The British Association for Applied Linguistics

Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics

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Introduction

Applied linguistics is both an approach to understanding language issues in the real world, drawing on theory and empirical analysis, and an interdisciplinary area of study, in which linguistics is combined with issues, methods and perspectives drawn from other disciplines.

In the course of their work, which may include teaching, research, administration and consultancy, applied linguists often face a variety of conflicting interests and competing obligations. This document aims to assist applied linguists in their awareness of and response to some of the dilemmas they may face and the choices they entail. To do so, it points to a range of principles and values. Some, such as the commitment to equal opportunities and to fair employment practices, are general in their scope. Others are more specific to academic work and to applied linguistics. Ethical priorities are the central concern throughout this text, but it leans more to discussion in terms of 'could' than prescription in terms of 'must'. This document is not designed as a set of criteria for professional accreditation in applied linguistics, and it does not provide any recipes for professional decision-making. In a changing climate of teaching and research, its suggestions are intended to help applied linguists to maintain high standards and to respond flexibly to new opportunities, acting in the spirit of good equal opportunities practice and showing due respect to all participants, to the values of truth, fairness and open democracy, and to the integrity of applied linguistics as a body of knowledge and a mode of inquiry.

The document does not aim to exhaust the discussion around these issues but it provides points for reflection and engagement with several aspects of professional practice. Most of this document is organised around the different work relationships and responsibilities with which applied linguists engage. Within each section, an outline of central issues is offered, cross-referring to other guidelines and relevant references where these may be of value. At the end of each section, a set of questions are posed, which serve as a checklist of important considerations. Suggestions for further reading are also listed, should the reader wish to explore particular issues that are raised in this document in more detail. The recommendations in this document are intended for use alongside ethics and good practice requirements and guidelines from specific institutions and funders.

1. Types of Applied Linguistics Research

Research in applied linguistics takes a number of different forms, and these have a substantial influence on the way that relationships are conducted within the research process. The types of relationship between investigators, their colleagues, their informants and their sponsors that are central to one style of inquiry can be less relevant for another. As a result, recommendations about good practice in research have to be prefaced with some discussion of the different forms that inquiry in applied linguistics can take.

It is notoriously difficult to identify categorical differences between types of research such as action research, participatory research, ethnographic research, theoretical research, and related forms such as evaluation and consultancy. Terminology is frequently inconsistent; there is flux in the academic status associated with different approaches, and actual projects are often hybrid. However, investigations can often be broadly distinguished in terms of the priority given to debate with peers, with informants and with sponsors. For example, in consultancy and in participatory or action research, the ideas and perceptions of informants and sponsors can be given as much weight as those

of academic colleagues, whereas with doctoral research, central importance is typically given to dialogue within the scholarly community.

The amount of control given to the researcher over the publication of results can also vary according to research type. The right to publish stands as the cornerstone of academic freedom, and should only be relinquished under the most exceptional circumstances. In traditional academic inquiry, the researcher alone decides on the form in which findings would best be disseminated, and retains full ownership over them. But in some other kinds of inquiry, the form and timing of publication is sometimes negotiated with informants and/or sponsors. In commercial consultancy for example, the sponsor may wish to retain some advantage over its competitors, and in some circumstances, it is reasonable to delay publication for a short period.

Another way in which research can be distinguished is in the time taken for analysis and writing up. Where investigations are intended to feed directly into the management of institutions, reports often have to be produced quite rapidly. By contrast, in doctoral research, the applied linguist generally has much more time for reflection and analysis prior to the production of a final report.

Consultancy, evaluation, action research, participatory research, ethnographic research and theoretical research are all potentially valuable forms of applied linguistic research. Indeed, it would be easy to argue that this diversity in forms of inquiry is an important factor contributing to the vitality of applied linguistics as whole. However, this diversity can become a problem if different kinds of research are confused with one another. Government, commerce and other bodies often seek the assistance of academic research because of the authority generated by its traditional independence. It would be wrong if this were claimed for work in which a disproportionate amount of the final shaping rested either with sponsors or with informants. Because of the risk of this confusion, it is essential to be absolutely clear about the conditions governing the production of a piece of work.

Key Questions

What type of investigation is planned?

Who is involved in the research design? Does their involvement have any implications for academic freedom?

What are the time scales involved?

Who is in control of the data?

Who is in control of the publication of results?

Are the conditions associated with the investigation clear?

