range of repairing and bridging work required for a successful unfolding of the ongoing encounter. In the course of doing so, they often interpret selectively; indeed, medical interpreters have been found to offer their own answers to patients’ questions without the physician necessarily being aware of it, thus acting as covert co-diagnosticians (Davidson 2000). Interpreters thus claim a participatory role for themselves ‘as speaking agents who are critically engaged in the process of making meaningful utterances that elicit the intended response from, or have the intended effect upon, the hearer’ (Davidson 2002: 1275). Ultimately, interactants, including the interpreter, realign themselves as required by the turn-by-turn unfolding of the conversation by exploiting the politeness and face-saving strategies available at each stage in order to maximize the effectiveness of the ongoing interview or interrogation.

Studies such as those discussed above have drawn attention to interpreters’ active participation in the management of institutional interaction. At the same time, the vulnerability of interpreters to exercises of power by institutional representatives has received some attention from scholars interested in the workings of institutions that regulate the flow of asylum seekers and political refugees (Barsky 1996; Jacquemet 2005; Inghilleri 2007), from journalists reporting on the involvement of interpreters and translators in various wars (Levinson 2006; Packer 2007), and from professionals concerned about the welfare of interpreters operating in conflict zones (Kahane 2007). Interpreters working in the asylum system are often co-opted into the

relevant institutional cultures and made to assume responsibilities that lie outside their canonical role, for example by participating in the evaluation of the asylum applicant's credibility, thus exacerbating their shifting perceptions of their own position as mediators within these structures of power. Similarly, interpreters working for the American troops in Iraq in the first decade of the twenty-first century were often assigned intelligence-gathering tasks that further alienated them from their local community and put their lives at greater risk (Packer 2007).

In addition to nationally based systems such as asylum, court and medical institutions, international organizations like the United Nations and the European Union also rely heavily on translators and interpreters. Indeed, they address their respective constituencies through translated and interpreted texts, such that 'in a constructivist sense, the institution itself gets translated' (Koskinen 2008: 22). One issue raised in the relatively small body of literature on international organizations available so far concerns efforts by these organizations to hide their translational character, and their subsequent effacement of the role played by translators and interpreters at different levels. On the one hand, translators' and interpreters' individual identities and contributions are diluted through the enforcement of collective workflow processes which serve to strengthen the public perception of the organizational voice. On the other hand, translators' and interpreters' ability to exercise their professional discretion is significantly restricted by means of institutional guidelines which seek to effect a gradual routinization and mechanization of translational behaviour and ensure that the language they produce 'functions seamlessly as part of the discourse' of the institution in question (Kang 2009: 144). Once again, despite the efforts of international organizations to develop translational cultures of their own, current research has identified a slippage between what translators and interpreters are officially expected or asked to do and what they actually do. This has been attributed to mismatches between institutional doctrine and 'interpreting habituses' (Marzocchi 2005) and to the growing impact of the economics of translation (i.e. time/costs factors), rather than socio-cultural policies, as the driving force behind institutional agendas (Mossop 2006). Mason ([2003] 2004: 481) also reports on the 'little uniformity of practice or evidence of influence of institutional guidelines on translator behaviour' that he found in his analysis of data from the European Parliament and UNESCO. His study suggests that institutional translators are responsible for numerous 'discoursal shifts', i.e. concatenations of small shifts in the use of transitivity patterns throughout the translated text, which result in attenuating or intensifying the message conveyed in the original text. Mason's contention that such discoursal shifts display traces of the ideologies that circulate in the translators' environment reinforces their interactional status as agents who are actively engaged in the production of institutional discourses, rather than simple mouthpieces whose role consists of consolidating 'habitualized' discourses through mechanistic practices of mediation.

