



Reconceptualizing Applied Linguistics in the Era of Generative AI: Emerging Trends, Opportunities, and Challenges

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Abstract

Artificial intelligence (AI) is increasingly transforming the study and practice of applied linguistics, creating new possibilities for language learning, teaching, assessment, research, translation, and communication. This literature review examines the emerging role of AI in applied linguistics and considers how recent technological developments are contributing to a reconceptualization of the field. Particular attention is given to natural language processing, generative AI, large language models, AI-supported language learning, second language acquisition, language assessment, and linguistic research. The review highlights the potential of AI to provide personalized learning, immediate feedback, adaptive assessment, large-scale language analysis, conversational practice, and new forms of human–AI communication. At the same time, it identifies important challenges related to accuracy, algorithmic bias, privacy, academic integrity, authorship, transparency, linguistic inequality, and overreliance on automated systems. The discussion further suggests that AI is expanding the traditional boundaries of applied linguistics by introducing emerging areas such as AI-mediated discourse, machine-generated language, AI literacy, and human–AI interaction. Rather than replacing human linguistic expertise, AI is best understood as a complementary technology that can extend human capabilities when integrated critically, ethically, and pedagogically. The review concludes that the future of applied linguistics depends on developing human-centered and interdisciplinary approaches that balance technological innovation with human agency, linguistic diversity, educational quality, and ethical responsibility in increasingly AI-mediated language environments.

Keywords: Artificial Intelligence; Applied Linguistics; Generative AI; Language Learning; Human–AI Communication.

1. Introduction

Applied linguistics has traditionally been concerned with understanding and addressing real-world problems related to language, communication, language learning, language teaching, assessment, translation, and other forms of linguistic practice. As an interdisciplinary field, it draws upon insights from linguistics, psychology, education, sociology, and related disciplines to investigate how language operates in diverse social, cultural, educational, and professional contexts. Over time, the scope of applied linguistics has continued to expand in response to major social, technological, and educational developments. The rapid emergence of AI represents one of the most significant contemporary developments with the potential to reshape the theoretical foundations, research practices, and practical applications of the field.

Artificial intelligence has increasingly become integrated into language-related activities through technologies such as natural language processing, machine learning, speech recognition, machine translation, intelligent tutoring systems, automated writing evaluation, conversational agents, and

generative AI. More recently, large language models and AI-powered applications have introduced new forms of interaction in which users can communicate, learn, write, receive feedback, translate texts, and generate linguistic content through engagement with intelligent systems. These developments have transformed AI from a primarily computational technology into an increasingly influential component of language use, language learning, communication, and knowledge construction.

The growing presence of AI in linguistic and educational contexts has important implications for applied linguistics. In language education, AI can support personalized learning, adaptive instruction, automated and immediate feedback, vocabulary development, writing assistance, pronunciation practice, and opportunities for interactive communication. AI-powered tools also provide teachers with new possibilities for developing instructional materials, supporting assessment, monitoring learner progress, and designing more individualized learning experiences. Similarly, AI technologies have expanded opportunities for linguistic research by enabling the processing and analysis of large amounts of textual and spoken language data, identifying linguistic patterns, and supporting corpus-based and discourse-oriented investigations.

These developments suggest that artificial intelligence may represent more than an additional tool within the existing scope of applied linguistics. Instead, AI may constitute an emerging dimension that expands the field toward new areas of inquiry, including human–AI interaction, AI-mediated communication, machine-generated language, algorithmic discourse, digital and AI literacy, and the ethical implications of intelligent language technologies. Consequently, applied linguistics may need to reconsider its traditional boundaries and strengthen its connections with disciplines such as computer science, cognitive science, data science, educational technology, and human–computer interaction.

Against this background, this literature review examines the growing relationship between artificial intelligence and applied linguistics and explores how AI is contributing to the transformation of the field. The review discusses the role of AI in language learning and teaching, second language acquisition, language assessment, linguistic research, and human communication. It also examines the opportunities and challenges associated with AI integration and considers the theoretical and practical implications of these developments for the future of applied linguistics. By bringing together these perspectives, the paper argues that the age of artificial intelligence requires a reconceptualization of applied linguistics as an increasingly interdisciplinary field concerned not only with human language and communication but also with the expanding interaction between humans, language, and intelligent technologies.

2. Applied Linguistics as a Changing Technological Landscape

Applied linguistics is an interdisciplinary field concerned with understanding and addressing real-world problems involving language, communication, language learning, language teaching, assessment, translation, and other language-related practices. Rather than being limited to the application of linguistic theories, the field has developed as a broad area of inquiry that draws upon linguistics, psychology, education, sociology, anthropology, and other disciplines to examine language in relation to human experience and social practice (Davies & Elder, 2004; Grabe, 2010). The scope of applied linguistics has therefore remained dynamic, expanding in response to changes in society, communication, education, and technology.

Traditionally, applied linguistics has been closely associated with language teaching and learning, particularly in the areas of second language acquisition, curriculum development, language pedagogy, teacher education, language testing, and language policy (Kasneci et al., 2023; Kohnke et al., 2023). However, contemporary perspectives recognize that the field extends beyond

classroom language education to include multilingualism, discourse, literacy, translation and interpreting, language planning, workplace communication, and other practical language-related concerns (Davies & Elder, 2004; Kaplan, 2010). This broad orientation has enabled applied linguistics to respond to emerging developments that influence the ways language is produced, learned, used, and evaluated. One of the most significant forces contributing to the transformation of applied linguistics has been the rapid development of digital technology (Klella, 2024). The introduction of computers into language education contributed to the emergence and development of computer-assisted language learning (CALL), which created new opportunities for learners to interact with digital materials, access authentic resources, communicate across geographical boundaries, and receive different forms of feedback (Chapelle, 2001; Warschauer & Healey, 1998). Early CALL research focused primarily on the use of computers as instructional tools, whereas later developments emphasized communication, interaction, learner autonomy, and the integration of multimedia and internet-based resources into language learning environments (Klella, 2026).

