1. Introduction

The term applied linguistics (AL) has been given a wide range of interpretations (Corder 1973; Crystal 1981; Trudgill 1984; Kaplan 1990; Sridhar 1993; James 1993). The traditional and most widespread use of the term is also the narrowest one, restricting AL to the application of linguistic research to mother tongue education and to the teaching and learning of foreign and second languages. According to this interpretation, the central issues are language acquisition and learning, testing, error analysis, and teaching methodology and technology.

A broader interpretation sees AL as covering different types of problem areas within society, not only educational problems, but practical and social problems of all kinds (Trudgill 1984; Gunnarsson 1995a; 1997a; Bygate 2004; Candlin & Sarangi 2004). A glance at the programs of early congresses within applied linguistics shows for instance that language for specific purposes, LSP, was recognized quite early on as a central area of AL. Standardization of terminology, computer aids and document design were early concerns within this field. Language planning was another prominent subfield of applied linguistics.

At a theoretical level, early AL studies reflect the situation in general linguistics at the time. Work carried out in the 1950s, 1960s, and 1970s is clearly indebted to structuralism and to functional stylistics (Malmberg 1981: 9). Early work in the LSP field also reflects structuralism and a functionalist approach to language (Gunnarsson 1995b).
Over time a broadening of the scope of AL has taken place. As linguistics has expanded to include pragmatics, text linguistics, discourse analysis, semiotics, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, critical linguistics and conversation analysis, AL too has undergone changes. The study of smaller units, of words and sentences, has yielded ground to studies of larger units, of texts and discourse. An interest in more global text patterns and in spoken discourse, combined with a growing awareness of the relationship between text and context, has changed the subject-matter of linguistic investigation. The earlier exclusive focus on verbal elements is now replaced with analyses of the various multimodal dimensions of text and talk.

As theoretical and methodological interests and insights have evolved, linguistic analysis has been able to solve new types of problems, and along with this widening of the perspective, new areas have become central to those interested in AL. Medical discourse, communication in the professions, workplace interaction, intercultural negotiations, forensic linguistics, language and the media, immersion education, adult language learning, language and education in multilingual settings, discourse and technology, and language and gender are examples of AL areas in the 2000s.

Disciplines like socio- and psycholinguistics have brought a multidisciplinary approach to the study of language and discourse, as has cross-disciplinary collaboration between linguists on the one hand and anthropologists, sociologists, ethnomethodologists, psychologists, educationalists and technicians on the other. In theoretical terms, AL has travelled from structuralism to social constructivism.

This new situation for linguistic research has blurred the borderline between general and applied linguistics and also between fundamental research and its application. The earlier view that AL is a matter of applying linguistic research to problem areas is misleading as a description of modern AL. On the contrary, AL studies play a part in the development of linguistic theory and methods.

Compared with general linguistics, the subject-matter of applied linguistics is language and communication in real-life situations, and the goal is to analyze, understand or solve problems relating to practical action in real-life contexts. The focus is not on language per se, but on language in use. The link with real life steers the selection of questions to be asked and also the methods by which answers are sought. It does not, though, limit the theoretical aspirations of AL.

Martin Bygate means that this theoretical aspiration is “axiomatic”. The dilemma for the applied linguists, however, is that they “need to be doubly
accountable, in ways which non-applied academics need not be”. He writes that applied linguists “need to be accountable in their choice and use of theories and methods to the rigours and informed criticisms of their academy, and from related academies from which they may need to borrow and adapt the tools necessary for their work. /…/ However, applied linguists also owe accountability to the lay communities which they also claim to serve. This they cannot convincingly do without attending beyond the discourse of those communities to their perceived needs.” (2004:19)

In the year of 2006, AL thus comprises studies relating to a wide range of different settings and problem areas within society. To give an overview of all these studies would be impossible, and I have therefore chosen to limit my account to a few settings, within which important AL work has been carried out.

2. The educational setting

The educational setting is the traditional arena of AL studies, and it still occupies an important place in the life of AILA, the International Association for Applied Linguistics. The latest AILA congress, which was held in Madison, Wisconsin, in 2005, included several strands relating to education: adult language learning, learner autonomy in language learning, child language, contrastive analysis and error analysis, educational technology and language learning, foreign language teaching methodology and language learning, immersion education, language and education in multilingual settings, language testing and evaluation, literacy, mother tongue education, second language acquisition, evaluation assessment and testing.

