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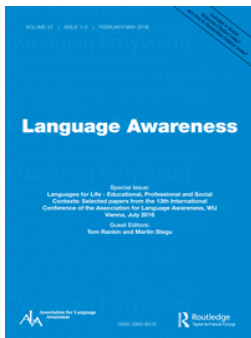
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DISCUSSION

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Panel discussion: language awareness vs. folk linguistics vs. applied linguistics

Martin Stegu, Dennis R. Preston, Antje Wilton and Claudia Finkbeiner

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As already mentioned in our introduction, the disciplinary status of Language Awareness (research), especially its relationship to other subfields of (Applied) Linguistics or also non-linguistic disciplines still seems rather vague. Even if disciplines never reach a definitive, crystallised, final status, and there is and has to be a perpetual dynamic in the social construction of the system of sciences and disciplines, a 'meta-disciplinary' discourse remains important for every (potential) discipline and its identity.

In the previous conference special issue, Agneta Svalberg published an important overview 'Language Awareness research: where we are now' (Svalberg, 2016), where she presented the most prominent LA topics and most frequently used research methods in the contributions of this journal in the years 2010 – 2014. Her analysis and considerations concern however rather internal aspects of LA research and not disciplinary issues. As in the last years I have been personally involved not only in the LA, but also in the Folk Linguistics community (co-convening with Antje Wilton the AILA Research Network 'Folk Linguistics'; cf. Wilton & Stegu, 2011; AILA = Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée), I have been increasingly interested in the mutual relationship between Language Awareness, Folk Linguistics and Applied Linguistics. Therefore, I decided to organise at the Vienna conference a forum of experts from the different communities who would discuss the disciplinary issues mentioned above. The participants in this discussion were: Claire Kramsch, the (in the meantime: past) president of AILA, Dennis Preston, one of the most prominent researchers in 'Folk Linguistics' (cf. Niedzielski & Preston, 2000), Antje Wilton (see above) and myself, as moderator. Unfortunately, for reasons of time, Claire Kramsch was not able to compose a written version of her contribution, but we got texts from all the other participants.

The oral and written versions were both reactions to an input text I had sent the participants before the conference, and at the beginning of the panel, as an introduction, I read the same text to the audience in order to present my questions. I will also copy the original text here before inserting the discussants' statements. At the end of these statements, I will sum up with a provisional conclusion.

Before beginning with the proper discussion, let me explain the genesis of my questions.

My starting hypothesis was (and still is) that the main difference between the research fields 'Folk Linguistics' and 'Language Awareness' was not a difference in research objects or in methodology, etc., but mainly a difference of 'communities': Two communities dealing more or less with the same issues, but using two different terminologies. Although some form of language awareness is present in every individual (be it a 'person on the street' or a linguistics professor), Language Awareness researchers were de facto primarily interested in folk linguistic awareness (of young 'native speakers', of learners of second languages, etc.), and this fact brings the two fields still closer together.

Getting from Dennis Preston – who gave a plenary lecture at the Vienna ALA conference – the planned title of his contribution: 'Why folk linguists should hate language awareness', I understood that some people see a bigger difference between Folk Linguistics and Language Awareness than I did. They would consider Language Awareness as a capacity to overcome (too naïve a?) Folk linguistic conception (see below).

As far as the second question is concerned, I have the impression that in many sub-fields of Applied Linguistics, experts cannot (or don't want to) give concrete detailed instructions, but make do with discussions of the complexity of the issue in question and leave it to the non-experts themselves to decide which solution to choose. Although 'folk people' tend to expect concrete solutions, applied linguists will in general not say: 'You have to take method X for learning Japanese!' or 'If you as a French person meet a person from Argentina, you have '(inter-) culturally' to behave in the way Y!.' This would be more the approach of 'advice literature' (German *Ratgeberliteratur*) in the sense of Antos' (1996) discussion of *Laien-Linguistik*. However, applied linguists can at least contribute to 'raise the (linguistic/communicative/cultural) awareness' of non-experts, and, therefore to me, language awareness (raising) is a very central, if not the central notion of Applied Linguistics, and this for any of its many subfields. Thus, the second group of questions was supposed to discuss the role of language awareness in Applied Linguistics in general, but also in making (too) problematic folk linguistic conceptions 'better'. Let us pass over now to my original introduction to the panel at the ALA conference.

