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**| RESEARCH ARTICLE**

## **The Routledge Handbook of Applied Linguistics: A Critical Review (Volume 2)**

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**| ABSTRACT**

Routledge Handbook of Applied Linguistics (2nd ed., 2023), edited by Li Wei, Zhu Hua, and James Simpson, is an important and extensive source of applied linguistics. This revised version contains more than 50 chapters by the foremost scholars across the globe, covering the traditional and current topics in applied linguistics. This volume has been edited by major representatives in the applied linguistics field, and it has been chosen to represent the growing breadth of the branch by adding newly emerged areas of interest, including digital communication, ecolinguistics, and critical applied linguistics (Li et al., 2023).

**| KEYWORDS**

Artificial intelligence, ChatGPT, EFL writing, written corrective feedback, human feedback, learner uptake, Saudi Arabia

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**Introduction**

Routledge Handbook of Applied Linguistics (2nd ed., 2023), edited by Li Wei, Zhu Hua, and James Simpson, is an important and extensive source of applied linguistics. This revised version contains more than 50 chapters by the foremost scholars across the globe, covering the traditional and current topics in applied linguistics. This volume has been edited by major representatives in the applied linguistics field, and it has been chosen to represent the growing breadth of the branch by adding newly emerged areas of interest, including digital communication, ecolinguistics, and critical applied linguistics (Li et al., 2023).

The interdisciplinary nature of the book renders it an essential source of information to all people studying/researching language, education, policy, and communication. It connects theory with practice, providing the knowledge of language acquisition, educational approaches, sociolinguistics, and so on. The handbook can be applied to my study of the language education and policy field, as it offers some background information as well as the contemporary issues that are thought-provoking and relevant to my research (Li et al., 2023).

This review is aimed at critically examining how the book has contributed to applied linguistics. I am going to evaluate its efficacy in touching the areas of emergence, its practical use to the educators and policymakers, as well as its strengths and weaknesses regarding content and accessibility.

**Summary of the Book**

Routledge Handbook of Applied Linguistics (2023, second edition) is a two-volume work that is comprehensive. Volume One covers the language learning, education, and major approaches towards it, giving an insight into the language acquisition, pedagogy, and methodologies of second language teaching. It includes the use of technology in language education and a discussion of language acquisition theories under various conditions. Volume Two, however, changes to applied linguistics in society and wider horizons, looking at the meeting point of language and social, political, and cultural problems (Li et al., 2023). It

covers the topics of multilingualism, language policy, digital communication, and such new directions as ecolinguistics and posthumanism.

### **Key Themes and Arguments**

The book brings out the interdisciplinary nature of applied linguistics. One of them is multilingualism, to be discussed by Jasone Cenoz and Durk Gorter, who discuss the impact of multilingualism on cognitive and social identity as well as communication. The language policy is also a major theme of the book, especially in matters of management of linguistic diversity in education and society. It has talked about the conflict between the state language and minority languages, especially in a multi-cultural situation.

The other major theme is that of translanguaging, in which several chapters explore the way speakers change languages freely in multilingual settings. There is also a discussion of digital communication, especially the manner in which the way language is used is being changed in the digital era, and the chapter by Caroline Tagg has given an insight into the role of new media in communication. More recently, new issues, such as ecolinguistics and posthumanism, indicate the development of the field to incorporate studies of the environment and non-human viewpoints (Li et al., 2023)..

### **Chapters and Sections**

Important ones are Multilingualism by Cenoz and Gorter, which gives an in-depth analysis of multilingualism practices in the world, and Critical Discourse Analysis by Karin Zotzmann and John P. O'Regan, which discusses the use of language as a source of power and ideology. Digital Language and Communication by Caroline Tagg is a study that examines the way language is being transformed by the use of technology. The arrangement of the handbook is structured to capture the current problems in applied linguistics, whereby it connects the traditional fields with the new areas. It encourages the reader to think of the way applied linguistics is changing to meet the global issues, including migration, language policy, and environmental sustainability (Li et al., 2023) .

### **Critical Evaluation**

#### ***Relevance to Applied Linguistics.***

The Routledge Handbook of Applied Linguistics is better at addressing the old and the new areas of the field. It addresses the most topical issues, including the process of acquiring a second language and the educational process, but also presents the background ones, including digital communication, translanguaging, and ecolinguistics. The broad scope of the book also suggests the augmented interdisciplinary character of applied linguistics and guarantees that the readers are acquainted with the evolving character of the discipline (Li et al., 2023). As an example, the issues of language policy and multilingualism in the chapters touch upon the social, political, and cultural dimensions of language, and these aspects are fundamental to consider the role language plays in the environment of various communities as well as in the globalization of the world.

