I. Applied Linguistics and Language Teaching: How are they related?

For a large part of its history, Applied Linguistics was more or less synonymous with language education, especially English Language Teaching. Phillipson (1992) hints that the early Applied Linguistics university units, such as the School of Applied Linguistics in Edinburgh, chose this name as a 'scientific' alternative to terms like 'Teaching English Overseas', which had undesirable imperialistic connotations. But in the years since, Applied Linguistics has broadened in scope, and now includes many domains of inquiry other than language education. Even more recently, Applied Linguistics has become increasingly concerned with political and ideological issues, such as the ways in which societal imbalances are encoded in language, and how language feeds back into unjust societal structures (Critical Applied Linguistics, or CALx).

It has also included research that draws on a broad array of work such as cognitive semantics, translation and translanguaging theory, postmodern sociolinguistics, postcolonial theory, symbolic power theory, and more, and it has insightfully applied this knowledge to the understanding of human communication.

So, in short, Applied Linguistics is a wider field than language education. As it continues to expand, it will probably move further away from its original association with language teaching.

1 Language Teaching is more than just Applied Linguistics

Much as Applied Linguistics is a broader discipline than language education, the reverse also holds true. Here, too, there is a long tradition of equating the two domains, and this seems to have its origin to the 'applied science' model of teacher education. As universities became more active in teacher education from the 1960s onwards, the dominant view was that knowledge was produced by scientists, transmitted to teachers-in-training in the university, and then the latter were responsible for 'applying' it in their professional practice. Within this frame, applied linguistics was developed as a 'buffer' facilitating the transmission of linguistic knowledge and the transition from the lecture hall to the language classroom.

Many researchers take on the idea that the unique selling point of AL that distinguishes it from the many domains and sub-domains of psychology, education and language teaching is language, hence the "linguistic" part. At its core, it needs a coherent theory of language, whether this comes from linguistics or from some others discipline, a set rigorous descriptive tools to handle language, and a body of research relevant to language teaching. This is not to say that the language element has to dominate or that linguistics itself has to feature at all but that it does not count as applied linguistics of language teaching:

a) If there is no language element. This does not mean it could not justifiably be studied as language teaching methodology, applied psychology and so on. But why call it applied linguistics if there is no language content?

b) If the language elements are handled without any theory of language. The theory of language does not need to come from linguistics but might be philosophy or literary theory: crucially applied linguistics cannot treat language as if there were no traditions of language study whatsoever. Nor can the methods of language description be based solely on folk ideas from the school tradition of grammar or the practical EFL (English as a Foreign Language) teaching tradition, which would be rather like basing physics on alchemy or folk beliefs. Doubtless, some aspects of these may be interpreted in a more up-to-date and scientific fashion, but this applies equally to alchemy.

c) If the research base is neither directly concerned with language teaching nor related to it in a demonstrable way. That is to say, a theory from outside language teaching cannot be applied without a clear chain of logic showing how and why it is relevant. An idea from mathematical theory, computer simulation or first language acquisition needs to show its credentials by proving its link to second language teaching through L2 evidence and argument, not imposing itself by fiat, by analogy, or by sheer computer modelling. If one were, say, to adopt knitting theory as a foundation for the applied linguistics of language teaching, one would need to demonstrate how warp and weft account for the basic phenomena of language acquisition and use by showing empirical evidence of their applicability to second language acquisition.

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2 The Research of AL on Language Teaching

Today, 'applied linguistics' is sometimes used to refer to 'second language acquisition', but these are distinct fields (as previously explained), in that SLA involves more theoretical study of the system of language, whereas applied linguistics concerns itself more with teaching and learning. In their approach to the study of learning, applied linguists have increasingly devised their own theories and methodologies, such as the shift towards studying the learner rather than the system of language itself, in contrast to the emphasis within SLA, herewith, the development of teaching language.