A little terminological remark at the beginning, as an ouverture: Is Folk Linguistics Linguistics practised by folk people/lay people/non-linguists or is Folk Linguistics practised by linguists studying folk beliefs about language – or is it both? And should it be both?

There are two possible views of the relationship between Language Awareness and Folk Linguistics: (1) Folk Linguistics is the pre-academic, naive way of thinking about language of non-linguists, and we should contribute to a higher level of 'knowledge about language', through an awareness raising process. This process should lead to 'language awareness' which is always considered something 'good.' 'Stupid beliefs' about language are not 'language awareness' in this interpretation – even if they are very 'present' in the minds of certain persons, let's think about the 'very purist awareness' of many folk people (e.g. 'Anglicisms threaten the existence of French, of German, etc., and they are all dangerous').

(2) The second view: Folk linguistics is the way of thinking about language of non-linguists, i.e. of persons without an official degree in language studies at university, independently of the quality of their beliefs and lay theories. Thus, in some cases folk linguistics has almost the standard of academic linguistics (or might even be better), in others folk linguistics is very different from academic linguistics, and, as most of us would say, has a worse quality than

academic linguistics. This approach can also be transferred to language awareness, with a distinction between occurrences of language awareness that we would welcome and appreciate and that there are occurrences of language awareness that we, as academic linguists, would rather consider as problematic.

If we accept the existence of good and bad folk linguistics as well as the existence of good and bad language awareness, both fields have more in common than if we distinguish a low-quality folk linguistics and a high-quality language awareness.

So, I would like to ask you – how do you see the mutual relationship of language awareness and folk linguistics?

My second question (or bundle of questions) concerns the relationship between language awareness and applied linguistics. In some cases, applied linguistics gives us concrete answers – a grammar handbook for a certain language, a dictionary, concrete arguments for certain linguistic rights, e.g. the status of minority languages, etc. But there are so many examples where applied linguistics can only give recommendations and no concrete guidelines: 'How shall we teach or learn languages?', 'How shall we behave in intercultural encounters?' I have the impression that applied linguistics can contribute in many cases 'only' to a sensitisation, to general awareness raising and that 'language awareness' (including culture/ intercultural awareness, communication awareness), of course seen in its 'positive interpretation', is the key notion par excellence of applied linguistics. Would you also see that language awareness is possibly the common denominator for all projects in applied linguistics? And then - can efforts to raise language awareness overcome possibly misguided or problematical folk beliefs of language? And how can applied linguists make sure that raising language awareness ultimately results in a change in belief and/or linguistic behaviour?

Dennis R. Preston

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As a follow-up to the panel discussion on 'Language Awareness vs. Folk Linguistics vs. Applied Linguistics' at ALA 2016 at WU Vienna, Martin Stegu asked members of the panel to reflect on characterizations of the relationship between Folk Linguistics (FL) and Language Awareness (LA) as well as the relationship between LA and Applied Linguistics, all this introduced by a preliminary question: Is FL that which is practiced by lay people or what linguists do in the study of such practices? I take the simple answer to be — both. In nearly every field of linguistics the ambiguity is the same. Real people *do* articulatory phonetics to make human language noises and articulatory phonetics is the *study of* that noise-making. That some of the practices of FL do not correspond to what linguists know about language (i.e. what people *really do*) only complicates this issue and drives the methodologies used to study them more into the methods of the social sciences.

