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An introduction to applied linguistics (2nd edition)

Reviewed by Jey Burkhardt
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This is an introductory book to applied linguistics. The editor acknowledges the wide spectrum involved in the study of applied linguistics, as he defines: "Applied Linguistics is using what we know about (a) language, (b) how it is learned and (c) how it is used, in order to achieve some purpose or solve some problems in the real world" (p. 1). He presents this as a first book to familiarise one with various fields within applied linguistics, before one engages in more advanced books and journal articles.

The second edition came out eight years after the first. I am unable to assess the difference between the first and second edition because I do not have access to the former and was unable to find the editor's remarks as to the reason for this edition.

This book is intended for two different types of audiences for varying purposes. It serves as an introductory textbook for students of applied linguistics, TESOL and second language pedagogy and as a refresher book for teachers and researchers who intend keep abreast with developments in the field of applied linguistics.

In compiling this book, Schmitt gives the readers a broad overview into key areas in the field of applied linguistics. In order to do that, he teams up with 30 authors with expertise from various fields within applied linguistics to contribute sections and chapters in this book. Each chapter opens with a basic question, 'What is X?' and then progressively moves to more sophisticated and complex areas within the field. The authors also deliberate and cover the pedagogical implications of the areas they deal with. They provide a number of reading suggestions with short annotations. And at the end of each chapter they provide some hands-on activity where data and problems are presented to the readers to investigate and find solutions. A handy list of suggested solutions is provided at the end of the whole book in chapter 16. The contents in this book are arranged typologically into three major sections, namely (1) a description of language and language use; (2) essential areas of enquiry; and (3) the four skills and testing. Each section has between four to five chapters.

Section 1. Description of Language and Language Use

a. Grammar by Dianne Larsen-Freeman and Jeanette DeCarrico—The authors engage the readers in the importance of descriptive grammars with extensive explanation of the challenges and limitations of writing it. They state that prescriptive grammars, which are the main area of formulaic grammar teaching, have changed the view of grammar over the years (p. 31). In conclusion, they recommend grammarians to focus more on lexico-grammar rather than focusing solely on morphology and syntax.

b. Vocabulary by Paul Nation and Paul Meara—This chapter is dedicated primarily to the learning of vocabulary. It stressed that teaching of vocabulary should be devoted to only high-frequency vocabulary and that the learners, having been taught strategies of learning vocabulary, would then attempt learning low-frequency words on their own. Suggestions are given on these vocabulary learning strategies.

c. Discourse Analysis by Michael McCarthy, Christian Matthiessen and Diana Slade—A discourse continuum with two extremes is drawn in this chapter, with informal spoken English and formal written English on opposite ends. The authors then give examples of different approaches to discourse analysis and connect corpus linguistics with discourse analysis.

d. Pragmatics by Helen Spencer-Oatez and Vladimir Yegarac—This chapter shows the important role of pragmatics, which takes the reader beyond knowledge of language to communication. While the chapter offers examples for the uninitiated reader, I still found some parts of it rather technical.

e. Corpus Linguistics by Randi Reppen and Rita Simpson-Vlach—It describes the different types of corpora available and further clarifies the sort of information one can gain from corpus analysis. It also looks at the practical approaches of corpora based language teaching in classrooms.

Section 2. Essential Areas of Enquiry in Applied Linguistics

a. Second Language Acquisition by Nina Spada and Patsy M. Lightbown—The authors acknowledge that Second Language Acquisition (SLA) is a well-developed area of study, and simply offers a broad overview due to the limitation of space. It introduces the various theories behind SLA and then moves into a short section about Second Language teaching.

b. Psycholinguistics by Kees de Bot and Judith F. Kroll—The authors focus their description of psycholinguistic processes on 'bilinguals', as this field is related to active use and acquiring of language, for which they find that bilinguals "provide a genuinely universal account of the cognitive mechanisms that underlie language performance" (p. 124). The chapter provides current trends in the study of psycholinguistics, namely monologue to dialogue, words to larger units, verbal to non-verbal aspects of language use, and the value of neuro-imaging. They succeed in making it a very interesting and thought-provoking chapter.

c. Sociolinguistics by Carmen Llamas and Peter Stockwell—Again, due to the limitation of space, this large area of study is rather briefly skimmed through by the authors. They inform readers concisely on issues of sociolinguistics, factors and tools in describing language variations, and its implications.

d. Focus on the Language Learner: Styles, Strategies and Motivation by Andrew D. Cohen—The author describes adequately the interrelatedness of learner characteristics, learner strategies, and motivation. The chapter ends with ways to exploit motivation into self-motivating strategies to benefit the learner in his learning process.

Section 3. Language Skills and Assessment

a. Listening by Tonz Lynch and David Mendelsohn
b. Speaking and Pronunciation by Anne Burns and Barbara Seidlhofer
c. Reading by Patricia L. Carrell and William Grabe
d. Writing by Paul Kei Matsuda and Tony Silva

The above four chapters are written in a rather uniformed manner with respect to the arrangement of the sub-topics contained in them. Each chapter, after describing the "What is" question, looks at issues related to listening, speaking, reading, and writing. They then elucidate what kind of insights one can glean from these issues. The chapters finally move into the pedagogical implications and issues in Second Language instruction with respect to listening, speaking, reading, and writing. However, the authors focused mostly on the area of Second Language teaching with very little reference to First Language instruction (classrooms), which I had expected to receive a wider coverage in the chapters about reading and writing.

e. Assessment by Carol A. Chappelle and Geoff Brindley—While the title is called Assessment, the authors focus primarily on language assessment of student performance. They clarify issues relating to language assessment and the interrelatedness of language assessment and language teaching. In this, they list various methods of assessment. I would have expected the authors to make some comments on language material assessment and orthography assessment as well as the assessment of language courses per se.

