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Editorial

During the preparation of this special issue of *ial* on communication disorders, I've been surprised that I haven't seen more evidence of interchange between the fields of applied linguistics and of communication disorders. Communication disorders include a variety of problems with speech and language, such as speech and articulation problems, acquired language problems such as aphasia, and language problems associated with developmental disorders and psychiatric conditions. While the field most central to the study, diagnosis, and treatment of communication disorders is speech and language pathology (and the related area of clinical linguistics), speech pathology draws upon other disciplines such as linguistics, psychology, and neuropsychology, and these disciplines also investigate communication disorders independently.

Though applied linguistics has its roots in language teaching and linguistics, it has grown to encompass work in diverse areas including functional linguistics, discourse analysis, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, and neurolinguistics in addition to more traditional areas such as second language acquisition and assessment. Language disorders are sometimes regarded by applied linguists as part of applied linguistics, and some programs for speech and language pathology or communication disorders are housed in the same departments as programs in applied linguistics. Recently, approaches such as conversation analysis and ethnography, which have gained strength in applied linguistics, have been applied to the study of communication disorders (e.g., Goodwin, 2003). Nevertheless, I believe that the connections between communication disorders and other areas of applied linguistics could be strengthened considerably. This special issue represents a small step towards that goal.

The three extended pieces in this issue embody these connections in different ways. As it happens, the two articles in this issue both, in different ways, apply conversation analysis to the interaction of children with autism spectrum disorders. This similarity of frameworks and topics was not deliberate, but rather reflects submissions for the special issue. As noted above, the study of communication disorders includes many other areas, and other approaches used in applied linguistics have been used to study communication disorders. In fact, several of these other approaches—discourse analysis, linguistic analysis, experimentation, and standardized testing—have been used in the research of Christiane Baltaxe, who is interviewed in the third extended piece in this issue.

One strength of conversation analysis and similar approaches is their use of naturally occurring data, which enriches and changes the picture of communication disorders provided by more traditional approaches. In the first article, Tony Wootton compares the interaction of children with autism spectrum disorders or pragmatic impairment with that of typically developing children, and discusses implications of

his findings for both autism and typical development. For example, the low level of initiations of interaction by children with autism at early stages of language development may have long-term effects on their experience of conversational repair. In the second article, Johanna Rendle-Short examines a phone conversation between an 8-year-old girl with Asperger's syndrome (a mild autism spectrum disorder), her friend, and the friend's mother. Rendle-Short concludes that though the girl is often able to manage basic interactional practices such as turn-taking, her interlocutors play a greater role than usual in keeping the conversation going.

In the third piece, I interview Christiane Baltaxe, a pioneer in the field of communication disorders who is best known for her work on language and communication in autism. Her research is grounded in her background as a linguist and in her clinical practice as a speech pathologist at UCLA's Neuropsychiatric Institute, whose Department of Communication Disorders she founded. In a wide-ranging interview, Baltaxe discusses her early life and training, research, teaching, and clinical work. She believes that linguistics, applied linguistics, speech pathology and neuroscience should cooperate with each other in the study of communication disorders.

This issue marks a few personnel changes at *ial*. This is Viphavee Vongpumivitch's last issue; we thank her for her long service as managing editor. We welcome Tim Farnsworth as a book review editor; starting with the next issue, he will take over that position from Stefan Frazier and Seung-hee Lee. Rosamina Lowi, who is an assistant editor on this issue, will take over as co-editor from Debra Friedman starting with the next issue. I would like to take this opportunity to thank Debra for doing an excellent job as co-editor—it has been a pleasure working with her.

Emmy Goldknopf

REFERENCE

- Goodwin, C. (Ed.) (2003). *Conversation and brain damage*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.