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2. Informants: Relationships and Responsibilities

The term 'informants' is used to refer to those people from whom information or data is elicited or collected in some way. Responsibilities to and relations with informants will sometimes vary according to the type of inquiry carried out. In traditional approaches to applied linguistics research, the role of an informant is clear-cut. In some approaches, however, their role may be more ambiguous, such as in the case of collaborative research with professionals, action research or some forms of internet research, particularly those that involve the collection of large amounts of publicly available online data. In such cases, alternative terms, such as co-researchers, subjects or participants may be more appropriate.

Occasionally, dilemmas and tensions may arise, such as, for example, between confidentiality and the public's right to know, or between anonymity and the safety of other people. In such cases, responsibilities and relationships will need to be considered case by case. The points below generally apply to all informants, whatever their social position, but particular care needs to be taken with those who have less power to negotiate their rights.

Applied linguists should respect the rights, interests, sensitivities, privacy and autonomy of their informants in all research contexts, including those in which users' rights are not so clear-cut, such as easily accessible internet sites. It is important to try to anticipate any harmful effects or disruptions to informants' lives and environment, and to mitigate any stress, undue intrusion, and real or perceived exploitation. Some ethical codes ask researchers to consider how a research design might personally benefit informants, possibly through opportunities to learn and/or reflect on their context. Researchers also have a responsibility to be sensitive to cultural, religious, gender, age and other differences: when trying to assess the potential impact of their work, they may need to seek guidance from members of the informants' own communities. In certain types of contract research, however, respect for informants cannot be guaranteed, and in these cases, researchers should consider carefully whether they should continue with the project.

Informed consent is often considered to be a cornerstone of ethical research, and the foundation upon which trust and openness between researcher and informant is built. Nevertheless, the notion of informed consent is increasingly recognised as a complex one. Informants, for example, are rarely familiar with the nature of academic activities such as publication or conference presentations, making it difficult for them to give fully informed consent to the use of data. In some cases, it may not be appropriate, or even possible, to obtain informed consent. For example, with some types of internet research, it might not be clear exactly who informants are, how to contact them or whether they fall into a 'vulnerable' category (Markham & Buchanan, 2015). In such circumstances, decisions should be made on a case-by-case basis, with the support of a strong rationale that takes into account informants' rights and sensitivities (Markham & Buchanan, 2015). Nevertheless, wherever possible researchers should endeavour to provide sufficient information about all aspects of the research that might reasonably be expected to affect informants' willingness to participate. The information given at the outset of a project should cover the objectives of the research, its possible consequences, and issues of confidentiality and data security. When informants belong to different socio-cultural groups from the researcher(s), it is worth seeking guidance on social, cultural, religious and other practices which might affect relationships and their willingness to participate. In cases where the research continues over a long period, the informed consent obtained at the start of the project may no longer be adequate, and consent may need to be renegotiated. Researchers should try to obtain the real consent of children and of adults with impairments in understanding.

Informants have a right to refuse to participate in research. But applied linguists need to be aware that the power relations between themselves and their potential informants can sometimes be inadvertently misused to put pressure on people to participate. It is also important to respect an informant's wish to withdraw from the study, particularly if it is not conducted in the way explicitly agreed in advance.

Informants also have the right to remain anonymous. Their desire for confidentiality should be respected, and attempts made to anticipate potential threats to both anonymity and confidentiality (for example by anonymising the data, making it secure, and sometimes by destroying it). But it is important to let informants know that it is not always possible to conceal identities completely, and that anonymity can sometimes be compromised unintentionally, and recognition of these facts should inform their consent. In some cases, such as participatory or collaborative research with professionals and some forms of internet research, anonymity may be impossible or unfavourable, as where an internet site's regulations state that data should not be altered, or where an author, or joint practitioner/researcher, wishes to be acknowledged. In such cases, specific regulatory frameworks governing research sites, and/or the autonomy of individual informants, must be negotiated. However, where an informant's right to anonymity is waived, implications for other participants (such as a teacher's students and colleagues) should be carefully considered. In all cases, researchers should be aware of the provisions of legislation such as the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Freedom of Information Act (2000) (for more information on both acts see http://www.ico.gov.uk or a university information officer or equivalent).

Deception and covert research are areas of particular concern in applied linguistics. Covert research and deliberate deception are unacceptable to the extent that they violate the principle of informed consent and the right to privacy. However, in some research, which is concerned for example with phonological variation and pragmatic variation in naturally occurring speech, there are compelling methodological reasons for informants not to be fully informed about the precise objectives of research. In such cases, one defensible option would be to withhold the specific objectives of the research without deliberately misleading or giving false information (for example, by informing doctors and patients that the research concerns the structure or progress of doctor-patients interviews without specifying that the aim is to study pause phenomena as an index of power). Another approach would be to ask informants to consent to being deceived at some unspecified time in the future, on the grounds that the research could not be done otherwise. After the event, informants should then give their permission before the data can be used. If there are no methodological alternatives, a final option would be to present the objectives of the research to informants immediately after the data has been collected, guaranteeing anonymity if consent is given and destroying the data if it is withheld.