Power, inequality, minority

Much of the current literature on translation and interpreting approaches cross-cultural encounters that involve an element of interlinguistic mediation as a space of radical inequality. Translators and interpreters mediating these encounters play a major role in asserting, questioning and sometimes forcefully resisting existing power structures. Viewed from this perspective, translation does not resolve conflict and inequality by enabling dialogue but rather constitutes a space of tension and power struggle in its own right. Casanova (2010), for example, examines translation as a factor in the struggle for legitimacy in the literary and political fields – a factor that participates in the consecration of authors and works, both nationally and internationally, and in the distribution and transfer of cultural capital. In her

model, structural inequality evident in the imbalance between dominating and dominated languages and literatures reflects the struggle within any field in Bourdieu's terms. Inghilleri similarly draws on Bourdieu's notions of habitus, field, capital and *illusio* to demonstrate that interpreters working in the asylum system 'act within and are constituted by ... power-laden macro-structures ... that impact directly and indirectly on the interpreting activity' (2003: 261).

Growing interest in issues of power and inequality has naturally drawn attention to the role played by translation and interpreting in shaping the relationship between minority and majority groups in any society. Translation has always been a powerful instrument of the nation-state, not only in colonial and postcolonial contexts (Niranjana 1990; Dodson 2005) but also in the context of more modern, multicultural and multi-ethnic societies. Minority issues become particularly acute, with translation and interpreting acquiring increased significance, in diglossic situations, where the dominant, colonial or majority language inhabits and has monopoly on official, public life, and where the native language is relegated to the realm of the home, the casual, the ephemeral. Cronin (1998) was among the first to stress the urgency of exploring the effects of translation on various minority languages given their diminishing numbers across the world. He distinguishes between translation efforts that seek to obliterate the minority language by assimilating it to the dominant language and those which seek to retain and develop the minority language and resist its incorporation into the dominant language. Examples of the former abound in the Irish experience and are brought to life vividly in Brian Friel's *Translations* (Friel 1981), a play that depicts the process of anglicizing Ireland through the British Ordnance Survey in 1833. Examples of the latter include translation both from and into Welsh in many official contexts today, and translations undertaken from a wide range of prestigious literatures and languages into Scots in order to 'raise its status and establish its validity as a literary medium' (Corbett 1999: 3). Beyond the mere survival of the dominated language, translation into a minority language like Corsican is sometimes also 'a way of demonstrating a new confidence in [that] language and identity by acting *as if* it were a language of power' (Jaffe 1999: 264; original emphasis).

The deaf and hard-of-hearing are often treated as a minority group, and their interaction with the hearing community is seen as a site of power struggle in which translation and interpreting can play either an oppressive or empowering role. Those who are born deaf, in particular, generally do not acquire the majority language, or do not acquire it to native-speaker level, and because of their inability to hear they rely on interpreters throughout their life, and in a wide range of contexts. Improved access to interpreting services allows this particular minority group to participate more fully in various aspects of social life. It also improves their chances of advancing in their careers by using their own native, sign language in meetings and other face-to-face work encounters, rather than having to lip read, for instance. However, McKee (2003) warns that for various reasons to do with lack of cultural knowledge, issues of literacy, and the gap between the experience of the hearing interpreter and the deaf person, the mere provision of interpreting services can have a disempowering effect by creating an illusion of access or independence without necessarily putting the deaf person on an equal footing with their hearing co-interactants.

Translators and interpreters in the war zone

Scholars of translation have only recently begun to engage in a sustained manner with various aspects of the role and positioning of translators and interpreters in the war zone. Their focus has varied from an interest in the impact of interpreter and translator behaviour on other parties in the conflict, and the way they align or do not align with the institutions that employ

them (Jacquemet 2005; Baker 2006; Salama-Carr 2007), to the impact of the war situation and proximity to violence on the interpreters and translators themselves (Maier 2007; Inghilleri 2008, 2009; Stahuljak 2010).

