

Journée d'études / International Conference / Arbeitstagung

Multicultural and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Language Awareness: Current Research Perspectives and Challenges

ATILF, Nancy (France) – May 26th 2025
9.00–17.30

This interdisciplinary symposium aims:

- i) to take stock of recent and current work on the concept of Language Awareness, with specific focus on Metalinguistic Awareness and Critical (Multilingual) Language Awareness and
- ii) to discuss current and future issues and challenges in regard to Language Awareness in a multicultural society in the throes of digital (r)evolution.

Initially defined by Donmall (1985, 7, see also 1992) “as a person’s sensitivity to a conscious awareness of the nature of language and its role in human life”, Language Awareness (LA) has been extended to “explicit knowledge about language [...] and language use” (see definition by the [Association for Language Awareness](#)). Research carried out over more than four decades has made it possible to identify, on the basis of the studies compiled by James and Garrett (1991/1998) and the model developed by Van Lier (2004), among others, three forms of LA, which have been the subject of recent studies and discussions in the context of language teaching (among others Daryai-Hansen, Drachmann, Krogager Andersen, 2024; Krogager Andersen, 2024): ‘Practical Language Awareness’ (PLA), ‘Metalinguistic Awareness’ (MLA), and ‘Critical Language Awareness’ (CLA) – this third type having given rise to a recent offshoot, resulting from societal evolution, discussed under the term ‘Critical Multilingual Language Awareness’ (see e.g. Van Gorp et al., 2023).

While these forms/dimensions of LA have primarily interested specialists in (foreign) language teaching, linguists have explored other disciplinary fields to highlight the relevance and importance of the concept of LA in contexts other than the educational world (cf. also *The Routledge Handbook of Language Awareness* – Garrett & Cots, 2018; Finkbeiner, Olson, Ost, Shonfeld, 2023). Thus, the 17th conference of the Association for Language Awareness (July 2024, University of Karlsruhe), intitled: “Language Awareness, Education, and Power”, examined LA in an innovative interdisciplinary light, yielding current findings in diverse research fields:

- LA and the workplace: LA in business, marketing and health care
- LA in political institutions and democratic decision-making processes
- LA and the media: LA in the digital world
- LA, media, and artificial intelligence

This symposium is part of this dynamic – the common denominator of the expected contributions lies in the interest given primarily (but not exclusively) to MLA and (C(M)LA), analysed individually or regarding their interrelationship.

We welcome contributions related to the following topics which will be investigated from an empirical and/or theoretical, plurilingual/multilingual perspective, and/or discussed regarding the inherently digital environment of the potential areas of application of the concept of LA.

Research focus on two forms of LA:

Metalinguistic Awareness (MLA) and Critical (Multilingual) Language Awareness (C(M)LA)

Main topics:

Specific fields of application and / or interconnexions with other research disciplines:

- CLA, language ideologies and language policy (European, national, regional and/or individual level)
- LA and digital tools: digital media; digital corpora; online dictionaries (monolingual and multilingual); OpenAI translation
- LA and multimodality
- LA and gender linguistics' research: interface between metalinguistic and critical forms of LA
- LA and plurilingual education
- LA and learner corpora
- LA and terminology
- MLA and (meta)lexicography
- LA from the user's perspective
- MLA and metapragmatic sociolinguistics

Invited speakers:

Prof. Claudia Finkbeiner, University of Kassel, President of the Association for Language Awareness

Prof. Constanze Weth, University of Luxembourg

References

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Languages: English, German, French

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