Observations

The most well-developed section of applied linguistics is the area of Second Language teaching, with which this book is in tandem. However, this leads to the assumption that foreign language education (meaning major languages such as English, Spanish, Japanese, etc.) is the sole impetus for Applied Linguistics. The editor has regrettably failed to pay attention to the role of applied linguistics in mother tongue education, multi-lingual education, language disorder (clinical pedagogy), language policy issues, bilingualism, etc.

In illustrating their themes and fields of expertise, the authors have used predominantly English examples, even in areas where the focus does not play a huge role in English. English language examples are a good starting point to engage a reader of English (which one has to be in order to

be able to read this book) with the themes and issues discussed in the book. However, I would have liked to see the authors widen their perspective to include examples from other languages (especially those which are not languages of wider communication), to provide a more universal perspective of applied linguistics and its multifaceted issues.

For those wanting to do further research into various scopes of applied linguistics, there is an extensive 52 pages of references at the end of the book listed topically according to chapter headings. There is also a good index.

Overall, I find this book easy to read and besides using it as a teaching tool for first year students, I would also use it as a reference book. It is arranged in a uniform and quick referencing manner, making it a handy tool to have on one's desk.

Recommendation

This is a good textbook for first year applied linguistics students or readers from other disciplines, as it gives a broad overview of the various sub-fields within applied linguistics. This book can be employed in classes with slight modifications by the teacher/lecturer by using data from languages other than English (or other major languages).

The strength of this book is in pedagogical linguistics: linguistics for the purpose of teaching a language. It can be used to help literacy and language development practitioners to form a good understanding of the target language (which could be a minority language) for the purpose of teaching and providing training for literacy and Multilingual Education classes.

I hope my fellow SILers would attempt writing a book on this subject and include examples from minority languages as well as English. Their field experience would give the book greater depth and a broader perspective.

Norbert Schmitt is Professor of Applied Linguistics, University of Nottingham. Product details. Item Weight : 1.2 pounds. Â Publisher : Hodder Education Publishers; 2nd Edition (March 26, 2010). Language: : English. Best Sellers Rank: #1,074,903 in Books (See Top 100 in Books). #1,632 in Linguistics (Books). #3,442 in Linguistics Reference. Customer ReviewsÂ This book is great for anyone interesting in going into the field of Applied Linguistics. It gives basic knowledge of aspects for the disipline. I would recommend it. Norbert Schmitt is Professor of Applied Linguistics at the University of Nottingham. Customers who bought this item also bought. Page 1 of 1 Start overPage 1 of 1.Â This book could be a nice platform to have a review of the entire field that are regarding to this aim. Have a look to this book if you are interested in describing humans only capacity and in applying it in technological systems. Read more. Fan Fan. @inproceedings{Schmitt2010AnIT, title={An Introduction to Applied Linguistics}, author={N. Schmitt}, year={2010} }. N. Schmitt. Published 2010. History. 1. An overview of applied linguistics (Norbert Schmitt and Marianne Celce-Murcia) PART I: Description of language and language use 2. Grammar (Diane Larsen-Freeman and Jeanette DeCarrico) 3. Vocabulary (Paul Nation and Paul Meara) 4. Discourse analysis (Michael McCarthy, Christian Matthiessen and Diana Slade) 5. Pragmatics (Helen Spencer-Oatey and Vladimir Zegarac) 6. Corpus linguistics (Randi Reppen and Rita Simpson-Vlach) PART. II: Essential Hodder Education, London, England (2010). pp. 342+ix, ISBN: 978-0-340-98447-5. OO 4. 5 Norbert Schmitt has done an outstanding job in compiling a volume intended to fulll its stated purpose of offering a 6 broad overview of Applied Linguistics (p. viii).Â Thus, in the Preface, Schmitt explains that the book will introduce you 7 [readers] to important areas in the eld, and familiarize you with the key issues in each of those areas (p. viii). The easy-to- 8 read writing style of the chapters, described by Schmitt as sophisticated introduction, helps in this regard since it provides 9 readers with a basic knowledge of the most current ideas and theories, research methodology, and practical applications. Hodder Education, London, England (2010), pp. 342+ix, ISBN: 978-0-340-98447-5 | Find, read and cite all the research you need on ResearchGate.Â Linguistics and Education (2011), doi:10.1016/j.linged.2011.05.003. Article in press. Uncorrected proof. G Model. LINEDU 368 1â€"2.Â broad overview of Applied Linguisticsâ€ (p. viii). Thus, in the Preface, Schmitt explains that the book â€œwill introduce you. 6. [readers] to important areas in the ï¬eld, and familiarize you with the key issues in each of those areasâ€ (p. viii). The easy-to-7. read writing style of the chapters, described by Schmitt as â€œsophisticated introduction,â€ helps in this regard since it provides8. readers with a basic knowledge of the most current ideas and theories, research methodology, and practical applications9.