Drawing on narrative theory, Baker (2006) demonstrates how the discursive negotiation of competing narratives of wars and armed conflicts is realized in and through acts of translation and interpreting in the media, literature, scholarly articles, documentary film, political reports and Websites. Rafael (2007) argues that in the case of armed conflicts, interpreters can become particularly involved on the ground and find themselves occupying precarious positions, often exposed to extreme discursive violence and distrusted by the very same parties which deployed them as instruments of surveillance. He examines the tensions and indeterminacy inherent in the positions that translators and interpreters occupy in the context of various wars. Despite their essential function in fighting insurgents, he argues, locally hired interpreters are also feared as potential insurgents themselves. Distrust of local interpreters and translators in the context of colonial expansion and armed conflict is well documented historically. Niranjana (1990) notes that the colonial governor of India, William Jones, and his British administrators found it 'highly dangerous to employ the natives as interpreters, upon whose fidelity they could not depend' (1990: 774), and that their remedy for this state of affairs was to substitute local interpreters and translators with British ones. Takeda (2009) similarly reports that interpreters and translators of Japanese origin were not used in code-breaking work in the USA during the Second World War for security reasons, and that their non-Japanese colleagues were secretly instructed to monitor them and to ensure that they were translating and interpreting accurately. Stahuljak (2010) offers a more extended and specific account of interpreting in contemporary war zones, with reference to the war in Croatia in the early 1990s.

Research on the role of translators and interpreters in mediating armed conflict suggests that they typically assume a wide range of tasks that extend well beyond any canonical definition of their responsibilities and obligations. Based on interviews with British and French journalists who worked in Iraq following its invasion by US troops in 2003, Palmer (2007) confirms that interpreters often selected the individuals to be interviewed by the media representative and advised on whether it was safe or practical to travel to a particular place to secure an interview. Takeda (2009: 52) states that second-generation Japanese Americans recruited and trained by the US military during the Second World War 'translated captured enemy documents, interrogated Japanese prisoners of war, persuaded Japanese soldiers and civilians to surrender, and participated in propaganda activities'. Similar findings have emerged from the UK-based Languages at War Project, run by the University of Reading and the University of Southampton in conjunction with the Imperial War Museum.

Translation and interpreting in the globalized information society

Recent technological developments have made it possible to overcome spatial barriers and speed up the circulation of information. This 'de-materialization of space' (Cronin 2003) is responsible for the creation of supraterritorial readerships and audiences and accounts for the growing importance of instantaneity in the translation profession. Although these developments have strengthened the translation and interpreting industries in economic terms, the current literature on globalization has failed to engage meaningfully with the role that these forms of mediation play within the global deterritorialized space. As noted by Bielsa (2005), theorists of cultural globalization have tended to put a positive spin on the instantaneity of global flows and to assume uncritically that it allows a straightforward juxtaposition of cultures and spaces. The emphasis on the dynamics of instant circulation also glosses over the

problematic reliance of users and viewers on content in English as a lingua franca. Translation scholars have sought to tackle the complexity of this situation, either by attempting to establish how the dominant lingua franca influences other languages via processes of translation and multilingual text production, or by exploring the way in which translation can serve as a strategy of resistance against the linguistic and cultural dominance of English.

Bennett (2007) examines the role of translation in strengthening the position of English as a lingua franca in academic discourse, and hence in configuring knowledge and controlling the flow and format of information. Referring to the discourse routinely employed by academics and academic translators as 'predatory', she describes some of its main principles as follows: the discourse has to be clear and coherent; the language must be impartial and objective; the text has to be hierarchically organized into sections with a clear introduction, development and conclusion; the prose must be lucid, economical and precise; vagueness and verbosity must be avoided; impersonal structures, including use of the passive and nominalized forms, are preferred; and material and existential processes tend to dominate, reflecting a preoccupation with statements of fact and descriptions of actions. Bennett draws on examples of Portuguese academic articles translated for publication in English to demonstrate the extent to which the ideological framework that informs the original articles is disrupted and replaced by a positivist structure inherent to English academic discourse. She concludes that translators' complicity in enforcing ideologies embedded in English academic discourse must be questioned since it can lead to the systematic destruction of rival forms of knowledge.