A distinction is sometimes made between deception and distraction. In contrast with the former, distraction is generally accepted as ethical, and it can be illustrated either in, for example, the introduction of multiple activities in a psycholinguistic experiment to prevent informants monitoring themselves, or in situations of participant observation, in which informants come to accept the researcher as one of the community. Observation in public spaces, including those found online, is a particularly problematic issue. Indeed, whether a distinction can even be made between 'public' and 'private' spaces, particularly in online contexts, is questionable (see Markham & Buchanan 2012, 2015). If observations or recordings are made of the public at large, it is not always possible to gain informed consent from everyone. Additionally, it is not clear whether 'lurking' in an online forum, for example, can be considered a form of covert research. Again, decisions must be made as to the appropriateness of different forms of covert research with careful attention to the rights and

sensitivities of individual informants, and must be supported by a strong rationale. A degree of reflexivity, together with consultation with relevant parties, can help researchers to judge the acceptability of such research.

Wherever possible, on completion of research, final project reports should be made available to participants in an accessible form, and informants should have the right to make comments. Accessible forms may include more costly versions in several languages or video reports in BSL.

The practical consequences of the kinds of inquiry often designated within action research, evaluation and consultancy are usually more immediate than they can be in other forms of research, affecting the distribution of power and resources in more obvious ways. In situations like this, where (a) participants have a significant degree of control over the research process, and (b) the political stakes are quite high, the notion of academic independence needs to be reformulated. In setting the agenda, in accessing and analysing the data, and in writing up the findings, the applied linguist may be happy to relinquish some autonomy, but she/he should take steps to avoid uncritically partisan alignment with any one interest group. In addition to the responsibilities outlined above, a number of checks and balances should be built into the research process to prevent it turning into advertising or propaganda. Researchers may wish to refer to the RCUK (2015) for further guidelines relating to good research conduct.

All of the above points apply to research carried out with children as well as adults; it is possible for even young children to be involved effectively in the planning, conduct and dissemination of research. However, particular care may be needed with certain aspects of research when working with children, for example in providing explanations and consulting at all stages of research, including consultation about the outcomes of research. Informed consent may be obtained even from young children, but researchers need to spend time ensuring children understand, to a degree commensurate with their capacities and interests, what they are agreeing to when they give consent. For children under 16, consent also needs to be obtained from parents or other adults acting in loco parentis. Researchers should be aware, however, that in some cases, particularly with internet research, it may not be easy to determine informants' ages.

Children may be in a relatively powerless position vis à vis researchers and other adults: it is important that care is taken to ensure they do not feel under undue pressure to participate in or continue with research; it is also important not to exploit children's enthusiasm, and to ensure they do not undertake activities that may be against their own interests. Researchers planning to work with children may be required to obtain clearance from the Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS). For an example of published guidelines see National Children's Bureau (2011). Other resources include Alderson and Morrow (2004) and Hill (2005).

Finally, investigators who work within linguistically and/or culturally diverse communities may find themselves researching individuals whose understanding of the status and power of academics and/or public sector researchers is quite different from their own. Here, too, there is a risk of exploitation as conflicting assumptions undermine the very notion of informed consent, and may result in undue deference or personal disclosure, and/or false assumptions about the benefits that accrue from participation. Providing information sheets, consent forms and (possibly) audio-recorded information to potential participants could play a crucial role in mitigating these risks. So, too, could the practices of translating such documents into multiple languages, using accessible and jargon-free writing, and providing translators to explain the process of gaining consent.

Key Questions

How are the informants' roles construed?

How are the rights, interests, sensitivities, privacy and autonomy of the informants taken into account?

Has informed consent been obtained (including from children and adults with impairments in understanding), where appropriate, and does it cover the full duration of the project?

Have informants' rights not to participate been made explicit?

Has every effort been made, where appropriate, to protect informants' confidentiality and anonymity?

Where anonymity may be compromised, have the conditions of the Data Protection Act, the Freedom of Information Act or comparable legislation been taken into account?

Does the research require covert collection of data or deception of any kind? If so, have the options to minimise negative effects on informants been considered?

Can distraction be used as a way to collect more reliable data?

Are informants likely to react negatively when told about the precise objectives of the study?

