牛津应用语言学丛书

Controversies in Applied Linguistics

应用语言学中的争议

edited by

Barbara Seidlhofer

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Controversies in Applied Linguistics

There are several issues on which applied linguists take very different positions. This book presents controversies between prominent scholars arguing different positions, and directs attention to the main points at issue.

Barbara Seidlhofer provides detailed introductions to each topic, and suggestions for further reading. There are 33 key articles reprinted in their entirety, and thus made accessible in one volume. In addition, 50 study questions are included at the end of the book.These help readers to engage critically with the original articles, and to investigate their own reactions to these controversies.

Barbara Seidlhofer is Professor of English and Applied Linguistics at the University of Vienna.

Applied Linguistics Adviser: H. G. Widdowson

'Debate and controversy are the *sine qua non* of intellectual life. This book is a valuable reminder that applied linguistic research is not disembodied experimentation and theory, but a dialogic, impassioned quest for understanding and improving language teaching and learning.'
Professor Claire Kramsch, *University of California at Berkeley*

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出 版 说 明

本世纪初，外教社先后引进“牛津应用语言学丛书”（19种）和“牛津应用语言学丛书（续编）”（10种）。这些图书由于内容权威、选择精当而受到了外语界的好评，在科研论文中被广泛引用，对推动我国外语教学和研究的发展起到了重大作用。

近年来，随着研究的不断扩展和深入，国内学界对研究资料有了新的需求，像“任务型教学法”、“英语作为国际通用语”、“二语习得的跨学科研究”等逐渐成为了热门的话题。有鉴于此，我们又从牛津大学出版社出版的应用语言学图书中精选了10本，以更好地满足广大教师和科研人员的需求。希望这次出版的这10本图书，能够和以前的29本一起，反映出国际应用语言学重要领域研究的前沿，为全面、深入推动我国外语科研起到新的作用，做出新的贡献。

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Margie Berns *et al.* for permission to reproduce '(Re)experiencing hegemony: the linguistic imperialism of Robert Phillipson'. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 8/2: 271–82; 'Hegemonic discourse revisited'; and 'A Closing Word' by Phillipson and by Berns *et al. International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 9/1: 138–41.

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Robert Phillipson for permission to reproduce 'Linguistic imperialism re-visited – or re-invented. A rejoinder to a review essay'. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 9/1: 135–7; and 'Voice in global English: unheard chords in Crystal loud and clear'. *Applied Linguistics* 20/2: 265–76.

Nanda Poulisse for permission to reproduce 'Some words in defense of the pycholinguistic approach: a response to Firth and Wagner'. *Modern Language Journal* 81/3: 324–8.

Steven Price for permission to reproduce 'Comments on Bonny Norton's "Social identity, investment, and language learning"'. *TESOL Quarterly* 30: 331–7.

Luke Prodromou for permission to reproduce 'Correspondence'. *ELT Journal* 50/1: 88–9 and 50/4: 371–3.

Randolph Quirk for permission to reproduce 'Language varieties and standard language'. *English Today* 21: 3–10.

Ben Rampton for permission to reproduce 'Retuning in applied linguistics'. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 7/1: 3–25; and 'Problems with an orchestral view of applied linguistics: a reply to Widdowson'. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 8/1: 141–6.

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Barbara Seidlhofer
Vienna, November 2002

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Text 2 **Kachru, B. B.** 1991. 'Liberation linguistics and the Quirk Concern'. *English Today* 25: 3–13.

Controversy 2

Text 3 **Berns, M.** *et al.* 1998. '(Re)experiencing hegemony: the linguistic imperialism of Robert Phillipson'. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 8/2: 271–82.
Text 4 **Phillipson, R.** 1999. 'Linguistic imperialism re-visited – or re-invented. A rejoinder to a review essay'. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 9/1: 135–7.
Text 5 **Berns, M.** *et al.* 1999. 'Hegemonic discourse revisited'. *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 9/1: 138–41.
Text 6 **Phillipson, R.** 1999. 'A closing word'; **Berns, M.** *et al.* 1999. 'A closing word', both in *International Journal of Applied Linguistics* 9/1: 142.

Controversy 3

Text 7 **Phillipson, R.** 1999. 'Voice in Global English: Unheard Chords in Crystal Loud and Clear'. *Applied Linguistics* 20/2: 265–76.
Text 8 **Crystal, D.** 2000. 'On Trying to Be Crystal-Clear: A Response to Phillipson'. *Applied Linguistics* 21/3: 415–21.
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Contents

Introduction

> *Critical imagination* ... is often the result of culture clash, that is, a clash between ideas, or frameworks of ideas. Such a clash may help us break through the ordinary bounds of our imagination. (Popper 1976: 47, original emphasis)

Why this book?