In studies conducted over the past decade, House (2004, 2008) explored the impact of English on a number of target languages more systematically by investigating the communicative norms operating in a wide range of texts translated from English and those operating in comparable texts written originally in the target language. In attempting to establish whether translation from English results in eroding the communicative norms of a target language, House assumes that, whether inadvertent or not, choices made in the course of translation either reinforce cultural diversity or participate in imposing Anglo-Saxon norms on other cultures under the guise of 'universality'. Although the studies conducted so far have not produced clear-cut evidence, they suggest that textual norms in languages other than English are likely to be adapted to Anglophone ones, 'particularly in the use of certain functional categories that express subjectivity and audience design' (House 2008: 87). Such adaptations include shifts from the ideational (message-oriented) to the interpersonal (addressee-oriented) function of language, from informational explicitness to inference-inducing implicitness, and from 'densely packed information to loosely linearized information' (House 2004: 49).

Another aspect of the interface between globalization and translation which has attracted growing scholarly attention is the impact of new information and communication technologies on the way we use and conceptualize language, including translational practices. The instantaneity of global flows resulting from technological advances is often an oppressive factor forcing translators to produce assignments within increasingly short response periods. According to Cronin (1998), technology-driven instantaneity generates pressure on translation to become a uniform, transparent medium of fluid exchange: as professionals struggle to translate more and faster, the communicative norms and specialized terminology of dominant languages are more likely to find their way into the target texts, thus gradually eroding the native resources. But the effects of technology can be more specific, particularly in the context of machine translation systems and translation memory tools. As Raley (2003) explains, machine translation technologies place particular emphasis on functionality and utilitarianism: reasonably accurate and functional draft translations are thus only feasible when the input is

basic, and when both input and output are restricted in terms of style, vocabulary, figurative expression and content. Unsurprisingly, given its centrality to technological developments, English is the language which has most informed the design of input entry protocols in machine translation, thus further contributing to the growing hegemony of this language and its communicative norms. The privileging of English modes of expression in the context of machine translation, however, can also be resisted. As suggested by Raley (2003), the ‘broken’ English which makes up machine translation input and output lends itself to ‘free’ adaptation by native and non-native speakers alike. Ultimately, free adaptation can contribute to severing the link between English and specific geophysical spaces as well as undermining collective identities based on this link. Beyond machine translation as such, translation memory tools have also been found to impact our use of language in a number of ways. Translating in this environment, for instance, involves the mechanical segmentation of the source text into translation ‘units’. Translators are thus prompted to use the same number of segments in the target language, which often results in the erosion of cohesion resources and, more widely, a partial excision of the rhetorical element of language.

Technological advances have also stimulated interest in the diversity of resources that can be used to create texts. In addition to the spoken and written word, different semiotic modalities such as gestures, visuals and music are often co-deployed within a multimodal text to create meaning. Although the study of multimodal translational behaviour has traditionally focused on the subtitling and dubbing of films and other audiovisual broadcasts, attention is increasingly shifting towards new areas of multimodal mediation, often involving the transfer of meaning across semiotic modes. These include subtitling and interpreting for the hard of hearing and the deaf, as well as the audio description of films for the blind. Audio description consists of a spoken account of those visual aspects of a film which play a role in conveying its plot, rather than a translation of linguistic content (Pérez-González 2009).