Will final project reports be accessible to participants?

Is the balance of power over the research process in keeping with academic integrity?

Have checks and balances been built into the research process?

Has any party requested privileged access to the data, the right to wholly determine the focus of the inquiry, sole access to project reports or a unilateral veto over their contents?

Have all participants been given the right to comment on the fairness, relevance and accuracy of project reports?

Have all major interest groups been represented on steering groups or management committees?

Where children are concerned, has time been spent ensuring they understand, to a degree commensurate with their capacities and interests, what they are agreeing to when they give consent?

For children under 16, has consent also been obtained from parents or other adults acting in loco parentis?

Have researchers avoided exploiting children's enthusiasm or placing undue pressure on them to participate or continue to participate?

Have all the necessary Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) clearances been obtained?

References and further reading

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3. Responsibilities to Colleagues

Relations within scholarly communities, which are characterised by their emphasis on academic independence, peer review and intellectual self-governance, distinguish academic work from that of other institutions and organisations. Self-interest and personal factors are incompatible with the ideals of these communities and should not interfere with a commitment to the production and dissemination of knowledge in applied linguistics. The same values oblige applied linguists to engage in ethical decision-making that meets if not exceeds the legislated standards for employment equity and human rights practices in all matters related to the selection, mentoring and promotion of academic and non-academic staff, and to promote equal opportunities in appointments, appraisal and promotion.

Applied linguists take up a wide range of activities that involve working with colleagues. For example, they write books, book proposals, manuscripts and research grant applications, and review these same

documents. They accredit courses, examine theses, write references, and are involved in appraisal and promotion procedures. When working with colleagues in such circumstances, applied linguists should be aware of key considerations. For example, they should not knowingly misrepresent the work of others, or present other people's work as their own. They should acknowledge in full all those who contributed to their research and publications and they should clearly identify and reference any material which comes from other authors' publications or from personal communications. When reviewing the work of others, there is a general responsibility to provide honest, thoughtful and respectful evaluations that will support fellow researchers and colleagues in continuing to develop and refine their ideas and/or institutional practices. More specifically, it is important to protect confidentiality (unless there is a good professional reason for not doing so), encourage practices that favour equality of opportunity (such as anonymity for both reviewer and reviewed) and supply requested references or reviews promptly.

All involved in collaborative or team research - other researchers, research assistants, interpreters, clerical staff or students - must be clear about their ethical and professional responsibilities. Applied linguists are responsible for communicating these responsibilities and for making every effort to ensure ethical and professional obligations are fulfilled. This includes but is not limited to the roles, rights and obligations of team members to have access and rights in data and field notes, access to travel and conference funding, publication and co-authorship in publication. In departments or groups where responsibilities are shared, it is important to try to ensure that work is distributed fairly. Applied linguists also share responsibility for safety issues in the conduct of their research, which may relate to, amongst other things, considering manageable workloads, mitigating potential causes of stress, providing suitable workspaces and organising safe field visits. When employing other staff, it is important to ensure that all employees are properly informed of the terms and conditions of their employment. The potential for casualisation in both teaching and research can lead to an increasing reliance on part-time and contract staff (including interpreters and transcribers) who together constitute a particularly vulnerable group. Care should be taken not to underpay part-time or administration staff, or to ask them to do duties for which they are neither adequately qualified, nor paid. Attention should be paid to the career development of all such staff participating in a project.

When working away from one's own locality, it is important to consider the interests of local scholars and researchers. In locations away from the UK, matters such as the disparity of resources or access to publications may need to be handled with sensitivity. The status of 'visiting expert' can also be problematic, although seeking the active involvement of local applied linguists may help researchers to navigate potential pitfalls.

Key Questions

Has the work of others been accurately represented and appropriately referenced?

Have colleagues' informal as well as formal contributions to research and publications been acknowledged?

Before agreeing to a review, have potential conflicts of interest been considered?

Do review practices favour equality of opportunity?

Have steps been taken to ensure the confidentiality of the review process?

Is care taken not to draw on ideas from unpublished manuscripts?

Does the review support the author(s) in continuing to refine and develop their ideas?

Are non-research responsibilities distributed fairly, through a transparent process, among colleagues and departmental staff?

Have ethical and/or professional responsibilities been clearly communicated to all research team members?

Is the distribution of involvement with the three responsibilities of teaching, administration and research worked out through careful and explicit processes of negotiation?

Have reasonable steps been taken to monitor the research team's performance of its ethical and/or professional responsibilities?

Are terms and conditions of employment for staff appropriate for the work they are assigned and the maintenance of high standards for human rights, workplace safety and workplace well-being?

