Introduction

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APPLIED LINGUISTICS, when referring to the teaching and learning of English as a first, second or foreign language is currently a very significant area of academic research, shared, at least, by two fields of university inquiry: linguistics and English Studies. For years specialists from these two fields have been directly or indirectly doing research in Applied Linguistics, since language has been evidently the raw material of their academic work. And, although they have undoubtedly based their pursuit on different theoretical tenets, they have all had the same goal: a clearer description of language structures and a deeper explanation of how language works. In other words, they have aimed at a better understanding of the nature of language, in order to improve the efectiveness of language teaching and learning as well as to obtain better and more satisfactory results.

There have been several branches that have emerged from this area of scholarly research which is closely associated with language teaching and learning. These branches can be arranged in two large groups: those that have adopted a more pedagogical bent in their examination of language, on the one hand, and those involved in theoretical or descriptive aspects of language, on the other. The interests of the former are more closely concerned with the role of language and its successful exploitation in the classroom (for example, the function of communicative skills), whereas the concerns of the latter are almost exclusively pure linguistic issues (for example, contrastive analysis). *RAEI* is very pleased to devote its fourth number to a better understanding of some of the more relevant topics in the field of applied linguistics.

ENGLISH FOR SPECIFIC PURPOSES (ESP) is probably one of the newest branches stemming from the ever-growing tree of applied linguistics. As Winifred Crombie and Powhiri Rika-Heke state in their «E.S.P.: Fact or Fiction?,» there has been a growing demand for ESP courses over the last years. In this article they examine the meaning of this new label and its place and connections with other types of similar courses (GPE, EAP, EAP, etc.), especially what has been called RRE (Restricted Repertoire English). In a very straightforward and illuminating prose, some of the most appealing theoretical and practical points that have arisen since the concept of «register» emerged from quantitative studies of *corpora* are discussed; the role of speech acts and other pragmatic features are also considered within communicative methodologies. This study comes to the conclusion that all these labels suggesting that courses relate directly to specific

or specifiable purposes, except in the case of RRE, are misleading and should therefore
be abandoned.

ENGLISH LITERATURE AND LANGUAGE TEACHING have probably been the two most closely
connected disciplines in University English Studies and in Applied Linguistics, since in
the past a great many English courses used literary texts as their basic linguistic sup-
port. Two articles deal with the topic of literature and language teaching. Juan José Zaro
Vera in his «Literature as Study and Resource: The Purposes of English Literature
Teaching at University Level» elaborates on the possibility of achieving the two goals
that the literary text offers the young scholar of English Studies: (a) a subject-matter to
be studied as a cultural product and (b) a resource for language learning. Stylistics,
however, emerges as a third conciliatory discipline spanning a gap between literary and
linguistic objectives: the discovery of the role of linguistic devices in the global
meaning of literary texts.

Jenny Elliott de Riverol advocates a similar line of pedagogical collaboration be-
tween literature and language teaching. In her «Literature in the Teaching of English as
a Foreign Language,» she offers her personal experience gained from teaching English
to adult Spanish speakers. Her article offers some practical hints concerned with
classroom activities and the selection of literary material for teaching purposes.

Segmental phonetics and phonology is probably the linguistic component, along
with syntax, that has received the greatest attention from linguists and language teachers
since the advent of structuralism to language teaching. However, suprasegmental or
PROSODIC PHONOLOGY, due to its intrinsic difficulty, has been dealt with more superficial-
ly, and in some cases it has been ignored or disregarded. In her «Stress and Rhythm in
English,» María-Josep Solé concentrates on two phonological features, stress and
rhythm, that give the word or group of words their overall shape, since their easy
intelligibility will largely depend on their appropriate accentual and rhythmic pattern. In
a quite comprehensive analysis of stress and rhythm, María-Josep Solé examines many
of the linguistic factors affected by the influence of stress, such as the effects of stress
on segmental phonemes, the varieties of spoken English distinguished by stress, the
influence of stress on morphological, syntactical and lexical variation, stress and
meaning, the meaning of isochrony, etc. As she claims that, from a teaching point of
view, assigning the right stress pattern at word and sentence level and learring to
produce unstressed syllables is the most fruitful device for achieving adequate pronun-
ciation of English, she advocates instilling into the students of English a sense of
English rhythm. In order to attain this aim, she gives very useful hints for the practice
of stress and rhythm.

CONTRASTIVE ANALYSIS has been a fruitful area of research applied to language
teaching, and also to translation theory and practice, ever since it was inaugurated by
the structuralists in the early sixties, particularly after Robert Lado wrote his *Linguis-
tics across Cultures*. The boom experienced by the generative paradigm over the last
few decades has not at all meant a decline in this type of analysis. On the contrary, new
paths have been opened thanks to the powerful theoretical support provided by this new
paradigm. Two of the articles in this special is ue deal with contrastive analysis within
the realm of generative grammar. In his «Reduction, Fusion and Raising in English and
Spanish,» Francisco Garrudo examines, with clear illustrations, three syntactic problems
which are very common in English but not so in Spanish: clause reduction (*Mary wants
John to come*) clause fusion and raising (*She happened to see you*) and their

implications for language teaching. On the other hand, Joaquín Domínguez in his «The Role of Morphology in the Process of Language Acquisition and Learning» tackles some of the many unsolved morphological problems in linguistic analysis. Domínguez supports the need for a deeper knowledge of the morphological rules and processes in order to reach a better understanding of the mechanisms of the human brain and of the strategies speakers use to increase their lexical capacity. In a section devoted to the role of morphology and the learning of an added language, he draws on an inquiry he carried out in the Escuela Oficial de Idiomas de Barcelona, in which some teaching aspects of lexical and morphological contrastive problems are discussed.

