New Insights and Interdisciplinary Approaches to Study Linguistics

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Abstract

Linguistics is the study of Languages. This goes all the way from identifying the sounds of a language to making policies about language use. Because language is such a fundamental part of who we are, understanding how it works and all the information that it contains can help us understand a whole of other things too. Languages are the basis of all of our interactions and thoughts. Worldwide, we speak over 6000 distinct languages, with many more dialects and regional varieties. The paper concentrates on understanding how languages work, who uses them, why they can be useful to us and what we can do with them in a big task, but there is a discipline and an approach with new ideas about linguistics as a science.

Introduction

The production of knowledge is dominantly organized in disciplines. Interdisciplinary research is developing at the boundaries of the scientific disciplines (Peter: 2001). Interdisciplinary is an important and complex issue as modern society increasing demands application-oriented knowledge, and the usability of scientific knowledge generally requires the combination and integration of knowledge from various scientific disciplines. Gibbons et al (1994) analyzed these changes by contrasting two modes of knowledge production with their approaches.

The notion of interdisciplinary is a difficult one as many related concepts exist with various interpretations, multidisciplinary, cross disciplinary, pluridisciplinary, interdisciplinary approach creates its own theoretical, conceptual, and methodological identity. Consequently, the results of an interdisciplinary study of a certain problem are more coherent and integrated. More recently, Gibbons et al (1994) use the concept of transdisciplinary in different way. In their view, interdisciplinary approaches are characterized by an formulation of a uniform or a common methodology.

What is Linguistics?

The recent accelerated information and technological development of society has caused a greater interdisciplinary interaction of separate fields of knowledge and has stimulated a new perspective of cross-border disciplines appearing in these zones of contract (Yulia, 2011). Languages, as a system, consists of contrastive relations between its various constituent elements such that element derives its meaning and value within the system from the simultaneous presence of all elements Atkinson, et al (1982). Linguistics is principally concerned with the description of any language. It has generally been explained as the scientific study of language (Chapman, 1984: P. 4). Linguistics is concerned with the science and theory of how languages work and provide categories and generalization on observations of language effect. Linguistics involves observation, generalization, and verification, its method is purely scientific (Kwofie, 1999).

Evdokia states that linguistics is the scientific study of language and the primary goal of linguists is to understand the nature of language in general. In fact, linguistics is primarily concerned with the nature of language and communication.

There are broadly three aspects to the study, including language form, language meaning, and language use in discursive and communicative contexts. Linguistics also deals with the study of particular languages, and the search for general properties common to all languages or large groups of languages. The branches of linguistics are:

- Phonology
- Morphology
- Pragmatics
- Semantics
- Syntax

Interdisciplinary studies of linguistics involve two or more academic disciplines which are considered distinct. The most common interdisciplinary branches of linguistics are:

- Historical linguistics
- Sociolinguistics
- Psycholinguistics
- Anthropological (Ethnolinguistics)
- Computational linguistics
- Neurolinguistics

Main Challenges and Interdisciplinary Approach

Society's responses to major social challenges must be informed by an improved understanding of human perceptions, responses, and of the economic and social impacts of the physical, and biological processes to promote social wellbeing (Solomon, 2013: P. 82). A comprehensive understanding of the main challenges requires the collaboration of physical scientists, social scientists, humanities scholars and engineers, and will be highly interdisciplinary. Interdisciplinary preparation and education are central to future competitiveness, because knowledge creation and innovation frequently occur at the interface of disciplines. Interdisciplinary programmes, which gives students better ability to work in a problem-oriented way and at the same time the ability to think across fields and interact. It responds to the need to prepare students for an increasingly interdisciplinary, collaborative, and global job market (National Academy of Sciences, 2005).

Interdisciplinary education must supplement disciplinary teaching and learning so students can learn how to respond to challenges that transcend their specific disciplines (Golding, 2009). The interdisciplinary approach has become an important and challenging technique in the modern curriculum.   The interdisciplinary approach synthesizes more than one descriptive and creates teams of teachers and students that enrich the overall educational experience. The interdisciplinary approach provides many benefits that develop into much needed lifelong learning skills that are essential to a student's future learning. Today, the interdisciplinary approach is a key concept to the advancement of school curriculum at all levels. It also expand students' understanding and achievement between all

disciplines or enhancing communication skills (Casey, 2o09). Richards concludes that team teaching is a poor vehicle for interdisciplinary undergraduate education (Haynes, 2002: P. 16).

A New Awareness

Students who are taught with an interdisciplinary technique in which the students master higher order thinking skills and integrated pedagogy become very attractive to colleges and wealthy business (Youngblood, 2008: P. 2). Students and their teachers will advance in critical thinking, communication, creativity, pedagogy, and essential academia with the use interdisciplinary techniques (Duerr, 2008: P. 176).