Have the conditions, norms and sensitivities of the local context been considered and thoughtfully engaged with in work conducted beyond one's home institution/UK?

4. Responsibilities to Students

Students of applied linguistics have diverse backgrounds. They have distinct learning experiences, have been immersed in a range of learning cultures, and may have experienced at least some of their formal education outside the UK. Unlike the hard sciences, many Masters and Doctoral students have experience outside the academy and bring different kinds of professional experience to their study. Applied linguists need to be sensitive to this variation in their course recruitment, course planning, teaching and assessment. It is important to take account of equal opportunities issues, to be alert to issues arising from inequalities of power between teachers and students, and to ensure that students are treated on the basis of their abilities and potential regardless of their gender, age, race, religion, ethnicity, place of origin, sexuality, physical disability, family circumstances or other factors linked to personal identities (see protected characteristics listed in the Equality Act 2010).

It is good practice to develop a variety of teaching and assessment approaches that are sensitive to a range of student backgrounds. Course materials should also take account of equal opportunities issues in the way they represent people and events. As applied linguistics research has amply demonstrated, face-to-face interaction often perpetrates quite subtle forms of unintended bias and discrimination: it is important to avoid these in applied linguistics teaching. Assessment should be fair, based on criteria that are as explicit as possible and students should be informed regularly about their progress. Student records should be readily available to the students themselves. Personal information about students, including formal records, should be handled in confidence and practices for maintaining digital records should meet the highest standards for data security. Tutors should be aware of the possible impact of recent legislation, including the Disability Discrimination Act (1995), the subsequent Disability Discrimination (NI) Order (2006) and the Special Educational Needs and Disability Act (2001), but also the values and ethos underpinning such documents as the HEA's Framework for internationalising

education and Universities UK's good practice guide on Student Mental Well-being in Higher Education (2015). Time should be set aside for the thorough evaluation of courses by both staff and students.

When students are being recruited for applied linguistics programmes, they need to be provided with explicit information on the nature and content of the courses and programme, the assumptions made about previous knowledge and experience (including language proficiency), the expectations for independent study and learning, the methods of assessment and appeals procedures. Potential students should be advised if their interests and needs are better suited to another programme. There should be clear criteria for selecting students, and entry standards and admission requirements should work to maintain the institution's academic standards and to ensure a high success rate among students. Given current pressures to take on an increasing number of students, there is a danger that resources will not keep pace with recruitment. Every effort should be made to ensure that courses in applied linguistics are adequately resourced in terms of staffing, accommodation, materials and equipment, access to libraries and other facilities. With a broader intake, it may also be necessary to build in continuing support - support in academic writing for example - for students with specific requirements. Finally, many British universities offer courses and even campuses overseas independently and in collaboration with partner universities around the world.

Some groups of students may face particular challenges when embarking on programmes in applied linguistics. For example, international students are likely to need special help with settling in, as studying abroad generally requires making domestic arrangements, which can be time-consuming and stressful. These additional pastoral needs may continue throughout their period of study. In addition to comprehensive information on academic matters, potential students also need clear financial and practical information before deciding to study overseas (such as information on course fees, likely cost of living, accommodation and travel arrangements). Applied linguists involved in teaching students from outside the UK should consult resources available through the HEA and UKCISA (the United Kingdom Council for International Student Affairs), which provide publications and workshops on good practice. Additionally, every effort needs to be made to ensure students, both international and home, possess the English language capacities to participate fully in their programme (note that the politics of visas and the testing industry can complicate this process). As applied linguistics research has shown, a high level of general English may not correspond to a similar level of academic English and specific support may be necessary in the area of academic writing in particular. Neither is "native speaker", nor "native-like" a useful or ethical standard for assessing or communicating competency in academic language use. Finally, research students are likely to have a number of more specific requirements. They need a working environment that is conducive to research, a programme tailored to their individual needs, and a supervisor with whom they can engage in high quality dialogue. The ESRC's *Postgraduate Training Guidelines* (2015) recommendations are relevant to all research students, not simply those with ESRC funding, and provide a useful reference point for assessing a department or faculty's current provisions for postgraduate students.

If an applied linguist draws on a student's research, or on a student's contribution to a larger project, this should always be fully acknowledged in publications, including through co-authorship where appropriate. It is unethical for applied linguists to exploit their students' work as a means of enhancing their own publications, through, for example, automatically adding their name to students' work. Where students are needed as research informants, they should be invited to participate without coercion. Unless they are volunteering freely, students should be remunerated or otherwise compensated. The nature of their involvement should be properly explained to students, in line with the recommendations of section 2, above.

