



ABSTRACT: AAAL09 Invited Symposium

Applied Linguistics in a Changing World: Connecting Research and Practice

March 22, 2009 ♦ American Association for Applied Linguistics Convention ♦ Denver, Colorado
Organizer: Donna Christian, Center for Applied Linguistics

The Center for Applied Linguistics marks its 50th anniversary in 2009. This colloquium celebrates that milestone by reflecting on selected topics in applied linguistics that connect research and practice in the changing world in which we live. Discussion will look to future trends and issues in the field.

Changing World?

Shirley Brice Heath, Brown University

"Change" raises questions about evolving directions and circumstances. A major impetus for the founding of CAL was the role of applied linguistics in international diplomacy. Currently, key issues include threatened languages, xenophobia in language policies, and the role of language in academic learning. What do these changes in issues mean for applied linguistics, particularly when practice dominates theory, drives funding, and determines political support?

Lau's Legacy and the Place of Linguistic Theory

Kenji Hakuta, Stanford University

Lau v. Nichols, the unanimous U.S. Supreme Court decision in 1974, continues to frame the federal role in educating language minority students. This presentation provides an overview of the role that linguistic theory has played in the interpretation of this decision, and reviews CAL's important contributions in this area.

Learning Language in Middle School: The Academic Register

Catherine Snow, Harvard University

A major challenge for students in the middle grades is "academic language." Reading and writing academic language requires knowledge of abstract vocabulary, complex syntax, novel discourse structures, and control over rules for dispassionate self-representation. A program to help urban middle school students learn academic language, Word Generation, has generated promising results.

Dialect Diversity and Public Education

Walt Wolfram, North Carolina State University

Despite the disparity between sociolinguistic knowledge and popular beliefs about language diversity, little proactive attention has been given to changing public misconceptions. This presentation offers the foundation for informal and formal language awareness programs, including concrete examples of activities that range from public TV programs to curricular materials for public education

Discussant: G. Richard Tucker, Carnegie Mellon University