

TESOL AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS LOST THREE GIANTS THIS YEAR: JOSHUA FISHMAN, CHRISTOPHER CANDLIN, AND JAMES ALATIS

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I know I write on behalf of many of our readers to express deep sadness at the loss of three influential linguists whose work has touched our lives, our academic studies, current careers, and professional contributions in more ways than the space here can allow me to list. But it is their work on expanding the field of linguistics, and focusing attention of scholars and institutions of power on minority and endangered languages, that truly stands out as a guide and enduring legacy to many young scholars.

As a doctoral student, I first came across Joshua Fishman's work in the stacks of Bobst Library at NYU, looking for journals on sociolinguistics. Many readers probably share my story and have read his early work on the sociology of language; some of this journal's more recent publications on bilingualism directly or indirectly share ideas that Professor Fishman put forth decades ago. Fishman earned his Ph.D. from Columbia University and taught at CUNY (City College, the Graduate Center) at various stages of his very active teaching life—a special link to New York City. Among his many interests were Yiddish, bilingual education, and the relationship between language, ethnicity, and religion. His work on social aspects of language still resonates with his students and colleagues, and no doubt with many of our readers and authors as well.

Chris Candlin has had a great impact on me, personally—in particular, his efforts to make applied linguistics more relevant to the “real” world of language use and to make praxis a part of what applied linguists do every day. Professor Candlin mentored almost every influential applied linguist who is presently contributing to the field. A major intellectual force, he was instrumental in applied linguistics establishment as a respected discipline worldwide. His work pursued a greater understanding of the role of language in a range of social contexts.

I end this tribute with James Alatis, a considerable figure in TESOL, known to many as a Georgetown professor who was part of the initial group that got together to form TESOL in 1966. For over forty years, Professor Alatis contributed to the development of sociolinguistics and TESOL at Georgetown. His vision of teaching included cross-cultural communication, mutual exchange with speakers of other languages, social justice, and world peace. For many of us, social justice is a large part of what we do as language teachers, so his vision lives on not only in our classrooms and in our publications, but also—and even more important—beyond academia.



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