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A Course in Applied Linguistics
M.A. in English Language and Linguistics

(Scope of Applied Linguistics)

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What is applied linguistics?

Applied linguistics is concerned with increasing understanding of the role of language in human affairs and thereby with providing the knowledge necessary for those who are responsible for taking language related decisions whether the need for these arises in the classroom, the workplace, the law court, or the laboratory.

Guy Cook defines applied linguistics as „the academic discipline concerned with the relation of knowledge about language to decision making in the real world“ (ibid:5). He recognizes that „the scope of applied linguistics remains rather vague“ but attempts to delimit its main areas of concern as consisting of language and education; language, work and law; and language information and effect (ibid 7/8). Delimitations of this kind are helpful, even if they remain contestable.

Linguistics Applied & Applied linguistics

Davies, A. & Elder, C. (2004:9), say that We have distinguished between two traditions, that of applied linguistics and that of applications of linguistics.

Widdowson presents the question in terms of linguistics applied and applied linguistics: The differences between these modes of intervention is that **in the case of linguistics applied** the assumption is that the problem can be reformulated by the direct and unilateral application of concepts and terms deriving from linguistic enquiry itself. That is to say, language problems are amenable to linguistics solutions. **In the case of applied linguistics**, intervention is crucially a matter of mediation . . . applied linguistics . . . has to relate and reconcile different representations of reality, including that of linguistics without excluding others.

What is the role of applied linguistics?

Davies, A. & Elder, C.(2004: 1-2) states that applied linguistics is often said to be concerned with solving or at least improving social problems involving language. The problems applied linguistics concerns itself with are likely to be: How can we teach languages better? How can we diagnose speech pathologies better? How can we improve the training of translators and interpreters? How can we write a valid language examination? How can we evaluate a school bilingual program? How can we determine the literacy levels of a whole population? How can we helpfully discuss the language of a text? What advice can we offer a Ministry of Education on a proposal to introduce a new medium of instruction?

How can we compare the acquisition of a European and an Asian language? What advice should we give a defense lawyer on the authenticity of a police transcript of an interview with a suspect?

The scope of applied linguistics

Applied linguistics encompasses various sections, including foreign language teaching and learning, mother tongue teaching and learning, multilingualism, testing, language planning, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, speech pathology, lexicography, translation, contrastive linguistics, computational linguistics, writing systems, and others. Cook (2003) highlights the wide range of activities in which applied linguistics is relevant, but the scope remains vague. To define the field, it is necessary to classify the problems concerned in a systematic way and map out the scope of the area. The three main headings are language and education, language, work, and law, and language, information, and effect. Rafat and Coder's 1974 definition of applied linguistics outlines the scopes of applied linguistics.

1. Language and Teaching

This scope covers methods of language teaching. Linguistic is applied on those methods.

- ❖ **Grammar Translation Method (GTM):** Classes are conducted in the mother tongue. This method depends on memorization of lists of new vocabulary in isolation (i.e. no context provided). Great attention is paid to grammatical rules.
- ❖ **The Series Method:** Ls are exposed to a series of connected sentences (in FL) that are easy to understand.
- ❖ **The Direct Method:** It depends on the oral interaction using the FL inside the classroom. It is based on the belief that language should be learned the way we learned our mother tongue.
- ❖ **The Audio-lingual Method (ALM):** It is based on the idea of overlearning and repetition. New material is presented in a form of dialogues, broken into pieces.
- ❖ **Cognitive Code Learning Method (CCL):** It is a more student-oriented method as it focuses on his/her mentality and the complicated processes that take place as learning progresses.
- ❖ **The Designer Methods:**
 - a) **Community Language Learning (CLL):** It focuses on establishing interpersonal relationships between Ls in order to make the classroom a family-like environment
 - b) **Suggestopedia:** It is based on the idea that the human mind can learn anything

if a suitable atmosphere (e.g.: music, visuals, imagination, meditation, relaxation ...) is provided.

- c) **The Silent Way:** It focuses on the learner's independence. Ls should struggle to learn. Visuals are very much used to compensate for the teacher's silence.
- d) **The Total Physical Response (TPR):** It is based in actions in learning new language.
- e) **The Natural Approach:** It focuses on how humans learn their first language unintentionally. Simple and comprehensible content is provided, getting harder as Ls go on the learning process.
- f) **Community Language Teaching (CLT):** It focuses on helping Ls to communicate in FL by improving their communicative competence. It also pays attention to fluency, not always accuracy.

2. Language and Society

This branch is also called sociolinguistics. It studies the relationship between the society and language. It answers questions like how society affects the language, what are the varieties of a language, what is the relationship between language and gender, what are some examples of terms of taboo and euphemism and why they should be used, what are the social factors of language shift, why people resort to code switching, how languages die and how they are revived.

3. Language and education

This area includes:

- ❖ **first-language education**, when a child studies their home language or languages. (Cook, G. 2003:7).

Rafat M. states that in this section, linguists try to answer the question: how infants learn/acquire their mother tongue. Parents do not teach their children to speak. They correct their falsehoods when they misbehave rather than correcting their language mistakes. First-language acquisition is innate, meaning that we are born with a set of language rules which Chomsky refers to as the Universal Grammar.

- ❖ **additional-language education**, often divided into **second-language education**, when someone studies their society's majority or official language which is not their home language, and **foreign-language education**, when someone studies the language of another country.

❖ **clinical linguistics:** Crystal defines clinical linguistics as the application of the

linguistic sciences to the study of language disability in all its forms (Crystal,2001:673).

Cook says, it is the study and treatment of speech and communication impairments, whether hereditary, developmental, or acquired (through injury, stroke, illness, or age). (Cook, G. 2003:7).

❖ **language testing:** the assessment and evaluation of language , achievement

and proficiency, both in first and additional languages, and for both general and specific purposes. (Cook, G. 2003:7).

4. Language, work, and law

This area includes:

❖ **workplace communication:** the study of how language is used in the workplace, and how it contributes to the nature and power relations of different types of work. (Cook, G. 2003:8).

It answers the questions what are the different techniques of communication in the work place, what should be said in what situations at what time...etc.

Communication in the workplace is one of the signs of a high-performance culture. Exchanging information and ideas within an organization is called workplace communication.

❖ **language planning:** Language planning is based on some principles. First of all, it is a multidimensional activity, that is to say, it should include all the communities and faculties that participate in the language planning process. Second, the idea that a nation has one language only is a myth. Third, the process of language planning should not be the responsibility of the education sector alone. Fourth, in order that this process is to be successful, there should be continuous revision, evaluation and implementation.

❖ **Forensic linguistics:** the deployment of linguistic evidence in criminal and other legal investigations, for example, to establish the authorship of a document, or a profile of a speaker from a tape-recording. (Cook, G. 2003:7:ibd).