

ENG522 — Applied Linguistics

Midterm Preparation File (Lectures 1–22)

MCQs • Short Questions • Long Questions — with Answers

VU Learning Hub

This file is prepared from the ENG522 handout (Lessons 1–7, Topics 1–32): Introducing Applied Linguistics; Language Development; Teaching and Learning Language — Approaches, Methods and Practices; Error Analysis; Syllabus Designing; and Language Assessment (Testing and Evaluation). All questions are original practice questions written for midterm preparation.

Section A — Multiple Choice Questions (MCQs)

Lesson 1: Introducing Applied Linguistics

1. According to the International Association of Applied Linguistics (AILA), applied linguistics deals with:

- A) The historical development of languages only
- B) Practical problems of language and communication that can be analysed or solved by applying linguistic theories and methods
- C) The teaching of grammar in schools only
- D) The translation of literary texts

Answer: (B) Practical problems of language and communication that can be analysed or solved by applying linguistic theories and methods

2. Ron Macaulay presented “Seven Ways of Looking at Language”. Which of the following is NOT one of them?

- A) Language as meaning
- B) Language as sound
- C) Language as identity
- D) Language as mathematics

Answer: (D) Language as mathematics

3. Ben Rampton (1997) described applied linguistics as:

- A) An open field of interest in language

- B) A branch of phonetics
- C) A method of language teaching
- D) The study of dead languages

Answer: (A) An open field of interest in language

4. In the scope of applied linguistics, forensic linguistics and language planning fall under:

- A) Language and Teaching
- B) Language and Society
- C) Language, Work and Law
- D) Language, Information and Effect

Answer: (C) Language, Work and Law

5. Brumfit (1997) defined applied linguistics as:

- A) The art of translating texts from one language to another
- B) The theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue
- C) The description of the sound system of a language
- D) The preparation of dictionaries only

Answer: (B) The theoretical and empirical investigation of real-world problems in which language is a central issue

6. The British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) was formally established in:

- A) 1967
- B) 1957
- C) 1977
- D) 1994

Answer: (A) 1967

7. According to Widdowson, "linguistics applied" assumes that language problems can be solved by:

- A) Consulting language teachers only
- B) Ignoring linguistic theory completely
- C) The direct and unilateral application of concepts from linguistic enquiry

D) Collecting large amounts of data

Answer: (C) The direct and unilateral application of concepts from linguistic enquiry

8. A survey questionnaire used to collect data is an example of a:

A) Methodology

B) Method

C) Worldview

D) Paradigm

Answer: (B) Method

9. Creswell (2003) classified research worldviews into postpositivism, constructivism, advocacy/participatory and:

A) Behaviorism

B) Structuralism

C) Functionalism

D) Pragmatism

Answer: (D) Pragmatism

Lesson 2: Language Development

10. A child's first meaningful words usually appear at around:

A) Six months of age

B) Twelve months of age

C) Two years of age

D) Three years of age

Answer: (B) Twelve months of age

11. The babbling stage in first language acquisition appears at around:

A) Six months of age

B) Twelve weeks of age

C) Eighteen months of age

D) Five years of age

Answer: (A) Six months of age

12. The holophrastic stage is the stage in which a child:

- A) Combines two words into short sentences
- B) Speaks in telegram-like sentences
- C) Uses a single word to express a whole sentence meaning
- D) Uses adult-like grammar

Answer: (C) Uses a single word to express a whole sentence meaning

13. Children's speech is called "telegraphic" because at this stage they:

- A) Speak very fast like a telegram operator
- B) Omit bound morphemes and many function words, so utterances resemble telegrams
- C) Can only repeat what adults say
- D) Use only nouns

Answer: (B) Omit bound morphemes and many function words, so utterances resemble telegrams

14. In Chomsky's innateness hypothesis, the inborn knowledge of the basic principles of grammar is called:

- A) Universal Grammar
- B) Interlanguage
- C) Langue
- D) Performance

Answer: (A) Universal Grammar

15. The Language Acquisition Device (LAD) is best described as:

- A) A machine used in language laboratories
- B) A set of textbooks for children
- C) The part of the brain that stores vocabulary
- D) An inborn language faculty that converts linguistic experience and innate knowledge into knowledge of a language

Answer: (D) An inborn language faculty that converts linguistic experience and innate knowledge into knowledge of a language

16. An additional language (L2 or foreign language) is typically acquired after the age of:

- A) One year

- B) Three years
- C) Ten years
- D) Five years

Answer: (B) Three years

17. Research estimates that about 97% of people have language represented in the:

- A) Right hemisphere of the brain
- B) Spinal cord
- C) Left hemisphere of the brain
- D) Cerebellum only