The expansion of the internet further transformed the technological landscape of language learning and communication. Digital environments enabled learners to participate in online discussions, collaborative writing, social networking, and intercultural communication. These developments challenged the traditional boundaries between formal and informal learning by allowing language development to occur across multiple digital spaces and communities (Kasneci et al., 2023; Tili et al., 2023). As a result, applied linguistics increasingly became concerned with digital literacy, online discourse, computer-mediated communication, and the linguistic practices associated with emerging technologies (Thorne, 2010; Warschauer, 1996). The development of mobile technologies represented another important stage in this transformation. Mobile-assisted language learning enabled learners to access language resources and participate in learning activities beyond the physical classroom. Smartphones and mobile applications supported flexible, portable, and personalized learning experiences, allowing learners to engage with vocabulary, pronunciation, reading, listening, and communication activities in diverse contexts. Kukulska-Hulme and Shield (2008) argued that mobile learning has significant implications for language education because it extends learning opportunities beyond conventional institutional settings and encourages greater learner mobility and autonomy.

More recently, advances in artificial intelligence have introduced a new stage in the relationship between technology and applied linguistics. Unlike many earlier digital tools, AI systems are increasingly capable of processing, analyzing, generating, and responding to human language (Klella & Al Garaghoolee, 2026). Developments in natural language processing, machine learning, speech recognition, machine translation, automated writing evaluation, intelligent tutoring systems, and conversational agents have created new possibilities for language learning, teaching, assessment, and research (Kohnke et al., 2023; Ouyang et al., 2022). The emergence of generative AI and large language models has further intensified this transformation by enabling users to engage in sophisticated forms of interaction with systems capable of producing coherent and contextually responsive texts.

3. Artificial Intelligence in Language Learning and Teaching

Artificial intelligence has become an increasingly influential component of contemporary language education. The development of intelligent systems capable of processing, generating, and responding to human language has created new opportunities for teaching and learning across different educational contexts. AI-powered technologies can support personalized instruction, automated feedback, adaptive learning, conversational practice, content generation, and learner

assessment (Holmes et al., 2019; Ouyang et al., 2022). Unlike earlier forms of educational technology that primarily delivered predetermined content, many contemporary AI systems can respond dynamically to learners' input and generate individualized forms of support (Alsaeh et al., 2026). Consequently, AI is increasingly transforming the roles of learners, teachers, and technological tools in language education.

3.1 Personalized and Adaptive Language Learning

One of the major advantages associated with AI in language learning is its potential to provide personalized and adaptive learning experiences. Learners differ in their linguistic proficiency, learning pace, needs, interests, and difficulties. Traditional classroom environments may make it difficult for teachers to provide individualized support to every learner (Luckin et al., 2016). AI-powered systems can potentially address this challenge by analyzing learner performance and adapting learning materials, activities, and feedback accordingly.

Adaptive learning systems can identify patterns in learners' responses and provide appropriate tasks based on their performance (Benarose & Hmouma, 2026). In language education, this may involve recommending vocabulary activities, grammar exercises, reading materials, or pronunciation practice that correspond to an individual learner's level. Such personalization can contribute to greater learner autonomy and enable students to engage with language learning materials at their own pace. Zawacki-Richter et al. (2019) emphasized that AI applications in education have increasingly focused on adaptive and personalized learning, highlighting the potential of intelligent systems to support individualized educational experiences.

Generative AI has further expanded the possibilities for personalization. Large language models can provide explanations, examples, practice activities, and responses based on specific learner requests. For example, learners may ask an AI system to explain a grammatical structure, simplify a text, generate vocabulary exercises, simulate a conversation, or provide feedback on a written paragraph (Klella & Mrghem, 2024). This flexibility enables learners to access linguistic support that can be adapted to their immediate needs and learning goals (Kohnke et al., 2023). However, the effectiveness of such personalized learning depends on learners' ability to formulate appropriate prompts, evaluate AI-generated responses, and use the technology critically.

3.2 AI-Assisted Language Teaching

Artificial intelligence also provides important opportunities for language teachers. AI-powered applications can assist in the preparation of instructional materials, the development of classroom activities, the generation of examples and exercises, and the provision of preliminary feedback (Kasneci et al., 2023). Generative AI systems can support teachers in creating reading passages, discussion questions, vocabulary tasks, grammar exercises, and writing prompts.

AI can also assist teachers in differentiating instruction. Because learners often demonstrate different levels of proficiency and learning needs, teachers may use AI tools to adapt instructional materials for different groups of students. For instance, a complex text can be simplified for lower-level learners or accompanied by vocabulary explanations and comprehension questions (Kohnke et al., 2023). Similarly, teachers can use AI to generate alternative examples, practice tasks, and communicative activities appropriate for different proficiency levels. Nevertheless, AI-assisted teaching does not eliminate the importance of the teacher (Ibrahim et al., 2026). Human teachers remain responsible for evaluating the accuracy and appropriateness of AI-generated materials and for making pedagogical decisions based on learners' social, emotional, cultural, and educational needs. Kasneci et al. (2023) argued that the educational use of large language models should be approached critically because AI-generated content may contain inaccuracies, biases, or misleading information.

3.3 AI and the Development of Language Skills

AI technologies can support the development of the major language skills, including writing, speaking, reading, and listening, as well as vocabulary, grammar, and pronunciation. AI-powered writing tools, for example, can provide learners with feedback related to grammar, vocabulary, spelling, organization, and style (Shermis & Burstein, 2013). Automated writing evaluation systems can offer immediate responses that may encourage learners to revise and improve their texts. Research on automated writing evaluation suggests that such systems can provide useful formative support, particularly when feedback is integrated with teacher guidance and revision activities (Karrar et al., 2026).

Generative AI has expanded the role of automated support in writing by enabling learners to receive explanations, suggestions, examples, and alternative expressions. Students may use AI systems during different stages of the writing process, including brainstorming, outlining, drafting, revising, and editing (Kohnke et al., 2023). However, this development also raises concerns about authorship, originality, and the possibility that learners may rely excessively on AI-generated text (McCrocklin, 2019). Therefore, the educational use of generative AI requires a balance between technological assistance and the development of learners' independent writing abilities. Speaking and pronunciation can also benefit from AI-powered technologies. Speech recognition systems can analyze spoken language and provide feedback on pronunciation and fluency. Conversational agents can create opportunities for learners to practice interactive communication without the immediate pressure associated with human interlocutors (Tlili et al., 2023). Such technologies may provide additional opportunities for repeated practice and experimentation with language.

In reading and listening, AI can assist learners by adapting texts to different proficiency levels, providing vocabulary explanations, generating comprehension questions, and summarizing complex information (Hmouma, 2024). AI-powered systems may also support learners in accessing multimodal resources and receiving individualized assistance while engaging with difficult texts (Kasneci et al., 2023). These applications can potentially improve accessibility and allow learners to interact with instructional materials in more flexible ways. However, learners must develop the ability to evaluate AI-generated explanations and avoid accepting inaccurate information without critical examination.

