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Editorial: Beginning Again



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The journey to putting together this inaugural issue of the Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics is a surprisingly long one. I originally founded the journal in 1999 back when I was a young academic at Griffith University in Australia where I taught Japanese and linguistics. I was nearing the end of my PhD thesis, and I was passionate about promoting applied linguistics in Australia, hoping to make the journal a platform through which this could be accomplished. There was a very small editorial board at the time, made up predominantly of colleagues in my department at Griffith University, and ironically, it was in electronic format, perhaps one of the first journals in the field to do this. Open access as a publishing concept didn't exist then, and publications typically went through major publishing houses, or like the Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics of the time, by small groups at universities and other academic organisations.

We published two volumes of the journal through 1999 and 2000, but then a job offer took me to Japan in 2001, and it just became too difficult for me to continue with the journal at that time. It was always in the back of my mind how much of a waste it was that I couldn't continue what I started, and I hoped that there was some way of getting it going again. I never dreamed that it would take nearly twenty years to get back to it. When the publishers—based in Australia—approached me about starting a journal, I told them that I would like to recommence the Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics, and they've been very supportive and instrumental in doing a far better job of it than I could have back in those early days. Initially I hoped that it might be possible to start off where the previous issues left off, but Volume 2 in 2000 and Volume 3 in 2018 seemed more than a little odd, so we decided to make a fresh start with the same name but a different ISSN, a far more visually pleasing layout, and, I believe, a brighter future.

In saying this, it is not only the layout that sets the revamped version of the Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics apart from its predecessor. Our editorial board is made up of experts in different areas within applied linguistics representing 12 different countries. Submissions received at the time of writing this come from no less than seven countries, and the scope of research is extremely diverse. I believe that this internationalisation of both the editorial board and the authors of submissions is illustrative of how applied linguistics in Australia is changing as well. Australia itself is coming more

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diversified, where we see a mix of cultures coming together to live, work, and study, and this is reflected in what we see in research which is taking place. It is important to realise that applied linguistics can play a major role in shaping the way in which we teach, learn, and even view the world in terms of language and culture, and doing this in an international arena helps put many issues in perspective. The field is highly sophisticated and can be considered as both inter-disciplinary and multi-disciplinary (Weidman, 2017), despite claims that the term “applied” gives an impression of it being atheoretical (Li, 2018). The field is not only rich in theory, but it also strives to apply this theory to real life situations. The goal of applied linguistics is to bring together the varied fields and to see how they can be used to better understand how languages are taught and learned in both formal and informal contexts.

It is in this undertaking that we hope that the Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics can contribute. This inaugural issue is headed off with a study by Wang Huabin, looking at codeswitching in TV programs from Singapore, Hong Kong, and China. The second study by Phil Benson, Phillip Chappell, and Linda Yates follows the daily life of an international student in Sydney to examine how she uses the spatial dimensions of her everyday life to create opportunities for using and learning English, and the last study by Fatmawati Djafri explores the complexities of educational policy and the impact on Indonesian learners’ of Japanese investment in Japanese language learning. It is an extremely diverse beginning to the journal, and a trend that I am sure we will see more of in future issues.

My position as Editor-in-Chief of this journal puts me in a rather unique position, in that I founded the Australian Journal of Applied Linguistics not only once, but twice. I may not be quite as young as I was the first time around, but I am still just as passionate about how we can develop our research, practice, and theory in the field, and I feel sure that the hard work of the editorial board, reviewers, and of course the authors who contribute manuscripts will ensure that this goal can be achieved.

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