Answer: (C) Left hemisphere of the brain

18. In Saussure's distinction, "langue" refers to:

- A) The whole system of a language, while "parole" is an individual utterance
- B) A single spoken utterance
- C) The written form of a language
- D) The sounds of a language only

Answer: (A) The whole system of a language, while "parole" is an individual utterance

19. Systemic Linguistics, which examines the structure of texts and discourse in social context, was developed by:

- A) Noam Chomsky
- B) Leonard Bloomfield
- C) Michael Halliday
- D) Ferdinand de Saussure

Answer: (C) Michael Halliday

Lesson 3: Approaches, Methods and Practices — I (Grammar and its Types)

20. Pānini, regarded as arguably the first descriptive linguist, described which language?

- A) Latin
- B) Sanskrit
- C) Greek

D) Arabic

Answer: (B) Sanskrit

21. Who is known as the father of modern structural linguistics?

A) Ferdinand de Saussure

B) Edward Sapir

C) Franz Boas

D) Kenneth Pike

Answer: (A) Ferdinand de Saussure

22. In transformational generative grammar, the word “generate” means:

A) To produce speech in the classroom

B) To translate a sentence

C) To describe how a linguistic element or string is formed

D) To memorize rules

Answer: (C) To describe how a linguistic element or string is formed

23. In Chomsky’s model, the deep structure of a sentence determines its:

A) Phonetic form

B) Semantic interpretation (meaning)

C) Spelling

D) Handwriting

Answer: (B) Semantic interpretation (meaning)

24. “Never split an infinitive” is an example of a:

A) Descriptive rule

B) Transformational rule

C) Phonological rule

D) Proscriptive rule

Answer: (D) Proscriptive rule

25. Lindley Murray’s influential English Grammar was published in:

A) 1794

- B) 1492
- C) 1957
- D) 1586

Answer: (A) 1794

Lesson 4: Approaches, Methods and Practices — II (Skills and Methods)

26. The Cambridge framework describes good communication skills through four strands: Physical, Linguistic, Cognitive and:

- A) Economic
- B) Historical
- C) Social and emotional
- D) Technical

Answer: (C) Social and emotional

27. “Narrow listening”, suggested by Krashen, means that learners:

- A) Listen only to their teacher
- B) Listen extensively within one chosen topic or one author
- C) Listen only once to every text
- D) Avoid listening outside the classroom

Answer: (B) Listen extensively within one chosen topic or one author

28. The two main goals of the Grammar Translation Method are:

- A) Reading literature in the target language and developing general mental discipline
- B) Fluency in speaking and listening
- C) Passing oral examinations
- D) Learning to communicate while travelling

Answer: (A) Reading literature in the target language and developing general mental discipline

29. In the Direct Method, grammar is taught:

- A) Deductively, through rules given first
- B) Through translation of classical texts
- C) Indirectly (inductively), and translation is not allowed

D) Only through written exercises

Answer: (C) Indirectly (inductively), and translation is not allowed

30. The Audio-Lingual Method is based on which theory of learning?

A) Cognitivism

B) Behaviorism — habit formation through stimulus, response and reinforcement

C) Humanism

D) Constructivism

Answer: (B) Behaviorism — habit formation through stimulus, response and reinforcement

31. Communicative Language Teaching grew out of the:

A) Notional/functional syllabus

B) Grammar translation syllabus

C) Phonetic syllabus

D) Lexical syllabus only

Answer: (A) Notional/functional syllabus

32. In Littlewood's information-gap activities, the main purpose is that learners must:

A) Memorize a dialogue

B) Translate a passage together

C) Pool information they hold separately in order to solve a problem or reach a decision

D) Repeat sentences after the teacher

Answer: (C) Pool information they hold separately in order to solve a problem or reach a decision

33. The Natural Approach was developed by:

A) James Asher

B) Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell

C) N. S. Prabhu

D) Michael Halliday

Answer: (B) Stephen Krashen and Tracy Terrell

34. Total Physical Response (TPR) was developed by James Asher. In TPR, learners mainly

play the roles of:

- A) Teacher and examiner
- B) Translator and writer
- C) Listener and performer, responding physically to commands
- D) Reader and note-taker

Answer: (C) Listener and performer, responding physically to commands

35. Larsen-Freeman (2000) and Mellow (2000) used the term “principled eclecticism” for:

- A) Using one pure method only
- B) Random mixing of classroom activities
- C) Avoiding all established methods
- D) A coherent, pluralistic use of techniques drawn from different approaches