Why 'controversies'? Some people shy away from 'adversarial exchanges' and think you cannot learn from them. I, however, think you can, and my students tell me they do. So although we sometimes refer to scholars airing their differences in public as an 'unedifying spectacle', I believe, on the contrary, that this form of debate can in fact be edifying. Indeed, the idea for this book occurred to me when I was discussing with my colleagues my observation of how much easier our students find it to get their heads round complex issues, perceive different sides to certain problems, and make up their own minds when they are presented with opposing views rather than (apparent) expert consensus.

My students also tell me that it is initially often hard for them to accept that the 'famous scholars' whose work they study with admiration do not all agree with one another – 'It's a bit like watching your parents having an argument', as one of them put it. Schooled as they are to accept authority rather than challenge it, they tend to be in awe of well-known scholars and find it difficult to let go of the belief that there must be the right answer out there somewhere, and to recognize that uncertainty is part of academic life, at least in the humanities. That is why it seemed appropriate to put together a collection of some documented disagreements in applied linguistics that are known to have started off sustained and productive debates, and generated further arguments (in both senses of the word). This collection also indicates that such controversies do not occur in the isolation in which they are sometimes encountered, but are both numerous and interrelated. In order to ease readers gently into them, they are presented here together with short contextualizing introductions and, importantly, I think, suggestions for how students might not just read but *work with* these controversies.

We think dialogically, there are different voices in us, and thoughts are often in opposition in the same head: pros and cons. In the thinking process it is usual to weigh up different ideas and to resolve differences and

contradictions and then come to one's own conclusion. It seems to me that one of the basic processes in education is to encourage people to engage in this kind of mental process. And to this end it can be very stimulating to see this internal process externalized in dialogic interaction, in a way that recalls the Vygotskian notion of the relationship between inner and outer speech.

Who is this book for?

This collection is particularly intended for people in applied linguistics, and perhaps especially in language education, who feel that the topics exemplified here are important for their work, but who do not have the time they would need to read extensively in these areas. For them, the controversies can serve as a kind of shortcut to the most important issues as perceived by the protagonists in these debates. For the same reason, these controversies can be useful for the compilation of reading lists, as well as for pointing out issues to focus on in exam preparation.

The readers I have in mind, then, apart from applied linguists themselves, are typically lecturers and postgraduate students involved in MA or research degree courses, as well as students in English and linguistics departments, very many of which run high-level teacher education courses for future teachers of English.

Many courses with an applied linguistics component around the world already use (some of) the papers included in this book, but until now teachers and students have had to search in libraries to find them, and needless to say, some journals are only available in some of the best-equipped libraries, and thus not accessible to most students worldwide. By bringing together these controversies in one volume, I hope to make them more accessible to teachers and students alike.

What is in this book?

Since, not surprisingly, scholars tend to a) publish their work in places associated with their particular field of research, and b) concentrate on their own views, findings, and interpretations rather than devoting precious space to discussing competing views, it has not been usual publishing practice to bring together, and set off against each other, contrasting views in a number of applied linguistics areas of current relevance. It is thus hoped that this volume fills the gap between what researchers write and what students need, in that it deliberately brings together writings that do not 'naturally' *occur* together (for example, second language acquisition and critical discourse analysis), although they are *taught* together in courses that seek to give an introduction to, or overview of, applied linguistics.

In recent years there have been several issues in applied linguistics which have provoked quite radical disagreement; this has often found expression in published exchanges between scholars in which their respective positions

are vigorously asserted and challenged. These exchanges are not only revealing in that the points at issue are made prominent and brought out with particular clarity, but they are appealing, too, in that they represent interpersonal encounters of an intellectual kind. In short, they yield insights about both controversies and protagonists.

All of these exchanges have appeared in journals, even the best-known of which are of limited circulation. As for the specific selection, what I regard to be particularly 'productive' controversies is controversial in itself, and no doubt colleagues in different academic and geographical settings would have made a different selection. So, clearly, I do not claim that those I have chosen will be the most important controversies for everyone. But the point to emphasize here is that the objective of this book is not to provide broad coverage, but to indicate a particular way of dealing with the issues raised in these debates (and so, by implication, with others not included here).

The source papers appear as they were published, and any idiosyncrasies of the original texts have been retained. No attempt has been made to standardize spellings, styles of referencing and similar matters. The papers were chosen according to the following criteria:

- they are published pieces in their entirety, rather than extracts;
- they are written by prominent scholars, and often quoted in the applied linguistics literature;
- they are personal encounters in that the authors make direct reference to each other; and
- they deal with issues which are widely discussed in current applied linguistics.

