# 应用语言学

程星华 苏承志 董晓云 编著

## Applied Linguistics

上海市高等学校教育高地英语项目

英语语言学与教学丛书

蔡龙权 总主编

# Applied Linguistics

# 应用语言学

• 程星华 苏承志 董晓云 编著

外文出版社
FOREIGN LANGUAGES PRESS

# 应用语言学

# Preface

Modern linguistics, whether dating back to Ferdinand de Saussure or Wilhelm von Humboldt, has been developing at leaps and bounds in the past decades. Such a virile development is, as a matter of fact, an expected result of expanding human knowledge of Nature as well as various human social activities not excluding the use of human language that, if properly executed, pools human beings together and if not, fools them apart. The study of human civilization is accordingly kaleidoscopic in general, and requests many a close-up in particular. So does the modern study of human language science, linguistics.

The designation of modern linguistics can be analyzed into a binary fashion, approach-based and content-based. In terms of approach, there are diachronic or historic linguistics, synchronic linguistics, theoretical or general linguistics, descriptive linguistics, comparative or typological linguistics, etc. In respect of content branch out plenteous cross-disciplinary concerns and issues, such as those listed alphabetically by David Crystal, anthropological linguistics, applied linguistics, biological linguistics, clinical linguistics, computational linguistics, educational linguistics, ethnolinguistics, geographical linguistics, mathematical linguistics, neurolinguistics, philosophical linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics, statistical linguistics, theolinguistics, linguistics, linguistics, and lots of others, if we'd like to keep on reeling for instance, forensic linguistics, corpus linguistics, and cognitive linguistics. This binary division is of course contingent, because the primary studies of linguistics are, by all means, centered on phonetics and phonology, morphology and syntax, semantics and pragmatics, all being within the

structure of its *ad hoc* components of language, and because the interest here and now is to introduce the coming of *Applied Linguistics*, *Psycholinguistics*, and *Sociolinguistics*, which, written by professors who have been researching in the fields for years, go across the sheer borders of linguistics *per se* into other disciplines the contents of which, by no means, have nothing to do with linguistics.

Hence, there stand firm the appeal of reading at large and the call for reading in minute detail if personal interest and professional requirement coincidentally come into play at length. And I, irresistibly therefore, would like to make a reference to rather than a recommendation of reading these works at hand, *Applied Linguistics*, *Psycholinguistics*, and *Sociolinguistics*, with regard to viewing what happens in betwe linguistics and other disciplines and how the terms the happening helps keep with English language teaching as a household commonly run by those who ever have had some engagement in this business. Resolutions may hang guilty, yet a resurrection of further, and perhaps inexorable, exploration will become certain, and welcomed.

Cai Longquan
Shanghai Normal University

# Foreword

In writing this book, our primary aim has been to present what we feel to be the major advances in applied linguistics over the past several decades. Needless to say, it is not possible to cover all the topics and issues involved in as vast a field as applied linguistics, and this is reflected in our focus on the learning and teaching of foreign languages. It constitutes, in our opinion, the most important areas within the extensive field of applied linguistics. The FLT that we have in mind is the type where the teaching takes place in a different linguistic environment from that of the language to be learned: we have focused on foreign language learning rather than second language learning. Our preference for this particular frame of reference is of course closely related to the fact that this book will be used in China, where most teaching of languages other than the mother tongue concerns the teaching of foreign languages in schools.

It is generally accepted that theories in applied linguistics are based on linguistics, psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics and educational theory. Applied linguistics acts as a channel of communication between the linguist and the teacher. The applied linguist stands in relation to the theoretical linguist and to the practical teacher of languages. The linguist and the teacher have different goals, methods and attitudes. The method of the linguist is formal and abstract while that of the teacher is an essentially functional and practical one. It is the task of the applied linguist to attempt to bridge the gap between them.

This book sketches the main aspects of linguistics and explores the nature of language, the process of language learning and the relationship between linguistics and language teaching. We have attempted to pro-

vide a historical and linguistic perspective on the areas and incorporate many of the contributions of earlier scholars, as well as discussions of some currently debated issues. The intention has been to give readers an insight into the theories, rather than a complete presentation. It has avoided many of the technicalities that linguists address as well as much of the detail. Because of the rapidly changing scope of applied linguistics and because of the diversity of opinions held about its nature, we have chosen to give readers a more general picture. Within the areas we have selected, we have not discussed all aspects, and not every aspect has been discussed equally exhaustively. This should, we hope, enable them to approach the literature and make critical judgments on their own.