As in other subareas, the borderline between applied and non-applied linguistics is not easy to draw. This said, it must be stated that there are a quite strong applied tradition in relation to classroom teaching and language learning in schools and colleges. The researchers even urge teachers to carry out their own research. The goal is better practice in the classroom, and the researcher wants to make the teacher observe what is going on, to start a continuing research activity. Widdowson (1990) discusses the theory and practice of language teaching. His idea is a mediation process between theory and practice. The theoretical side should entail an appraisal of principles, and the practical side an application of theories. He stresses
that the division of responsibilities between the researcher and the teacher does not parallel the distinction between theory and practice. In accordance with such ideas, Burton & Bartlett (2005) discuss the design and implementation of classroom-based research in a practitioner research guide for teachers.

Other important borderlines relate to our analytical frameworks. For writing and learning to write, Roz Ivanič (2004:225) distinguishes six discourses: a skills discourse, a creativity discourse, a process discourse, a genre discourse, a social practice discourse and a socio-political discourse. For each type of discourse, he shows the consequences for the layer in the comprehensive view of language, the beliefs about writing, the beliefs about learning to write, the approaches to the teaching of writing, and the assessment criteria. A similar set of frameworks could of course be applied to analysis of talk and learning to talk.

It is indeed difficult to give an overview of the whole educational setting (cf. Encyclopedia of Language and Education 1997). My ambition here is more humbly to point to a few trends.

2.1 Child language and early literacy

Much research has been devoted to early development of talking and writing skills. One group of studies on child language acquisition is carried out within a cognitive framework. The chapters in Bowerman & Levinson (2001) analyse how the process of language acquisition interact with early cognitive development, Perkins & Howard (2000) present studies on language acquisition in children whose language learning capacity is in some way impaired. The interest in these studies is to find the universal features. The aim of the crosslinguistic comparisons is thus to show the relative contributions to the development process made by the child’s innate linguistic capacity and the specific properties of the language being acquired.

Other studies owe a debt to the developmental perspective of Piaget and Vygotsky. Many studies have been devoted to literacy problems and to early development of talking and writing skills (Whitehead 1999). The earlier focus on mother-child interaction (Snow & Ferguson 1977; Söderbergh 1977) has given way to a more general focus on the role of the adults for the child’s literacy development (Blum-Kulka & Snow 2002). The preschool child’s efforts to learn to write have been focused on in many studies (e.g. Liberg 1990), as has the inter-relationship between reading, writing, speaking and listening (Corden 2000). The gradual and
differentiated acquisition of the skill to express oneself orally and to participate in classroom conversation has been studied (Barnes & Todd 1977; Myhill, Jones & Hopper 2006). The focus is enlarged to cover talk also outside the classroom in Maybin (2006), where children in their own voices express the complexity, contradiction and ambiguity that constitute their lives and their identities.

2.2 Classroom interaction

Many studies have also focused on interaction in the classroom, both teacher-pupil and pupil-pupil interaction. In the 1960s Bellack and his colleagues studied the language of the classroom, describing educational activity as related to three interactive moves: soliciting, responding and reacting (Bellack et al. 1966). Sinclair & Coulthard (1975) used the classroom situation as a step towards the development of a model for discourse analysis. Their approach has been quite influential and their framework has been elaborated to suit language classes (Lörscher 1983). The component of classroom interaction that has most interested researchers is the exchange, that is (teacher’s) initiative, (pupil’s) response and (teacher’s) feedback. This tripartite structure is studied in depth by Mehan (1979) and found to be an organization principle in classroom interaction. Mehan sees this structure as constitutive of the event of a lesson, that is as constitutive of a social reality in interaction. He talks about a ‘constitutive ethnography’ of the classroom. The relationship between participation in classroom interaction and constraints and affordances for creating equity in classrooms is analysed in Sahlström (1999). Participation is there demonstrated to rely on the turn-taking systematics outlined in conversation analysis (CA).


