

Applied Linguistics

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What is Applied Linguistics?

- According to the Longman Dictionary of Applied Linguistics (1985) there are two definitions:
 - 1 the study of second or foreign language learning and teaching.
 - 2 the study of language and linguistics in relation to practical problems, such as lexicography, translation, speech pathology, etc.

Definitions

- Applied linguistics uses information from sociology, anthropology, and information theory as well as from linguistics in order to develop its own theoretical models of language and language use, and then uses this information and theory in practical areas such as syllabus design, speech therapy, language planning, literacy, bilingualism and authorship identification.

Definitions

- Wilkins (1999) states:
 - In a broad sense, 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.

An Overview of Applied Linguistics

- Therefore, applied linguistics involves
 - a- what we know about language
 - b- how it is learned
 - c- how it is used
- The primary concern of applied linguistics has been second language acquisition theory, second language pedagogy and the interrelationship of both areas.

Definition

- Applied linguistics is a field that studies cases in which language related disorders such as speech of aphasia, schizophrenic and autistic speakers and hemispherectomy patients in hopes that a better view of how the brain works when the language system of the speaker breaks down or is dysfunctional is uncovered.

Applied Linguistics: The Twentieth Century

Language teaching came into its own as a profession in the twentieth century. The whole foundation on contemporary language teaching was developed during the early part of the twentieth century, as applied linguistic and others sought to develop principles and procedures for the design of teaching methods and materials, drawing on the developing fields of linguistics and psychology to support a succession of proposals for the more effective and theoretically sound teaching methods.

The Grammar Translation Method

- Whereas today English is the world's most widely studied foreign language, 500 years ago it was Latin for it was the dominant language of education, commerce, religion, and government in the Western world.
- The political changes in Europe gave French, Italian, and English importance thus Latin was displaced as a language of spoken and written communication.
- Latin was diminished from a living language to a subject in the school curriculum. Children in "grammar school" were given a rigorous introduction to Latin grammar which was taught through rote learning of grammar rules, study of conjugations, translations and writing parallel bilingual texts and dialogue.

The Grammar Translation Method

The principle characteristics of GTM were:

- The goal of foreign language study is to learn a language in order to read its literature or in order to benefit from the mental discipline and intellectual development. GTM approaches language study through a detailed analysis of its grammar rules, followed by translating sentences and texts into the target language. This view consists of memorizing rules and facts to understand the morphology and syntax. The first language is maintained as the reference system in the acquisition of the second language.

Characteristics GTM

- Reading and writing are the major focus; little or no systematic attention is paid to speaking or listening.
- Vocabulary selection is based solely on the reading texts used, and words are taught through bilingual word lists, dictionary study, and memorization.
- The sentence is the basic unit of teaching and language practice. The lesson is devoted to translating sentences into the target language with a focus on that sentence.

Characteristics continued

- Accuracy is emphasized. Students are expected to attain high standards in translation.
- Grammar is taught deductively by the presentation of rules then practiced through translation exercises.
- The student's native language is the medium of instruction. It is used to explain new items and to enable comparisons to be made between the foreign language and the student's native language.

Reform Movement

- The spoken language is primary and language teaching should reflect an oral-based method.
- The findings of phonetics should be applied to teaching and to teacher training.
- Learners should hear the language first, before seeing it in written forms.
- Words should be presented in sentences, and sentences should be practiced in meaningful contexts—that is, grammar should be taught inductively.
- Translation should be avoided except to check comprehension.

Direct Method

- Principles for language teaching out of naturalistic ways are seen as those of first language acquisition or to natural methods which led to the development of the Direct Method.
- Rather than analytical procedures that focus on explanation of grammar rules in classroom teaching, teachers must encourage direct and spontaneous use of the foreign language in the classroom. Learner's would induce rules, and the teacher replaced textbooks in the early stages of learning. Speaking began with attention to pronunciation. Known words could be used to teach new vocabulary, using mime, demonstration, and pictures.

Principles of the Direct Method

- Classroom instruction was conducted exclusively in the target language.
- Only everyday vocabulary and sentences were taught.
- Oral communication skills were built up in a carefully graded progression organized around question and answer exchanges between teachers and students in small intensive classes.
- Grammar was taught inductively.
- New teaching points were introduced orally.
- Concrete vocabulary was taught through demonstration, objects, and pictures; abstract vocabulary was taught by association of ideas.

Principles of the Direct Method

- Both speech and listening comprehension were taught.
- Correct pronunciation and grammar were emphasized.
- The DM was successful in private language schools such as Berlitz where paying clients had a high motivation and the use of native speaking teachers was the norm.
- By the 1920s it declined due to the lack of native teacher availability and the irrelevance to conversational skills. Reading became the goal of most foreign programs in the U.S. until World War II.

The Audiolingual Method

- Entry of the U.S. into WWII has a significant effect on language teaching in America.
- The government commissioned American universities to develop foreign language programs for military personnel. As a result the Army Specialized Training Program was established to train students to attain conversational proficiency in a variety of languages: German, French, Italian, Chinese, Japanese, Malay, etc.
- Although this program only lasted two years, it attracted attention in the popular press and in the academic community due to its intensive oral-based approach.

The Audiolingual Method

- In 1939, Charles Fries, trained in structural linguistics, posited that grammar was the starting point. The structure of the language was identified with its basic sentence patterns and grammatical structures.
- Systematic attention to pronunciation
- Intensive oral drilling of basic sentence patterns
- Pattern practice was a classroom technique

Behaviorism

- The study of human behavior
- The human being is an organism capable of a repertoire of behaviors
- The occurrence of these behaviors depends on three crucial elements in learning: a stimulus, which serves to elicit behavior
- A response triggered by the stimulus and
- Reinforcement which serves to mark the response as being appropriate and encourages the repetition of the response in the future (Skinner).

The Decline of Audiolingualism

- The MIT linguist Noam Chomsky rejected the structuralist approach to language description as well as behaviorist theory of language learning.
- Language is not a habit structure.
- It involves innovation, formation of new sentences and patterns in accordance with rule of great abstractness and intricacy.
- Sentences are not learned by imitation and repetition but "generated" from the learner's underlying "competence"

Communicative Language Teaching

- Learning principles
 - the communication principle: activities that involve real learning promote communication
 - the task principle: activities in which language is used for carrying out meaningful tasks promote learning
 - the meaningfulness principle: language that is meaningful to the learner supports the learning process

Krashen's Views

- Acquisition is the basic process involved in developing language proficiency
- It is distinct from learning
- Acquisition refers to the unconscious development of the target language system as a result of using the language for real communication
- Learning is the conscious representation of grammatical knowledge that has resulted from instruction, and it cannot lead to acquisition.

Conclusion

- The initiatives for change may come from within the profession-from teachers, administrators, theoreticians, and researchers. Incentives or demands of a political, social, or even fiscal nature may drive change as in the past.