Key Questions

Has the diversity of students' needs, interests and capacities been considered in the design of the module and/or programme?

Have issues associated with equality of opportunity and the potential inequalities arising from power imbalances been reflected upon and evaluated in relation to teaching designs, policies and supports?

Do recruitment materials clearly communicate the content, expectations and requirements of the applied linguistics modules and/or programmes, and the factors that may facilitate or impede successful completion?

Are the entry requirements aligned with the demands of the programme/module? Do they contribute to maintaining the academic standards of the programme and institution?

Are the available resources for teaching and learning appropriate for the demands of the programme? Do they address the ongoing needs of the student population?

Do teaching approaches and materials employ a variety of techniques, strategies and activities? Have legal requirements relevant to instructional design been reviewed and addressed?

Do assessments take into account students' differing backgrounds and academic needs? Are students informed regularly of their progress?

Is the confidentiality and security of students' academic records adequately maintained? Are students aware that they have access to such records and of the processes for gaining access?

Are course evaluations completed by students and staff?

Are the standards for students' educational experience equal regardless of location and/or delivery mode?

Are the unique needs of groups such as international students, research students and students for whom English is an additional language considered and reflected in the programme design and supports?

Have the standards for use of the English language been realistically set and assessed prior to accepting students into a programme?

Are the unique contributions of research students recognised in publications, presentations and other forms of dissemination? Are opportunities for student involvement clearly presented as optional and is the appropriate compensation awarded where applicable?

References and further reading

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5. Responsibilities to Applied Linguistics

Applied linguistics is a diverse field and applied linguists often work with stakeholders within and outside academia in different disciplines, and in different parts of the world. Applied linguists should strive to maintain the integrity of enquiry, the freedom to research and study, and the freedom to publish and disseminate the results of their research. Because of the widely held popular view that 'everyone knows about language, it's just common sense', the public standing of applied linguistics can sometimes be quite vulnerable. Strong views on language are also presented and debated in the media (including social media). Applied linguists often need to react quickly and position themselves in public fora. It is important not to compromise the standards of academic conduct in this process, so as well as ensuring high standards in their own academic conduct, applied linguists need to be fully explicit about their own professionalism.

The integrity and reputation of applied linguistics partly depends on the ways in which knowledge is produced and circulated inside and outside the profession. As representatives of a scholarly community, applied linguists have a duty to keep up with research in the field. Applied linguistics is an interdisciplinary field; this involves keeping in touch with relevant developments in associated disciplines. Given the vast amount of research and writing that appears every year, however, applied

linguists should be aware of the limitations of their knowledge and position themselves in their own selected areas of expertise.

In line with the UKRIO Code of Practice for Research (2009) and RCUK Policy and Guidelines (2015), it is essential and expected that applied linguists do not fabricate, falsify or misrepresent evidence, data, findings or conclusions. All aspects of research should be reported in enough detail to allow other applied linguists to understand and interpret the findings as appropriate. Within the conditions of any research project and area, it is also worth considering ways in which the data collected could be made available to others working in the area.

It is important to make and maintain links with the international community of applied linguists. BAAL provides access to an international network that can play a major role in disseminating knowledge both inside and outside the academy. While it may be unavoidable that there is bias towards work that is both in English and *about* English in a British association (notwithstanding work undertaken with the indigenous Celtic languages of the UK), applied linguists should also try to ensure that proper weight is given in both teaching and research to work published in and about other languages. Applied linguists should be sensitive to issues of international academic equity and power relating to the economic circumstances of different countries. This sensitivity might include, for example, avoidance of exploitation of colleagues from low income countries, or support for the international participation of such colleagues in conferences or other knowledge creation/dissemination events, as well as international collaboration in funded projects that can contribute to the creation of local resources in different parts of the world.

To maintain the historical integrity of the area, it is necessary to draw on and critique past traditions of applied linguistics. Without in any way discouraging innovation, this knowledge needs to be passed on to newcomers to the field. More generally, applied linguists have a responsibility to support newcomers to the field (students, research assistants, colleagues from other fields) to become active contributors to the community through open engagement, fair dealing and support for career development.

The standing of applied linguistics is also influenced by the ways in which applied linguists communicate with a wider audience. Applied linguists regularly interact with a range of non-specialists, and sections 2, 6 and 8 provide some quite detailed discussion about ways of developing and maintaining good relationships with the general public, with informants and with sponsors.

Key questions

Has the researcher conducted themselves in a way that is consistent with the highest standards of academic conduct in the public arena?

