Abstract: The article introduces the German Association for Applied Linguistics (GAL). After a description of the history of GAL, its concept of applied linguistics is explained and its scope of activities today described. The article concludes with information on the status of applied linguistics in Germany today and contact information.

1 The history of GAL

The German Association for Applied Linguistics (Gesellschaft für Angewandte Linguistik – GAL e.V.) was founded as an autonomous German affiliate of AILA in November 1968 on the occasion of the 11th International Sonnenberg Conference of Modern Philologists in the presence of the AILA Executive Board. One of the motives for its foundation was the desire to create a forum for the exchange of knowledge related to the analysis and solution of language-related problems in all areas of society and to provide a bridge between theoreticians and practitioners. At the same time, its foundation was a reaction against the methodological restrictions imposed on linguistic research by structuralism and generative grammar (Ehlich 1999). In the early years, there was a focus on the professionalization of foreign language teaching and bringing research-oriented linguists and language teachers together. This was the time when applied linguists fought for the establishment of language centres at universities and when language laboratories were set up in schools. The founding assembly had such prominent participants as Pit Corder (Edinburgh), at that time chairman of the British Association for Applied Linguistics (BAAL) founded in 1967, Max Gorosch (Stockholm), Sven Nord (Strasbourg) and Bernard Pottier (Paris). GAL’s first chairman was Gerhard Nickel, professor of English Linguistics at the University of Stuttgart; its vice-chairman, Albert Raasch, professor of Applied Linguistics at Saarland University; and its treasurer Hans-Eberhard Piepho, professor of Didactics of English Lan-
language and Literature at the University of Giessen. Table 1 provides an overview of the chairpersons and vice-chairpersons, from 1995 onwards named *presidents* and *vice-presidents*, as well as treasurers of GAL.

**Table 1:** Chairpersons/presidents, vice-chairpersons/vice-presidents and treasurers of GAL

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Chairpersons/Presidents</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Gerhard Nickel, University of Stuttgart (1968–1976)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Wolfgang Kühlwein, University of Trier (1977–1986)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gerd Antos, University of Halle (1997–2002)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bernd Rüschoff, University of Duisburg-Essen (2007–2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Susanne Göpferich, Justus Liebig University, Giessen (since 2013)</td>
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<tr>
<th>Vice-chairpersons/Vice-presidents</th>
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<tr>
<td>Albert Raasch, Saarland University (1968–1984)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Bernd Rüschoff, University of Duisburg-Essen (2003–2006)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Michael Becker-Mrotzek, University of Cologne (2009–2010)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Susanne Göpferich, Justus Liebig University, Giessen (2011–2012)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Katrin Lehnen, Justus Liebig University, Giessen (since 2013)</td>
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<th>Treasurers</th>
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<tr>
<td>Hans-Eberhard Piepho, Justus Liebig University, Giessen (1968–1984)</td>
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<tr>
<td>Karlfried Knapp, University of Erfurt (1999–2000)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Michael Becker-Mrotzek, University of Cologne (2003–2008)</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Friedrich Lenz, University of Hildesheim (since 2009)</td>
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It took 26 years for the first woman, Margot Heinemann, professor of Linguistics of German and German as a Foreign Language at the University of Applied Sciences Zittau, to be elected on the GAL Executive Board in 1994 and another 18 years for the first GAL president to be a woman: Susanne Göpferich, professor
of Applied Linguistics at the Department of English and Director of the Centre for Competence Development (ZfbK) at Justus Liebig University, Giessen.

GAL started with eight sections, which, in its initial years, also included a section called Linguistics. The other seven sections were: Teaching Technology, Translation Theory, Foreign Language Teaching, Contemporary German Linguistics, Psycholinguistics, Language Testing, and Machine-Aided Language Analysis. These sections were not the result of a systematic classification of the areas of Applied Linguistics but reflected the interests of GAL’s founding members. Time and again, efforts to arrive at a more systematic classification have been undertaken albeit without success because, in the end, a classification following the members’ interests had been considered more favourable than sticking to a rigid taxonomy (Raasch 2012: 5). Thus, new sections were founded and others abandoned reflecting trends and social challenges. The increase in the number of sections from eight at the time of GAL’s foundation to 15 today has been the result of the widening scope that Applied Linguistics has experienced in Germany. The sections today are (in alphabetical order):
1. Computational Linguistics,
2. Conversation Analysis,
3. Grammar and Grammaticography,
4. Intercultural Communication & Multilingual Discourses,
5. Language Teaching,
6. Lexicography,
7. Media Communication,
8. Media Didactics & Media Literacy,
9. Migration Linguistics,
10. Multilinguality & Multilingualism,
11. Phonetics & Speech Communication,
12. Socio-linguistics,
13. Specialized Communication,
14. Text Linguistics & Stilistics, and
15. Translation Studies.