3.4 AI, Learner Autonomy, and Interactive Learning

The integration of AI into language education may contribute to the development of learner autonomy by giving students greater control over when, where, and how they engage with learning activities. AI-powered tools are generally available beyond classroom hours and can provide immediate assistance when teachers or peers are unavailable (Kohnke et al., 2023). Learners can independently ask questions, request explanations, practice conversations, and receive feedback. Such opportunities may encourage self-directed learning and increase access to individualized linguistic support. In this respect, AI literacy and critical digital literacy are becoming increasingly important components of language education (UNESCO, 2023). Learners must understand that AI systems can generate convincing but inaccurate information and that responsible language learning requires active human judgment rather than passive acceptance of automated responses.

AI can also support interactive learning through conversational agents and chatbots. These technologies can simulate dialogues and enable learners to practice different communicative situations. For language learners who have limited access to native or proficient speakers, AI-powered conversational systems may provide additional opportunities for interaction. Such systems can be used to simulate interviews, everyday conversations, role-playing activities, and other communicative situations.

3.5 The Changing Role of Language Teachers

The increasing use of AI requires a reconsideration of the role of language teachers. Rather than replacing teachers, AI is more likely to transform the nature of teaching responsibilities. Teachers may increasingly function as facilitators, evaluators, designers of learning experiences, and guides who help learners use AI critically and effectively (Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). They remain responsible for determining appropriate learning objectives, selecting suitable pedagogical approaches, evaluating AI-generated materials, and ensuring that technology supports rather than undermines meaningful learning. Teachers also play an essential role in addressing the ethical and pedagogical challenges associated with AI. They must guide students in matters related to academic integrity, responsible authorship, privacy, bias, and the appropriate use of AI-generated content (Holmes et al., 2019). This requires professional development that prepares language educators to understand AI technologies and integrate them into teaching practices in pedagogically meaningful ways. Without adequate training, there is a risk that AI will be adopted primarily because of its technological novelty rather than its demonstrated contribution to language learning.

4. Artificial Intelligence and Second Language Acquisition

One of the central concepts in second language acquisition (SLA) is the role of input in language development. According to Krashen's (1985) Input Hypothesis, language acquisition is supported when learners are exposed to comprehensible language that is slightly beyond their current level of competence. AI-powered systems can potentially increase access to comprehensible input by generating texts, explanations, examples, and learning materials adapted to learners' proficiency levels (Kasneci et al., 2023). Generative AI can also simplify complex texts, explain unfamiliar vocabulary, and provide multiple examples of grammatical structures. Such capabilities may enable learners to access individualized linguistic input according to their immediate learning needs. However, the quality and pedagogical appropriateness of AI-generated input must be critically evaluated because AI systems may produce inaccurate or misleading information.

The concept of interaction is also highly relevant to AI-supported language learning. Interactionist perspectives emphasize the importance of communication and negotiation of meaning in facilitating second language development (Long, 1996). Traditionally, interaction has been examined primarily in communication between learners and teachers or among learners themselves. AI-powered conversational agents introduce an additional form of interaction in which learners communicate with intelligent systems (Fryer et al., 2019; Kohnke et al., 2023). Chatbots and large language models can simulate dialogues, respond to learner questions, and maintain extended conversations.

AI-mediated interaction may also create opportunities for learners to engage in repeated communication without some of the social pressures associated with human interaction. Learners may feel more comfortable experimenting with vocabulary, grammar, and communicative strategies when interacting with an AI system. Conversational AI can therefore provide a relatively accessible environment for practicing language production. Nevertheless, AI interaction differs from human communication because intelligent systems do not participate in social interaction in the same way as human interlocutors (Fryer et al., 2019). Consequently, AI-mediated communication should be considered a complementary learning environment rather than a complete substitute for authentic human interaction, particularly in the development of pragmatic, sociolinguistic, and intercultural competence.

The role of output provides another important perspective for understanding AI-supported SLA. Swain's (1985) Output Hypothesis emphasizes that language production contributes to learning

by encouraging learners to test their linguistic knowledge, recognize gaps in their competence, and modify their language. AI-powered systems can encourage output by engaging learners in written and spoken exchanges, asking follow-up questions, and providing prompts that require learners to express ideas. Closely connected to the role of output is the importance of feedback (Shermis & Burstein, 2013). Corrective feedback has been widely recognized as a significant component of second language development because it can help learners notice differences between their linguistic production and target-language forms. Lyster and Ranta (1997) demonstrated the importance of different types of corrective feedback in classroom interaction, while later research has continued to examine how feedback contributes to language learning. AI technologies can provide immediate feedback on grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation, and writing.

The Noticing Hypothesis also provides a useful framework for examining AI-supported language learning. Schmidt (1990) argues that conscious attention to linguistic features plays an important role in language acquisition. AI systems can support noticing by highlighting grammatical patterns, identifying errors, explaining linguistic forms, and comparing alternative expressions. For example, an AI-powered writing assistant may identify repeated grammatical errors and provide explanations that draw learners' attention to specific linguistic features (Kohnke et al., 2023). Similarly, conversational AI can respond to learners' output with reformulations or explanations.

AI may also influence learner autonomy, which has become an important concept in language learning. According to Holec (1981), learner autonomy involves the ability to take responsibility for one's own learning. AI-powered systems can provide learners with continuous access to explanations, practice activities, feedback, and language resources beyond the classroom (UNESCO, 2023). Learners can independently select topics, request learning materials, practice conversations, and receive individualized assistance. These opportunities may strengthen self-directed learning by allowing learners to take greater control over their learning processes.

From a cognitive perspective, AI can provide individualized learning experiences that may support attention, practice, memory, and the development of linguistic knowledge. Intelligent systems can adapt tasks according to learner performance, provide repeated practice, and generate explanations based on individual needs (Luckin et al., 2016; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). Such personalization may be particularly useful in large language classrooms where teachers may have limited opportunities to provide continuous individual support.

