

Editorial

You have received the first issue of the new electronic journal Applied Language Studies APPLES. We would like to thank you for the interest that you have shown in our effort to widen the scope of scholarly publishing in the area of applied linguistics and applied language studies.

Not one day goes by these days without your hearing the word 'globalization'. Is globalization a phenomenon that has an impact on applied language studies? We think it has.

First of all, the Internet, the medium that we decided to use for the distribution of our new journal, is as such one of the prime movers of globalization. It makes it easy for the editors to communicate with writers of papers, and after all the preparatory work is over, it is no problem to make the issues of the journal available to those who have 'subscribed' to it, by sending us their names and e-mail addresses.

We believe that the future of journals is in electronic format. Hundreds of printed journals can now be accessed also via the Internet, mostly through libraries. Will the printed versions be needed in the future at all? When a journal is electronic, it is possible for readers to pick up the papers that they are really interested in. They can make printed copies of them and avoid collecting material that they do not need. This is becoming more important in a world where specialization advances at a very rapid rate in most disciplines. One of the advantages of an electronic journal is, indeed, that, in addition to globalization, it offers a means of diversification. Since readers need not download everything, we can include papers and other material in languages other than English, even in a language like Finnish in a Finnish journal.

But globalization is not restricted to the ways and means of editing and distributing a journal. There is a fair amount of evidence of the fact that our field of research and teaching is experiencing a boom. Or if not yet there, the boom should be coming soon, because what applied linguists should be concerned with is an important aspect of globalization. Language learning and teaching, language planning and language policy, and language in social life are all aspects of research work that serve the needs of a globalized world. They have social relevance in a large number of present day contexts, and that is why we have chosen them as the major fields of applied language studies that will be represented in this journal. They are also the major fields represented at the Centre for Applied Language Studies, University of Jyväskylä, the publisher of APPLES.

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Those of us who have been working in the field for some time now know how difficult it has been in many countries to bring the importance of our field to the consciousness of 'powers that be', funding agents, even to the consciousness of many of our fellow linguists. The word applied seems to sound warning signals at some quarters, even at a time when the borderline between basic and applied research is getting fuzzy. Increased social relevance of whatever you do is the key to research that may appeal to decision-makers and funding agents.

APPLES will publish papers and reviews. We will also be happy to launch a discussion forum if there is a need for one. We will start with two issues a year but will be ready to add at least one more when the need appears.

APPLES will be available free of charge. This is a matter of policy, because we came to the conclusion that collecting the payments for subscriptions would have been too complicated and costly. This does not mean however that we will let this policy have an impact on the quality of the journal. The papers will be refereed by an international team of experts.

We will be happy to hear your views about the journal and your possible suggestions for its future development.

Kari Sajavaara

Sauli Takala