Stegu first questions the relationship between FL and LA and suggests two formulations. 1) There always exists a naïve (nonlinguist) FL in society and individuals, and that fact gives impetus to LA, which, from this point of view, is an attempt to convert 'bad' FL

to a 'good' (i.e. linguistically sound) understandings of language. This position very clearly characterizes LA as action to improve awareness. 2) In his second formulation, Stegu suggests there is a 'good' and 'bad' FL and 'LA.' People have linguistically sound and linguistically unsound FL and linguistically sound and linguistically unsound LA. This, however, suggests that LA is only an investigative field that attempts to understand the 'bad' FL around them and barely implies the obviously action-oriented character of LA.

In short, I do not believe the choice presented to us in these formulations is accurate. FL has as its pure goal the understanding of beliefs about language held by ordinary (i.e. nonlinguist) people, but FL has, from its very beginnings, indicated that there are important applied uses of that knowledge. 'In the general area of applied linguistics, folk linguistics surely plays a most important role' (Niedzielski & Preston, 2003, p. xvii). The rationale is simple: If you want to engineer any aspect of language behavior, you will be more likely to succeed if you have a notion of what your clients already believe about language in the area you want to have an influence on. Like every other 'pure' field of linguistics, FL has important applied ramifications. When LA is taken to be the awareness of nonlinguists, that makes it, to put it bluntly, simply FL, which seeks to discover and characterize the linguistic beliefs of nonlinguists. There is, therefore, in what I take to be an applied field, no apparent ambiguity between the awareness of nonlinguists and the awareness LA practitioners would like for them to have. The awareness they have to start with (true or false) is a part of their FL, and there is no need to rename it. The ALA recognizes this aim almost as an afterthought at its website:

> Language Awareness interests also include learning more about what sorts of ideas about language people normally operate with, and what effects these have on how they conduct their everyday affairs: e.g. their professional dealings.

I would have preferred, just for clarity, this rewording: '… .ideas about language normally operate with (i.e. their *folk linguistics*.)'. If LA practitioners take the quote above seriously (that knowledge of the folk beliefs surrounding language in the area where they want to improve, redirect, or instill awareness is important), then FL practitioners would be happy to welcome LA proponents to our field, but we see no confusion between the major aims. FL seeks to learn what people know about language; LA aims to instill correct (and personally helpful, socially responsible, etc…) beliefs. Practitioners of FL have no Star Trek like prime directive. If LA workers want to fix up the language beliefs of their clients so that they learn languages better, treat minority varieties with more respect, and a host of other well-meant goals, FL can only applaud them, and, as it often is in the real world of research and practice, an LA worker may often be (ought to be?) the same person as a FL enthusiast.

Lest this seem all too easy, let me introduce at least two complicating factors. First, FL has often been taken to mean the *explicit* knowledge that nonlinguists have about language; that it is most frequently accessed by interview data from interactions, group encounters, and the like or by inviting respondents to carry out tasks that they need explicit knowledge for, e.g. rating areas for their degree of linguistic correctness or showing on maps where language varieties differ. Social psychologists, however, have often downplayed the value of these overt tasks and have devised such others as the 'matched guise' or more recently varieties of the Implicit Association Test (IAT) that purport to uncover the nonconscious but perhaps even more deeply held attitudes that people have

towards language questions. I have more recently proposed the term *language regard* (e.g. Preston, 2011) in the face of these apparent limitations to FL. This term encompasses everything that those of us who care about real people and language, whether they are fully conscious or performed in elicited conditions which give them no time for reflection (which might not even then lead them to an accessible idea). If LA practitioners want to have a full background of their clients, I believe it is this wider vision of language regard that will serve them best, although I believe the entire range of language regard, automatic and controlled, has value for both FL and LA. Turning again to ALA's website, up to now the organization seems to promote only the use of explicit knowledge:

> *Language Awareness* encourages and disseminates work which explores the following: the role of explicit knowledge about language in the process of language learning; the role that such explicit knowledge about language plays in language teaching and how such knowledge can best be mediated by teachers; the role of explicit knowledge about language in language use: e.g. sensitivity to bias in language, manipulative aspects of language, literary use of language.