Interdisciplinary learning is one of many ways to learn over the course of a curriculum: when educators consider their curriculum objectives and students' needs, they may choose interdisciplinary learning to deliver part or all of the content they will present. This method can help bring students to a new awareness of the meaningful connections that exist among the disciplines (Hayes, 2016).

Ellis (2016), states that interdisciplinary in humanities / sciences teaching since the mid-1970s has come to be defined as a learning made involving the exploration of issues, problems and knowledge through integration and synthesis of theoretical and / or methodological procedures which draw upon more than one discipline or challenge conventional disciplinary approaches. It proved particularly relevant to linguistics, which has developed strongly-defined interdisciplines (such as psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics), which characteristically draws upon several disciplines. Developing interdisciplinary learning approaches proves challenging in terms of syllabus design.

In important respects the development of a whole range of sociologies in the mid-twentieth century (of knowledge, of literature, of power, of gender, etc…), demanded that further interdisciplinary practice be developed, as academics in the Humanities and the Social Sciences encountered and interacted with their Sociological counterparts' ideas (Gozzer, 1982: P. 282).

Plainly, for example, there are different types of interdisciplinary study in linguistics:

1. Developing conceptual links using a perspective in one discipline to modify a perspective in another.

2. Recognizing a new level of organization with its own process in order to solve unsolved problems within existing disciplines or problems that lie beyond the scope of any one discipline.

3. Using research techniques developed in one discipline to elaborate a theoretical model in another.

4. Modifying and extending a theoretical framework from one domain to apply in another.

5. Developing a new theoretical framework that may reconceptualize research in separate domains as it attempts to integrate them.

6. Addressing broad issues (Bechtel, 1986: PP. 46-7; 1990: P.11).

Linguistics and Sciences

Linguistics' interactions with the Social Sciences certainly illustrate this, with Psycholinguistics and Sociolinguistics in particular firmly established as what can be called interdisciplines – areas of knowledge, study and learning with distinct, evolving theoretical and methodological procedures.

Becher (1989: P. 22), describes that disciplines in terms of tribes with recognizable identities and particular cultural attributes. Each discipline has its professional language and literature and defends its territories (physical and intellectual) from outsides. The discipline is different to the subject- a subject is knowledge base, whereas a discipline is a tribe, a culture, a guild (Parker, 2002: P. 374). The discipline is a culture rather than a body of knowledge. The importance of these identities is exposed in the context of interdisciplinary teaching and learning. These have important implications on the ways that students receive these courses. Therefore, the concept of interdisciplinary teaching depends to a large extend upon disciplinary itself. Effective interdisciplinary teaching and research in linguistics is not likely to occur without a strong disciplinary base (Kennedy, 2003: P. 3).

Language structure can be studied at various levels. Phonology, or the study in sounds in a language, deals with the basic utterances in speech. Morphology includes the study of the internal structure of words and phrases. Linguistics seek to specify the meaning behind words and combinations of words. Linguistics is concerned with the nature of language and communication. It deals both with the study of particular languages, and the search for general properties common to all languages or large groups of languages. It includes the following subareas:

- Phonetics (the study of production, acoustics and hearing of speech sounds)
- Phonology (the patterning of sounds)
- Morphology (the structure of words)
- Syntax (the structure of sentences)
- Semantics (meaning)
- Pragmatics (language in context)

It also includes exploration into the nature of language variation (i.e., dialect), language over time, how language is processed and stored in the brain, and how it is acquired by young children. Although linguistics is still largely unfamiliar to the educated public, it is a growing and existing field, with an increasing important impact on other fields as diverse as psychology, philosophy, education, language teaching, sociology, anthropology, computer science, and artificial intelligence (Studying Linguistics, 2016).

Teaching and Learning

Interdisciplinary teaching increases student learning about linguistics and engaging and helping them to develop knowledge, insights, problem solving skills, self-confidence, self-efficacy, and a passion to the exploration promotes realization of objectives (Repko, 2009). Interdisciplinary instruction allows us to understand our preconceptions of "what is" and the framework by which we arrived "what is". It also fits with recent advances in learning science about how to foster learning when students bring powerful pre-existing ideas with them to the learning process (Bransford, 2000). Interdisciplinary instruction helps students develop their

cognitive abilities-brain-based skills and mental processes that are needed to carry out tasks (Jacobs, 1989).

Understanding Linguistics Science

Kevin (2015), states that Linguistics is the science of language. It has four branches: (1.) The history of language; (2.) Language acquisition; (3.) Sociolinguistics; and (4.) The philosophy of language. Linguists study the following in each: sounds, morphemes, syntax and semantics. Let's look at the latter in more detail.