Each section has two elected section coordinators, who, together, form the GAL Advisory Board. Until GAL had firmly established itself as a learned society, admission of members had been handled in a rather restrictive manner. In order to be accepted as individual members, applicants had to demonstrate their qualification either by formal degrees or a record of publications or had to provide the names of two existing members who were prepared to sponsor them. The GAL constitution today (Satzung der Gesellschaft für Angewandte Linguistik 2011) just stipulates that any person who is active in the field of Applied Linguistics can
become a member. The number of GAL members has grown continuously. By 1987, it had exceeded 500, and by 1992, GAL had already more than 1,000 members, a level that has more or less been maintained ever since.


Apart from membership and conference fees, GAL also benefited from sponsors. From the beginning, the Goethe Institut took a deep interest in the aims of the association, paid the GAL membership fees for several of its employees and hosted meetings of the GAL Executive and Advisory Boards in its headquarters in Munich. Another generous sponsor was the Volkswagen Foundation (Raasch 2012).

Since 1983, GAL has edited its own book series *Forum Angewandte Linguistik (Forum Applied Linguistics – F.A.L.)*, in which 52 volumes have appeared so far (for an overview of the titles, see http://www.gal-ev.de/index.php/publikationen/fal). Many of the early volumes were conference proceedings, but gradually the topics of the volumes became more focused and the quality standards were raised. In addition to the volumes which appeared in the series, GAL’s work also yielded edited volumes such as *Angewandte Linguistik: Positionen, Wege, Perspektiven (Applied Linguistics: Positions, Developments, Perspectives)* edited by Wolfgang Kühlwein and Albert Raasch (1980), which reflects conceptions of Applied Linguistics. These conceptions were then taken up and elaborated in the F.A.L. volume *Angewandte Linguistik heute (Applied Linguistics Today)*, again edited by
Wolfgang Kühlwein and Albert Raasch (1990). In addition to the book series, GAL also edits the journal *Zeitschrift für Angewandte Linguistik (ZfAL – Journal of Applied Linguistics)*. From 1996 to 2009, this journal was published by Peter Lang and then transferred to de Gruyter. It superseded the GAL in-house publication *GAL Bulletin*, which appeared from 1983 to 1995.

A milestone in the publication history of GAL is the textbook on Applied Linguistics entitled *Angewandte Linguistik – Ein Lehrbuch* (Knapp et al. 2011). First published in 2004, it appeared in revised and extended editions in 2007 and 2011. Its latest edition comprises 28 articles spanning the scope of Applied Linguistics from the alphabetization of adults, corpus-based language analysis in lexicography and phraseography, and technical documentation via journalistic writing, foreign language teaching and intercultural communication to translation, language planning and clinical linguistics. It documents the wide scope of fields covered by the term Applied Linguistics as it is understood in Germany today. Each of the 28 articles starts with the description of a specific language or communication problem, provides information on the theory and methods that can be used to tackle this problem and illustrates their application in exemplary analyses. A CD-ROM, which comes with the book, provides additional information, references, exercises and solutions.

Another major contribution to Applied Linguistics originating from GAL is the Mouton-de Gruyter series *Handbooks of Applied Linguistics*. This series was initiated by Karlfried Knapp and Gerd Antos when they were presiding the GAL Executive Board. Under their series editorship, from 2007 until now, the following 10 volumes have been published so far, with others still to appear:

2. *Interpersonal Communication*, ed. by Gerd Antos and Eija Venttola (in cooperation with Thilo Weber)
3. *Communication in Organizations and Professions*, ed. by Chris Candlin and Srikant Sarangi
4. *Communication in the Public Sphere*, ed. by Ruth Wodak and Veronika Koller
5. *Multilingualism and Multilingual Communication*, ed. by Peter Auer and Li Wei
7. *Intercultural Communication*, ed. by Helga Kotthoff and Helen Spencer-Oatey
10. *Writing and Text Production*, ed. by Eva-Maria Jakobs and Daniel Perrin
Throughout its history, GAL has been networking in both European and international contexts. Internationally, it has been active in AILA, whose current president, Bernd Rüschoff, had been GAL president from 2007 to 2012. Under his GAL presidency, GAL organized the 15th World Congress of Applied Linguistics, AILA 2008 – Multilingualism: Challenges and Opportunities, in Essen. This congress brought together more than 2,300 delegates from all over the world. Its invited plenary speakers were Neville Alexander (South Africa), Jim Cummins (Canada), Shi-Xu (China), Konrad Ehlich (Germany), Claire Kramsch (USA) and Rita Franceschini (Italy). From 2002 to 2008, Karlfried Knapp, who had been a GAL Executive Board member (member at large, treasurer and then vice-president) from 1996 to 2001, was AILA Secretary General. His successor and current AILA Secretary General is Daniel Perrin, also a member of GAL and at the same time of VALS-ASLA, the Swiss Association for Applied Linguistics.

At a European level, GAL has a tradition of cooperating with the associations for Applied Linguistics of its neighbouring countries. Among them is ADLA in Denmark, with which GAL organized its 17th Annual Conference in 1986. GAL also played an active role in the foundation of AILA Europe, whose first coordinator was Karlfried Knapp followed by Antje Wilton, also GAL member, who has just been elected to continue as AILA Europe coordinator for another two years. Karlfried Knapp is the Editor-in-Chief of the new European Journal of Applied Linguistics, the first issue of which appeared in 2013. In addition, GAL hosted both the 2nd and 3rd AILA-Europe Junior Research Meetings, conferences for early career researchers in Applied Linguistics which give them an opportunity to present their work in front of other junior and senior researchers and to establish networks with researchers working in similar areas. The 2nd Junior Research Meeting was organized by the University of Münster in cooperation with Anéla and Verbal, the Dutch and Austrian associations for Applied Linguistics. The 3rd Junior Research Meeting at the University of Duisburg-Essen in Essen was co-organized by ABLA, Anéla and VALS-ASLA, the Belgian, Dutch and Swiss associations for Applied Linguistics. Keynote speakers at this conference were Marjolijn Verspoor (Groningen) and Gisela Brünner (Dortmund).

Applied linguists from neighbouring countries have also been members of the GAL Advisory Board. Jan ten Thije from the Netherlands was coordinator of GAL’s section “Intercultural Communication & Multilingual Discourses”, Jan Engberg from Denmark coordinated the section “Specialized Communication”, and Daniel Perrin from Switzerland is still coordinating the section “Media Communication”.

According to its constitution (Satzung 2011: § 3), GAL may honour members for outstanding merits for the association and the objectives it pursues by awarding them an honorary membership, formerly honorary presidency. This honour
has been bestowed upon Gerhard Nickel, Helm von Faber, Wolfgang Kühlwein, Albert Raasch, Bernd Spillner, Heiner Pürschel, Klaus Mattheier, Gerd Antos and Bernd Rüschoff.

GAL also has a tradition of awarding prizes. On the occasion of its 31st Annual Conference in the year 2000, GAL awarded an Innovation Prize for the best contribution on the question “Do we need a new text concept?” to Eva Eckkrammer from the University of Salzburg. Six years later, GAL started to award a prize every two years to an early career researcher for an excellent research project in the field of Applied Linguistics. This prize endowed with 2000 € is sponsored by the three publishers Narr, Peter Lang and de Gruyter. Since 2012 it is awarded on the occasion of GAL’s biennial Congresses. The winners of this prize were Michaela Albl-Mikasa from the University of Tübingen in 2006 for her doctoral dissertation on consecutive interpreting (Albl-Mikasa 2007), Marlene Sator from the University of Vienna in 2008 for her doctoral dissertation on doctor-patient communication (Sator 2011), Ina Hörmeyer from the University of Freiburg for her dissertation project on electronic aids for people suffering from cerebral palsy, and Michaela Geyerhos from the University of Munich in 2012 for her habilitation project on the automatic generation of company profiles from a linguistic analysis of company data.