2.3 Second and foreign language learning

A large group of studies have been devoted to problems relating to second language acquisition. In the late 1950s and early 1960s a major concern was to determine
L1 influence on L2 learning and use. The predominant method was ‘contrastive analysis’, that is L1 and L2 were compared and areas of similarity and difference were identified. Positive and negative transfer could be predicted as facilitation or interference (Weinreich 1953; Wardhaugh 1970). Another early approach was known as the ‘study of errors’. ‘Morpheme studies’ focused on different types of error, in order to establish an acquisition order, while ‘performance analysis’ used a more varied approach, studying both correct and erroneous behavior. An overview of second language learning theories is given in Mitchell & Myles (1998), while Gass & Selinker (2001) discuss the various approaches taken to second language acquisition, e.g. SLA and linguistics, Universal Grammar, interlanguage processes, interlanguage in context, input, interaction and output, instructed second language learning, non-language influences and the lexicon. They also present an integrated view on SLA.

An interactional angle to second language acquisition is taken in Faerch & Kasper (1985), where the focus is on different communication strategies revealed in communication. In the Vygotskian tradition more recent studies have focused on second and foreign language learning through classroom interaction (Hall & Verplaetse 2000).

A large number of studies have focused on immersion programmes in different countries and on different languages (Johnson & Swain 1997). The best known study might be that on the French immersion programmes in Canada (Swain & Lapkin 1982), but there are also studies on English immersion programmes in Sweden and Swedish immersion programmes in Finland.

A more recent focus is on the multicultural classroom. Hoosain & Salili (2005) present studies on the role of language in multicultural education mainly in North America but also in Hong Kong, Australia and Belarus (former part of the Sovjet Union). The crosscultural perspective is also central for the volume on foreign language research edited by de Bot et al (1991).

2.4 Teaching methodology and language testing

The question ‘Can language acquisition be altered by instruction?’ has been asked and answered differently by many AL scholars. A variety of tools have been developed in order to facilitate learning, e.g. cognitively based thinking maps (Hyerle 2004) and computer-mediated tools. The use of Internet for distance learning has
been studied during the last decade (Egbert & Hanson-Smith 1999; Garrison, 2003; Duffy & Kirkley 2004).

A relevant question that has come into focus is the role of language awareness or consciousness in language learning, where awareness is related to intuitions or implicit knowledge related to one’s own or others’ (implicit) knowledge (James & Garrett 1991). Another relevant question relates to the role of explicit genre knowledge for the gradual maturity of the text writer. Characteristic of the genre discourse, e.g. in Australia, is the idea that writing is best learnt from explicit instruction (Christie 1987; Martin et al 1994). Also discourse analysis has found its way into educational practice. Shohamy (1990), indeed, finds it necessary to stress that discourse analysis ought to be considered in language testing, and Riggenbach (1990) claims that discourse analysis should be integrated in spoken language instruction, a claim that is also put forward in Brown & Yule (1983), amongst others.

2.5 Schooling and society

Basil Bernstein’s work (1971, 1973) on the importance of class and early socialization has, although criticized by many, served as a basis for a great deal of research with a sociological perspective. Reading and writing, language learning and teaching have been studied from a sociolinguistic angle (see Stubbs 1980; Pride 1979; Wenger 1998). Attitudes and motivation, for instance, are considered to play important roles in second language learning (Gardner 1985). The most recent trend within the sociological tradition is related to a growing awareness of the importance of language socialization and literacy in bilingual and multilingual societies. Many studies deal with these issues with a variety of foci, e.g. the family and schooling (Bayley & Schecter 2003; Martin-Jones & Jones 2000; Barton & Tusting 2005).

In this context, I would also like to mention a few studies of schools as societal institutions. Bourdieu & Passeron (1970), Lundgren (1972) and Gale & Densmore (2000) view schools as educational systems, which reproduce the social structure and the established order. Power and identity is also a topic in Heller (1999).