In addition to these traditional spheres, there are other emerging disciplines such as posthumanism and critical applied linguistics that are also well in time discussed by the book. Such themes resonate with the contemporary debates that focus on the intersection of language, technology, and the environment. The authors are able to relate these emerging areas of concern to more traditional concerns, and it is a holistic approach to the process of how applied linguistics is adapting to the demands of the new Millennium, such as global migration, sustainability of the environment, communication revolution, and so forth (Li et al., 2023). This combination of traditional and contemporary problems contributes to the fact that the book is highly topical to the scholars and professionals of applied linguistics.

#### ***Strengths***

The most valuable strengths of the book are also its interdisciplinary approach. The representation of the eclectic nature of applied linguistics of the book in question is that it uses a wide range of other disciplines, including sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and language education. The chapters are written by experts in their areas of expertise and bring out the enrichment of the different theoretical lenses. This multidimensional depth has made the book a tool that cannot be dispensed with in the understanding of the multidimensional nature of language and its relation with society, cognition, and communication.

Contributions to the book are also made all over the world. Applied linguistics may assume a different perspective in the various regions of the globe, and this is because of the various cultural, social, and political aspects. This international diversity not only contributes to the value that the work has on the academic front but also renders the work relevant to a large audience on the international front. In addition, the chapters like Content and Language Integrated Learning have practical implications for the language educators and policymakers that bridge the gap between theory and practice.

### **Weaknesses**

Though the level and the extent of the coverage are its strengths, they can also be viewed as weaknesses of the book, at least when it comes to complexity and the ease of reading. Some of the chapters are extremely technical and cannot be understood by undergraduate students or those who are new to the topic of applied linguistics. The wide scope of the book allows suggesting that certain chapters may assume certain background knowledge, i.e., the book may not be a good read for beginner readers, or a more introductory account of the issues.

The other potential weakness of the book is that some of the new themes that are being deployed in the field of applied linguistics could have been further addressed or discussed. As an example, though the book also helps in discussing digital communication, the role of artificial intelligence as a tool of learning and processing languages could have been elaborated further. Similarly, language and race are also raised, although some more insight into the critical race theory under applied linguistics would have been useful to add some explanation to the language and identity discourse.

### **Comparative Analysis**

Over the last decade, the field of applied linguistics has been changing significantly, in particular, owing to the advances in the digital channels of communication, globalization, and the rise of the sociopolitical dimension of language. The second edition provides some of the emergent themes that are well incorporated, such as the practice of translanguaging, digital language, and race. Not only are these issues more topical to contemporary world issues, but it is also a trend that deals with a more critical and inclusive approach to the study of language (Li et al., 2023).

The handbook can be compared to hold its own as an aid to be used in applied linguistics. It is notable for its great breadth and interdisciplinary focus, even though it is not as detailed as other works in each of its niche domains. This makes it a valuable resource to the students who need an introduction to the field in a simple-to-find manner and the researchers who would like to have a scholarly source that introduces the basic theories as well as the fields of research that are more recent.

### **Personal Evaluation**

The book also enabled me to validate the fact that I was aware of applied linguistics as an interdisciplinary topic. It proved that the research of languages could be closely connected with such other disciplines as sociocultural theory, political economy, and technology. As it concerns the future of applied linguistics, the book states that the field will continue to expand its boundaries to include issues like sustainability, online communication, and the ethics of using language in international contexts. The book emphasizes the need for applied linguists to adopt the aspect of being flexible and open to the constantly changing linguistic environment, which is sure to change with the issues that trouble the world, like climate change and digital transformation, influencing language practices.

### **Conclusion**

The achievement of the Routledge Handbook of Applied Linguistics (2nd ed., 2024) is that it provides a multi-disciplinary perspective of the sphere. The book also addresses the classical topics, such as language learning and teaching, and the new ones, such as e-communication and e-linguistics. Its coverage is very general, therefore rendering it familiar with a broad group of consumers, such as the postgraduate and experienced researchers. Its mixture of both traditional and modern issues makes it an irreplaceable source of information about any person, studying or working in the field of applied linguistics, which offers valuable ideas to discuss the issues and implement them into practice simultaneously.

The academic contribution of the book is enormous, as it is a part of the current development of applied linguistics that addresses the issues of modern global migration, language policy, and the role of technology in communication. It provides us with multiple viewpoints of scholars all over the world, and it adds global interest and interdisciplinary significance to the field. I would strongly recommend this book to postgraduate students, researchers, and educators in applied linguistics. The fact that it has covered the traditional theories and the new ones offers it as an invaluable addition to the library of every person who is interested in knowing the current trends in the field of language studies, be it in academia, education, or policy formulation.

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