Answer: (D) A coherent, pluralistic use of techniques drawn from different approaches

Lesson 5: Error Analysis

36. The key difference between an error and a mistake is that an error:

- A) Is always made by native speakers
- B) Reflects the learner’s competence (lack of knowledge) and cannot be self-corrected
- C) Is a random slip that the learner can correct at once
- D) Occurs only in writing

Answer: (B) Reflects the learner’s competence (lack of knowledge) and cannot be self-corrected

37. Who is known as the “father of Error Analysis” through his 1967 article “The Significance of Learners’ Errors”?

- A) S. Pit Corder
- B) Jack Richards
- C) Carl James
- D) Rod Ellis

Answer: (A) S. Pit Corder

38. In the behavioristic view, learner errors were regarded as:

- A) Evidence that learning is taking place

- B) A natural part of developing competence
- C) A sign of failure on the part of learners and teachers
- D) Completely unimportant

Answer: (C) A sign of failure on the part of learners and teachers

39. The correct order of Corder's five stages of error analysis is:

- A) Identification, collection, evaluation, description, explanation
- B) Collection of data, identification, description, explanation, evaluation
- C) Description, explanation, collection, evaluation, identification
- D) Evaluation, explanation, description, identification, collection

Answer: (B) Collection of data, identification, description, explanation, evaluation

40. In the utterance "He cooking", the error is classified as an error of:

- A) Omission
- B) Addition
- C) Mis-ordering
- D) Substitution only

Answer: (A) Omission

41. According to Richards (1974), interlingual errors are caused mainly by:

- A) Carelessness of the learner
- B) Faulty teaching materials
- C) Overgeneralization of target language rules
- D) Mother tongue interference

Answer: (D) Mother tongue interference

42. A child who says "goed" and "foots" is showing:

- A) Mother tongue transfer
- B) Overgeneralization of a grammatical rule
- C) A speech disorder
- D) Incomplete application of rules

Answer: (B) Overgeneralization of a grammatical rule

43. Corder classified errors by systematicity into pre-systematic, systematic and:

- A) Interlingual
- B) Covert
- C) Post-systematic
- D) Global

Answer: (C) Post-systematic

Lesson 6: Syllabus Designing

44. The distinction between synthetic and analytic syllabuses was first drawn by:

- A) Wilkins (1976)
- B) Breen (1984)
- C) Yalden (1987)
- D) Candlin (1984)

Answer: (A) Wilkins (1976)

45. In a synthetic syllabus:

- A) Learning starts from whole communicative purposes
- B) The different parts of the language are taught separately, step by step, and learning is additive
- C) No grading of content takes place
- D) Only tasks are used as units

Answer: (B) The different parts of the language are taught separately, step by step, and learning is additive

46. Grammatical and notional-functional syllabuses are examples of:

- A) Process-oriented syllabuses
- B) Procedural syllabuses
- C) Product-oriented syllabuses
- D) Analytic syllabuses only

Answer: (C) Product-oriented syllabuses

47. The procedural syllabus, organised around pedagogic tasks with a focus on meaning, was designed by:

- A) Van Ek
- B) Skehan
- C) Wilkins
- D) Prabhu

Answer: (D) Prabhu

48. Prabhu's three task types are information-gap, opinion-gap and:

- A) Reasoning-gap
- B) Grammar-gap
- C) Vocabulary-gap
- D) Culture-gap

Answer: (A) Reasoning-gap

49. Needs analysis became a recognised stage of syllabus design in the early 1980s, and it was first restricted to:

- A) Children's courses
- B) ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses
- C) Translation courses
- D) Literature courses

Answer: (B) ESP (English for Specific Purposes) courses

Lesson 7: Language Assessment — Testing and Evaluation

50. A proficiency test is designed to:

- A) Measure whether candidates have reached a certain standard of ability in the language, independent of any particular course
- B) Measure only what was taught in one term
- C) Place new students into classes
- D) Find out students' weaknesses for remedial teaching

Answer: (A) Measure whether candidates have reached a certain standard of ability in the language, independent of any particular course

51. A diagnostic test is normally given:

- A) At the end of a course

- B) During a job interview
- C) At the beginning of a course, to discover learners' strengths and weaknesses
- D) Only after the final examination

Answer: (C) At the beginning of a course, to discover learners' strengths and weaknesses

52. A norm-referenced test gives information by:

- A) Comparing a candidate with a fixed standard
- B) Relating one candidate's performance to that of other candidates
- C) Testing one element at a time
- D) Asking candidates to write compositions