The critical perspective is also central in Kramsch (1993, 2004). In the chapter “Looking for a third place”, she writes: “The language that is being learned can be used both to maintain traditional social practice, and to bring about change in the very practice that brought about this learning.” (2004: 233). The sociopolitical explanations and consequences have been developed in approaches known as

3. The economic-technical setting

Research exploring the uniqueness and variation of texts for specific purposes has a long tradition within AL as has research directed towards the improvement of written documents. This early interest in the text produced were followed by an interest in the writing process and in the intertwinment of text and talk in the professions. In the last few decades the main focus has been on discourse in organizations, and the term Professional Discourse has gradually come to replace LSP, Language for specific purposes, to name the subarea.

3.1 Improving written documents

The plain language movement flourished in the 1970s and early 1980s. The idea was to formulate strategies and rules for users which would improve different kinds of documents. Perhaps the most widespread and enduring result of this movement was what were called readability formulae. Based on a mechanistic view of reading and comprehension, formulae were developed which could measure the difficulty — readability — of texts. Most of them counted word and sentence length. The theoretical basis for these formulae is very weak, but they owe their popularity to their simplicity.

The plain language movement is much more than these formulae, however, and some work has been done under this umbrella which is of good theoretical standard. Basing their studies on psycholinguistics and cognitive psychology, Linda Flower and John Hayes managed to give their document design work a theoretical orientation. They conducted experiments with readers and writers, and came to develop their famous writing model (Hayes & Flower 1980).

Instructional science was also used as a basis for document design work, for example in Europe. Instructional research centres on the development of procedures for optimizing learning in specific situations. Its aim is to establish rules that specify the most effective way of attaining knowledge or mastering skills. Another field which has contributed to document design work is that of
‘human factors’. Here, methods and techniques are developed for the application of experimental procedures in real-life situations.

The plain language movement has not ceased to exist, although its focus has shifted. Studies are oriented towards text linguistics and rhetoric with the goal of improving instructions, guidelines and technical reports, finding adequate strategies for the drafting of sales promotion letters and job applications, and also popularizing difficult documents. The development of *The Journal of Business Communication*, the first number of which appeared already in 1963, reflects this change, as does the newly merged journal *Information Design Journal + Document Design*. A good example of its broad application is also Shuy (1998), where a number of tools for communicating more clearly in government and business settings are given.

### 3.2 Studies of discourse in organizations

Numerous studies have been devoted to the analysis of writing in non-academic settings. These studies border in many cases on work on organization within sociology. The relationship between organizational structure and culture, hierarchy and writing activities is elucidated in a variety of studies, using methods ranging from pure survey to ethnographic observation and sociolinguistic analysis. The collective character of writing at work is shown in Winsor (1989), and its close connection with spoken discourse in Gunnarsson (1997b).

These studies could be seen as precursors to the research on discourse in organizations and institutions which will be dealt with under this heading. With a theoretical orientation towards sociology and organization/network theory, social constructivism, critical linguistics, ethnography and conversation analysis, these studies on organization try to grasp and understand problem areas relating to the complexity and diversity of communication in the professions. The aim is not mainly to describe differences relating to the various professions as to find macro- and micro structures in professional discourse as such. In many ways these studies can be seen as pointing towards the future.

The relationship between organizational structure and culture, hierarchy and writing activities have earlier been elucidated in a variety of studies, using methods ranging from pure survey to ethnographic observation (Odell & Goswani 1986; Spilka 1993). What characterizes the work within this area is its close connection to sociolinguistics and to work on organizations within sociology (Bargiela-Chiappini 2004).
Gunarsson (2005a) gives an account of research related to different types of organizations. In one study the writing activities of a local government office were analysed in relation to its internal structure – hierarchies, clusters, role patterns – as well as to the external networks to which the actors-writers belong. Within this workplace, complexity was found to be related to the roles played by the writer, the network structure and also the intertwining of spoken and written discourse. Complexity was also found central within larger organizations, which were the focus of a contrastive study. Banks and structural engineering companies were studied in three countries: Germany, UK and Sweden. Based on interview data and analyses of texts, the relationship between discourse, organizations, and national cultures were explored. The organizational ideas and communicative policies of each enterprise were found to matter for the structure of discourse at the same time as national cultural patterns could be distinguished.