Is the researcher aware of current interdisciplinary developments (accepting the limitations of their knowledge)?

Has proper weight been given in both teaching and research to work published in and about other languages?

Is research reported in enough detail to allow other applied linguists to understand and interpret the findings?

Is the researcher familiar with prominent documents such as the Research Council UK Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct and the UK Research Integrity Office Code of Practice for Research (including a recommended checklist for researchers)?

Have power inequities between a range of colleagues been considered and mitigated where possible?

Has the researcher considered international collaborations that contribute to dissemination of knowledge?

Is the researcher ready to circulate the findings of their study outside academia?

Have newcomers to the field been adequately supported?

References and further reading

Academy of Social Sciences (n.d.) *Research Ethics Guidelines.*Available at https://www.acss.org.uk/developing-generic-ethics-principles-social-science/

Research Councils UK. (2013) *Policy and Guidelines on Governance of Good Research Conduct.* Available at http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/RCUK-prod/assets/documents/reviews/grc/RCUKPolicyandGuidelinesonGovernanceofGoodResearchPracticeFebruary2013.pdf) Last accessed February 2016.

UK Research Integrity Office. (2009) *Code of Practice for Research: Promoting Good Practice and Preventing Misconduct*. Available at http://ukrio.org/wp-content/uploads/UKRIO-Code-of-Practice-for-Research.pdf Last accessed February 2016.

6. Relationships with Sponsors

Sponsors or funders are involved in several kinds of applied linguistic work. They can be involved, for example, in research contracts where the researcher has the idea and obtains funding for it, for example from Research Councils or charities. Sometimes sponsors themselves define the research issue and seek expert assistance from outside, and this can happen, for example, with a private sector company or a government department. Increasingly, research agendas and programmes are developed collaboratively between researchers and funders/sponsors. Applied linguists should be careful not to enter into any contract with sponsors that compromises the kinds of professional ethics outlined in this document. The discussion in Section 1 of variation in research relationships refers to sponsors and funders as well as to informants.

Some of the responsibilities applied linguistic researcher have to sponsors/funders include honesty about their qualifications, capabilities and aims in undertaking a piece of work. As appropriate, applied linguists should provide full details of the methodology they propose, and they should be ready, if necessary, to redirect potential sponsors to other scholars. Although the time required to carry out a piece of work cannot always be predicted accurately, it is important not to under- or over-price for it. Researchers should also offer clear, regular and accurate accounts of their work, with a frequency agreed in advance. Investigators should be accountable for the funds spent, but they should never misrepresent data or findings to enhance commercial potential.

Applied linguists may not be able to compel agencies to adopt specific contracts or codes of practice, but they should expect certain treatment, for example for their professional expertise to be respected, for their work to be properly credited, without any misrepresentation of their views, and for sponsors to act with integrity, fairness, and regard for equal opportunities. Applied linguists need to be careful about the terms on which they accept contracts for investigation, as well as being very clear about the amount of autonomy they will be able to exercise.

Contracts with sponsors raise issues that are too numerous and too complex to be treated adequately in the present document. These include: the composition of steering committees; lines of communication; the ownership of data and findings; publication rights and contract termination. Before signing a contract, applied linguists would be well advised to seek expert advice, and to refer to the detailed suggestions about collaborative working and conflicts of interest outlined in, for example, the UKRIO Code of Practice for Research (2009) and the ESRC's Framework for Research Ethics (2016).

Key questions

Has the researcher clearly articulated the aims, objectives and delivery plans of the research to their sponsor/funder?

Do contracts with sponsors/funders compromise the kinds of professional ethics outlined in this document?

Has a collaboration agreement been developed between the researcher and the sponsor/funder that clearly states codes of practices for ethical conduct on both sides? (see Nolan, 1995)

Have clear governance structures been put in place within which the research will be conducted?

Has the researcher sought advice and followed relevant guidelines before signing a contract with sponsors/ funders?

References and Further Reading

Economic and Social Research Council. (2016) *Framework for Research Ethics*. Available at http://www.esrc.ac.uk/funding/guidance-for-applicants/research-ethics/ Last accessed February 2016.

Nolan, M. (1995) *The Seven Principles of Public Life.* Overview available at:
https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-7-principles-of-public-life Last accessed
February 2016.

7. Relationships with Institutions

Although it may only be in exceptional circumstances that applied linguists can disclaim all personal responsibility, the institutions that they work for can significantly help or hinder them in their efforts to adhere to the values and principles outlined in this document. This document cannot stipulate the duties of institutions, but there are certain conditions that applied linguists should look for in employment.