In addition to dealing with important and topical issues, these papers thus make it clear who the main proponents of the specific issues are, and they bring into sharp relief the main points of contention between them. The fact that publications of this confrontational kind tend to exert a particular fascination on readers opens up educational opportunities in pedagogical settings (university courses in applied linguistics as well as self-study contexts) for the following reasons:

- Because positions in such exchanges need to be set out quite explicitly, they tend to be more accessible than papers which build on a considerable amount of assumed background knowledge; accordingly, ideas tend to be outlined clearly, and terms defined, and it is spelt out 'who is on which side', which again furthers the accessibility and acculturation/initiation into a specific discipline and its discourse.
- There is, by definition, a higher than usual degree of contextualization and historical perspective: of necessity, authors have to refer to who said what first, what the reactions were to this, and who else in the scientific community supports which position.

- 'Personal' controversies help students appreciate that academic debate is not a lifeless affair and that scholars, even the best-known ones, are neither infallible nor dispassionate: they are not just in the business of making well-supported, detached statements, but invest a good deal of personal commitment in their work. Their arguments have an affective edge to them.
- Due to their personal tone, the exchanges are also likely to provoke students to engage with the subject matter in a personal way, asking such questions as: What does all this mean to me? Where do I stand in this dispute? Whose argumentation do I tend to go along with and why? What did I learn from this reading of contrasting views? These are reactions which many teachers in advanced courses find very desirable, but often also quite difficult, to elicit from their students.
- Often (though admittedly not always) these papers provide good models for how to set out one's ideas and opinions, so to a certain extent the suggested source papers can also act as models of how academic discourse in the social sciences is conducted, i.e. as models of the genre 'academic paper'. It is therefore easy to see how the papers can be used in class as objects of analysis with regard to the following conventions and 'tricks of the trade' of academic writing: how is an argument constructed and developed? How are some arguments accepted and others rejected? What is cited as legitimate evidence in support of a certain position, and how? What is put into footnotes/endnotes and why? Which lexical choices are made, for example, of reporting verbs and evaluating items such as adjectives and adverbs? How is hedging effected and which purposes does it serve? How are issues taken up selectively in responses, and others avoided, and how are new ones introduced?

How is this book organized?

The five themes of the controversies appear in separate sections. Each is prefaced by an introduction which briefly sketches out the context of the dispute, and keys readers in to the main points of contention, as 'neutrally' as possible. In addition, comments draw out connections across the controversies, and so indicate relationships among areas of applied linguistic enquiry which have not hitherto been made explicit.

The papers are obviously presented in the chronology of the developing debate itself; where there is more than one controversy, these are also arranged chronologically. At the end of each section there is a list of annotated bibliographical references for further reading, so that readers can refer the controversy to a fuller context of work in the area, and to any further developments in recent publications (including further controversies).

Ways of working with this book

In applied linguistics especially, most people know more in one or two fields than in the others, though to varying degrees they will have had contact with all of the areas exemplified. Hence there can be no such thing as a best selection of papers for a volume such as this one, let alone a general recommendation as to how it might be used in the most productive way.

What I want therefore to emphasize is that for the introductions to the five sections, I have limited my own contribution to what I hope will be a maximally helpful contextualization for relative novices in the area in question. However, since the main objective is to stimulate critical engagement with the issues discussed, I feel that some readers, at least, will benefit from a number of quite specific but open questions that might help them focus on particular points of content and presentation. These study questions are included at the end of this volume, and can be applied variously and selectively at the discretion of different readers (or teachers). The fact that they can all, in principle, be asked about each component of this book (including my own introductions!) ensures that they cannot selectively favour some views over others.

At all events, it is hoped that the reader's own engagement with the controversial issues in these pages will reveal with particular force just how diverse, dynamic, and intellectually stimulating the field of applied linguistics can be.

Further reading

It may seem strange to have suggestions for further reading provided in the introduction to a book. However, since the question of whether controversies can be conducive to a deeper understanding of relevant issues is itself controversial, it is not surprising to find that this question has given rise to a (fairly compact) controversy in its own right which readers might like to seek out: Kramsch (1995a) – Byrnes (1995) – Bernhardt (1995) – Kramsch (1995b).

While primarily addressing questions concerning foreign language education in the United States of America, the arguments themselves will be recognized by all applied linguists working in institutional contexts. In the first paragraph of her stimulus paper, Kramsch says:

> I am not sure that 'achieving consensus' is the proper phrase for what we should be doing in foreign language education. Consensus can sometimes be the death of intellectual enquiry; it can be a major obstacle to educational change. Furthermore, I do not share the opinion that intellectual and systemic differences are undesirable 'obstacles' to the articulation we seek between the different sectors of the educational system. Rather, they might be viewed as opportunities for an ongoing dialogue that respects differences instead of trying to erase them. (Kramsch 1995a: 6)