A current theme within studies of professional discourse is related to the communicative practices within transnational companies. In Gunarsson (2005a), a study on the multilingual practices of a transnational company with its head office in Sweden is also discussed. The term *parallel writing* is used to describe the practices established within the Electrolux group. This term relates to text writing in different languages based on a common raw material, which is sent out from the head office in Stockholm. The selling offices throughout the world receive this raw material, from which they can choose ideas and parts for the writing of customer brochures in their respective language and for their respective group of customers. The role of translating is thus minimized and mainly reserved for official documents like annual reports (Jämtelid 2002).

In a globalized business world, many companies are forced to use *English lingua franca, ELF*, as their corporate language. Currently there are a great number of research focusing on this practice. Nickerson (1998) analysed ELF in email writing within an international company in the Netherlands, and Kankaanranta (2005) analyses the use of ELF in email correspondence between Finns and Swedes.

4. Legal and bureaucratic settings

Within legal and bureaucratic settings, there are many problem areas that have come to involve AL scholars. I will concentrate here on three areas: (1) comprehensibility
of legal and bureaucratic language and texts, (2) asymmetric interaction in court proceedings and police interrogation, and (3) the use of linguistic knowledge in the legal process, a field often referred to as forensic linguistics.

4.1 Comprehensibility of legal and bureaucratic language

A good deal of work on the comprehensibility of legal language has been based on the many descriptive studies of the characteristics of legislative language in terms of vocabulary, syntax and textual patterns (Mellinkoff 1963; Gustafsson 1984; Kurzon 1986; Bhatia 1987; Hiltunen 1990). Other studies have had a sociological foundation, analyzing the functions of laws and other legal texts (Danet 1980a; Gunnarsson 1984).

One problem area focused on relates to the comprehensibility of legal language, that is, to the asymmetries in reading comprehension between lay people and professionals. Being undertaken with the aim of facilitating reading and comprehension for the ordinary man or woman, these studies have come to clearly reflect the theoretical situation within psycholinguistics. In the 1960s legislative texts were analysed and assessed in relation to their readability, which involved a mechanical way of analysing documents at a surface level. An analysis of jury instructions by Charrow and Charrow (1979) represented a step forward. Their ideas for reform derived from a number of linguistic factors. However, they were not based on any theory of text comprehension or on a very inquisitive analysis of the societal function of the texts. The comprehensibility problem related to jury instructions is also dealt with in Dumas (2000).

Other studies have had a more theoretical foundation. On the basis of a critique of previous research, Gunnarsson (1984) rejected the concern with lexis or syntax, which went no further than memorization or the ability to paraphrase, and developed a theory of functional comprehensibility focusing on perspective and function orientation (implications for action). A similar approach was taken by Austrian researchers, who also included in their model a socio-psychological dimension relating to attitudes towards legal language and law text reading (Pfeiffer et al. 1987). These studies view the reading of laws and text comprehension in a societal framework. The individual’s reading and understanding of the text is discussed in relation to the functions of laws in society. In Gunnarsson (1989) the comprehensibility problem is discussed in relation to the law-making process.
The collective and negotiative character of the law-making process at different stages militates against the idea of a reader-oriented text.

4.2 Asymmetries in court and police encounters

Courtroom proceedings and police encounters have been studied by linguists, sociologists and ethnographers from a variety of perspectives. Studies have focused on different types of content and argumentative features, in order to reveal how utterances are part of a prior and anticipated context. Cross-examination, question-answer patterns, topic progression and recycling, argumentative structure, and story patterns have been analyzed. This research has emanated from different traditions, ranging from speech act theory to an ethnomethodological tradition comprising micro-analysis of varying elements in dialogue (Atkinson & Drew 1979; Danet 1980b; Danet & Bogoch 1980; Bennett & Feldman 1981). Courtroom interaction has also been studied using the technique of CA, conversation analysis, (Atkinson 1992; Drew 1992; Philips 1992). A focus on mediation in court from the perspective of intertextuality and interdiscursity is also to be found.

Another line of research has focused on the understanding and interpretation of utterances. Within a sociolinguistic theoretical framework, experiments have been carried out with different versions of utterances, in order to test powerful and powerless speech, gender differences etc. in style, self-presentation, tone of voice etc. (O’Barr 1982; Adelswärd et al. 1987; Conley & O’Barr 1998).

