R E P O R T R E S U M E S

ED 013 552 FL 000 267

CURRENT TRENDS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS.

BY- KACHRU, BRAJ B.

PUB DATE OCT 66

EDRS PRICE MF-$0.25 HC-$0.44 11P.

DESCRIPTORS- *LANGUAGE TEACHERS, *APPLIED LINGUISTICS, *LANGUAGE INSTRUCTION, *LANGUAGE RESEARCH, *LINGUISTIC THEORY, PROGRAM EVALUATION, CONTRASTIVE LINGUISTICS, EDUCATIONAL PROBLEMS, GRAMMAR TRANSLATION METHOD, PSYCHOLINGUISTICS, TEACHER EDUCATION, TRANSFORMATION THEORY (LANGUAGE), SOCIOLINGUISTICS, TRANSLATION,

WITH PROGRESS IN THEORETICAL AND APPLIED LINGUISTICS, THE APPLICATION OF LINGUISTICS TO LANGUAGE TEACHING HAS COME UNDER INCREASING SCRUTINY. WHILE THE STRUCTURALISTS HAVE FOUND COMPETITION IN THE MORE RECENT CONCEPTS OF THE COMPETENCE-ORIENTED AND THE PERFORMANCE-ORIENTED APPROACHES, AND MENTALISTIC THEORIES SEEM TO PROVIDE MORE EXPLANATIONS THAN THE TAXONOMIC, IT IS STILL DEBATABLE WHETHER THE GENERAL AREA OF APPLIED LINGUISTICS IS SUFFICIENTLY REFINED TO REQUIRE LANGUAGE TEACHERS TO STUDY THE LINGUISTIC SCIENCES. IN THE AREA OF STYLISTICS, THE APPLICATIONS OF LINGUISTICS HOLD GOOD PROMISE, AND FURTHER RESEARCH IN TRANSLATION SHOULD LEAD TO THE RECOGNITION OF SIMILAR REGISTERS AND STYLES IN VARIOUS LANGUAGES. ALTHOUGH CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS IS DEVELOPING THE NOTION OF TRANSFER GRAMMAR AND INVESTIGATING THE ELEMENTS OF INTERFERENCE BETWEEN LANGUAGES, THE VALUE OF SUCH RESEARCH STILL LIES MAINLY IN THE FUTURE. THIS ARTICLE APPEARED IN THE "ILLINOIS JOURNAL OF EDUCATION," VOLUME 57, NUMBER 6, OCTOBER 1966, PAGES 33-41. (GJ)

ILLINOIS JOURNAL OF EDUCATION
Volume 57, Number 6, October 1966.

CURRENT TRENDS IN APPLIED LINGUISTICS

BRAJ B. KACHRU, *Professor*, Department of Linguistics,
University of Illinois, Urbana

0. The scope of this paper is not as broad as the title suggests. I shall briefiy survey the present directions of the areas in which linguistic theory has been applied, and shall mainly concentrate on two specific points. First, I shall attempt to evaluate the role which contemporary linguistic models play in some selected (see 3.1.) areas of what is termed *applied linguistics.* Second, I shall discuss the underlying theoretical controversies current in contemporary linguistic research, and their manifestation in *applied* linguistic research without referring to the differences and/or similarities of the various linguistic models. I shall refer to already published literature for specialized discussion.

1. In linguistics the term *applied* is used in the same sense in which it is used in the behavioral sciences, or perhaps, pure sciences. The theoretical frameworks which form the basis for the applied areas need not be identical, as the motivations and goals of different models vary, and accordingly shape a theory.[1]

1.1. The history of the linguistic sciences (i.e., general linguistics and general phonetics) shows that the concepts of *theory* and *applied theory* have been closely integrated. The applied aspects have been largely responsible for influencing the formulation of linguistic theories. Clearly, this was the case in America (especially between 1930 and 1950) and in Britain. In America, anthropological research led to linguistic research, while in Britain the study of 'exotic' Asian languages was done primarily for pragmatic reasons (e.g., administrative, and diplomatic).[2]

1.2. The last three decades have been years of intense and fruitful thinking in linguistics. There have been two main results of this period. First, the development of structuralism, associated with Bloomfield and his followers.[3] This approach was based on what is termed "behaviorism" and "operationalism" and contributed methodological precision. Second, the more recent developments, especially the transformational model,[4] have contributed deep insights into language behavior in general,[5] and highly formalized descriptions of a large variety of languages have been made available. The aim is to arrive at the universals of languages.