For example, institutions should have their own codes of good practice, covering all aspects of their relationship with employees. These should facilitate conduct in accordance with the recommendations presented here, which reflect a significant level of consensus across the social sciences. Institutions should have suitable procedures (e.g. ethics committees) for the ethical scrutiny of research. Such procedures should be supportive, educative, dialogic, proportionate and not unnecessarily bureaucratic. However, applied linguists should not see approval by an ethics committee as absolving them from further ethical consideration as their research progresses.

Further, institutions should not require applied linguists to undertake work which runs counter to the norms of good professional practice. In relation to work funded externally, they should not compel applied linguists to engage in particular contract projects, and they should provide their academic staff with opportunities to supplement externally funded contract work with independent inquiry and with training to upgrade their teaching and research skills. This is important to prevent contract work becoming an arid piecemeal activity, and it is also likely to lead to greater productivity and effectiveness in contract work in the medium to long term. In the event of a disagreement arising between the agency funding a project and the investigator engaged on it, the institution should give its full support in resolving the dispute.

Key Questions

Has the researcher considered their relevant institution's code of research conduct and governance structure surrounding research ethics?

Does the proposed research meet the ethics requirements stipulated by the institution?

Has a strategy for continuous ethical review as the project progresses been considered?

8. Responsibilities to the Public

Language issues pervade many aspects of public and everyday life. This gives applied linguists special as well as general responsibilities towards members of the public and the wider society. It is important to try to promote confidence in applied linguistic work, without exaggerating the accuracy or explanatory power of its findings. Where research uses public money, there is a duty to provide an account of how and why funds have been spent, and of what has been achieved.

In setting up research, consideration should be given to conflicting interests. In principle, greater access to well-founded information should serve rather than threaten the interests of society. But it is necessary to consider the effects of research on all groups, including those that are not directly involved at the time. Further, applied linguists should try to anticipate likely misinterpretations or misconstruals of information, and the damage they might cause, and counteract them when they occur.

A specific type of responsibility to the public arises when applied linguists are asked to contribute their expertise to public bodies by becoming members of committees, working parties or review bodies. Such work is an important arena for the dissemination and application of language research. However, applied linguists should observe the highest codes of personal and professional integrity when acting in such roles (see Nolan, 1995 for further guidance). They should be maximally transparent with regards to their involvement and opinion, and the representation of their opinion in any decision making process.

It is important to consider disseminating one's work both in specialist publications and in more diverse and accessible formats. But relations with the mass media require particularly careful thought. Publicity for applied linguistics should adhere to the highest standards of information sharing. The ESRC's (2016) *Impact Toolkit* provides researchers with detailed suggestions on how to form a productive relationship with the media, including advice relating to the use of social media and effective websites to communicate research.

Key questions

Have the potential effects of research on a range of groups been considered? Have likely misinterpretations or misconstruals of information, and the damage they might cause, been anticipated?

Has there been careful consideration of the best way to disseminate research to different publics?

When serving on a public body or providing expertise to public enquiries, have Nolan's (1995) principles of public life been considered?

Has a media strategy been developed for the discussion and dissemination of research?

How will an engaged applied linguistics community be represented in interactions with the media?

References and Further Reading

Economic and Social Research Council. (2016) *Impact Toolkit*. Available at
http://www.esrc.ac.uk/research/impact-toolkit/ Last accessed February 2016.

9. Afterword

The first edition of these Recommendations (1994) was drafted by Ben Rampton (coordinator), Joanna Channell, Pauline Rea-Dickins, Celia Roberts and Joan Swann. Comments on a first draft were provided by Meriel Bloor, Christopher Brumfit, Tony Burgess, Debbie Cameron, Ron Carter, Romy Clark, Paul Meara, Ulrike Meinhof, May Pettigrew, Antoinette Renouf, Mukul Saxena, Phil Scholfield, Brian Street, Mike Stubbs, John Trim and Janet White.

Revisions for the second edition (2006) were drafted by Richard Barwell and Joan Swann. Comments and suggestions were provided by Graham Hodson Turner, Julia Gillen and Janet Maybin and Sarah North.

This 2016 revision of the Recommendations on Good Practice in Applied Linguistics was produced by Svenja Adolphs, Jo Angouri, Tess Fitzpatrick, Tilly Harrison, Jai Mackenzie and Diane Potts.

The recommendations will need to be developed through continuing debate and in the light of the changing conditions in which applied linguists work. It is hoped that BAAL members will be active in the periodic revision and updating of this text.

BAAL is grateful to the members below for drafting the 2016 revision of this guide:

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