Each language has its own set of verbs and consonants, deciding which sounds in its set separate words (for example, "bat" from "pat"); and which are unconscious byproducts of normal speech. We English speakers write "I am going to eat," but what is it we actually say? "I'm gonna eat." Here, a different word is not being communicated ("going to" is the same as "gonna"). But due to the way sounds are created in the mouth, and the rapid nature of speech, these accidents happen hundreds of times every day.

Morphemes are the atoms of meaning. For example, "dog" has one meaning; "dogs" another, that final "-s" instructing you to think of more than one dog. Both "dog" and "-s" are morphemes, meaning you can't break them down into smaller units of meaning. One morpheme can be a word; but many words are made up of one more than one morpheme.

Each language decides what type of morphology it wants. Isolating languages, like Mandarin, stick mostly to single morphemes. Agglutinative, like Turkish, add prefixes and suffixes to morphemes. These add-ons have one meaning apiece. Fissional languages, like English, also add affixes, but these can have more than one meaning. Finally, there's polysynthetic languages, which Native Americans prefer. Here, there aren't sentences so much as single words, and not words so much as a long series of morphemes coming together to communicate everything that a normal sentence would communicate to us. If that sounds incredible, that's because it is. Where language is concerned, the variety can beggar belief.

Language is the expression of thought. A written thought is a sentence. A spoken thought is called an utterance. The organization of everything between the first word and last (syntax) proves to be as inventive.

Finally, there's semantics. "Antisemitic fish diametrically eat past stadiums." This sentence is perfectly constructed but means nothing. There's more to meaning than what's on the surface. When I was young, dudes said "What's up?" to each other. And there was always the smart ass here and there who pretended to take the question literally. "What's up?" means "How are you?" though you'd never know it unless someone told you! Once more, human creativity proves perversely in-depth, for you could memorize all the vocabulary and all the grammar rules of another language and still understand very little faced with real people and the way they really communicate to each other. I've learned that the hard way with Serbian.

The history of language is the history of language change. For details, please see the review I plan on writing for The Story of Human Language by the same author.

How do we learn languages? And why do children have an easier time of it than adults? These are the questions probed by linguists with a bent toward language acquisition.

Sociolinguistics shows the effect on language by that other human invention, society. For instance, language change is a bottom-up phenomenon. The way the working class speaks now is the way the upper classes will speak in the future. Language contact, where two languages meet and exchange ideas, is the reason why today's English is much simpler, in terms of grammar, than its Germanic siblings (not to mention all those French words we think of as naturally English.

Then there's the philosophy of language. What is language? Why? And all the other deep questions.

Does a given language restrict or expand thought? It's an idea many like to believe. But there's only trivial evidence to support such. Otherwise, if you can think it, you can express it.

Is language going to the dogs? Languages are always changing. A language that does not change dies. And languages change by way of the very things grammar snobs despair. The change from Chaucer to Shakespeare is considered grand. To think our educated grandchildren will be saying "I axed U a question and yr all git outta my face" makes us cry? Stop the insanity.

Conclusion

Linguistics is the scientific study of language specifically language form, language meaning, and language in context (David, 1990). The formal study of language has also led to the growth fields like psycholinguistics, which explores the representation and function of language in the mind; neurolinguistics, which studies acquisition, which investigates how children and adults acquire a particular language. Linguistics also includes aspects of human language, such as social, cultural, historical and political factors (Daniela, 2013). Linguistics is primarily descriptive that states features of language without making subjective judgments. On the other hand, linguistics is descriptive which is an attempt to promote a particular linguistic usage over others, often favouring a particular dialect (Bloomfield, 1914: P. 307). An approach to linguistics regard it as the use of the term language to refer to a communication system that developed to support a comparative activity (Wikipedia). Linguistics is a window to understand the brain. Language is a human science. It is distinctive, essential, mysterious, practical, and central to human.

Linguistic science's goal is to show that speaking is more than a matter of knowing words and putting them in order. Linguists have discovered that language is an intricate hierarchy of systems, ever changing in surface appearance but ever consistent in organizational essence.

Linguistics is an art or science in which such grammars are written for the public, to help them become better speakers of their language. Linguistics is the science of natural language; whereas science is a form of inquiry and a form of knowledge that need activity and a mental object. Science is a subjective process which needs a form of cognition, a mental process, theories constructed in individual minds, the content of individual minds is private and personal, knowledge is private and personal, and illusion of objectivity of science and of scientific knowledge (Naïve Theories of Linguistics and Language).

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