2. The new insights of contemporary linguistics are naturally reflected in the *applied* areas of linguistics. At present, however, things are uncertain and the attitude is one of skepticism more than of satisfaction, especially in the areas of linguistics and language teaching. The following remarks of Chomsky are typical of this new thinking.[6] "I am, frankly, rather skeptical about the significance, for the teaching of languages, of such insights and

understanding as have been attained in linguistics and psychology . . . it is difficult to believe that either linguistics or psychology has achieved a level of theoretical understanding that might enable it to support a "technology" of language teaching."

2.1. By contemporary linguistics I mean the breakthrough in linguistic theory which was first seriously noticed in 1957. This was a crucial year in the sense that two important works were published during that year, i.e., N. Chomsky's *Syntactic Structures*[7] and J. R. Firth's *Papers in Linguistics 1934-1951*.[8] I will not go into detail to show in what sense these two were significant; but it must be emphasized here that these two works introduced two distinct concepts, or, as the authors would like to claim, the *renewed* two distinct approaches to language.

It is interesting that though both the Chomskians and the Firthians were critical of the structuralist approach to language, their own attitudes toward a linguistic theory were diametrically opposed. (See 2.2. and 2.3.). On the one hand, Chomsky emphasized the *competence* of a speaker-hearer which enables him to produce and comprehend an infinite number of sentences with a finite set of rules. On the other hand, Firth wanted to develop a "spectrum" of linguistic "meanings" (or "functions") in order to describe, and analyze in linguistic terms, the *uses* of a languge in different sociocultural settings. He used the Malinowskian concept of the *context of situation* as a relevant, and perhaps important linguistic level.

2.2. It should be noted here that these two schools were reacting against the antimentalistic (or behavioristic) theory of the structuralists. In this reaction they viewed the goals of linguistics differently. In the first case, a linguist is formally reconstructing a native speaker's *knowledge* of his language. In the second case, a linguist is *observing* and *describing* the linguistic features of situationally or "contextually" determined language types. In other words, one is interested in the investigation of *linguistic competence* and the other in *linguistic performance*.[9]

2.3. The distinction between a *competence-oriented* and a *performance-oriented* approach is crucial, both theoretically and methodologically. It is important that the current trends in applied linguistics be viewed within this theoretical framework of contemporary linguistics. It is possible to use this dichotomy to account for most of the current linguistic models (e.g., tagmemics, scale and category, stratificational).

The emphasis on *competence* in one approach and *performance* in the other approach has some methodological implications, too. It is claimed that another dichotomy can be used to separate these models, i.e., *data-oriented* and *model-*(or *theory*) *oriented*. It has, however, been argued that this dichotomy is very arbitrary.[10]

3. In contemporary linguistics, then, the term *applied* is controversial in two ways. First, its ontological status as a distinct area is still being discussed. Second, if the *status* of applied linguistics is accepted, the *areas* of application are *debated*.[11]

3.1. The term *applied* is either used in a very restricted sense, or it covers all those areas where language is relevant, however remotely. It is the restricted use of the term which has made the area of applied linguistics

suspect. For a long time, on both sides of the Atlantic, the term *applied* linguistics was equated with language teaching and/or learning. It is exactly this area where linguists think that at the present stage of our knowledge, the uses of linguistics are doubtful. (See 4.1.). In a wider sense one can include the following areas under applied linguistics.

1. The areas which are relevant to language teaching operations at different levels, e.g., stylistics, contrastive analysis, comparative descriptive studies, language-contact, translation.
2. The interdisciplinary areas e.g., psycholinguistics, sociolinguistics.
3. The areas which are not of immediate interest to a language teacher, e.g., computational linguistics, mathematical linguistics.

4. In order to present the recent trends in applied linguistics I shall concentrate on the following four areas since these are of direct interest to a language teacher and/or learner.

1. language pedagogy;
2. stylistics;
3. theory of translation;
4. contrastive analysis.