We have written this book specifically for the following three categories of readers: (future) teachers of foreign languages, (future) researchers in applied linguistics, and those who train (future) teachers and researchers. We expect our readers to have some personal experience in learning a foreign language. We also expect them to be familiar with the basic concepts of theoretical and descriptive linguistics. This book contains the information that we consider essential for those who train future teachers of foreign languages. Teachers will find that the book contains more information than is necessary for their teaching, and for them, it is a work of reference and guide to further study. We have not provided any directly applicable suggestions with regard to teaching. What we wish to offer is the theoretical background which is essential for diagnosing problems and without which effective therapy can only be achieved accidentally.

The contents and plans of the book have been greatly inspired by the courses on applied linguistics that we have been teaching to our students over a number of years. The book is organized as follows:

Chapter 1 begins with an explanation of the relationship between

linguistics and applied linguistics, which is followed by a discussion of the role of corpora in applied linguistics. Chapter 2 deals with grammatical study of language. Chapter 3 looks at the relationship between linguistics and communication. Chapter 4 addresses the issues concerning second language acquisition research. Chapter 5 examines the characteristics of language learners. Chapter 6 provides a historical and linguistic perspective on foreign language teaching methodology. Chapter 7 explores the relationship between linguistics and foreign language testing. Chapter 8 focuses on course design. Each chapter is followed by suggestions for further reading and most of the books recommended are available in this country.

Although all chapters of the book have been written by individual members of our team, we like to think of the book as a joint undertaking for which we accept joint responsibility for any infelicity that this book might contain.

We should like to thank a number of people for different kinds of help which they have given us in producing this book. We wish to thank the students of the MA in English Language and Literature at the Foreign Languages College of Shanghai Normal University on whom we tried out much of this book over a number of years. Thanks are also due to all colleagues who in one way or another helped administratively to complete the book.

<div align="right">

Cheng Xinghua
July 20, 2007
Shanghai

</div>

# Contents

# **1** **Linguistics and Applied Linguistics**

## 1.1 Linguistics

Linguistics is the study of language as a system of human communication. It involves the description of languages, the study of their origin, and the analysis of how children acquire their native languages and how people learn languages other than their own. Linguistics is also concerned with relationships between languages and with the ways languages change over a period of time. Linguists may study language as a thought process and seek a theory that accounts for the universal human capacity to produce and understand language. In an attempt to explain the scientific study of language, the linguist may first define language and then give examples of general areas of concern. Any adequate theory of language must provide answers to questions such as the following:

(1) What is language?
(2) What does a native speaker know about his language?
(3) What are the essential defining characteristics of natural languages?
(4) Do languages all share certain universal properties?

Linguistics is a theoretical science. In principle, linguistics is concerned with all languages and every aspect of language. There are three inter-related theories which any detailed study of language ultimately

seeks to develop:

(1) Theory of language structure
(2) Theory of language acquisition
(3) Theory of language use

The theory of language structure will concern itself with the question of what are the essential defining characteristics of natural languages which differentiate them from artificial languages; the theory of language acquisition with the question of how children acquire their native languages; and the theory of language use with the question of how linguistic and non-linguistic knowledge interact in speech comprehension and production. What the linguist does is to collect a set of data relevant to a particular phenomenon, formulate a hypothesis, test the hypothesis against further data, modify the hypothesis and test it against yet more data. The linguist gradually builds up a set of principles concerning language structure, language acquisition, and language use. There are two types of data which linguists typically work with. The first is a recorded sample of speech or text; the second type of data are informant intuitions. Linguistics is not only a theoretical science, but also an empirical science. It makes detailed observations on particular languages, the learning and development of an individual's language and language use to confirm or refute generalizations about them.

For many linguists the purpose of linguistics is to develop theories on aspects of language and a general theory of language. For example, for Chomsky, the ultimate purpose of linguistics is to specify precisely the possible form of a human grammar and especially the restrictions on the form such grammars can take. Central to an adequate description of a language is syntax. Syntax is the study of the rules which govern the

2 ———

way words are combined to form sentences in a language. A linguist may study verbs to determine specific similarities and differences of meaning. Consider two of Chomsky's most famous sentences:

(1) John is easy to please.
(2) John is eager to please.

In traditional grammar, there is a clear structural similarity between these two sentences. But in terms of Chomsky's analysis, there are fundamental differences between the sentences. In (2), the person who wants to do the pleasing is John. But (1) means "it is easy for someone else to please John". According to Chomsky, the two sentences are dissimilar at the deep level. A linguist is also concerned with varying sentence patterns. The following two sentences differ in their implications:

(1) John happened to know Mary.
(2) John wanted to know Mary.