Recent changes in the audiovisual landscape, including the development of digitization techniques and emergence of new patterns in the distribution and consumption of audiovisual products, have encouraged the emergence of interventionist practices such as ‘fansubbing’, whether for aesthetic or political reasons. Unhappy with the shortage and cultural insensitivity of commercial translations of their favourite audiovisual programmes and genres, networks of fans, known as fansubbers, produce their own subtitled versions which are then circulated globally through Internet-based channels. In order to allow their fellow fans to experience the cultural ‘otherness’ of the programme they are subtitling, these amateur translators exploit traditional meaning-making codes in a creative manner and criss-cross the traditional boundaries between linguistic and visual semiotics in innovative ways. For example, they use ‘head-notes’ and written glosses at the top of the screen to expand or elaborate on the meaning of ‘untranslatable’ cultural references in the film dialogue; the cultural references in question still feature untranslated within the ‘traditional subtitle’ displayed simultaneously at the bottom of the screen. Fansubbers also favour the ‘dilution’ of subtitles within the image: technological developments allow them to display subtitles in unusual angles, perspectives and fonts which blend in with the aesthetics of the film, thus maximizing the viewer’s enjoyment of the visuals (Pérez-González 2006b). But subtitling is also being increasingly appropriated by politically engaged groups without formal training in translation to undermine the socio-economic structures that sustain global capitalism. Pérez-González (2010) describes how these communities of politicized ‘non-translators’ capitalize on the potential of networked communication to circulate translations of audiovisual content that would otherwise be only available in English. This interventionist engagement of activist communities represents a challenge to the control that media corporations have traditionally exerted over the distribution and reception

of their news programmes: audiovisual content mediated by activists often takes on new resonances when displaced from the global circuits it was originally intended for and watched by a national audience with a specific take on what is reported.

Concluding remarks

The prevalence and pervasiveness of translation and interpreting in all areas of social interaction have important consequences for society as a whole, as this entry has attempted to demonstrate. More specifically, their impact is also being felt in the academy. Translation and interpreting are increasingly being acknowledged as core areas of research. Rather than a sub-field of linguistics or cultural studies, translation studies has become an interdisciplinary field in its own right. Its remit encompasses, extends and surpasses a range of issues with which other disciplines have traditionally engaged from different perspectives. As it continues to develop in the twenty-first century, many scholars now believe that its next and most consequential challenge is to shed its Eurocentric origins and prepare to embrace the variety of theoretical perspectives, experiences and traditions that the West's many 'others' have to offer. This challenge is already being undertaken, with a growing number of voices of non-Western scholars continuing to gain strength and calling into question much of our received wisdom in the field (Hung and Wakabayashi 2005; Cheung 2006; Bandia 2008; Selim 2009).

Related topics

corpus linguistics; critical discourse analysis; culture; discourse analysis; identity; institutional discourse; linguistic imperialism; medical communication; migration; multimodal communication; sign language; the media

Further reading

- Baker, M. (ed.) (2010) *Critical Readings in Translation Studies*, Abingdon and New York: Routledge. (A thematically organized reader which prioritizes latest developments in the field rather than foundational texts and features detailed summaries of each article, follow-up questions for discussion and recommended further reading.)
- Baker, M. and Saldanha, G. (eds) (2009) *The Routledge Encyclopedia of Translation Studies*, 2nd edn, Abingdon and New York: Routledge. (A standard reference in the field which features extended entries on core concepts, types of translation and interpreting and theoretical approaches, plus entries which summarize the history of translation in a wide range of Western and non-Western societies.)
- Munday, J. (2001) *Introducing Translation Studies: Theories and Applications*, London and New York: Routledge. (Munday provides a balanced and accessible overview of the main theoretical strands in the discipline, supported by illustrative case studies in different languages, suggestions for further reading and a list of discussion and research points.)
- Pöchhacker, F. (2004) *Introducing Interpreting Studies*, London: Routledge. (A clear and comprehensive introduction to interpreting studies as an academic discipline, outlining its origins and development to the present day.)
- Venuti, L. (2004) *The Translation Studies Reader*, 2nd edn, London and New York: Routledge. (A chronologically organized reader which focuses largely on foundational texts. Extended introductions to each section clearly outline the main trends during the relevant period.)