At the same time, SLA cannot be understood exclusively as an individual cognitive process. Sociocultural perspectives emphasize that language development occurs through interaction, mediation, and participation in social and cultural activities. Drawing on Vygotskian principles, Lantolf and Thorne (2006) argue that language learning is fundamentally mediated by social interaction and cultural tools. AI can potentially function as a mediating technological tool by providing linguistic support and opportunities for interaction (Kohnke et al., 2023; Tlili et al., 2023). However, questions remain concerning the nature and quality of AI as a mediating agent. Unlike human teachers and peers, AI systems do not possess lived social experiences, cultural identities, or human intentions.

5. Artificial Intelligence and Language Assessment

One of the most established applications of AI in language assessment is automated scoring. Automated systems have been developed to evaluate written and spoken language using computational analyses of linguistic features. In writing assessment, automated systems can analyze aspects such as vocabulary, grammar, syntax, organization, fluency, and other textual characteristics. In speaking assessment, speech technologies can examine pronunciation, fluency,

lexical use, and other aspects of oral performance (Shermis & Burstein, 2013). Automated scoring has attracted considerable attention because it can potentially reduce assessment time, increase scoring efficiency, and provide consistent evaluation across large numbers of learners.

The development of automated essay scoring represents an important stage in the integration of AI into language assessment. Automated essay evaluation systems are designed to estimate writing quality by identifying linguistic and textual patterns that correlate with human judgments (Chapelle & Voss, 2016). Such systems can provide rapid scores and, in some cases, diagnostic information about learners' writing. Their scalability makes them particularly attractive in educational environments where large numbers of written responses must be evaluated (Williamson et al., 2012). Nevertheless, the use of automated scoring raises important questions about construct validity, fairness, transparency, and the extent to which computational measures adequately represent the complex construct of writing ability. AI systems may identify measurable linguistic features successfully while failing to capture important dimensions of communicative competence, such as rhetorical effectiveness, originality, pragmatic appropriateness, cultural meaning, or the quality of ideas. Consequently, a high degree of agreement between automated scores and human scores does not necessarily demonstrate that an AI system is measuring the same underlying construct in an educationally meaningful way (Chapelle & Voss, 2016). The validity of AI-assisted assessment must therefore be examined in relation to the purpose, context, and consequences of assessment.

The effectiveness of automated feedback depends strongly on its quality and interpretability. AI systems may identify linguistic problems, but learners need to understand why a particular form is considered problematic and how it can be improved (Kohnke et al., 2023). Feedback that merely marks an answer as correct or incorrect may provide limited support for learning (Stevenson & Phakiti, 2014). In addition, AI also has potential applications in adaptive language assessment. Adaptive systems can adjust the difficulty, content, or sequence of test items according to a learner's previous responses. The purpose is to obtain a more precise estimate of ability while reducing unnecessary testing time (Isaacs, 2018). Computer-adaptive testing has already demonstrated the value of technology in creating individualized assessment pathways, while AI may further enhance such systems through increasingly sophisticated learner modeling and data analysis (Wainer, 2000). In language assessment, adaptive technologies may help identify learners' strengths and weaknesses and provide more targeted diagnostic information.

The emergence of generative AI also creates significant challenges for the interpretation of learner performance. In traditional assessment, a written assignment is generally assumed to represent the learner's own language production. When learners can use generative AI to create or substantially revise their responses, the relationship between the observed performance and the learner's independent ability becomes less straightforward (Kasneci et al., 2023). Consequently, assessments designed for an environment without AI assistance may no longer provide the same interpretation of scores when AI tools are readily available (Yan et al., 2023). This issue has encouraged researchers and educators to reconsider assessment design, authenticity, and the distinction between independent and AI-assisted performance.

Fairness and bias represent additional concerns in AI-mediated language assessment. AI systems learn from data, and the data used to train them may reflect linguistic, cultural, demographic, and social biases (Bender et al., 2021; Williamson et al., 2012). If particular accents, varieties of English, writing styles, or discourse patterns are underrepresented in training datasets, automated assessment may systematically favor some learners over others (UNESCO, 2023). In high-stakes assessment contexts, such disparities can have serious educational consequences.

Transparency is equally important. Human assessors can usually explain the criteria they use when evaluating performance, whereas some AI systems rely on complex computational processes that may be difficult for users to interpret (Chapelle & Voss, 2016). When learners receive an automated score without understanding how that score was produced, opportunities for meaningful feedback and contestability may be reduced. Language assessment therefore requires AI systems that provide sufficient information about scoring criteria, limitations, and sources of uncertainty. Teachers and assessment specialists are still needed to select appropriate constructs, develop valid assessment tasks, interpret results, evaluate unusual responses, and consider contextual information that automated systems may not capture (Holmes et al., 2019). Consequently, the future of AI-based language assessment is more appropriately understood in terms of human–AI collaboration rather than complete replacement of human assessment.

6. Artificial Intelligence and Linguistic Research

One of the most important contributions of AI to linguistic research is its capacity to process large-scale textual and spoken datasets. Natural language processing technologies can identify linguistic patterns, classify texts, extract information, and analyze language features across extensive collections of data (Grabe, 2010). Computational approaches allow researchers to examine vocabulary, syntax, semantic relationships, discourse patterns, sentiment, and other linguistic characteristics that may be difficult to investigate manually at scale (Jurafsky & Martin, 2024). This capability has strengthened the role of corpus-based approaches and encouraged researchers to combine traditional linguistic analysis with computational methods.

AI has also contributed significantly to the development of corpus linguistics. Large digital corpora can contain millions or even billions of words, making manual analysis impractical for many research questions. Machine learning and NLP techniques can assist researchers in identifying recurring patterns, collocations, grammatical structures, semantic relationships, and discourse features (Biber et al., 1998). By automating parts of the process, AI can make it possible to investigate linguistic variation across genres, contexts, speakers, and populations more efficiently. Another important application of AI involves automated discourse analysis. Discourse analysis traditionally requires researchers to examine how language constructs meaning, identity, relationships, and social practices within particular contexts. AI can assist in analyzing large collections of discourse by identifying thematic patterns, linguistic features, sentiment, rhetorical structures, and relationships among concepts (Grimmer et al., 2022). Machine learning methods can be used to classify and organize large datasets before researchers conduct more detailed qualitative interpretation.