The pre-trial phase, that is the police interrogation, has also attracted AL research. Cicourel (1968) analyzed the part played by police questioning in the long bureaucratic judicial process. In this pioneering work, he studied the social construction of ‘cases’, particularly the formation and transformation of the images of young delinquents as the cases pass through the legal system (police, social workers, probation officers, prosecutors, courts). Lynch (1982) studied argumentation in pre-trial versus trial situations. Jönsson (1988) focused on another problem associated with the bureaucratic routine. Her interest was in the interplay between police interrogation and the written police report, and she analyzed to what extent police officers were influenced when interrogating suspects by the fact that they were going to write a report. A more detailed analysis of the perspective-setting in police interrogations is presented in Linell & Jönsson (1991).
Finally there are studies that examine the role and effectiveness of legal interpretation. As well in police interrogations as in the court room, interpreters play essential roles for the process (Berk-Seligson 1990, 2000).

### 4.3 Forensic linguistics

A different problem area is represented by what is termed *forensic linguistics*. Linguists are directly involved in the legal process, used as expert witnesses and the like. Taped conversations are analyzed and used as criminal evidence. Roger Shuy is the linguist who has published most widely on this subject (Shuy 1993). Linguists have also been used in the identification of speakers and of voices, and in the forensic application of dialectology and of dialogue patterning. Overviews of studies within the field of forensic linguistics can be found in Kniffka (1990) and Levi (1994).

A general approach to the role of language in courtroom interaction is taken in Solan (1993). Solan, who is a trained lawyer as well as a linguist, analyses in revealing detail how a person trained in both legal and linguistic theory can illuminate the critical question of how judges have approached the dilemmas of language disputes and what the legal consequences have been.

In Gibbons (2003) the use of linguistic evidence in court proceedings and police interrogations is exemplified. Important contributions within this area has been done by Roger Shuy (1993, 1997). An interesting use of linguistic analysis in court is presented in Goodwin and Goodwin (1997), which analyses the interplay between linguistic and non-linguistic means in the construction of the court discourse in the famous Rodney King trial in Los Angeles in 1992.

### 5. The medical-social setting

Medical discourse has also been studied from a variety of angles. The problems that arise between doctors and patients have been seen to a large extent as interactional, and it has been assumed that it is possible to do something about them. The asymmetries between doctor and patient have been analysed in various ways. Elliot Mishler (1984) talked about the two different voices in doctor-patient interaction, the voice of medicine and the voice of the life world, which represent different ways
of conceptualizing and understanding patients’ problems. The different perspectives in medical interaction have been the concern of Aaron Cicourel, one of the founding fathers of doctor-patient research. By means of a conversation analysis of extracts from doctor-patient encounters he was able to reveal important sources of miscommunication (Cicourel 1981). Another method being used to grasp the different perspectives of patient and doctor is narratology, and there is a growing interest in the study of patients’ narratives (cf. Hydén & Mishler 1999).

Among the different medical specialities, psychiatric treatment has been of particular interest to linguists. A well-known example is Labov & Fanshel’s work on therapeutic discourse (1977). Neurotic and psychotic language is analyzed in Wodak & Van de Craen (1987). Interaction with aphasia and dementia sufferers has also been studied, as well as talk to and about old people.

A more institutional approach to the study of discourse in the medical setting is taken in Lalouschek et al. (1990) and Wodak (1997). The actual discourse between the medical actors, doctor, nurse, patient and relative, is analyzed in relation to a macro-description of the institution as a working organization, comprising an analysis of roles, routines and events. The research team found a clear relationship between the setting, the physical and mental state of the professionals and the actual conversation. The doctors’ behaviour towards the patients, for instance the length of the conversation, the tone and the degree of mutual understanding, varies with the degree of stress and tension caused by the events occurring. The Wodak study was carried out within the critical discourse analysis paradigm, and it has also found a direct application in that the research team have based courses for doctors on their results.

In Sarangi and Roberts (1999), several important analyses of discourse in medical settings are presented and placed in their theoretical and methodological framework. Discourse in medicine can be said to belong to the most vital subareas within AL. One sign of this is the newly established journal Communication and Medicine, another sign the section on Medical discourse in the second edition of Encyclopedia of Language and Linguistics (2005).