The connection between development of language teaching and AL is tight. Applied linguistics helps to bridge the gap between practicing teachers and academics and research scientists. The research contributes a lot to language teaching and learning, and provides solutions to the problems of what happens in language classes. AL's successes have played a part in EU projects on translation on linguistic diversity. Most success has, however, had to do with language teaching. The field of applied linguistics first concerned itself with second language acquisition, in particular error and contrastive analysis, in the 1950s and 1960s. In the 1970s, with the failure of contrastive analysis as a theory to predict errors, second language researchers began to adopt Noam Chomsky's theory of universal grammar to explain second language learning phenomena; its impact in applied linguistics and language teaching was more limited. In the 1990s, more and more researchers began to employ research methods from cognitive psychology. Researchers are mainly drawn from linguistics, anthropology, psychology, and education.

Applied linguistics as an enterprise is therefore a research and development activity that sets out to make use of theoretical insights and collect empirical data which can be of use in dealing with institutional language problems. It is not primarily a form of social work with immediate access to individuals in the happenstance of their ongoing social communication, although its findings may of course be helpful to counsellors and teachers faced with these particular problems.

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The starting-point is typically to be presented with an institutional language problem. The purpose of the activity is to provide relevant information which will help those involved understand the issues better; in some cases on the basis of the information it will be possible to offer a solution to the problem. More likely is an explanation of what is involved, setting out the choices available, along with their implications. We distinguish this problem-based view of applied linguistics from other views which begin from theory. The applied linguist is deliberately eclectic, drawing on any source of knowledge that may illuminate the language problem. Proceeding eclectically is legitimate because for the applied linguist, language problems involve more than language. They involve (some or all of) these factors:

• the educational (including the psychometric or measurement)

• the social (and its interface with the linguistic, the sociolinguistic) • the psychological (and its interface, the psycho-linguistic)

• the anthropological (for insights on cultural matters)

• the political

• the religious

• the economic

• the business

• the planning and policy aspect

• and, of course, the linguistic, including the phonetic.

II. Research on Non-native Speaking Teachers

The question of native vs. non-native identity of language teachers has probably been long present in the mind of language educators, though it was not researched until Peter Medgyes devoted his attention to NNSs in ELT. Before, language teaching had been carried out by native and non-native teachers alike, with some methods stressing the importance of foreign languages being taught by native teachers (e.g., the Direct Method), while others establishing methodological procedures based on the assumption that native teachers were not available in a given context (e.g., the Reading Approach in the US, in the 1920s). However, since Communicative Language Teaching appeared as the dominant theoretical framework in second and foreign language teaching, an implicit rule was that native speakers were ideal for promoting natural and spontaneous communication, and therefore when available they should naturally be

preferred over non-natives. Only in contexts where natives were scarce or non-available would non-native teachers be considered acceptable. This was the case of ELT in 'expanding circle' countries.

Although research on native and non-native speaking teachers is still lacking in many aspects and suffers from some important problems, it has so far come up with some relevant findings. These include very diverse aspects that range from students' general openness and acceptance of non-native teachers, especially after having had sufficient experiences involving NNESTs, to teachers' self-perceptions and characteristic lack of self-confidence. The latter is a particularly sensitive aspect, as it points to aspects of professional self-esteem, and hints at the existence of an inferiority complex. Medgyes had already mentioned the existence of a generic inferiority complex affecting NNESTs, and the effects of being a non-native teacher on professional self-esteem were also addressed, albeit in a rather marginal way, by several researchers. Llurda brings up a more radical image to this debate by stating that many NNESTs suffer from a syndrome that is somehow resonant of the Stockholm Syndrome,

inasmuch as NNESTs suffer from discrimination by NSs who are preferred in many professional situations, but they still find a justification for such a discriminatory practice and do in fact agree with the choice, as shown by research pointing at NNESTs' typical preference for NS models and NS teachers.