4.1. Language Pedagogy: In current literature this aspect of applied linguistics has become most controversial. There are two basic questions which are asked. First, what is the relationship between general linguistics and language teaching? Second, what is the status of the terms *scientific* and *theory* in language teaching so far as linguistics is concerned?

The answer to the first question is that in most of the works which claim to be 'linguistically oriented', the goals of linguistic description have followed a trend in linguistics which is already outdated.[12] The questions they ask do not seek deep answers, and, one could argue that such an approach is a step backwards. It has been shown that the "traditionalists" such as Jespersen, Henry Sweet, etc., had deep insights into language behavior, and in addition to that have much to offer to a language teacher. In the linguistic model which the structuralists follow, two things are crucial, i.e., *segmentation* and *nonmentalism*. It has been shown that both linguistically and psychologically this approach is inadequate. The limitations of the *phoneme-oriented* descriptions have succinctly been shown by Chomsky, Halle, and also the Firthians and neo-Firthians.[13] And, what is more important, the arguments in favor of mentalism (and against behaviorism) have shown that mentalism is a crucial concept from the point of view of linguistic behavior in general and language acquisition in particular.[14]

There are now two interrelated questions: Why is the role of structural linguistics doubtful in language pedagogy? And, what was its contribution to this area? Note that the following concepts which are repeatedly emphasized by the structuralists are not different from the "common-sense" view of language teaching, and are also found in the standard 'traditional' works:

1. that the spoken medium is primary and the written medium is secondary;

2. that language is a structured activity;

3. that language has 'varieties';

4. that language has 'levels'.

Clearly, these are very superficial procedural questions. This was immediately realized by linguists. Consider, for example, the following statement of John B. Carroll:[15] "There has been a rash of papers on the implications of linguistics for the teaching of English, the teaching of reading, the teaching of foreign languages, and so on. In fact, the idea that linguistics has much to contribute to educational problems in the 'language arts' has become almost embarrassingly fashionable. One's embarrassment comes from the fact that despite certain very definite and positive contributions that linguistics can make to these endeavors, these contributions are of relatively small extent."

The structuralists, then, have no answer to the following basic questions posed by the language teacher. First, what is the underlying knowledge of a native speaker? Second, how is that knowledge used by a speaker? And third, how does a native speaker acquire this knowledge? That is, what is the process of development from an infant speaker to a fluent adult speaker?

In current linguistic literature one finds that attempts are made to seek answers to these crucial questions. In one school of linguistics it is claimed that only through a mentalistic approach can these questions be answered.[16] And by rejecting mentalism, the scope of both linguistics and language teaching is restricted. It is argued that (a) the structuralists fail to account for all the facts of linguistic structures, because their theories are not concerned with the mental capacities and processes of speakers of natural languages; (b) the linguistic facts can not be covered fully unless mental concepts are included in linguistic theories. The claim is made that mentalistic theories account for all those facts which are accounted for in taxonomix theories, and in addition account for many more facts where taxonomic theories fail.

A detailed discussion on linguistics and language teaching from the transformational standpoint can be found in two recent papers by Chomsky.[17] In Britain, it seems that the over-enthusiasm about the role of linguistics in the classroom, which was evident after 1955, has subsided. In a recent book on the linguistic sciences and language teaching, it is made clear that "the place for both phonetics and linguistics is *behind* the classroom teacher, in the training that he received for his job as a teacher, in the preparation of the syllabus according to which his teaching program is organized, and in the preparation of the teaching materials of all kinds that he makes use of in class. These are the points at which the linguistic sciences affect language teaching."[18]

It is perhaps evident then that in 'linguistically oriented' language teaching, we are not much more advanced now than we were in 1899 when Henry Sweet wrote:[19] "In fact, things are altogether unsettled both as regards methods and textbooks. This is a good sign: it gives a promise of the survival of the fittest. Anything is better than artificial uniformity enforced from without."

4.2. Stylistics: The term *stylistics* is used for that area of linguistics which is concerned with the formal analysis of literary texts. It is in this area that the applications of linguistics hold good promise.

