

## *Intersections: Applied linguistics as a meeting place*

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This volume, entitled rather modestly *Intersections*, is devoted to applied linguistics in the broadest sense, illustrating the interdisciplinary nature of our field. It contains sixteen original empirical studies taking into account the ever extending boundaries of the field. As Elke Stracke points out in her introduction, the volume intends to focus “on the many junctions within applied linguistics and its intersections with other disciplines” (p. xiii). The volume grew out of a conference organised in Canberra (apparently and aptly meaning ‘meeting place’ [p. xiv]) by the Applied Linguistics Associations of Australia and New Zealand. Despite this, the studies cover a range of other contexts as well, from the USA to Japan. In order to make sense of the very different papers and orient readers, the edited volume contains three large subchapters centering around workplace contexts and communications, educational settings, and finally, on the role of advocacy devoted to endangered languages.

Part I includes five studies examining different aspects of workplace language. Janet Holmes investigates language samples from New Zealand contexts originating from interactions between interns (skilled workers) and their mentors.

Her results illustrate how implicit and explicit norms are conveyed when giving advice to newcomers. The next two chapters highlight different medical contexts. Louisa Willoughby, Simon Musgrave, Marisa Cordella and Julie Bradshaw analyse medical consultations in which apart from a doctor and a patient several other parties are present, such as family members and/or interpreters necessitated by the limited English knowledge of the patient. Their results reflect on a wealth of discourse and highlight the possible roles different parties are playing in consultations. On a somewhat lighter note, Suzanne Eiggins examines medical humor. Based on interactional sociology and critical linguistics, she looks at patient-initiated humor and concludes that humor helps the patient to shift values and assumptions related to the medical discourse. From the hospital we move to the courtroom: Kristen Hanna sets out to research the practice of the cross-examination of children in New Zealand, taking into account the testimony of 18 child witnesses. As a result, she proposes an interdisciplinary approach to questioning children and includes some roles for linguists and psychologists to help legal professionals to adjust to more children-friendly practices. Part I is concluded by Farzana Gounder with a study on anniversary journalism. The study is centered around the Fiji-Indian community, and anniversary narratives, collective memory, and national culture are examined in concert. Based on media discourse and the analysis of a radio documentary programme, the author shows examples of a narrative of a nation, continuity and tradition, as well as a foundational myth.

Part II contains eight chapters dealing with educational contexts from various perspectives. The first study, carried out by Stephen Moore and Hui Ling Xu, employs simulated role plays to study Chinese-background undergraduate accounting students' communication skills. Differences between students' and professional accountants' performance concerning language proficiency, communication skills, as well as academic literacies have driven the authors to develop a unique self-access pedagogical tool to help students. The following two chapters investigate academic literacy. Chapter 7, written by Angela Ardington, is on academic literacy concerning first year university students coming from diverse contexts attending an engineering program. Both diagnostic tests and students' views on writing are explored, and it is established that academic literacy programs need to be introduced to the core curriculum under investigation. Chapter 8 explores the intersection between academic literacy and e-learning; more specifically how an email exchange project can contribute to the completion of a writing assignment. Hiroyuki Nemoto's findings uncover what types of language management actions are taken to complete a writing task. This study also calls our attention to the way e-learning platforms can create authentic socio-cultural contexts for learners to communicate. E-learning is taken up as the topic of Chapter 9, authored by Carol Hayes and Yuki Itani-Adams, who discuss

the results of a digital storytelling project. The project concentrates on the development of some of the 21st century skills as well as on providing authentic tasks for students. Wan-lun Lee, in Chapter 10, has designed a mixed-methods project to investigate in what ways non-English majors might benefit from being taught literature within the framework of cooperative learning. The author points out that the designed learning project has a positive impact on students' language learning experiences as well as their motivation. In Chapter 11, Rosalie Grant, Rita MacDonald, Aek Phakiti and H. Gary Cook investigate the interrelationship between mathematics achievement and academic language proficiency. They show how mathematics achievement is affected by reading and listening skills, which, in turn, are shaped by writing and speaking skills. These results enhance our understanding of what roles writing skills might be playing in influencing achievement in mathematics. The last two chapters in this part of the volume explore Aboriginal language users. Elizabeth M. Ellis has designed a study to map how Aboriginal children's use of English can be described at home and at pre-school. Based on discrepancies in language use at home and school, the author offers a number of recommendations to help both children and stakeholders. Ian G. Malcolm deals with Aboriginal students and Aboriginal English. He looks at both Aboriginal English narratives as interpreted by non-Aboriginal teachers as well as how students (Aboriginal and non-Aboriginal) interpret standard English texts. One of the most important results of this study is how teaching and education are inherently cross-cultural processes.

Part III of the volume consists of three studies dealing with the rights of language minorities. Denise Angelo and Sophie McIntosh use a case study approach to describe language use in remote Australian communities. By looking at how census data categorises English, and indigenous and different contact languages, the authors manage to pinpoint problems concerning the measuring of the use of pidgins and creoles. In chapter 15, Karen L. Lillie takes us to Arizona, US, to illustrate how language policies are implemented for language minority students in the educational system of a single American state. The author describes and analyses legal decisions against the backdrop of the multilingual setting of the USA, whose educational system often fails to reflect multilinguality. In the last chapter, Molly Townes O'Brien and Peter Bailey investigate the right for mother tongue education of indigenous children in Australia. They provide a summary of the teaching of traditional languages and expand on the relationship between language use and identity also writing about historical experience around the world.

From this very short summary, in which I certainly cannot do justice to the rich tapestry of the volume, a number of issues emerge resulting in making me want to read the book further. Maybe a final chapter summarising the most important implications and offering possible research directions might have

helped the reader obtain a closure. I think the authors of this volume successfully show that an intersection is not only a metaphor for a meeting place for people, such as a conference, but that it can also create a space for a large variety of interdisciplinary research projects. Creating and filling this research niche is the biggest contribution of this book to the field of applied linguistics, especially given the fact that interdisciplinary studies are often difficult to publish in mainstream academic journals.

Another highlight is the rich variety of empirical methods employed in the various studies: Large-scale investigations and multi-variate statistical analyses, interaction and discourse analyses, the analyses of different learning projects as well as qualitative ethnographic studies all contribute to our understanding of applied linguistics better. The methodological variety provides an additional value to the book: It reads like a research methodology handbook, as well. This strength, however, sometimes turns into a weakness: Many studies fail to follow mainstream academic traditions in their write-up, which makes it difficult to address quality-control issues.

Another advantage of the book is that despite the fact that most of the studies look at various non-European contexts, the detailed contextual information makes it easy to transfer knowledge gained in these studies to other contexts, such as Europe. This means that the book is not only relevant but potentially eye-opening for the readers of *Studies of Second Language Learning and Teaching*. Finally, one small but surprisingly delightful detail that is usually not characteristic of academic publications in our field: The book contains coloured pictures!

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