AI is similarly changing the analysis of spoken language. Speech recognition technologies can convert spoken language into text, reducing some of the time required for manual transcription. Automatic speech processing can also support the analysis of pronunciation, fluency, pauses, intonation, and other characteristics of oral communication. These technologies can be particularly useful in second language acquisition and language teaching research, where researchers may need to analyze extensive collections of learner speech (Jurafsky & Martin, 2024). The emergence of large language models has introduced an additional dimension to linguistic research. Models such as GPT-based systems can generate, summarize, classify, transform, and analyze language. Researchers may use such systems as research assistants for activities such as generating preliminary coding schemes, comparing linguistic expressions, producing summaries, identifying possible themes, or assisting with language-related data exploration (Bender et al., 2021; Brown et al., 2020). In addition, AI has potential value for language assessment research. Automated scoring and natural language processing can be used to investigate writing and speaking

performance, develop assessment models, examine linguistic features associated with proficiency, and explore patterns in learner responses. Computational analyses can provide large amounts of evidence about how learners perform across assessment tasks (Chapelle & Voss, 2016). However, researchers must ensure that computational indicators correspond meaningfully to the construct being assessed. A system may successfully identify linguistic features that correlate with scores without adequately representing broader dimensions of communicative competence, rhetorical quality, or pragmatic appropriateness.

AI may also contribute to translation and interpreting research. Neural machine translation has significantly increased the quality and fluency of automated translation systems, creating new areas of research concerning translation accuracy, human–machine collaboration, post-editing, translator competence, and the changing professional role of translators (Koehn, 2020). Applied linguists can investigate how AI-mediated translation affects language use, intercultural communication, translation strategies, and perceptions of translation quality (Granger, 2002). The increasing integration of AI into translation also raises questions about how human linguistic expertise can best complement machine-generated output.

Automated outputs may create an appearance of objectivity even though computational models can reproduce biases or reflect limitations in the data used to train them. Bender et al. (2021) emphasized that language models can reproduce problematic patterns present in their training data, while Noble (2018) demonstrated more broadly how algorithmic systems can reflect and reinforce social inequalities. Consequently, AI-generated results should not automatically be treated as neutral or objective representations of linguistic reality.

7. Reconceptualizing the Scope of Applied Linguistics

Applied linguistics has undergone substantial conceptual expansion since its emergence as a field concerned primarily with the practical application of linguistic knowledge to language-related problems. Although language teaching and second language acquisition remain central areas of inquiry, contemporary applied linguistics encompasses a much broader range of issues involving language, communication, learning, identity, discourse, multilingualism, translation, literacy, language policy, and social practice (Davies & Elder, 2004; Grabe, 2010). This broadening reflects the interdisciplinary and problem-oriented nature of the field and its capacity to respond to changing social and technological conditions.

One important dimension of this reconceptualization is the emergence of human–AI communication as a potential area of applied linguistic inquiry. Conventional approaches to communication generally focus on interaction among human participants, with attention to meaning-making, turn-taking, pragmatics, identity, and social context. AI conversational systems introduce a different communicative configuration in which a technological system produces responses to human linguistic input. Although AI systems do not possess human consciousness or lived social experience, their ability to generate contextually appropriate language creates communicative encounters that users may experience as conversational (Bender et al., 2021; McTear, 2020). Applied linguistics can contribute to understanding how people interpret these interactions and how communicative norms develop around them.

The reconceptualization of applied linguistics also involves reconsidering the relationship between technology and human agency. Technological tools have long supported language learning, but AI systems increasingly perform tasks that were previously associated with human linguistic expertise. They can suggest revisions, generate explanations, translate texts, evaluate writing, and produce extended discourse (Kasneci et al., 2023). Such capabilities may increase users'

productivity and access to linguistic resources, but they can also influence decisions about what to say, how to say it, and which linguistic forms are considered appropriate.

Another important dimension concerns digital and AI literacy. Traditional literacy has increasingly been understood as more than the ability to read and write; it involves the ability to use language effectively within different social and technological environments (Bender et al., 2021; Brown et al., 2020). The expansion of AI suggests that learners and language professionals also need to understand how intelligent systems operate, how their outputs should be evaluated, and how AI-generated information can be used responsibly. UNESCO (2023) emphasizes the need for human-centered approaches to generative AI that promote critical evaluation, responsible use, and awareness of ethical implications. Computational language systems can reproduce or amplify biases found in their training data (Bender et al., 2021). Applied linguists have an important role in examining how different languages, dialects, accents, discourse styles, and cultural perspectives are represented within AI systems. This includes investigating whether AI technologies privilege dominant varieties of language while inadequately supporting less-represented linguistic communities.

The reconceptualization of applied linguistics also has implications for language education and teacher roles. Traditionally, language teachers have been viewed as providers of linguistic input, feedback, instruction, and guidance. With AI increasingly able to provide explanations, generate exercises, and interact with learners, the teacher's role may shift toward facilitating critical engagement with technological resources (Holmes et al., 2019; Kohnke et al., 2023). Rather than simply resisting or embracing AI, language educators need to determine when AI support contributes to learning and when it may hinder the development of independent linguistic abilities. Applied linguistics has always drawn on multiple disciplines, but AI creates especially strong connections with computer science, computational linguistics, cognitive science, educational technology, data science, and human–computer interaction (Davies & Elder, 2004). Understanding AI-mediated language phenomena requires knowledge of both linguistic theories and computational systems. This interdisciplinary orientation is consistent with the historical development of applied linguistics as a field that addresses complex language-related problems by drawing on concepts and methods from different areas of knowledge.

8. Opportunities of Artificial Intelligence for Applied Linguistics

AI has created a wide range of opportunities for the development of applied linguistics. As intelligent technologies become increasingly capable of processing, generating, and analyzing human language, they provide new possibilities for language research, teaching, learning, assessment, translation, discourse analysis, and professional practice.

8.1 Personalized Language Learning

One of the most significant opportunities provided by AI is the possibility of highly personalized language learning. Traditional classroom instruction often requires teachers to address groups of learners with different proficiency levels, learning styles, interests, and linguistic needs (Luckin et al., 2016; Zawacki-Richter et al., 2019). AI-powered systems can analyze learner performance and provide individualized activities, explanations, and feedback. Adaptive learning technologies can adjust the difficulty and content of learning tasks according to learners' progress, potentially creating more responsive learning environments. Learners can ask an AI system to explain a grammatical rule, provide examples, create vocabulary exercises, simplify a reading passage, or simulate a conversation (Davies & Elder, 2004; Grabe, 2010). This flexibility may support learner autonomy and enable students to engage in self-directed language learning beyond the classroom (Kohnke et al., 2023). From an applied linguistic perspective, personalized AI support creates new

opportunities to investigate the relationship between individual differences, technological mediation, and second language development.

