

○ **S. HUNSTON AND D. OAKEY,
*INTRODUCING APPLIED LINGUISTICS:
CONCEPTS AND SKILLS.***

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Introducing Applied Linguistics: Concepts and Skills consists of a compilation of chapters by key scholars in the field. The work is divided into two distinct sections: Section 1 “Key Concepts in Applied Linguistics” (12 chapters) and Section 2 “Study Skills for Applied Linguistics Students” (10 chapters).

The book is successful on two fronts: it introduces essential concepts in Applied Linguistics while highlighting the necessary study skills needed to succeed in this field. The book provides a wealth of resources, including detailed introductions to each of the 22 chapters, a table of contents at the outset of each chapter, and a state-of-the-art website (available at www.routledge.com/textbooks/9780415447676). Among other highlights, the website includes a section on study tasks (e.g. matching key words to their respective chapters) and offers further information on authors’ contributions and on the authors themselves.

Perhaps the most valuable aspect of this work is its undivided attention to the learning process. This is evident, for instance, in the editors’ inclusion of a “Using this book” section (p. xiv) where the reader is urged to “start with the chapters that most interest you” and reminded that one need not “start the book from the beginning” (p. xiv).

Organizationally, the inclusion of an introductory section at the outset of every chapter is a clear success. This feature of the work once again highlights the editors’ attention to the learning process. That is, the introductory sections do not only offer contextualization of the research discussed, but also direct the reader’s attention to the argument made in the chapter and even discuss language use and questions for further treatment.

Section 1, Part I, “Describing English” includes four chapters on various aspects of English description, including grammar, vocabulary and collocation, metaphor and language, as well as conversation analysis in the classroom. Part II “Teaching and learning a language” looks at communicative language teaching, task-based approaches to language teaching, motivation and English in a global context. Part III “Applied Linguistics in a wider context” presents a study of metaphor and ideology in hard news stories, portrays the linguist as detective and

deals with translation and stereotypes in intercultural communication. The topics in Section 1 are neatly organized from linguistic issues concerning language structure and use, to applied linguistics topics involving classroom pedagogy and practice. This layout offers the junior researcher a clear progression from the structural to the pedagogical, while consistently making the discussion relevant to teaching and learning.

In line with the aforementioned focus on the learning process, Section 2 includes four parts and ten chapters on study skills for students in the field of applied linguistics. A number of fundamental research-related skills are the focus here, including designing a questionnaire, using interview data, transcribing spoken interaction and using spoken language corpora. This section also deals with interpretation, expression and editing skills.

In Part I “Describing English”, Willis – in his chapter 1 “Three reasons why” – deals with pedagogic grammar, an area which focuses on how the grammar of a language may be best described for learners and how it may be taught to them. The main claim and contribution of this chapter is the idea that, regardless of how much grammar instruction occurs in the classroom, learners need exposure to the target language and opportunities to use it on their own. In chapter 2 “English vocabulary and collocation”, Oakley explores two approaches to investigating the role of collocation in English vocabulary and how collocations are relevant to language teachers and lexicographers. Here, Oakley also highlights the hegemonic position of native-speaker English and the issues surrounding such an ideology. In chapter 3 “Grammatical metaphor and success in academic writing”, Thompson empirically establishes that MA dissertations that use more nominalizations tend to be assessed more highly. Chapter 4 “Conversation analysis in the classroom” by Koester introduces the reader to the basics of conversation analysis (CA) and focuses on how CA may be implemented in language teaching and research on classroom language as institutional discourse. Koester argues that CA can help teachers, students and researchers understand how adjacency pairs, preference organization and opening and closing sequences are used in naturally occurring interaction by native speakers. Koester’s points are crucial as learning the pragmatics of conversational exchanges in a foreign language classroom can be taxing.

Some issues seem to remain relatively unexplored in Part I. The value of the foreign language learner’s knowledge of their own language, including grammar, collocations and formulaic expressions, metaphors and conversational skills remains unaddressed. Moreover, the discussion concerning collocations and formulaic expressions (p. 18) may benefit from an inclusion of the groundbreaking work of linguists such as Joan Bybee (2006) who has dealt with collocation and formulaic language extensively. Perhaps a more salient issue needing revising is the generalization implicit in the claim that “some learners will prefer to learn

English the way native speakers use it” (p. 20). The idea that native speakers of a language can be grouped together as speaking a single variety goes contrary to sociolinguistic findings that – whether native-like or not – language varies across a range of linguistic-internal and linguistic-external factors (e.g. Labov, 2001). That is, learners may prefer to learn English the way *some* native speakers (namely, those taken as canons and portrayed in language publications) use it.