That bias leads me to my last point. LA appears to carry some psychological, learning theory baggage. To practice LA one must at least in part adhere to a learning theory that prizes explicit learning. This is the sort of approach to the modification of behavior that surfaces in language teaching for example, under the notion of 'form focused instruction' (e.g. Doughty & Williams, 1998). Proponents of this approach believe that calling attention to linguistic form is an important contributor to learning, and LA surely adheres to this general approach. I do not criticize LA for it, but it would seem to put its people in a required psychological learning theory camp that the general study of FL does not require.

I conclude by noting the parentage facts of FL and LA as a final note that should help in the clarification of the distinctive vs. shared interests of the two fields.

> FL grows out of a research interest most directly fostered by ethnographic, sociolinguistic, and social psychological motivations, although its belief in its importance to applied linguistics is long-standing. In contrast, LA comes rather directly from applied linguistic motivations, at first those that touched primarily on adult second and foreign language learning, but it too has more recently cast a much wider net (Preston, 2018).

Antje Wilton

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In response to Martin's questions and in addition to Dennis' elaborations, I would like to consider the issues from an applied linguistics perspective and with a view on a specific area in applied linguistics to illustrate my point. Applied linguistics has an 'explicit orientation towards practical, everyday problems related to language and communication' (http://www.aila.info/en/about.html), and as such it relates to areas in which the folk linguistic view of language and communication held by a particular person or group of persons has direct impact on other people's lives, institutional decisions and processes.

Language learning and teaching definitely is one such area – with teachers' beliefs about language competence in multilingual children, for instance, significantly influencing the children's learning biographies in language classes and beyond, or the aim to enhance language awareness in learners with the ultimate goal to improve the language learning process as illustrated by the quote from the ALA website above. A question that has repeatedly posed itself in particular when trying to define the status of teachers as linguists or non-linguists addresses the fact that being a linguist or a non-linguist is not as clear-cut a dichotomy as Dennis' comments above make it to be. Despite the fact that teachers (and other language practitioners such as journalists, editors and proof readers etc.) generally do have some linguistic training, research and experience tells us that very often, their beliefs about language issues such as multilingualism still echo old myths and folk beliefs that have shown to be harmful to those they are applied to. Therefore, I think that it is worth keeping in mind the fact that possessing (professional, i.e. researched-based) linguistic knowledge is a matter of degree and does not exempt anyone, not even the linguist him/herself, from holding what would be identified as folk knowledge and beliefs about language and communication. As a theoretical contemplation, this is worth pursuing, as Paveau (2011) has shown, and it show us clearly that in real life, we not only have to expect different types of folk knowledge and beliefs, but also different types of language awareness – as Martin suggests, both can happen to either promote or hinder desirable behaviour.

In the following, I want to argue that valuing non-linguists' beliefs about language (or *language regard*, as Dennis calls it in his statement above) need not primarily be motivated by the wish to change people's attitudes to language and its phenomena, or to enhance their language awareness, but to exploit them. Taking up Martin's question of whether there are universally 'good' and universally 'bad' beliefs about language, one field of application shows that it is not the type of knowledge that allows its characterisation as good or bad, but it is the status of the person who holds or lacks that knowledge that determines whether that knowledge or the lack of it is a good or a bad thing. This field, where applied linguists are necessarily dependent on the perceptual competencies of non-linguists, is the area of forensic linguistics. Linguists are asked to a) conduct research in the various sub-disciplines of linguistics and b) are called upon to put their linguistic expertise in the service of the criminal justice system in order to help solving crimes in which the use of language plays an important role – or, as in the cases of blackmail or plagiarism, actually constitutes the crime itself.