Sentence (1) implies that John knew Mary. But sentence (2) does not have the same implication. Working out the descriptions of such problems may characterize the major concern of a linguistic approach. Linguists and grammarians have shifted from one method to another in their attempt to investigate, describe, and evaluate what is going on in language.

A complete description of a language would include a description of the sounds of the language and the ways in which the sounds combine and the rules governing their combination. The sound system (phonology) is usually divided into two parts: the elements of the sound system

and the original patterns of these elements. For example, the phonological rules of the English language allow a maximum of three consonants to cluster at the beginning of a word. But only a very few consonants are permitted in this position, and then only in a certain order. The first must be [s], the second must be one of [p], or [t], or [k], and the third either [l] or [r] (spring, strong, splint). Phonological rules also specify how to pronounce a given sound in a variety of contexts. For example, the final [k] of the word *public* changes to [s] before the suffix-ity (publicity). Since the relationship between phonemes, the smallest unit of sound in a language which can distinguish two words, and their allophones, any of the different forms of a phoneme, are generally predictable, they can be described by phonological rules. The aim of a phonological study of a language is to describe and ultimately to explain the knowledge speakers have which allows them to produce and to understand their language, and to make as general statements as possible about the nature of the sound system in the language. This knowledge includes knowledge of the specific sounds that occur in a language and how these sounds may be strung together to form syllables, words, and longer utterances.

The third component of a complete description of a language is the kinds of meaningful units that combine to form words and the rules governing their combination. One of the distinctive features of human language is its multilayered quality. Thus phonemes which have no meaning are combined to form morphemes which have meaning. The term *morpheme* has been defined as the smallest functioning unit in the composition of words to show that different morphemes serve different purposes. For example, lexical morphemes are used for the construction of new words in a language, such as in compound words (e. g. blackboard), and grammatical morphemes are used to express grammatical relation-

4 ————

ships between a word and its context, such as the past tense or plurality (i. e. the inflections on words). All languages use various kinds of morphemes to construct words, units larger than morphemes, and different kinds of processes in morphology. For example the English language marks the plurals of nouns with an ending. But the Chinese language does not do so in the same way.

An adequate description of a language must encompass other aspects as well. The study of meaning, semantics, is currently a topic of great interest to linguists. Although there are many different approaches to the way in which meaning in a language is studied, most attempts to describe the linguistic meaning of words have involved the use of semantic features, which are the basic units of meaning in a word. As an example, consider the word *boy*. The semantic feature [ + human] is part of the meaning of *boy*, and so is the feature [ + young] but other features are needed to give the whole sense of *boy*. Semantic features reveal concepts of words that can be formed by the human mind. But there is no agreement on the specific set of semantic features most appropriate for the definition of a particular word. The linguistic meaning of a sentence consists of more than just the sum of lexical meanings involved. Part of the meaning of sentences results from the syntactic structures in which lexical items occur. There are several different approaches to the way in which sentence semantics is analyzed and described. In generative semantics, syntactic rules operate on the meaning of a sentence to produce its form. Generative semantics views the semantic component of a grammar as being the generative base from which syntactic structure can be derived. In interpretive semantics, semantic rules operate on the words and syntactic structure to reveal its meaning since semantic rules provide for sentence meaning by interpreting sentences through their structure and the lexical items. In the interpretive semantic views, it is the level

of syntax which contains all the generative power of the grammar. Structural semantics displays the application of the principles of structural linguistics to the study of meaning through the notion of semantic relations. Semantic relations refer to the system of linguistic relationships which a lexical item contracts with other lexical items such as synonymy and antonymy. Some linguists maintain that a complete descriptive grammar of a language should include an account of semantic relations since semantic relations are an important aspect of meaning. Which approach to the description of human languages is more adequate remains an open question of great concern to those linguists who seek to develop a model for descriptive grammar.

**Subfields of Linguistics**

Linguistics covers a wide field with different approaches and different areas of investigation, for example, sound systems (Phonetics, Phonology), sentence structure (Syntax), and meaning systems (Semantics, Pragmatics, Functions of Language). The linguist takes an objective view of language and all linguistic phenomena. Different approaches may be distinguished according to the linguist's focus and range of interest. A major distinction, introduced by Ferdinand Saussure, is between diachronic and synchronic linguistics. The former is an approach to linguistics which studies how a language changes over a period of time, for example the change in the sound system of English from Early English to Modern British English, and the latter to the study of a language system at one particular point in time, for example, the sound system of Modern British English. Descriptive linguistics focuses on establishing the facts of a particular language system. It begins with what a linguist hears native speakers say. By listening to native speakers, the linguist gathers a body of data and analyzes it. The scientific procedures