6. The workplace

In recent decades, considerable interest has been devoted to interaction and communication in workplaces. I use workplace in a very wide sense, covering institutions and organizations, as well as more traditional blue-collars workplaces.
6.1 Workplace interaction

The volume *Talk at Work* (Drew & Heritage 1992) include studies of different working life settings — interviews, emergency calls, court proceedings, a hospital setting. The analyses carried out within the interactional sociolinguistics and CA tradition, thus focusing on the questioner, the answerer or the interplay between the two. A more recent study on a medial encounter is found in Heritage & Lindström (1998).

A broad range of methodologies are used for the analysis of the *construction* of professional discourse in Gunnarsson, Linell & Nordberg (1997), which include studies on interaction at a variety of workplaces. The aim of Stubbe et al (2003) is to compare different methodologies. The same data, one workplace interaction, is analysed using the techniques of conversation analysis, interactional sociolinguistics, politeness theory, critical discourse analysis, and discursive psychology. Sarangi and Roberts (1999: 157) give a valuable theoretical perspective on the dynamics of *institutional and interactional orders* in work-related discourse which are likely to form a background for future studies on institutional discourse.

The sociological approach is a common denominator for the studies included in Barton and Tusting (2005), the aim of which are a description of the various communities of practice within professional life. Holmes and Stubbe (2003) analyse power and politeness in the workplace. A particular focus in workplace studies has been on interaction involving immigrants with other mother tongue than the dominant language at work (Clyne, 1994, Gunnarsson 2005c).

6.2 Conflicts and negotiations

Encounters in working life have also been focused on from the perspective of the complexity of the social and cultural dimensions involved. Special problems relating to workplace interaction arise when accidents occur, in spite or because of the interaction. In a Labovian tradition, Charlotte Linde (1988) has analyzed interaction in relation to authentic disasters. She discusses the role of politeness strategies in aviation discourse. By means of a quantitative measurement of mitigation, she analyzed discourse failure and success in data from eight aviation accidents and also in data from flight simulator experiments.

Considerable practical interest attaches also to intercultural negotiations, and many studies have focused on negotiations between individuals from different cultures and with different mother tongues. Firth (1995) includes studies of
negotiations in intraorganizational encounters, in commodity trading, and in professional-lay interactions. Negotiations are studied in the varied settings of the doctor’s office, the welfare bureau, the travel agency, the consumer helpline, government, the university and business. Professional communication in international settings is also dealt with in Pan et al (2002), where the focus is on the communicative activities of telephone calls, resumés (or CV), presentations and meetings.

6.3 Discourse and technology

Another subarea where there is much work in progress relates to the complexity due to new technology. Since the 1990’s an increased number of studies have focused on the use of fax, e-mail and other computer mediated genres for business purposes (Bargiela-Chiappini and Nickerson, 1999), and the multimodal character of discourse is explored in a variety of professional interactions (Le Vine and Scollon, 2004; Norris and Jones, 2005, Karlsson, 2005). Meetings and negotiations by means of video technique have been recorded and analysed as have interaction in call centers (Oliviera, 2004).

7. Science and the academic setting

The scientific arena can be seen as a special kind of workplace. It has, however, followed a tradition of its own, a sociological-rhetorical tradition with a clear basis in the sociology of science.

7.1 The sociological-rhetorical study of scientific discourse

Within the sociology of science tradition, several studies have been devoted to analyzing the role of texts in the establishing of scientific fact. The scientific field is seen as a workplace, a laboratory where social rules determine the establishing of facts and the rank order of the scientist. Knorr-Cetina (1981) was one of the first to describe the writing up of results as a process of tinkering with facts rather than a knowledge-guided search. Latour & Woolgar (1986) described the social
construction of scientific facts as an antagonistic struggle among scientists, leading to a purposeful diminishing of the results of others and a levelling up — to a generalized level — of one’s own results.

Bazerman (1988) studied the rise of modern forms of scientific communication, focusing on the historical emergence of the experimental article. A social constructivist approach in relation to written texts is also found in Myers (1990), which deals with the writing of biologists, and in Bazerman & Paradis (1991), which examines the important role played by texts in profession-building. Textual forms and definitions are found to impose structure on human activity and help to shape versions of reality. Texts are shown to play powerful roles in staging the daily actions of individuals, and to be important factors in the rise of action.