8.2 Enhanced Language Teaching

AI also offers opportunities to enhance language teaching by supporting teachers in instructional planning and material development (Kasneci et al., 2023). Generative AI can assist in producing lesson ideas, reading passages, vocabulary activities, grammar exercises, discussion questions, writing prompts, and differentiated materials. Teachers can use AI to adapt texts and activities for learners at different proficiency levels or to generate alternative explanations of difficult linguistic concepts (Holmes et al., 2019). However, teachers remain responsible for evaluating the accuracy, appropriateness, and pedagogical value of AI-generated materials.

8.3 Expanded Opportunities for Language Practice

AI-powered conversational systems provide learners with opportunities for frequent and repeated language practice. Conversational agents and Chatbots can simulate dialogues, role-play communicative situations, ask questions, and respond to learner input (Fryer et al., 2019). Such environments may provide useful opportunities for speaking and writing practice, particularly for learners who have limited access to proficient speakers or who experience anxiety when communicating in a foreign language interaction (Holmes et al., 2019). AI-mediated practice may also allow learners to experiment with language without the immediate fear of negative social evaluation.

8.4 Immediate and Individualized Feedback

Another important opportunity lies in the delivery of immediate feedback. AI systems can provide rapid responses to learners' written and spoken language, including feedback related to grammar, vocabulary, spelling, pronunciation, fluency, and organization (Shute, 2008). Immediate feedback can support formative learning by enabling learners to identify problems and revise their performance while the learning activity is still cognitively accessible. Automated writing evaluation has demonstrated the potential of technology to provide feedback and support revision, particularly when automated tools are integrated with instructional guidance (Stevenson & Phakiti, 2014). Generative AI extends this possibility by providing explanations and alternative formulations rather than merely identifying errors (Kohnke et al., 2023). This may contribute to more individualized feedback experiences.

8.5 New Directions in Language Assessment

AI provides opportunities to make language assessment more efficient, adaptive, and data-informed. Automated scoring systems can analyze written and spoken language at scale, while adaptive assessment technologies can adjust task difficulty in response to learner performance (Shermis & Burstein, 2013). These capabilities may reduce administrative demands and provide faster access to assessment information. AI can also support formative assessment by continuously analyzing learner performance and identifying areas that require additional attention (Chapelle & Voss, 2016). Such systems may help teachers identify common errors and provide targeted instructional support.

8.6 Large-Scale Linguistic Research

AI offers substantial opportunities for linguistic research by enabling the analysis of large quantities of textual and spoken data. Natural language processing and machine learning can help researchers identify linguistic patterns, classify texts, analyze discourse, examine sentiment, and process large corpora. Such capabilities can substantially reduce the time required for some stages of data processing and allow researchers to investigate language phenomena that would be difficult to study manually on a large scale (Jurafsky & Martin, 2024). In applied linguistics, computational

approaches can support learner corpus research, discourse analysis, sociolinguistic research, language assessment, and studies of digital communication.

8.7 New Opportunities for Second Language Acquisition Research

The use of AI creates new contexts in which established theories of second language acquisition can be examined. Researchers can investigate how learners respond to AI-generated input, how interaction with conversational systems affects language production, and how automated feedback influences noticing and revision. AI-mediated learning environments also provide opportunities to study learner autonomy, motivation, engagement, and individual differences in technologically supported settings (Kohnke et al., 2023). AI can therefore serve both as a tool for conducting SLA research and as a phenomenon that requires theoretical investigation. The distinction is important because AI is changing the learning environment itself.

8.8 Advancing Translation and Interpreting

AI has created major opportunities for translation through neural machine translation and other computational language technologies. Modern translation systems can process large volumes of multilingual content rapidly and support translators in producing and revising translations (Chapelle & Voss, 2016). These systems may increase productivity and facilitate communication across linguistic boundaries (Koehn, 2020). The development of AI also opens new research areas within applied linguistics and translation studies, including human–machine collaboration, post-editing, translation quality, translator decision-making, and the changing professional identity of translators. Rather than eliminating the need for human expertise, AI may encourage a shift toward forms of collaborative translation in which professionals evaluate and refine machine-generated output.

8.9 Improving Accessibility and Inclusion

AI can contribute to greater linguistic accessibility for learners and language users with diverse needs. Speech recognition, text-to-speech, machine translation, automated captioning, and text simplification can help reduce barriers to accessing linguistic information (Davies & Elder, 2004). AI-based tools may also support learners who require alternative forms of interaction with educational materials. These possibilities are particularly relevant to inclusive applied linguistics because language education and communication must address diverse populations and abilities (Bender et al., 2021). However, the benefits of AI for inclusion depend on how well systems represent different languages, accents, dialects, and user populations. Technologies trained primarily on dominant linguistic varieties may reproduce existing inequalities rather than reduce them.

8.10 Human–AI Communication as a New Research Area

Perhaps one of the most significant opportunities is the emergence of human–AI communication as a potential new domain within applied linguistics. Traditional research has focused largely on communication among human participants (UNESCO, 2023). AI systems now participate in interactions through language generation and conversational response, creating communicative environments that require new linguistic analysis (McTear, 2020). Applied linguists can investigate how users interpret AI-generated language, how conversational norms develop, and how concepts such as politeness, stance, identity, turn-taking, and meaning are manifested in human–AI interaction. The study of AI-mediated communication may therefore expand discourse analysis and pragmatics into technological environments that were previously unavailable.

9. Challenges and Ethical Concerns

Although AI offers considerable opportunities for applied linguistics, its growing integration into language learning, teaching, assessment, research, and communication also creates substantial

challenges and ethical concerns. The increasing ability of AI systems to process and generate human language raises questions about accuracy, bias, privacy, academic integrity, authorship, transparency, human agency, and equity. These concerns are especially important in applied linguistics because language is closely associated with identity, culture, cognition, education, and social interaction.

9.1 Accuracy and Reliability of AI-Generated Language

One of the most important challenges associated with AI is the possibility of inaccurate or misleading output. Generative AI systems can produce fluent and convincing language while nevertheless providing incorrect information, inappropriate explanations, fabricated references, or unsupported claims. This phenomenon is particularly problematic in language education because learners may assume that linguistically well-formed responses are necessarily accurate. Large language models generate outputs based on patterns learned from extensive datasets rather than by consulting an infallible knowledge source, which means that their responses can contain errors (Bender et al., 2021; Kasneci et al., 2023). In applied linguistics, inaccurate AI output can affect grammar explanations, vocabulary definitions, translations, writing feedback, and language assessment. Learners who repeatedly accept incorrect AI-generated information may develop misconceptions or reinforce linguistic errors.