2 GAL’s concept of Applied Linguistics

In contrast to many other associations for Applied Linguistics which associate this notion more or less with foreign language teaching, GAL has always had a wider concept of Applied Linguistics. In Germany, Applied Linguistics comprises all fields of scholarly research, education and training that focus on the analysis and solution of language- and communication-related problems in all areas of human life and social interaction. As in any other applied science, doing Applied Linguistics means problem solving. For this purpose, ideally, applied linguists would have to follow a six-step approach, described by Knapp (2011: 121) as follows:
1. Identification of a real-world problem related to language and/or communication
2. Reformulation of the problem to make it fit into one or more scientific paradigms
3. Problem analysis, in some cases by means of basic research that may lead to new theories and methods
4. Development and testing of potential problem solutions
5. Assessment of ethical and ecological implications as well as cost-benefit analyses
6. Presentation of the problem solution to the real world and enabling those who need the solution to make use of it

Though it cannot be denied that the work done in GAL is determined by real-life problems with language and communication, the extent to which this six-step ideal is adhered to by individual researches differs considerably. For one thing, this is a consequence of the problem at hand, which may be tackled with existing linguistic theories and methods or which may require the development of new theories and methodologies, at times borrowed from disciplines other than linguistics. These different approaches mirror Widdowson’s (1980) well known distinction between linguistics applied and applied linguistics.

The work done by applied linguists in Germany falls under both categories. This is typically the case in lexicography and grammaticography. Where applied linguists compile selected results of descriptive linguistics, their work can be described as linguistics applied; as soon as they focus on the users of their work and the purposes for which these consult it, their work turns into applied linguistics. An example of the latter is the dictionary of formulations developed for English-medium instruction in technical subjects at Germany universities which required describing and ordering the linguistic means needed in class along new functional categories adequate for university teachers and students without any linguistic background (MuMiS 2013). Another typical example of the applied linguistics/linguistics applied difference can be found in the study of conversational interaction: the journal Gesprächsforschung, an important place of publication for GAL members working in this field, publishes both papers on basic research that aim at further developing existing approaches of conversation analysis, functional pragmatics, interactional sociolinguistics, etc. and thus represent linguistics applied, and papers under the heading Angewandte Gesprächsforschung (applied studies of conversational interaction) that focus on consulting, coaching, training for situations of problematical communication which explicitly depart from the perspective of practitioners and, as cases of applied linguistics, adapt their approaches accordingly.

As probably in most other AILA affiliates, not all of the work done in GAL proceeds beyond the description and analysis of an issue of language and communication and ultimately arrives at practical solutions or even at helping practitioners outside of the confines of Applied Linguistics to implement the suggested solutions in real life. The last step in particular implies that the suggestion and its rationale are translated into the language and the conceptual frame available to the practitioners, as they cannot be expected to become applied linguists themselves in order to be able to benefit from the solution. To achieve this mediation between research and practice, applied linguists would have to
become members of the respective community of practice from which the problem at hand originates (Knapp and Antos 2007–10: xi).

That this last step has frequently been neglected in Applied Linguistics – as in many other applied disciplines – may be due to the fact that researchers in general are not encouraged to adapt their scientific publications to the needs of the potential users of their findings. What counts in academia are articles in peer-reviewed scientific journals, which, in many disciplines, have to be written in English, and impact factors, not popularized versions and textbooks, especially not in “small” languages (Göpferich 2008).

In sum, as probably in most AILA affiliates, much of the work done in GAL can be labelled in line with Brumfit (1997: 93) more as “the theoretical and empirical study of problems in which language is a central issue” than as practical problem solving.

3 GAL’s scope of activities today

Today, GAL has approximately 1,000 active members. Its regular activities include the organization of an annual conference. Starting in 2011, the annual conferences have taken the shape of a biennial GAL Congress and so-called Section Conferences in the years in between. The first biennial GAL Congress, which focused on lexicography, was held at the University of Erlangen in 2012, the first two Section Conferences took place at the University of Bayreuth in 2011 and at Aachen University in 2013. The GAL Congress 2014 Applied Linguistics in Teaching – Teaching Applied Linguistics will take place at the University of Marburg. In contrast to the Congresses, which are devoted to specific topics and are organized in symposia focusing on different aspects of these topics, the Section Conferences provide a forum for the discussion of any topic of relevance in the areas of Applied Linguistics represented by the permanent sections. Each year, these events take place at another German university.