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Lexicography

Thierry Fontenelle

Introduction

Lexicography is an area of applied linguistics that focuses on the compilation of dictionaries (practical lexicography) as well as on the description of the various types of relations found in the lexicon (theoretical lexicography). It is neither a new science nor a new craft. Historians generally agree that the first dictionaries can be traced back to the explanations of difficult words inserted into Latin manuscripts in the Middle Ages. These glosses evolved into glossaries which were sorted alphabetically or thematically and, as Cowie (2009: 2) points out, came to fulfill a vital function in teaching and the transmission of knowledge. The use of Latin words to explain more difficult Latin ones foreshadowed monolingual dictionaries, with their headwords and definitions, while explanations of hard Latin words in Old English or Old French can be seen as a precursor of modern bilingual dictionaries.

Dictionaries are primarily compiled to meet practical needs. They are also cultural artifacts which convey a vision of a community's language. The tension between prescriptive and descriptive approaches has often made lexicographers uncomfortable, since, as Atkins and Rundell argue (2008: 2), many users perceive dictionaries as 'authoritative records of how people ought to use language'. Modern lexicography is more concerned with a descriptive approach where the lexicographer compiles a description of the vocabulary of a given speech community.

Robert Cawdrey's *A Table Alphabetical* (1604) is usually considered as the first printed monolingual English dictionary. However, the history of lexicography remembers Samuel Johnson's *Dictionary of the English Language* (1755) as the first modern and innovative dictionary of English. Johnson's dictionary reflected the need for a prescriptive and normative authority which would serve to establish a standard of correctness. In his 'Plan of a Dictionary of the English Language', addressed to Lord Chesterfield in 1747, Johnson discussed all the crucial issues which lexicographers are faced with, even today, when starting a dictionary project, ranging from inflectional and derivational morphology, to pronunciation and etymology. The representation of syntactic information (Johnson did not use the modern term 'sub-categorization') attracted his attention when he pointed out that one 'dies of one's wounds while one may perish with hunger'. He stressed that 'every man acquainted with our language

would be offended with a change of these particles'. Johnson's preoccupations are still at the heart of the creation of current dictionaries, especially learners' dictionaries. He was a radical thinker who was well ahead of his time and who managed to shed light on the nature of language and meaning, long before philosophers like Wittgenstein started addressing the crucial issue of word meaning. He asked many important questions which are still hotly debated in contemporary lexicography circles. He was aware of the need to establish clear criteria for selecting words to be included in dictionaries, or for distinguishing between general language and specialized terminology. The term 'corpus lexicographer' did not exist in 1755, but because he was the first to base his dictionary on authentic examples of usage, collected from the works of English authors, he was definitely a precursor of corpus lexicography.

A monument of English lexicography is undoubtedly Murray's *Oxford English Dictionary* (*OED*), whose final section was published in 1928. The original aim of the project, which started in 1879, was to produce a four-volume dictionary which would record the history of the English language from Anglo-Saxon times, using nearly two million citation forms to track the genesis and evolution of lexical items. Several supplements were published in the twentieth century (the first supplement appeared in 1933) and, today, the *OED* includes around 300,000 entries defining over half a million lexical items (Murray *et al.* 1933). The electronic version, which corresponds to the 20-volume integrated work, offers powerful search and browse functionalities which provide scholars with exciting vistas to research the history and evolution of the English language.

Historical dictionaries have been compiled for several other languages, such as for French, the prime example being the *Trésor de la langue française*, whose sixteen volumes are based on a huge corpus of millions of authentic citations from literary texts. It took nearly 150 years to compile the Dutch *Woordenboek der Nederlandsche Taal* (*WNT*), which, with its 40 volumes and 400,000 headwords, aims to provide an objective linguistic description of the vocabulary stock of that language. All these major historical dictionaries cover general-language words, but also dialectal, jargon and slang terms, as well as offensive and swear words which are more likely to be left out from general-purpose dictionaries.

