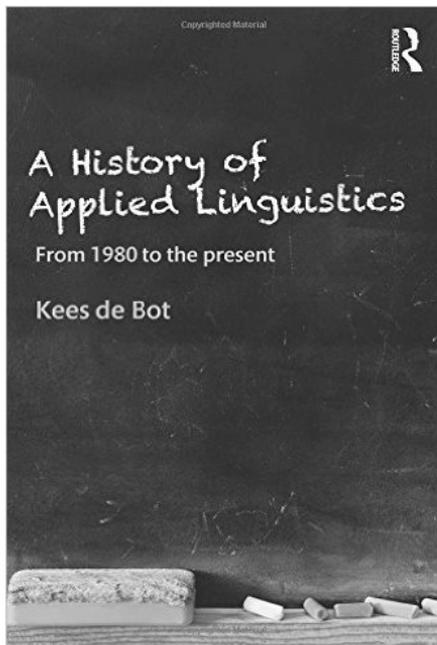


Book Review



Title	<i>A History of Applied Linguistics – From 1980 to the present</i>
Author	Kees de Bot
Publisher	Routledge 2015
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ISBN	ISBN-13: 978-1138820661 ISBN-10: 1138820660
Reviewer	Dr. Woravut Jaroongkhongdach School of Liberal Arts King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi

Kees de Bot, Chair of Applied Linguistics and head of department at the University of Groningen, the Netherlands, has provided a historical understanding of Applied Linguistics in *A History of Applied Linguistics From 1980 to the present*. Lecturers looking for a good introductory book to use in a course devoted to the history of Applied Linguistics may consider this book as a promising candidate. Also, students who are interested in Applied Linguistics or want to be familiar with leading researchers' names may find this useful as a starting point for their journey into the world of Applied Linguistics.

As a guide for the contents in his book, the author has asked several interesting questions. For instance, how has Applied Linguistics been defined and how has the field of Applied Linguistics developed for the past 30 years? Who were the leaders that expand the boundaries of the field? What has been the impact of Applied Linguistics on language teaching?

To answer these questions, the author divides the content of the book into 11 chapters: 1) Introduction, 2) The informants, 3) Defining AL, 4) The leaders, 5) Most important articles and books in AL, 6) Main trends I: theoretical and methodological aspects, 7) Trends II:

psycholinguistics, sociolinguistic and educational aspects, 8) Trends III: the dynamic turn, 9) The citation game, 10) The impact of applied linguistic research on language learning and teaching, and 11) Concluding remarks.

In Chapter 1, the author argues that the field of Applied Linguistics is quite young when compared with Linguistics which can be traced back to Babylonian, Hindu and Greek traditions. The author supports his argument by referring to several noted linguists. The author then describes the aim of the book which is to present a historical context of Applied Linguistics from 1980 to the present, his personal academic journey so that the reader is informed of his academic background, the foundation of the book, and the way of organizing the content (a theme-based approach rather than a time-based approach). Chapter 2 is The informants. The author has sought ideas for the book from 106 applied linguists (by interviewing or asking the informants to fill in a questionnaire). Throughout Chapter 2 is the description of the selection of informants — their educational background, gender, race and age. Many informants are from the USA and Canada, some are British and a few are from other countries. Chapter 2 ends with some concern with the informant selection such as gender bias, or an issue with representativeness of the informants. This shows that the author is well aware of the potential influences that may shape this book, and preempts a potential criticism of the book content.

Chapter 3 is aimed at defining Applied Linguistics (AL). The author discusses AL from different angles, starting from whether AL is defined inclusively or exclusively; the autonomy of AL; unity, fragmentation or compartmentalization of AL; AL and TESOL; and AL and AILA (an association of national associations). Chapter 3 concludes with the idea that there are three tendencies from the informants in defining AL. One is related to real world problems and ways to solve them by using linguistic knowledge. The second is to consider AL as a research field that employs a variety of research techniques, and its nature is empirical. Therefore, real world problems are not necessarily the starting point for AL. The third tendency is that AL is everything that has to do with language apart from theoretical linguistics. The author then suggests that his own definition is similar to the second.

Chapter 4 tries to list the leaders of the field, assuming that leaders can define the field. There are a total of 228 names mentioned with 58 of those mentioned 4 times. There seems to be a consensus on who the top leaders in the field are, and most of them are active in national and international conferences, or act as editors of journals or book series. Chapter 5 lists the most important books and journals identified by the informants. It suggests that there is not really a common core of publications that defines the field. The wide range of books and journals reflects the interdisciplinary aspect of the field.

The next three chapters look at main trends. Chapter 6 discusses theoretical and methodological aspects. Chapter 7 explores psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and educational aspects. Chapter 8 describes the dynamic turn. These three chapters only briefly cover a wide range of aspects, and thus more elaboration on each aspect could be added to these chapters as they seem to be the focus of the book.

Chapter 9 is The citation game. Chapter 9 is different from other chapters as it is not based on the informants' perspectives, but on their publications. The author suggests that an analysis of citations can provide the picture of the field that cannot be gathered from other types of data. While Chapter 9 may seem at first out of place, I think it is useful as it can point out a potential influence on the field of AL. That influence is the journal impact factor. Kees de Bot points out that journal impact factors are beginning to have a role in Applied Linguistics, and editors and authors. It also leads to a large number of submissions from authors around the globe who aim to publish in journals with high impact factors, which can have positive and negative impacts on the field. Chapter 10 discusses whether AL has an impact on language learning and teaching. The informants reveal several answers from "I don't know" and "No application" to "Negative impact", and the majority of the informants acknowledge that research has, at least, some impact. Chapter 10 is mostly based on excerpts from the informants with little input from the author. This is something that should be complimented that the author provides a well-rounded perspective rather than his own.

In summary, this short book entitled *A History of Applied Linguistics: From 1980 to the present* provides a foundation for those who are interested in understanding the chronicle of Applied Linguistics. It can be used either in classes with students who already have a background in Applied Linguistics or as a supplementary text book for independent study. The book is interestingly written with many insightful viewpoints from many leading figures in the field of Applied Linguistics.

Reviewer:

Woravut Jaroongkhongdach is a lecturer in MA in Applied Linguistics and MA in English for Professional and International Communication at the School of Liberal Arts, King Mongkut's University of Technology Thonburi (KMUTT). He has a PhD in Linguistics from Macquarie University, Sydney, Australia and a PhD in Applied Linguistics from KMUTT.

woravut.jar@mail.kmutt.ac.th