The term *style* has a wide variety of uses. A formal stylistic analysis is essentially concerned with the *language features* of a text, as against the nonformal analysis in which the emphasis is on *thought, effect,* and other aesthetic concepts. In linguistic terms, literary style implies *selection* and *ordering* of different patterns at different linguistic levels. These formal choices are realized in certain *style-features* e.g., *limber, involved, staccato, mellow, complicated,* etc. These are the labels given to the formal features by literary critics. Thus, a linguistic analysis of style contributes precision and rigor to certain vaguely used and seldom defined style-features. These tools are of special value in *comparative stylistics,* say, for example, in a comparison of the features of Tennyson's and Browning's poetry, or Faulkner's and Henry James' prose.

In formal terms, attempts have been made to define style in *distributional*[20] terms, and as the *deviation* [21] from the norm. No definition has been finally accepted.

A stylistic analysis does not imply that a formal analysis is an adequate substitute for the work of the literary critic. On the other hand, what a stylistic analysis accomplishes is to provide a more objective analysis of the text which the literary critic may use. A linguist attempts to capture and formalize the *stylistic-intuition* of the speakers of a language (or the readers of a text). The difficulty, however, is that stylistic-intuition (like other intuitions) varies and may not easily be generalized.

The aim of stylistic analysis, then, is to formalize those subjective and/or objective concepts which can be accounted for within the general framework of the description of a language.[22]

There is greater unanimity among different linguistic schools on the applications of linguistics to literary texts than on other areas of application. Note, however, that the emphasis and presentation varies according to the underlying linguistic model.[23]

4.3. Theory of Translation: The concept of *translation* as it is understood in linguistics, involves establishing formal 'equivalence' in two languages, usually designated as the *source-language* (SL), and the *target language* (TL). The formal equivalence does not imply a one-to-one correspondence since formally two languages are seldom the *same.* Formal equivalence basically applies to the grammatical, lexical and semantic levels. Catford[24] has attempted to stretch it to the graphemic and phonetic/phonological levels, too. The usefulness of graphemic equivalence in terms of translation is of doubtful value, except perhaps for comparative graphology. There is, however, no evidence that comparative graphology can be used with any special advantage in script teaching except in a very superficial sense. The notion of a phonetic/phonological 'translation' may, however, provide us with some clues for the translation of poetry, and the devices used for 'musicality' in different languages may be captured in more rigorous terms.

In the area of translation, Catford claims, following the scale and category model, that "any theory of translation must draw upon a theory of language—a general linguistic theory."[25]

The most exhaustive treatment of this area with copious examples and theoretical discussion are given in Nida's[26] recent book. His aim is to "provide something which would not only be solidly based on contemporary developments in the fields of linguistics, anthropology, and psychology, but

would also relate to the specific area of Bible translating and to the wider activity of translating in general.''[27] In adopting an underlying linguistic model, Nida shows preference for the transformational model, since, he argues, "one of the distinct advantages of transformational technique is the greater facility whereby ambiguous expressions can be analyzed and described.''[28]

4.3.1. A theory of translation aims at finding 'equivalence' in the *structures* and *systems* of two languages. It is not possible to give detailed examples here to show how this is done at different linguistic levels. Consider, for instance, the deictic demonstratives in Hindi, English, Kashmiri and Scots (N.E. dialects). In these four languages, the system works as follows:

1. Hindi and English have four-term systems, i.e.,

Hindi				English			
sing.		plural		sing.		plural	
yeh	*veh*	*ye*	*ve*	*this*	*that*	*these*	*those*

2. N. E. Scots dialects have a three-term system, i.e.,

this	*that*	*yon*

3. Kashmiri has an eleven-term system, i.e.,

Masculine		Feminine	
Sing.	plural	Sing.	plural
yi	*yim*	*yi*	*yime*
hu	*hum*	*ho*	*hume*
su	*tim*	*so*	*time*

In Hindi and English the choice is between number, and in Kashmiri both number and gender are involved. This is just one example of what the 'equivalence' involves. The formal equivalence naturally has semantic implications, too.

The research on the use of linguistic models in the theory of translation may provide useful insights into the translation of creative writing, the translation of technical and/or nontechnical registers, or machine translation. The problems in translation do not merely involve 'equating' the formal categories, they also involve finding 'identical' *registers* and *styles* in the languages under discussion. In the translation of creative writing, the notion of *style-range* or *register-range* is crucial. For example, in translating *Othello* into Hindi, there is the basic problem of deciding upon the *style-range* in Hindi which Shakespeare gives to his characters in English. This is not always easy as Hindi does not have as large a style-range as English.