GAL conferences and congresses today attract between 250 and 500 participants from all over the country and from abroad. In GAL’s early years, they attracted up to 800 participants. The reason for the decrease in the number of participants can be found in the fact that an increasing number of national, European and international associations have been founded over the years which focus on specific areas of Applied Linguistics or related to Applied Linguistics in an interdisciplinary or transdisciplinary manner. Examples of such newly-founded more specialized associations include the German Association of Translation Studies (Deutsche Gesellschaft für Übersetzungs- und Dolmetschwissenschaft – DGÜD), the European Society for Translation Studies (EST) and the International Associa-
tion for Translation and Intercultural Studies (IATIS); the European Second Language Association (EUROSLA), which focuses on second-language acquisition; and the Working Group Applied Conversation and Discourse Analysis (Arbeitskreis Angewandte Gesprächsforschung). Before their foundation, GAL had represented the only association which catered for the needs of researchers interested in all these fields. Today, one of the assets of GAL conferences is that they provide a forum that allows researchers to look beyond their immediate fields of interest.

The book series *Forum Angewandte Linguistik (Forum Applied Linguistics – F.A.L.*) that GAL has edited since 1983, has been relaunched in 2013 with a more modern design. GAL also continues to edit its journal *Zeitschrift für Angewandte Linguistik (ZfAL – Journal of Applied Linguistics)*, which appears at de Gruyter publishers twice a year in print and is also available online. Both the book series and the journal are peer-reviewed and have an editorial team comprising three GAL members each. The current members of the editorial team of the F.A.L. series are Susanne Niemeier, Ulrich Schmitz and Hajo Diekmannshenke, the members of the editorial team of the ZfAL are Dorothee Meer, who succeeded Hajo Diekmannshenke as head of the editorial team, Patrick Voßkamp and Monica Reif.

To keep its members up to date, GAL issues a monthly newsletter via e-mail providing information on upcoming events, job vacancies, awards, calls for manuscripts and other news related to Applied Linguistics. Furthermore, GAL provides topical information on its website, which has existed since 1995 and was relaunched with an improved design in 2011 (see http://www.gal-ev.de).

Since 2012, GAL can also be found in Facebook. Apart from the *AILA Review*, members of GAL also receive a printed copy of all issues of the *Zeitschrift für Angewandte Linguistik*. The subscription to the online version of this journal is also included in the GAL membership fee.

GAL also has the right to nominate candidates for the review boards of the German Research Foundation (Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft – DFG) and GAL members are involved in their election. One of the main tasks of these review boards is quality assurance of the review process preceding funding decisions.

### 4 Applied Linguistics in Germany

Applied Linguistics in Germany is firmly connected to the history of GAL. The founding members and first Executive and Advisory Board members of GAL were linguists working in departments of English, Germanic or Romance languages and literatures, translation scholars or foreign language teaching experts. Still today, most applied linguists in Germany work in language-specific philological departments or departments of translation studies and not in autonomous depart-
ments of Applied Linguistics, even though many of their professorships bear ‘Applied Linguistics’ in their denominations. This indicates that Applied Linguistics in Germany has not yet achieved disciplinary autonomy but is rather considered an area of linguistics, language teaching or translation studies. This has consequences for the objects of applied linguistic research in Germany. Applied linguists do not only tackle “real world problems in which language is a central issue” (Brumfit 1997: 93). Their research interests are of course also influenced by developments in their disciplines, such as, for example, the shift of interest from formal structures of languages and texts to dynamic processes of communication and cognition, and by new forms of communication using electronic media. These shifts of interest have been reflected in GAL’s sections: New sections have been established, such as “Media Communication” and “Media Didactics & Media Literacy”. Other sections have been renamed. The section “Contrastive Linguistics”, for example, gradually developed into the section “Intercultural Communication & Multilingual Discourses”; the section “Language for Specific Purposes” was renamed into “LSP Communication” to adapt its designation to the wider scope of objects that have been addressed in this section.

Even though Applied Linguistics has not yet achieved the autonomy required for the establishment of its own departments in German universities, it does possess many features that characterize a discipline: It has its own association, GAL, which is the largest scientific linguistic association in the German-speaking countries. There is a German journal (ZfAL) and an introductory textbook on Applied Linguistics (Knapp et al. 2004), which in 2011 already appeared in its third edition. And it also brought forth an international handbook series, the Handbooks of Applied Linguistics (Knapp and Antos, 2007–2013).

All this shows that Applied Linguistics is flourishing in Germany. The current increase in language-related problems resulting from globalization and migration will constantly provide new challenges for applied linguists and ensure that they will not run out of work. The recent establishment of a GAL section “Migration Linguistics” demonstrates that GAL is ready to face these challenges.

5 Contact information

Gesellschaft für Angewandte Linguistik (GAL) e.V. (German Association for Applied Linguistics)
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