Answer: (B) Relating one candidate's performance to that of other candidates

53. Discrete-point testing means:

- A) Testing through dictation and cloze passages
- B) Testing speaking and writing together
- C) Testing only pronunciation
- D) Testing one element of language at a time, item by item

Answer: (D) Testing one element of language at a time, item by item

54. "Reliability is necessary but not sufficient for validity" means that a test:

- A) Must give consistent results, but consistency alone does not guarantee it measures what it intends to measure
- B) Can be valid without being reliable
- C) Needs no consistency of scores
- D) Is valid if it is easy to score

Answer: (A) Must give consistent results, but consistency alone does not guarantee it measures what it intends to measure

Section B — Short Questions (with Model Answers)

1. Define applied linguistics.

Answer: Applied linguistics is an interdisciplinary field that investigates real-world problems in which language is a central issue — such as language teaching, testing, translation and language planning — and tries to solve them by applying linguistic theories and methods, or by developing new frameworks (AILA; Brumfit, 1997).

2. Differentiate between “linguistics applied” and “applied linguistics” (Widdowson).

Answer: In “linguistics applied”, it is assumed that a language problem can be reformulated and solved by directly applying concepts from linguistics alone. In “applied linguistics”, intervention is a matter of mediation: it relates and reconciles different representations of reality — linguistic knowledge as well as the experience and needs of the people involved in the problem.

3. List the five areas in the scope of applied linguistics.

Answer: (1) Language and Teaching — approaches and methods of second language teaching; (2) Language and Society — sociolinguistics; (3) Language and Education/Learning — first and additional language education, clinical linguistics, language testing; (4) Language, Work and Law — workplace communication, language planning, forensic linguistics; (5) Language, Information and Effect — stylistics, critical discourse analysis, translation and interpretation.

4. Distinguish between “method” and “methodology”.

Answer: Methods are the specific techniques used to collect and analyse data — for example, a survey questionnaire or ethnographic fieldwork. Methodology refers to the principles that determine how those methods are selected, deployed and interpreted in a research project.

5. What is the difference between interactional and non-interactional data?

Answer: Interactional data are actual samples of language in use, ranging from elicited conversation (role play, discourse completion tasks) to naturally occurring conversation. Non-interactional data are data *about* language practices rather than samples of them, collected through surveys, questionnaires, interviews, self-reports and standard assessments, usually to test hypotheses or verify findings.

6. Briefly describe the holophrastic and telegraphic stages of first language acquisition.

Answer: In the holophrastic stage (about 12–18 months) the child uses a single word to

convey a whole sentence meaning, e.g. “down” for “put me down”. In the telegraphic stage (from about two years) utterances become longer but bound morphemes and many function words are still missing, so speech resembles a telegram, e.g. “Me wanna show mommy” — although word order is usually correct.

7. What are Universal Grammar (UG) and the Language Acquisition Device (LAD)?

Answer: Universal Grammar is Chomsky’s term for the inborn knowledge of the fundamental organizing principles shared by the grammars of all human languages. The LAD is the innate language faculty in the child’s brain that uses this inborn knowledge together with the language input from the environment to construct the grammar of the native language.

8. Which individual-difference variables are considered most important in second language learning?

Answer: Research on the “good language learner” (e.g. Naiman and colleagues’ study of Canadian learners of French) found no single conclusive psychological profile. However, ability — intelligence and language aptitude — together with motivation are generally regarded as the primary individual-difference variables that affect success in second language learning (Gardner, 2006).

9. Distinguish between competence and performance.

Answer: Competence is the ideal speaker-hearer’s internalised knowledge of his language — the system of rules he has constructed in his mind. Performance is the actual use of language in concrete situations, which may contain slips and errors. The competence–performance distinction lies at the heart of generativism.

10. Differentiate between descriptive and prescriptive grammar.

Answer: Descriptive grammar describes how a language is actually used by its speakers, based on empirical observation of real speech. Prescriptive grammar tells speakers how they *should* speak or write, laying down rules of correctness — prescriptive rules to be followed and proscriptive rules (e.g. “never split an infinitive”) to be avoided — usually based on a prestige variety.

11. State the two goals of the Grammar Translation Method and one major weakness.

Answer: Its goals are (1) to develop students’ reading ability to a level where they can read literature in the target language, and (2) to develop their general mental discipline. A major weakness is that speaking and listening are neglected: classes are conducted in the mother tongue, rules are learnt by rote, and learners end up unable to use the language for communication.

12. What are the main beliefs of the Direct Method?

Answer: The Direct Method holds that learners should experience the target language as they experienced their mother tongue: no translation is allowed, concepts are taught through objects and contexts, oral training comes first and supports reading and writing, and grammar is taught indirectly. Typical techniques include question–answer exercises, dictation, reading aloud, self-correction and conversation practice.