9.2 Algorithmic Bias and Linguistic Inequality

Bias represents another major concern in AI systems. AI models learn from large datasets that may reflect historical inequalities, stereotypes, and dominant cultural or linguistic perspectives. As a consequence, AI-generated responses can reproduce or amplify biases embedded in the data used to train the systems (Bender et al., 2021). This problem is particularly important for applied linguistics because language varies across geographical regions, social groups, cultures, dialects, and communities. AI systems may perform better for dominant varieties of widely represented languages than for minority or less-resourced varieties. For example, systems developed primarily from standard forms of English may inadequately represent regional dialects, nonstandard varieties, or multilingual forms of communication. Kasneci et al. (2023) therefore emphasized that such disparities may have consequences for language assessment, automated writing feedback, speech recognition, and translation.

9.3 Privacy and Data Protection

The use of AI frequently involves the collection and processing of substantial quantities of user data. In language education, this may include students' written assignments, spoken recordings, personal information, learning histories, and interaction data. Uploading such materials to AI platforms can create concerns about who has access to the data, how long it is stored, whether it is used for other purposes, and how it is protected. Privacy concerns are especially important when educational institutions use external AI services. Students may not always understand how their data are processed or may not have meaningful opportunities to refuse participation. UNESCO (2023) emphasized the importance of protecting privacy and ensuring responsible governance in the use of generative AI in education and research.

9.4 Academic Integrity and Unauthorized Assistance

Generative AI has created new challenges for academic integrity. Students can use AI systems to generate essays, answer questions, summarize sources, translate texts, and revise assignments. While some forms of AI assistance can support learning, submitting substantial AI-generated content as independent student work can undermine the principles of academic authorship and assessment. This issue is particularly significant in language education because writing and speaking tasks are often designed to measure learners' independent language proficiency

(UNESCO, 2023). When AI produces or substantially modifies a learner's work, the resulting performance may no longer provide a valid representation of the learner's own linguistic ability.

9.5 Authorship and Ownership of AI-Generated Language

The increasing ability of AI systems to generate extended texts raises important questions concerning authorship. If a student, teacher, researcher, or professional uses AI to produce a text, determining who should be considered the author may become complicated. This issue extends beyond academic integrity to broader questions concerning intellectual ownership, originality, and human responsibility (Williamson et al., 2012). From an applied linguistic perspective, authorship is closely connected to concepts such as voice, identity, intention, and communicative agency. AI-generated texts may resemble human writing while lacking a human author in the traditional sense. Bender et al. (2021) argued that fluent language generation should not be confused with human understanding or intention. Consequently, users remain responsible for evaluating and taking ownership of the content they submit or publish, even when AI has contributed substantially to its production.

10. Future Directions for Applied Linguistics in the Age of AI

The rapid development of AI is likely to continue reshaping applied linguistics by creating new forms of language use, learning, teaching, assessment, research, and professional practice. While earlier technologies primarily supported access to language resources or communication, contemporary generative AI systems can produce and interact through language, creating a more complex relationship between humans and technology. Recent scholarship suggests that research on generative AI in language education is moving from initial exploratory discussions toward more systematic investigation of its pedagogical, theoretical, and practical implications (Fang & Han, 2025; Lee et al., 2025). The future of applied linguistics will therefore require not only greater technological awareness but also theoretical and critical perspectives capable of explaining language practices in AI-mediated environments.

10.1 Developing Human-Centered AI in Applied Linguistics

A major future direction is the development of human-centered approaches to AI. Rather than treating technological advancement as an end in itself, future applications should prioritize human learning, communication, agency, inclusion, and well-being. UNESCO (2023) emphasizes that generative AI should be developed and implemented through approaches that protect human agency, promote equity, respect cultural and linguistic diversity, and ensure responsible use. For applied linguistics, this means that AI should support meaningful language learning and communication while preserving the central role of human judgment and interaction.

10.2 Expanding Research on Human–AI Communication

Human–AI communication is likely to become an important new domain of applied linguistic research. As conversational systems become increasingly integrated into education, workplaces, and everyday communication, people are interacting with artificial agents through natural language with growing frequency. This creates opportunities to investigate conversational structure, pragmatics, politeness, identity, stance, turn-taking, meaning-making, and communicative expectations in human–AI interaction (McTear, 2020). Future research should examine how users adapt their language when communicating with AI and whether repeated interaction with AI influences human communication patterns. Researchers may also investigate how users develop trust in AI systems, how they interpret machine-generated language, and how perceptions of intelligence or agency influence communication.

10.3 Reconsidering Second Language Acquisition in AI-Mediated Environments

AI is also likely to influence theories and research in second language acquisition (SLA). Existing theories emphasize input, interaction, output, noticing, feedback, mediation, and social participation. AI systems create new environments in which these processes can occur through interactions between learners and intelligent technologies. Recent research has begun to identify AI-mediated input, corrective feedback, interaction, and personalized learning as areas requiring closer investigation (Fang & Han, 2025). Future SLA research should determine under what conditions interaction with AI contributes to durable language development. Important questions include whether AI-generated input promotes acquisition in the same way as human input, how learners respond to AI corrective feedback, and whether AI-mediated interaction supports pragmatic and communicative competence. Research should also examine the extent to which AI assistance influences learners' independence, motivation, and long-term linguistic development.

10.4 Transforming Language Pedagogy

Future language pedagogy is likely to move toward more flexible forms of human–AI collaboration. Rather than using AI simply as an optional technological supplement, teachers may increasingly integrate AI into classroom activities involving communication, writing, feedback, problem-solving, and personalized learning. Generative AI can provide learners with opportunities for interactive practice and individualized support while teachers focus on pedagogy, interpretation, and social interaction (Kohnke et al., 2023).

This development may encourage a shift from teacher-centered models toward learning environments in which teachers, learners, peers, and AI systems interact in complementary ways. Recent research indicates that generative AI is prompting reconsideration of language pedagogy, assessment, SLA, and teacher education, suggesting that AI may influence several core areas of applied linguistics simultaneously (Fang & Han, 2025; Lee et al., 2025).

