

to any analysis. To demonstrate this, applied linguistics has drawn upon, and also developed, discourse analysis—the study of how stretches of language in context are perceived as meaningful and unified by their users. New technologies make the paralinguistics of writing increasingly more significant, for whereas, in the past, resources were limited to handwriting, typing, or printing, the computer has brought powerful new tools for document design within many people's reach. In this chapter we consider how context, and in particular cultural context, can be analysed and understood, and in general terms how it is relevant to all the areas of applied linguistics. It is not the case, as some linguists have claimed, that the meaning of language in context is so messy and subjective that it is beyond the reach of systematic enquiry. Written words can be scribbled, printed, or painted, and their meaning can be amplified or altered by layout, accompanying pictures, and diagrams.⁵⁰ Systematizing context: discourse analysis

Systematic description of context is notoriously difficult. It threatens to introduce enormous amounts of new material, and categories which are inherently slippery and vague. Three areas of study which contribute to this field are paralinguistics, pragmatics, and genre studies. A good deal is conveyed by tone of voice—whether we shout or whisper for example, and by the use of our bodies—whether we smile, wave our hands, touch people, make eye contact, and so on. Such communicative behaviour, used alongside language, is paralinguistics. Convincing research suggests that paralinguistic messages can outweigh linguistic ones, especially in establishing and maintaining relationships. In the latter part of the chapter we focus, in particular, upon the practice of translation.