Within the structuralist paradigm, LISTENING COMPREHENSION was just a passive skill, that is, a second grade skill. This implied that its role in language learning (time allotted, number of techniques and exercises developed and used, etc.) was judged to be less relevant than other skills, like speaking, for example. A great deal of the research carried out in the generative paradigm, however, has stressed the primary function of listening in language learning. John Eastman's «Why Listening to English Is Difficult for Spanish Students» offers a clear and comprehensive treatment of this topic. His personal contribution examines not only the linguistic angles of this linguistic and communicative skill but its mental and learning factors as well. After the analysis of these linguistic and psychological factors, two thirds of the article is devoted to practical hints about the teaching of listening comprehension in the classroom.

The generative paradigm has also opened new avenues in a new line of research: language acquisition. Never before had there been so many hypotheses and theories expounded on the topic of LANGUAGE ACQUISITION from a linguistic point of view. The basic theories of the generative paradigm have provided solid support for the new hypothesis of language acquisition and have encouraged this line of research. The *language order hypothesis* is one of the many hypotheses developed within the realm of the generative paradigm. Ray Parker in his «Two Case Studies of Community Language Learning with Possible Implications for the Natural Order Hypothesis» examines the data generated by two experimental series of community language learning sessions. In the first place the article defines the concept of community language learning and the phases of the lessons of each of the case studies: the investment and the reflection phase. In each of the case studies, the description of the event, the analysis of the data and the functions found are presented and discussed. Finally, the author of this study assesses the light that this methodology can shed on the so-called 'natural route,' 'natural sequence' or 'natural order hypothesis' in language learning and language acquisition.

In the recent history of language teaching, COMMUNICATIVE METHODOLOGY is a rather new label. Aquilino Sánchez in his «Keys for an Investigation into the Origins of the Communicative Methodology in Language Teaching» clearly illustrates that most of the new methods are renderings or interpretations of deeply-rooted language teaching principles. Starting with an examination of the teaching scene, this study makes a critical survey of some of the recent ideas in language learning and language acquisition from a communicative point of view. He also analyses the contributions of autonomous learning, that has arisen from the branch of pedagogical thought called progressivism, and of psycholinguistics. Using direct and unmistakeable terms, the author of this article concludes in his final paragraph that at the moment communicative methodology is a complex issue: scholars, textbook authors and teachers do not always mean the same

thing when they use the term, and therefore some more time is still needed to clarify the field and decide which elements are most useful.

In the past, most of the weight in the research done in language teaching methodology was given to the concept of language, since most teachers had a better background in linguistics than in education. In this way, the nature of language has been for many years one of the most controversial issues in language teaching and learning: is language a set of linguistic patterns acquired through habit formation or a set of sentences governed by rules? Consequently education issues like *curriculum* or *syllabus* received much less attention than linguistic concepts like structure, sentence or phoneme, for example. CURRICULAR DESIGN is one of the new labels in this trend towards education issues in language teaching. Fernanda Rodríguez Torras in her «Content-Based Teaching: A Methodological Approach» justifies with unequivocal arguments this new approach and offers clear guidelines for the teaching of English through content, projects and tasks.

Within the same line of curriculum and syllabus design, Celia Florén in her «English Teacher Education: The Need for a New Perspective» tackles some of the challenges faced by the syllabus designer of courses for English language teachers. She discusses some of the problems that she has encountered in her experience as a teacher trainer and offers some suggestions such as awareness-raising activities, for example, for attaining a balance between theoretical subjects and the training of skills.

MOTIVATION is another important topic in language teaching. In the teaching profession there is a clear tendency advocated by those teachers who have little or no faith in new or more linguistic descriptions. They believe that better results could be obtained if more energy and time were allotted to a better understanding of the role of motivation in language learning. José Castro in «A Reappraisal of Motivation: The Cornerstone of L_2 Learning» carries out a quite thorough examination of the role of motivation, its types and sources and several analyses of the various factors which influence it. There is a very original section on some of the most outstanding variables in motivation in language teaching and on the importance of motivating the teacher.

The EVALUATION methods and techniques used in the classroom, along with the linguistic theories that support language description are probably two of the most influential factors in language teaching. María José Martínez Azorín in her «Self-Assessment in Second Language Teaching: Journals» first presents a clear examination of some of the most relevant factors in foreign language evaluation and discusses the dynamic interdependence of purpose, methodology and evaluation within the curriculum. Then the article examines the role of self-evaluation in the second language classroom, and it asserts the great advantages of having students keep a regular journal for this purpose.

The last article of this special issue of *RAEI* offers a useful bibliographical list, which has been prepared by José Mateo and María José Huesca. The list consists of four sections: (a) books on language teaching theory, (b) books for the classroom, (c) books on ESP, and (d) journals and periodicals.