To put it very simply: language awareness in victims or witnesses is a good thing, language awareness in criminals is not. Let me illustrate the point: in the course of a criminal investigation, language awareness might have to be established first (during interrogation, by providing cues that prompt recognition and enable the witnesses to put their observation into words). In a forensic context, this process of putting observations into words is crucial as it serves as evidence. Thus, implicit knowledge of language – for instance of the voice qualities of a suspect – has to be not only detected but also explicitly voiced, and this as unambiguously as possible. Laypeople's description of voices are valuable evidence – people are perceptive, but in most cases lack professional descriptive categories. It is the task of the linguist to transfer lay linguistic descriptions into evidence that can be used in court. However, if investigators are faced with a blackmailing or extortion letter by an anonymous author, linguists are called to analyse the text as closely as

possible for any markers of individual language use that may point to the identity of the author. Some authors are trying to be clever and attempt to disguise their own style, for instance by inserting errors into their text which they believe would mark them as foreign language users. Most of these attempts are unsuccessful – precisely because the layperson's knowledge of learner language and linguistic style is incomplete or faulty (Dern, 2009).

In court as one area of real life in which linguistic knowledge and expertise is applied, linguistic theory and methodology are judged by non-linguists and are subjected to the rules of the judicial context in which they have to prove their value and usefulness. Such scrutiny is different from, and possibly much less benevolent, than scrutiny by the fellow research community. Linguistic knowledge and expertise is applied to assess and dis/uncover folk knowledge and beliefs about language and the results of the discovery are subsequently put to the test during the trial. In such contexts, applied linguistics takes a vital role in the social institution of justice in that it helps a judge to reach an informed and objective decision for the benefit of society and its members. Applied linguistics in this context is not powerless or merely a meek attempt to educate the public by raising their language awareness a little. Instead, the application of linguistic knowledge that is based on an understanding of lay linguistic beliefs can serve the promotion of a better, more just, more social world in more than one way. Raising language awareness is one, exploiting it – or the lack of it – is another.

So, from this applied perspective, there is no 'good' and 'bad' linguistic knowledge and language awareness. The reality to which theoretical linguistic knowledge is applied is more complex than simple dichotomies of 'good' and 'bad'. In some contexts, the presence of language awareness and scientifically founded beliefs about the workings of language and communication are a good and helpful thing, in other contexts, the lack of language awareness and incomplete or myth-related beliefs about language are an asset. Nobody can seriously wish for a higher level of understanding of the characteristics of learner language so that it becomes easier for blackmailers to disguise their linguistic style – a low level of language awareness and simplistic beliefs about language are actually good in this case, and the task of the applied linguist as a forensic linguistic expert is to exploit people's awareness or the lack of it for the collection of evidence.

Claudia Finkbeiner

Foreign Language Research & Intercultural Communication, University of Kassel, Kassel, Germany

In the following I am referring to the questions posed by Martin Stegu to trigger the panel discussion on Language Awareness, Folk Linguistics and Applied Linguistics at the Conference of the *Association for Language Awareness* in Vienna in 2016. The introductory question was whether Folk Linguistics was linguistics practised by lay people or whether Folk Linguistics was practised by linguists studying folk beliefs about language.

First of all, I agree with Preston (1993) that folk linguistics can be positioned in the general field of the study of language. It is linguistics' study of what language users do, think

and believe about language. In this respect, I suggest comparing Folk Linguistics to studies on subjective theories. Subjective theories are general beliefs, for example by teachers and students, on the nature of language learning and teaching. These beliefs can concern the assumed difficulty level connected to the learning of a particular language. Subjective theories are complex cognitive structures which are relatively stable and highly individual (Grotjahn, 1991). Folk linguistics, therefore, can be described as people's subjective theories about language. These theories include both cognitive and affective factors. For example, they are not only cognitive beliefs about the linguistic system of a specific language, but also affective beliefs about the subjectively perceived 'beauty' or 'ugliness' of it. Very often language ideology is connected to such beliefs as can be seen in Pliska's research on post-war generation students' attitudes on the language variations Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian in Bosnia Herzegovina (Pliska, 2016). As beliefs can be ideological and normative, it is important to promote research that reveals hidden language ideologies and follows a non-normative and bottom-up approach. Furthermore, research on language beliefs that function as hypotheses about language learning is equally important.