Part II “Teaching and learning a language” includes four chapters. In chapter 5, “What is communicative language teaching?”, Stelma acknowledges the fundamental socio-cultural aspects of communication, describing it as competence, as process, and in context. Chapter 6 “Six propositions in search of a methodology: Applying linguistics to task-based language teaching” by Dave and Jane Willis presents an overview of the basics of task-based teaching. Chapter 7 “Researching motivation: From integrativeness to the ideal L2 self”, by Dörnyei, reports on the results of an empirical study of people’s views of themselves, their thoughts and what they do. The findings are then used to inform theory on motivation in language learning. In chapter 8 “Learning English in a global context”, Kennedy tackles the global spread of English and its consequences for teachers and learners alike. Overall, Part II offers a useful discussion of language methodologies that have been around for quite some time now. Perhaps the most fundamental contribution of Part II is its concern with sociolinguistic issues vital to language teaching and learning and its noting of novel research agendas (p. 92) such as identity and attitudes to languages and cultures – both definite candidates for promising investigation in the near future.

Part III “Applied linguistics in a wider context” tackles issues germane to the world outside the language classroom. The research in Part III encompasses metaphor and ideology, forensic linguistics, translation and stereotypes. In chapter 9, drawing on the groundbreaking work on metaphor by Lakoff and Johnson (1980), O’Halloran uses Critical Discourse Analysis to uncover ideologies present in hard news materials. Johnson and Woolls deal in chapter 10, “The linguist as detective”, with the task of the linguist in solving issues pertaining to forensic linguistics (such as giving evidence in court). In chapter 11, Malkjær investigates socio-cultural issues in translation (e.g. the inclusion of cultural components from the original into the translated text) and relates these to existing translation theory. Chapter 12 by Holliday touches on intercultural communication and cultural stereotypes, offering an in-depth treatment of the value of accepting and challenging stereotypes about other cultures. Part III does an excellent job at critically examining social and cultural issues at the core of applied linguistics and beyond. The inclusion of such a section in the current work asserts unequivocally that last century’s supposedly uncontroversial issues (e.g. political correctness) need further treatment.

Section 2, Part IV “Doing research in applied linguistics”, offers helpful guidance on how to design a questionnaire (chapter 13 by Bloomer), how to employ interview data in case studies (chapter 14 by Macksoud), how to transcribe spoken interaction (chapter 15 by Swann) and how to use a corpus to study spoken language (chapter 16 by Adolphs). The research in these chapters is both state-of-the-art and useful to both applied linguists and linguists (e.g. corpus linguists, discourse analysts, anthropological linguists). Part V “Skills of interpretation” includes two chapters by Oakey, chapter 17 and 18, both on linguistic issues pertaining to writing. Chapter 17 focuses on noun phrases, while chapter 18 studies ways to identify and report on other people’s point of view. Both chapters direct the reader’s attention to important writing issues, providing examples of what one is bound to come across when reading and writing research in applied linguistics. Oakey also authors chapters in Parts VI “Skills of expression” and VII “Editing skills”. Chapters 19 to 22 deal, respectively, with finding one’s voice, organizing essays, referencing and editing one’s own work. Throughout these, Oakey manages to present clear and useful examples of what the reader may encounter in real life. But Section 2 does so much more than merely describe research methods and writing issues in applied linguistics. It socializes the reader into the community of applied linguists, thus confirming the “applied” nature of this book and its undivided attention to the “how” of the learning process.

All in all, *Introducing applied linguistics: Concepts and Skills*, covers a multiplicity of topics ranging from classical applied linguistics issues such as methods in language teaching, to current research topics like English and globalization, stereotypes and translation. Not only is the work successful in dealing with concepts key to applied linguistics and beyond, the book also offers the reader a useful treatment of the skills needed to succeed in research and writing in the profession.

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