4.4. Contrastive Analysis: The basic framework of contrastive analysis has developed out of *comparative (descriptive) linguistics,* and the notion of *transfer grammar.*[29]

The underlying notions in contrastive analysis are not new for trained language teachers. In second and/or foreign language teaching what happens is that a new set of linguistic *rules* is introduced (or superimposed) on the linguistic rules learned by a person for his first language. The superimposed rules may either be completely deviant from the rules of his first language, or they may be partially shared. In such a situation, the first language is rarely affected; usually it is the second language which is seen through the linguistic 'grid' of first language. There is thus *interference* from one language into another. This interference manifests itself at different levels in different degrees depending upon the languages under discussion. There are references to this process in earlier books on language teaching.[30] What the linguists have done is to take specific languages and focus their attention on the *shared* and *nonshared* items; that is, on the probable areas of interference.[31]

The uses of contrastive analysis may further be extended for teaching 'educated' or 'standard' speech to a dialect speaker. It is difficult to say how successful this pedagogical device is in the actual classroom.

5. The above discussed applications of the linguistic sciences presuppose that a teacher has adequate linguistic sophistication to handle the materials. This takes us back to the basic question: are the applications of the linguistic theories so powerful that a teacher should be trained in the linguistic sciences in any serious sense? The current linguistic literature does not provide an answer to this crucial question. The main reason is that the past decade has been essentially a period of theoretical discussions. Applied linguistics is still in its infancy and its offerings are very fragmentary. The reason perhaps is that as yet the theoretical foundations are not firmly established. It is a healthy sign that both theoretical linguistics and applied linguistics are full of questions. The answers to these questions will determine the future directions in applied linguistics.

NOTES AND REFERENCES

1. For a detailed discussion on applied linguistics see Charles A. Ferguson, "Applied Linguistics" in Robert G. Mead, ed. *Report of the Working Committee of the North East Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages 1966,* pp. 50-58; William F. Mackey, "Applied Linguistics: Its Meaning and Use," *English Language Teaching,* XX, No. 3 (May, 1966) 197-206.
2. In earlier days even highly abstract and formalized language discriptions such as that of Panini, were motivated by some practical need. In his case, as is well known, the goal was to present a *prescriptive* analysis of Sanskrit to preserve the 'cultivated' pronunciation of the sacred Hindu texts.
3. See Charles C. Fries, "Advances in Linguistics", *College English* XXV (Oct. 1961), 30-37, for the structuralist approach to Linguistics.
4. For full bibliographical references on this school see William O. Dingwall, *Transformational Generative Grammar: A Bibliography,* Center for Applied Linguistics (Washington D.C., 1965).
5. For the developments of linguistic theory in other countries see R. H. Robins, "General Linguistics in Great Britain 1930-1960" in C. Mohrmann, et. al. eds *Trends in Modern Linguistics,* (Antwerp, 1963), pp. 11-37. Also, Josef Vachek, *The Linguistic School of Prague,* (Bloomington, 1966).