In order to answer the second part of the question whether folk linguistics is also linguistics practised by lay people, it is necessary to study people's folk linguistic systems. I believe that both approaches are complementary.

After the debate on 'folk linguistics' we attended to the relationship between language awareness and folk linguistics. First, it is important to mention that language awareness research does not follow a normative approach. Therefore, language awareness researchers would most likely not label lay people's beliefs about language as 'stupid'; rather would they investigate and describe lay people's different language varieties or language representations and which impact these might have on teaching and learning. Second, dichotomies of 'good' versus 'bad' as well as high or low 'quality' would not offer an adequate frame. These dichotomies could cement a so-called deficit theory. However, these issues have to be investigated as they might lead to negative attributions and self-fulfilling theories (Finkbeiner, 2005).

Language standards are either agreed upon or superimposed 'norms' that are situated within certain cultural contexts and that can change over time. Lay beliefs – just as academic linguistics beliefs – can be investigated as surface systems that draw on the same underlying complex cognitive structures. I see a huge common interest of both folk linguistic research and language awareness research in this research matter.

It is a natural human trait that language learners play with language and start reflecting about language phenomena from early age on. There are plenty of indicators as to the existence of non-linguists' language feeling or even a first step to language awareness – even if they do not use the same professional terminology. Learning process observations, for instance in the ADEQUA study, show that language learners might consult a dictionary or another reference work in order to learn more about language and to find out whether their own linguistic belief or intuition about the meaning of a word or structure is correct or not (Finkbeiner, Knierim, Smasal, & Ludwig, 2012; Schluer, 2017). Whenever lay people start reflecting about language, it may not only enhance their language awareness, but it may have a wider impact on their sociolinguistic community once they start sharing their ideas about language. Uncommon ('lay') explanations of linguistic phenomena can be of high cognitive quality and can give a surprising twist to theory. To give an example, in the ADEQUA study pupils had to read a text about a tornado which included *ripped up trees*.

The students thought that rip means sterben (to die) based on their observation that this sequence of letters can also be read on gravestones (R.I.P). Actually, the pupils had referred to a scene in the animated sitcom 'The Simpsons.' In the concrete reading event, this – linguistically incorrect – explanation helped the learners understand the sentence since trees that have been ripped up by a storm are dead indeed. Therefore, discourse about discourse has to be systematically planned and implemented in the language classroom as language awareness does not happen automatically. It can be triggered and elicited through a systematic language awareness approach (Hawkins, 1987).

When lay people encounter supposedly incorrect forms in their environment and start debating about them, this can be interpreted as a clash of beliefs. In line with the central paradigm of cultural awareness (and correspondingly of language awareness), 'know thyself and others' (Ruggiano Schmidt, 1999), such clashes can be successfully overcome with the help of awareness.

As an interim conclusion, the relationship between folk linguistics and language awareness is an overlapping one, which can give important insights into language learning facilitators as well as language learning obstacles. However, an exemplary research on the two terms with the Education Resources Information Center ERIC, only yielded five hits on the search combination 'Language Awareness' AND 'Folk Linguistics' (search date: 14.07.2016). All of them were published in the journal Language Awareness. The direct relationship between folk linguistics and language awareness has not been systematically investigated so far and can be considered a research gap.