10.5 Rethinking Language Assessment

The future of language assessment will likely require substantial reconsideration because AI can both assist assessment and participate in the production of assessed language. Traditional writing assignments, for example, may no longer provide a clear measure of independent language ability when learners can use generative AI during task completion. Consequently, assessment may increasingly place greater emphasis on process, interaction, oral performance, reflection, staged writing, and authentic communicative tasks. However, future assessment research must ensure that AI-assisted assessment remains valid, reliable, fair, transparent, and aligned with clearly defined constructs (Chapelle & Voss, 2016). Human oversight will remain especially important in high-stakes assessment.

10.6 Strengthening AI Literacy in Language Education

A key future direction is the development of AI literacy among both language learners and educators. AI literacy should involve more than knowing how to operate AI tools. Learners need to understand how AI systems generate language, recognize their limitations, evaluate the reliability of their outputs, identify possible bias, and use AI responsibly. Teachers similarly need competencies in evaluating AI tools, designing appropriate activities, checking AI-generated content, and teaching students about ethical use. UNESCO (2023) emphasized the importance of developing human capacity alongside technological development. In language education, this implies that AI literacy should become part of broader communicative and digital competence.

10.7 Preserving Linguistic and Cultural Diversity

The future development of AI raises important questions about linguistic diversity. Many AI systems are trained using large quantities of data from dominant languages and varieties, which may result in unequal performance across languages, dialects, and cultural contexts. Applied

linguistics can contribute to addressing these inequalities by investigating how AI represents multilingualism and whether technological systems adequately support less-resourced languages. Future research should examine AI performance across different varieties of English and other languages, including regional dialects and multilingual practices. The relationship between generative AI and Global Englishes is particularly important because AI-generated language may reinforce dominant norms if users are consistently presented with standardized forms as the preferred model (Lee et al., 2025). A future-oriented applied linguistics agenda should therefore promote linguistic pluralism rather than technological standardization.

10.8 Expanding AI-Assisted Linguistic Research

AI is likely to become increasingly integrated into linguistic research. Researchers may use AI systems to process large corpora, transcribe spoken data, identify linguistic patterns, organize qualitative data, and analyze discourse. These capabilities can make it possible to investigate large datasets and complex linguistic phenomena more efficiently (Jurafsky & Martin, 2024). However, future research should establish clear principles for responsible AI-assisted scholarship. Researchers need to document how AI was used, validate automated outputs, and distinguish computational assistance from human interpretation. This is particularly important in qualitative research, where linguistic meaning depends heavily on context and interpretation. AI can support research processes, but theoretical reasoning and final scholarly judgments should remain the responsibility of human researchers.

10.9 Redefining Teacher Education and Professional Competence

AI is likely to influence the knowledge and skills required of future language teachers. Teacher education programs may increasingly need to include AI literacy, digital pedagogy, AI-supported assessment, ethical decision-making, prompt design, evaluation of AI-generated materials, and critical analysis of technological outputs. Teachers will need to determine which tasks should be supported by AI and which should remain primarily human-centered (Holmes et al., 2019). The increasing availability of AI does not necessarily reduce the importance of teachers. Rather, it may strengthen the need for teachers who can provide contextual judgment, emotional support, cultural guidance, interpersonal interaction, and pedagogical expertise. Future teacher education should therefore focus on developing professionals capable of combining technological competence with strong linguistic and educational knowledge.

10.10 Establishing Ethical and Institutional Frameworks

Another important future direction involves the development of clear ethical and institutional policies governing AI use in language education and research. Because AI technologies are evolving rapidly, institutional rules may struggle to keep pace with technological change. UNESCO (2023) argued for coherent policy frameworks that address privacy, safety, equity, human agency, and responsible implementation. Applied linguistics can contribute to policy development by identifying language-specific issues that may be overlooked in general AI regulations (Fang & Han, 2025). These include linguistic bias, assessment validity, multilingual access, authorship, translation accuracy, and the implications of AI-generated language for language learning. Institutions should therefore develop policies that are flexible enough to adapt to technological change while maintaining clear educational and ethical principles.

11. Conclusion

Artificial intelligence is increasingly reshaping the field of applied linguistics by transforming the ways language is learned, taught, assessed, researched, translated, and communicated. The development of natural language processing, machine learning, conversational systems, and generative AI has created new possibilities for interacting with and through language. These

developments demonstrate that AI is not simply an additional technological tool but an emerging influence that has the potential to alter the conceptual boundaries and practical functions of applied linguistics.

The literature reviewed in this paper indicates that AI can provide important benefits across major areas of applied linguistics. In language learning and teaching, AI can support personalized instruction, interactive practice, automated feedback, and learner autonomy. In second language acquisition, AI creates new environments for examining input, interaction, output, feedback, noticing, and technological mediation. In language assessment, AI offers opportunities for automated scoring, adaptive assessment, and immediate feedback. In linguistic research, it facilitates the analysis of large quantities of textual and spoken data and creates new possibilities for examining machine-generated language and human–AI communication. These developments can increase access to linguistic resources and create more flexible and individualized learning and research environments.

At the same time, the increasing integration of AI introduces significant challenges. Concerns about inaccurate information, algorithmic bias, linguistic inequality, privacy, academic integrity, authorship, transparency, and overreliance on automated systems demonstrate that technological innovation must be accompanied by critical and ethical consideration. The ability of AI to generate fluent language should not be confused with human understanding, intention, cultural knowledge, or communicative competence. Human judgment therefore remains essential for evaluating AI-generated language and determining its appropriateness in educational, research, and professional contexts.

The emergence of AI also suggests that the scope of applied linguistics needs to be reconsidered. Traditional areas such as second language acquisition, language teaching, assessment, translation, and discourse analysis remain fundamental, but they are increasingly being conducted within technologically mediated environments. New areas of inquiry, including human–AI communication, AI-mediated discourse, machine-generated language, AI literacy, algorithmic language bias, and technology-mediated linguistic competence, are becoming increasingly relevant. This expansion further strengthens the interdisciplinary character of applied linguistics and creates opportunities for collaboration with computer science, cognitive science, computational linguistics, educational technology, and data science.

The age of AI provides an opportunity for applied linguistics to redefine and expand its disciplinary horizons. The field can move toward a broader conception of language that recognizes the increasingly complex relationship among humans, language, society, and intelligent technologies. Reconceptualizing applied linguistics in this way will enable the discipline to remain responsive to contemporary linguistic realities while preserving its central commitment to human communication, learning, cultural diversity, critical inquiry, and ethical responsibility.

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