6. N. Chomsky, "Linguistic Theory" in *Report of the Working Committee of the North East Conference on the Teaching of Foreign Languages, 1966*, p. 43.
7. Mouton and Co., (The Hague, 1955).
8. Oxford University Press, (London, 1957).
9. Note, for example, the following statement of M.A.K. Halliday: "The interest is focused not on what the native speaker knows of his language, but rather on what he does with it; one might perhaps say that the orientation is primarily textual and, in the widest sense, sociolcgical." "Syntax and the Consumer," in *Monographs Series on Language and Linguistics*, No. 17 (Washington D.C., 1964), p. 16.
10. See William O. Dingwall, "Morpheme Sequence Classes: A Taxonomic Approach to Contrastive Analysis," *IRAL* IV/1 (1966), 40. See also Robert B. Lees, "Two Views of Linguistic Research," *Linguistics* 11 (January, 1965), pp. 21-29, who disagrees with such a dichotomy.
11. Cf. Mackey, op. cit. fn.1
12. A good example of what is wrongly termed a "linguistically oriented" approach to language teaching is Robert Lado, *Language Teaching: A Scientific Approach* (New York, 1964). See also a review of this by Braj B. Kachru in *Linguistics* (to appear).
13. See e.g., M. Halle, "Phonology in Generative Grammar," *WORD*, XVIII, 54-72; "On the Bases of Phonology," in J. A. Fodor, J. J. Katz, eds. *The Structure of Language: Readings in the Philosophy of Language*, (New Jersey: Englewood Cliffs, 1964); R. R. Firth, "Sounds and Prosodies," *TPS* (1948).
14. For a detailed discussion see J. J. Katz "Mentalism in Linguistics," *Language*, XL/2 (1964), 124-137. Also, N. Chomsky, Review of B. F. Skinner *Verbal Behavior* in *Language* XXXV (1959), 26-58.
15. "Words, Meanings and Concepts," in *Harvard Educational Review*, XXXIV/2, (Spring, 1964), 179, fn.5.
16. J. J. Katz, op. cit. Note that in different linguistic schools this question is still being debated.
17. "The Current Scene in Linguistics: Present Direction," *College English*, XXVII/8 (May, 1966), 587-595; op. cit. fn.6; Also see Owen Thomas, *Transformational Grammar and the Teacher of English* (New York, 1965).
18. See M. A. K. Halliday et al., *The Linguistic Sciences and Language Teaching*, (London, 1964), p. 187.
19. Henry Sweet, *The Practical Study of Languages*. First published 1899; reprinted by Oxford University Press (1964), p. 42.
20. See Bernard Bloch "Linguistic Structure and Linguistic Analysis," *Report of the Fourth Annual Round Table Meeting on Linguistics and Language Teaching*, (Washington, 1953), p. 42.
21. See Charles E. Osgood, "Some Effects of Motivation on Style of Encoding," in *Style in Language*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960), p. 293.
22. It may be asked here: how does a linguist analyze the 'deviant' poems such as E. E. Cummings' *Anyone Lived in a pretty how town?* This has been worrying linguists for some time. See a detailed discussion on this problem in J. P. Thorne, "Stylistics and Generative Grammar," *Journal of Linguistics*, I/1 (April, 1965), 49-59.
23. The following works, using linguistic tools for stylistic analysis, show how contemporary linguistic models have been used in this area: Bernard Bloch, op. cit.; S. Chatman, "Linguistics and Teaching Introductory Literature," *Language Learning*, VII (1956-57), 3-10; N. E. Enkvist, et. al. *Linguistics and Style*, (London, 1964); J. R. Firth, "Modes of Meaning," in *Papers in Linguistics 1934-1951*, (London, 1957); M. A. K. Halliday, "Descriptive Linguistics in Literary Studies," *English Studies Today*, III (Edinburgh, 1964); A. A. Hill, "An Analysis of 'The Windlover': An Experiment in Structural Method," *PMLA*, LXX (1950), 968-78; S. R. Levin, *Linguistic Structures in Poetry*, (The Hague, 1962); R. Ohmann, "Generative Grammar and the Concept of Literary Style," *WORD* xx/3, (1964); "Literature as Sentences," *College English*, (Jan., 1966); T. Sebeok, ed. *Style in Language*, (Cambridge: MIT Press, 1960); J. P. Thorne, op. cit. fn. 22.

24. J. C. Catford, *A Linguistic Theory of Translation*, (London, 1965).
25. Op. cit. p.1.
26. E. A. Nida, *Towards a Science of Translating*, (Leiden, 1964). This also contains an excell nt detailed bibliography (see pp. 265-320).
27. Ibid. p.9.
28. Ibid. p.61. Notice that the theory of translation discussed here is distinct from the notion translation as it is understood in language teaching (e.g., the grammar-translation method).
29. Z. H. Harris, "Transfer Grammar," *IJAL*, XX/4, (1954), 259-270.
30. See, for example, Henry Sweet, op. cit.
31. For a detailed bibliography see J. H. Hammer et. al., eds., *Contrastive Studies in Linguistics*, Center for Applied Linguistics, (Washington D.C., 1965).