

## EDITOR'S INTRODUCTION: LINGUA FRANCA LANGUAGES

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### Overview of Volume 26

What does it mean for a language to serve as a *lingua franca*, shared by its native speakers with many other users for whom it is not the native tongue? Contributions in this year's *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics* document some of the many ramifications of contemporary and historical lingua franca uses for several major languages and suggest crucial areas for future research in language policy (Spolsky, 2005), sociolinguistics, and language pedagogy. Contributions in the first section deal with lingua francas originating in Europe as they are used at present and have been used in recent centuries. Although labeled based on geographic origin, their spheres of influence have not been limited only to Europe but are, to various degrees, global in scope. In the first chapter, Barbara Seidlhofer, Angelika Breiteneder, and Marie-Luise Pitzl show how contemporary uses of English in Europe have affected both forms and functions of communication between speakers of lingua franca English, drawing on examples from corpus linguistics and noting some of the other streams of research on, for example, discourse functions in lingua franca English influence norms for other languages (House, 2003). Sue Wright offers provocative insights into the official rationales of French authorities in seeking to maintain the influence of French as lingua franca despite evidence that its use, even within prestigious realms in France, often competes with English. In their discussion of German as lingua franca, Jeroen Darquennes and Peter Nelde set out the factors favoring use of German as a regional lingua franca as well conditions surrounding its relative contemporary diminution in some of the institutions of the European Union and in businesses. Aneta Pavlenko's discussion of Russian attests to the enduring legacy of Russian influence on literacy education, literary studies, and sometimes even orthographies across a wide geographic area despite the political changes accompanying the breakup of the former Soviet Union. Finally, Juan Carlos Godenzzi's review of Spanish as a lingua franca demonstrates that, in the Americas as well as Europe, processes of contact with other languages continue to affect language structure and vocabulary in dynamic fashion.

Chapters in the second section take up questions related to a sample of other lingua franca languages that represent a range of synchronic and diachronic issues. In his discussion of Arabic as a lingua franca, Yasir Suleiman shows that the link

between Arabic competence and political identification in various parts of the Middle East can be country-specific, as can developments related to types of bilingualism and bidialectalism used by educated elites and in emerging electronic media. David Li's presentation on Chinese as a lingua franca offers multiple examples of official efforts to promote maximal intelligibility in speech and comprehensibility in print across an enormous region. In their provocative discussion, Nancy Hornberger and Kendall King indicate that, while gathering evidence on historical circumstances of language poses challenges, the case of Quechua nonetheless offers an opportunity to examine myths related to the presumed neutrality, stability, and standardization of the lingua franca languages generally as well as those related to Quechua; in contemporary North America, these topics have emerged with renewed vibrancy in artistic creation (e.g., Gómez-Peña, 2000) and sociolinguistic research (Barrett, 2006).

Contributions in the third section illuminate some of the current applied linguistic theory, research directions, and pedagogy related to English as a lingua franca. While these discussions take the global dominance of English as a point of departure, it is hoped that these papers might also inspire an attitude of critical awareness to guide future applied linguistic research on any relevant languages (Pennycook, 2001). Suresh Canagarajah reminds us that, despite the spread of English as lingua franca, local cultural considerations continue to play a crucial role in its norms and uses, and thus offer the potential for achieving divergent meanings and continued creativity. Lucy Pickering's presentation offers a useful framework for exploring definitions of intelligibility in English as a lingua franca and an account of related research. In their discussion of SLA, early language learning, and related pedagogical developments, Marianne Nikolov and Jelena Mihaljević Djigunović provide an update on issues related to the perennial question of the optimal age for language learning and review some of the practical concerns related to early language instruction, usually offered mainly but not solely in English, that is often proposed and implemented with much enthusiasm but subsequently supported and investigated much more variably. A principal source of this variability is the nature of teacher training for English as a lingua franca; in their review of related developments, Ann Snow, Lía Kamhi-Stein, and Donna Brinton illuminate some of the national and international models used to promote teacher competence and improve classroom effectiveness. Finally, Catherine Elder and Alan Davies outline the many possible meanings of English as a lingua franca and show how choice of possible definitions and norms have direct and sometimes unrecognized consequences for language assessment.

Despite the global reach of the scholarship reflected in *ARAL 26*, there are inevitably limitations. Some aspects of the uses of lingua franca languages such as those associated with many religious traditions (Spolsky, 2003) or specific business and occupational domains (see, for example, Harris & Bargiela-Chiappini, 2003; Piller, 2003) are not represented. Neither are explorations of lingua francas in visual communication (Shohamy, 2006) or in settings where creoles also flourish (DeGraff, 2005). Some readers may feel that, as a whole, the contents of Volume 26 reflect a Eurocentric English-dominated view of the world, too common in applied linguistics.

