Lecture 1
PBI207

Scopes of Applied linguistics and the philosophy of applied linguistics

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Scope of Applied Linguistics

Interestingly, even among applied linguists there is a difference of opinion as to the scope, the domains and limits of applied linguistics.

The narrow definition of AL:
„the showpiece of linguistics"

❑ Language teaching theory, language pedagogy

❑ Testing ground for linguistics

The broad definition of AL: „the basket of many goodies"

❖Theoretical orientation:

sociolinguistics
psycholinguistics
pragmatics
L1 and L2 acquisition
discourse analysis

❖ Practical orientation

L1 and L2 teaching
Translation
discourse and conversation analysis
language planning
LSP
Neurolinguistics
computational linguistics

What is linguistics about?

What is the definition of Applied Linguistics?

Definitions from experts/linguists

"Applied Linguistics is the utilization of the knowledge about the nature of language achieved by linguistic research for the improvement of the efficiency of some practical task in which language is a central component."

(Corder, 1974, p. 24)

"Whenever knowledge about language is used to solve a basic language-related problem, one may say that applied linguistics is being practiced.

AL is a technology which makes abstract ideas and research findings accessible and relevant to the real world; it mediates between theory and practice."

(Strevens, 1992, p. 76)

Applied linguistics is an umbrella term that covers a wide set of numerous areas of study connected by the focus on the language that is actually used. The emphasis in applied linguistics is on language users and the ways in which they use languages, contrary to theoretical linguistics which studies the language in the abstract not referring it to any particular context, or language.

- ❖ Applied Linguistics investigates language in use.

- ❖ The aim is NOT to contribute to descriptions of language, but to solve practical problems. It identifies, investigates, and offers solutions to language-related real life problems.

- ❖ It is an *inter* an *trans* disciplinary approach.

For Applied Linguistics, the central question is:

How far can existing models of description in linguistics be used to resolve the practical problems of language use we are concerned with?

Therefore, applied linguistics involves:

a- what we know about language
b- how it is learned
c- how it is used

Linguistics v/s Applied Linguistics

- Linguistics is the scientific study of language. It endeavours to answer the question--what is language and how is represented in the mind?

- Oriented to the solution of linguistic problems.

- It puts linguistic theories into practice in areas such as foreign language teaching, speech therapy, translation, and speech pathology

General divisions of linguistics

<u>Phonetics</u>, the study of the physical properties of sounds of human language.

<u>Phonology</u>, the study of sounds as discrete, abstract elements in the speaker's mind that distinguish meaning.

<u>Morphology</u>, the study of internal structures of words and how they can be modified.

<u>Syntax</u>, the study of how words combine to form grammatical sentences .

<u>Semantics</u>, the study of the meaning of words (lexical semantics) and fixed word combinations (phraseology), and how these combine to form the meanings of sentences.

<u>Pragmatics</u>, the study of how utterances are used (literally, figuratively, or otherwise) in communicative acts.

<u>Discourse analysis</u>, the analysis of language use in texts (spoken, written, or signed)

The primary concern of our applied linguistics in PBI207 will be

- second language acquisition theory,

- second language pedagogy and

- the interrelationship of both areas.

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 of the Grammar Translation Method

- 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 of the Grammar Translation Method

- 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.

The Audiolingual Method

- Entry of the U.S. into World War II 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