Martin Stegu argued that language awareness might be 'the key notion par excellence of applied linguistics.' A good starting point into this discussion might be a look into the historical development of the two movements (Finkbeiner & White, 2017; Svalberg, 2007). Both applied linguistics and language awareness have indeed a lot in common: they are mutually interested in language research dealing with practical and real life issues. Today they seem to be dealing with issues which stem from corresponding interest. Historically, however, the two movements started from different angles. The Language Awareness Movement originally started as national pedagogical initiatives 'that had been undertaken in England in response to the report of the Bullock Committee in 1975 and that were primarily related to mother tongue learning. The Bullock report, which investigated the teaching of English as mother tongue and/or language of instruction, emphasized the importance of knowledge about language (KAL) for the entire school curriculum and recognized the potential benefits that could result from cooperation of mother tongue (English) and modern language teachers who, historically, had operated independently. The National Congress for Languages in Education (NCLE), established to facilitate this cooperation, set up the Language Awareness Working Party in 1982. … . By the mid-1980s, language awareness had become a movement in the UK.' (Finkbeiner & White, 2017). 1992 can be seen as a crucial year in the internationalization and the launching of the journal Language Awareness. With an established and functioning journal and 84 founding members the Association for Language Awareness was founded in 1994. Since then the Language Awareness movement has grown. The Association for Language Awareness has direct members from across the world and its biennial conferences focus on language awareness in language teaching and learning as well as in the workplace, multilingualism etc.

The Applied Linguists' movement is a bit older, for example the German Association GAL (Gesellschaft für Angewandte Linguistik) is 50 years old. Applied Linguistics has AILA

(*Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée*) as an international umbrella association (AILA) which forms a network of different national associations. Members of the national organizations automatically become members of the international association, so their membership is indirect in nature. AILA has two journals: The AILA review and AILA Applied Linguistic Series.

Despite their structural differences, the two movements meet and interconnect in similar and overlapping research interests which can be situated at the intersection of such fields as language learning and teaching pedagogy, folk linguistics, language awareness, critical media literacy and multilingualism. The underlying language awareness theories have turned out to be useful analytical tools. An incentive to start scholars' cooperation across applied linguistics and language awareness would be mutual research workshops as well as the reciprocal permanent establishment of an ALA and AILA host session at each other's international conferences as successfully implemented in Vienna 2016 for the first time.

Martin Stegu

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For space reasons, it is not possible here to comment on all the arguments brought forward in the three comments of the discussants. I would only insist on my impression that the different position papers rather seem to confirm my departure hypothesis than to refute them – viz. that there are no fundamental contradictions or differences between Folk Linguistics and Language Awareness research, but that most of the differences 'at first glance' can be explained by different research traditions and by the different communities involved. For most of the researchers there are prototypical research domains (e.g. perceptual dialectology, foreign language learning, etc.) that make differences appear bigger than they really are. If Folk Linguists got more interested in applied aspects, for example in language learning (see also the 'subjective theories' mentioned by Claudia Finkbeiner) and if Language Awareness researchers started to transcend their prototypical interest in the teaching and learning of languages (be they L1, L2, Ln …), they would become aware (!) of the similarities of their research objectives: to analyze what 'non-linguists' know or do not know about language(s) and, possibly, whether and how this (theoretical and practical) language knowledge might be improved.

Of course, what is 'good' and what is 'bad' is always a result of social construction, and 'epistemological' quality does not always go hand in hand with 'moral' quality, and as a reaction to Ante Wilton's comments, I would like to emphasize that 'high (= good) language awareness' may be unfortunately also used for ethically 'bad purposes.'

As was stated several times, Folk Linguistics is extremely relevant to Applied Linguistics, because Applied Linguistics is 'linguistics (primarily) conducted for folk people' and it is important to know what people think about language, before linguists try to change, at least partially, their minds. Language awareness research and Applied Linguistics are, as Claudia Finkbeiner highlighted, referring to their different organizational structures

(ALA vs. AILA), not the same thing, but I still think that for many, if not all subdisciplines and subfields of Applied Linguistics, language awareness is a decisive factor, because in all these contexts the raising of language awareness in a very broad sense is one of their central concerns.

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