That accurate perception is tempered somewhat, it is hoped, by the expectation that the paradigms for research, theory, pedagogy, and assessment reviewed in this volume could be used to investigate other languages and language varieties that have, formerly or at present, fulfilled special roles within specific communities (Clyne, 2005) or as lingua francas. Moreover, many chapters here offer theoretical frameworks and research techniques applicable to a wide variety of applied linguistic questions in areas such as language contact and change, perceptions of language uses and users, and language teaching and assessment, so they can advance research in many related areas, attesting to the interdisciplinary aspirations and achievements of applied linguistics (Grabe, 2000; Widdowson, 2005).

### Procedural Notes

To provide specialist readers with a tool that serves as an efficient guide to locating research in areas different from the present year's focus, each volume of *ARAL* includes a Contributor Index for the ten prior years listing authors, the titles of their review articles, and initial page numbers. The Contributor Index for Volumes 16–25, covering 1996 through 2005, appears at the end of this volume. Besides this, a five-year Author Citation Index for Volumes 21–25 and a ten-year Subject Index for Volumes 16–25 are available for consultation on the Cambridge Journals web site: [http://journals.cambridge.org/jid\\_APL](http://journals.cambridge.org/jid_APL). The editor and publisher hope that these various reference aids will assist readers in locating relevant information from recent *ARAL* discussions so that future research can build on the foundations and directions set out therein and thus promote coherence and vitality in the field.

A word about bibliographic format: in general, *ARAL* follows the citation style of the *Publication Manual of the American Psychological Association*, 5th edition (2001). There are a few exceptions, including the inclusion of both issue number and volume number for periodicals, when available. This information is provided as a convenience to readers whose libraries use electronic retrieval systems that may sometimes require issue numbers for prompt location of sources. North American spelling and punctuation conventions are used throughout the text of each chapter, but original spelling is retained in all citations and direct quotations.

### Acknowledgments

*ARAL's* international nature is reflected in all those whose efforts in many domains make publication possible. The authors, all active researchers and teachers, provide timely and comprehensive reviews of their topics. All have been prompt, cordial, and thorough during the process of manuscript preparation and the double-checking of the content, format, and, in this volume, orthographic, details essential to accuracy. As usual, the wise guidance of the Editorial Directors and the Editorial Advisory Board has been vital in shaping the contents of the volume. The good judgment and support of Editorial Directors Kees de Bot, Patricia Duff, William Grabe, Numa Markee, Tim McNamara, and Merrill Swain has been crucial to *ARAL's* continuity and quality and serves as a strong foundation for future efforts.

Because the goals of a review publication necessarily include reference to the best current work available, *ARAL* contributions sometimes include elements previously published elsewhere. For material in *ARAL 26*, appreciation is expressed to Harvard University Press and the President and Fellows of Harvard College for permission to use an excerpt from the 1999 volume by Cheshin, Hutman, and Melamed *Separate and Unequal* that appears in Yasir Suleiman's discussion of Arabic. Thanks are also extended to the original author and publisher for permission to reproduce Figure 1 in Lucy Pickering's chapter on intelligibility in English as a lingua franca, which first appeared as Figure 2 in John Levis's 2005 article in the September, 2005 issue of *TESOL Quarterly* (volume 39, number 3).

Many at Cambridge University Press, North America, provide oversight and assistance with several aspects of *ARAL's* planning, production, and distribution. It is a great pleasure to acknowledge the continuing support received from Ed Barnas, Journals Manager; Mark Zadrozny and Robert Dreesen, Journals Editors; Ed Carey, Production Manager; Susan Soule, Promotions Manager; and to the Cambridge staff members who assist these individuals. At Northern Arizona University, *ARAL* receives in-kind support, which I gratefully recognize, from the College of Arts and Letters, led this year by Dean Susan Fitzmaurice and Interim Dean Michael Malone, and from the English Department, chaired by Jean Boreen. The reference staff at Cline Library has again provided prompt and careful assistance with multiple bibliographic queries, which now extend to electronic documents as well as the usual print sources.

The preparation of *ARAL 26* has depended on the work of two key individuals. As she has done for the prior 15 years, Beth Yule managed initial manuscript preparation, revision, and indexing with efficiency, care, and skill; her length of high quality service to *ARAL* constitutes a truly remarkable record of professional editorial assistance. Julie McCormick has again demonstrated enormous expertise in composition, as she has for seven prior volumes, and met this year's challenge of incorporating different writing systems with poise. In recent years, Beth and Julie have, together, ensured that production and assembly of *ARAL* take advantage of advances in electronic publication; special thanks to them for ensuring that we make effective use of 21st century technologies. Coordination of our efforts has been facilitated by the electronic server established by Marc Lord. When necessary, Patrick Deegan provided courier service. The attentive proofreading of Teresa Barendsfeld at Cambridge and Federica Barbieri, Brad Horn, and Nicole Tracy at Northern Arizona University has helped to promote accuracy. (My apologies in advance to *ARAL* authors and readers for any remaining errors.) It is a privilege to be associated with the many persons whose efforts culminate in the publication of the *Annual Review of Applied Linguistics*, and I am deeply grateful to all.

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Flagstaff, Arizona  
May, 2006

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