Language teachers and researchers' lack of positive attitudes towards English as a Lingua Franca was revealed by Jenkins, and Sifakis and Sougari showed that Greek teachers took a rather norm-bound approach (i.e., based on a NS model) to the teaching of English pronunciation. I have argued elsewhere for the importance for NNESTs to adopt the formulation of English as an International Language or English as a Lingua Franca in order to develop a positive self-image and feel rightfully entitled to teach a language that is not their mother tongue. It appears, though, that many NNESTs still refuse to embrace such an approach to ELT.

The notion of 'the native teacher as the ideal teacher' was equivalent to the notion of 'the monolingual native speaker as the ideal speaker'. In some extreme cases, monolingual native speakers would

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be preferred over native speakers with a good knowledge of the learners' L1 Outcomes of Research.

The artificial construct of the separation between native speakers and non-native speakers in language teaching has been recently dealt with by several researchers who have used two major arguments to eliminate such a discrimination: (a) minimizing any perceived differences between the two groups; and (b) vindicating the role of the non-native speaker as a rightful language teacher:

1 Minimizing perceived differences between NSs and NNSs

The difficulty in establishing boundaries that separate NSs and NNSs has been the focus of a few studies centred on speakers who experience difficulty in defining themselves either as NSs or NNSs. Nayar provided an initial discussion on the need to overcome the NS–NNS dichotomy, and Liu conducted a series of interviews with seven language teachers to conclude that there was no consensus regarding the meaning and implications of the terms NS and NNS. Liu expressed the need to think of NNS professionals as being along 'a multidimensional and multilayered continuum'.

The fact that three of the participants in the study could not affiliate themselves with either the NS or the NNS category indicates that in some cases such a clear-cut distinction may not be easy or even plausible to make. Brutt-Griffler and Samimy also reported four cases that may be considered difficult to categorize under the NS/NNS distinction. Bringing up cases that do not conform to a commonly established categorization questions the adequacy of such a categorization.

These studies illustrate the existence of intermediate areas between the stereotyped NS and NNS, which provide evidence for the existence of a continuum that ranges from extreme English nativeness (e.g., a monolingual speaker of standard American or British English) to clear non-nativeness (e.g., a learner of English as a foreign language at the beginner level). And, in Liu's own words: 'if we perceive all ESL professionals on a NS–NNS continuum, then it is their competence and professional growth that will define their professionalism'.

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Thinking in terms of language users rather than language learners strengthens the above argument, as there is no longer the need to focus on native speaker models in language teaching. In this respect, the formulation of English as an International Language or English as a Lingua Franca comes in handy. A language that is truly international is not owned by any group of speakers and competence is based on the capacity to use language forms that are intelligible for the global community.

2 Vindicating the role of non-native speakers in language teaching

Language teaching has never been a straightforward activity. Research has emphasized the complexities of language teaching and language learning, and different methodological approaches have sometimes embraced opposite principles, a further sign of the difficulty of finding a simple answer to the question of how to teach a language successfully. Recent research on NNESTs has additionally shown that language teaching can be successfully performed by non-native teachers, and therefore has minimized the importance of an absolute knowledge of standard and colloquial language forms by stressing the added value of teachers who have a shared experience of struggling to learn the language with their students.

Some of the advantages of NNESTs that have been reported in the literature are founded on the premise that they have walked along the same path as their students, sharing with them their previous experience as language learners, although this experience may be different whether the teacher and students are native speakers of the same or a different language. The main advantages are listed here:

– They are a model for imitation
– They can successfully teach strategies for language learning
– They have a high level of awareness of the language and can supply information about it
– They can anticipate the difficulties that will appear in the learning process
– They can be more empathetic to the needs and problems of students

– They often have the same mother tongue as their students, which allows them to use it when necessary, and act as mediators between different languages and cultures

– They have more familiarity with the local context, and specifically with the syllabus and examination procedures.

The above advantages pinpoint the added value of having a non-native teacher, something that had never been considered in previous literature on language education. Further research has focused on perceptions of different agents and experiences aiming at transforming negative perceptions into a higher appreciation of NNSTs' role in language teaching.

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