7.2 The study of academic genres and writing

Writing at college and university level and the different academic genres of writing have attracted the attention of many researchers. As within the educational area, much research has been steered by the practical need to improve the teaching of writing in the college classroom. The Freshman Writing Program in the US, which means that academic writing is being taught to all college students, has led to a large number of studies on genres and on the writing process. The development within this field owe a debt to Bakhtin, Leontev and Vygotsky, as well as to Bazerman and other researchers within the sociology of science (7.1).

Linda Flower, who has produced numerous books and articles on the writing process, stresses in one of them (Flower 1994) the negotiative character of writing in a truly Bakhtinian sense. Within the American writing tradition, it is also common to see learning to write as an adaptation to the academic discourse community in a sociological tradition. In Johns (1997), for instance, learners are assumed to acquire literacy in particular social contexts, thus developing “socioliterate competence” through exposure to the genres specific to those contexts.

Within the American writing tradition, the learner’s adjustment to the academic discourse community is focused on from a sociological angle (e.g. MacDonald 1994). Typical of this group of researchers, working in the competitive society of the US, is their interest in rhetorical (persuading) patterns (Swales, 1990; Berkenkotter and Huckin, 1995). The European tradition, on the other hand, builds more on a text linguistic tradition, with a close analysis of large
text corpora at different levels: pragmatic, referential-cohesive, thematic, and cognitive (Schröder 1991, Gunnarsson, Melander & Näslund 1994, Gunnarsson 2005b). As a third approach to writing, I would like to distinguish the systemic grammar approach, which in particular has been influential in Australia (Halliday & Martin, 1993; Martin & Rose 2003).

Candlin & Hyland (1999) give research accounts of academic and professional texts emphasising the role of cultural and institutional practices in the construction and interpretations of these. In Hyland (2003) a complex methodological framework is used to describe social interactions in academic writing, including praise and criticism, citation and intertextuality, power and authority and the construction of expertise. The complexity of academic discourse is also shown in Räisänen (1998), which explores the conference practice and its system of interrelated genres in engineering. Räisänen’s study is based on observations, interviews and text analysis. Ethnographic methodology is also used by Swales (1998) for the study of the textography in academic settings.

Academic genres have also been studied from a cross-cultural angle, with the aim of revealing differences and improving L2 writing. The contrastive rhetoric tradition, which has been influenced by the pioneering work of Kaplan in the 1960s, has led to many important studies on differences between the writing of scholars with different language backgrounds. In most cases, the basis for comparison has been the English language and the Anglo-American culture (Kaplan, 1966; Purves 1988, Connor, 1996). A more European basis in found in Mauranen (1993), Melander et al (1997), and in Dahl (2003).

7.3 Spoken discourse within academia

Also spoken discourse within academia has been studied, though much less than written discourse. I would like to bring up three approaches to academic talk. Firstly, I would like to mention a study which shows the discursive intertwine of the verbal and non-verbal. Ochs (1994) analyses how physicists are constructing knowledge through talk and visual representations. Secondly, I wish to mention some studies focusing on gender and power. The construction of female subordination through academic classroom and seminar discourse is dealt with in Bergvall (1996) and in Gunnarsson (2002). A third approach to academic talk focuses on the
language choice. Mauranen (2005) analyses the use of English Lingua Franca in spoken discourse among academics in Finland.

8. Conclusion

Applied linguistics encompasses a wide range of studies, and this article has not been able to give more than a brief idea of all the research going on. Many areas have not been mentioned, such as work on communication with blind and deaf people, on interaction with the disabled, on bilingualism, and on the whole field of language planning. Rather than attempting to cover everything, my aim has been to give an overview of broader developments within AL. I have stressed the dynamic and expansive character of AL research, a field in which collaboration cuts across disciplines and where theories and methods are involved in the search for an understanding of problems relating to language and discourse. The narrower view of applied linguistics as an area dealing with the application of linguistic theories to language teaching is most certainly no longer valid.

References


All rights reserved


All rights reserved


All rights reserved


[1st edition 1993].