The advent of learners' dictionaries

The vocabulary control movement

The most noticeable impact of lexicography on applied linguistics is probably related to the advent of learners' dictionaries, which has heavily influenced Anglo-Saxon lexicography. One of the chief weaknesses of native-speaker dictionaries is that the words used in definitions are often difficult to understand for non-native speakers, which means that these dictionaries do not meet the specific needs of second language learners. The history of monolingual learners' dictionaries can be traced back to the contributions of a number of key figures such as A. S. Hornby, Michael West and H. E. Palmer, who created the so-called 'vocabulary control movement' and can justifiably be seen as the founding fathers of applied linguistics (see also Cowie 2009 for more information about this major development). The leading figure of this movement, Harold Palmer, was interested in identifying the set of words which speakers use most frequently to communicate. After realizing that a high level of natural communication could be achieved by using a vocabulary of around 1,000 words, he worked with A. S. Hornby to produce *Thousand-Word English* (Palmer and Hornby 1938), a word list of initially 900 words which was intended to lighten the learning load of foreign students. Michael West took the vocabulary control idea further by developing a limited vocabulary of about 1,500 words

which he used to write the definitions of his *New Method English Dictionary* (West and Endicott 1935). West's subsequent General Service List (1953), which includes frequency ratings for words in their particular senses as well as collocations and idioms, also definitely influenced the next generation of learners' dictionaries. The first edition of the *Longman Dictionary of Contemporary English*, a.k.a. *LDOCE* (Procter 1978) followed this tradition by using a controlled vocabulary of about 2,000 words to write the definitions, while, more recently, the *Macmillan English Dictionary for Advanced Learners*, *MEDAL* (Rundell 2007) uses a limited defining vocabulary of about 2,500 words. In *LDOCE1*, the words which do not belong to this set are printed in small capitals. Consider the definition of *mink*, where *weasel* and *carnivorous* are not part of the controlled vocabulary of this dictionary:

mink *n* 1 [Wn1;C] a type of small WEASEL-like animal – see picture at CARNIVOROUS 2 [U]
the valuable brown fur of this animal, often used for making ladies' coats

The vocabulary control movement therefore influenced the macrostructure of the dictionary. The list of words that are granted entry status is indeed significantly smaller than a native-speaker dictionary's macrostructure and rare and highly technical words are not likely to be included in learners' dictionaries.

The second edition of the Macmillan (*MEDAL*) dictionary (Rundell 2007) highlights the top 7,500 words which account for about 92 per cent of most texts. This distinction between high-frequency core vocabulary and less common lexical items reflects the distinction between receptive and productive vocabulary. In this dictionary, the core headwords are shown in red and are banded by frequency into three equal sets of 2,500 words each. This system is based upon research into vocabulary size, which has shown that learners need to be familiar with a fairly large number of lexical items to perform successfully at advanced level (see also Barcroft *et al.*'s chapter on *Lexis* in this volume for more details about vocabulary learning). Headwords that are part of the core vocabulary will therefore receive more extensive treatment and will provide users with more information in the form of additional examples, in-depth information about collocational and subcategorization preferences, frequent mistakes typically made by learners, etc.

The way definitions are written is also different from what can be found in dictionaries for native speakers. The use of a strictly controlled vocabulary facilitates the decoding task (understanding what a word means) and forces the lexicographer to resort to specific defining patterns or formulae. The following examples, excerpted from *LDOCE1*, illustrate patterns such as 'a person who' to define nouns denoting professions, or '(cause to)' and 'make or become', used to indicate that a verb participates in the so-called causative-inchoative alternation, which is typical of change-of-state verbs like *open*, *break*, *boil* or *increase*:

florist *n* a person who keeps a shop for selling flowers
herbalist *n* 1 a person who grows and/or sells HERBS, esp. for making medicine
shorten *v* [T1; I0] to make or become short or shorter
develop [T1; I0] to (cause to) grow, increase or become larger or more complete

Combining dictionaries and grammars

The examples in the preceding section illustrate the use of a feature which distinguishes learners' dictionaries from their unabridged counterparts for native speakers, namely a system of