13. What is comprehensible input in the Natural Approach, and what are the stages of learner production?

Answer: Comprehensible input is language input that is slightly beyond the learner's current level ($i + 1$) but still understandable through context and extra-linguistic information. Learners pass through a pre-production stage (responding physically or by pointing), an early-production stage (single words, short phrases, either–or answers) and a speech-emergent stage (role play, opinions, group problem solving).

14. Describe the roles of learners and the teacher in Total Physical Response.

Answer: In TPR, learners are listeners and performers: they listen attentively and respond physically to the teacher's commands, and they begin speaking only when they feel ready. The teacher plays an active, direct role — deciding what to teach, modelling and presenting new material, and selecting supporting materials; detailed written lesson plans are recommended because the action moves fast.

15. Differentiate between an error and a mistake.

Answer: An error is a systematic deviation from the target language that arises from lack of knowledge — it reflects the learner's imperfect competence and cannot be self-corrected. A mistake is a performance slip caused by factors such as fatigue, memory limitation or emotional strain; it is irregular, and learners can correct it themselves once their attention is drawn to it. Even native speakers make mistakes.

16. Distinguish between interlingual and intralingual errors (Richards, 1974).

Answer: Interlingual errors are caused by interference from the learner's mother tongue — the learner transfers L1 patterns into the target language. Intralingual errors arise within the target language itself during learning, when the learner has not yet fully acquired its system — for example through overgeneralization of a rule, ignorance of rule restrictions, incomplete application of rules, or false hypotheses.

17. What is overgeneralization? Give an example.

Answer: Overgeneralization is the application of a grammatical rule in cases where it does not apply. Children acquiring English routinely produce forms such as “goed”, “bringed”, “foots”

and “mouses” — they have worked out the regular past-tense and plural rules and apply them to irregular items as well; such forms are not imitated from adults but show the child actively constructing grammar.

18. Name Corder’s five stages of error analysis.

Answer: (1) Collection of data — gathering samples of learner language (massive, specific or incidental samples); (2) Identification of errors — distinguishing errors from mistakes; (3) Description of errors — classifying them, e.g. as omission, addition, substitution or mis-ordering; (4) Explanation of errors — establishing their sources; (5) Evaluation of errors — judging their seriousness and deciding on correction.

19. Differentiate between curriculum and syllabus (Candlin, 1984).

Answer: A curriculum is a broad, theoretical policy document concerned with general statements about language learning, its purposes and experience, evaluation, and the roles of teachers and learners; it reflects a country’s educational philosophy. A syllabus is more localised and operational: it specifies the content of a particular course — what is to be learnt, and in what order — as teachers and learners apply the curriculum in the classroom.

20. Distinguish between analytic and synthetic syllabuses (Wilkins, 1976).

Answer: A synthetic syllabus teaches the different parts of the language separately, step by step, so that learning is an additive process of gradually accumulating parts until the whole structure is built up; grammatical criteria are used to grade items. An analytic syllabus is organised around the purposes for which the learner is learning the language and the performances needed to achieve them; learning is viewed holistically, and content is selected according to learners’ real-world communicative needs.

21. What two situations are examined in a needs analysis?

Answer: A needs analysis examines (a) the present situation — the learner’s current proficiency, background, deficiencies and knowledge gaps, preferred learning styles, motivation and time available; and (b) the target situation — the communicative tasks the learner will have to perform, the goals expected by the learner and the institution, and the standard of performance required. The gap between the two guides course design.

22. Define validity and reliability, and name any four characteristics of a good test.

Answer: Validity is the extent to which a test measures what it intends to measure and nothing else. Reliability is the consistency or stability of test scores over repeated trials or across raters; a test may be reliable without being valid, but a valid test must also be reliable. Characteristics of a good test include: objectivity, objective-basedness, comprehensiveness and validity (others in the handout list: reliability, comparability, practicability, simplicity and

scorability).

23. Distinguish between direct and indirect testing.

Answer: Testing is direct when candidates must perform exactly the skill we wish to measure — for example, testing writing by asking candidates to write a composition; it also produces a helpful backwash effect. Indirect testing measures the abilities underlying a skill — for example, using a grammar test as an indirect measure of writing ability; its weakness is that the relationship between test performance and the real skill is often weak and uncertain.

Section C — Long Questions (with Model Answers)

1. Discuss applied linguistics as a problem-solving discipline. What kind of professional is the applied linguist?

Answer: Applied linguistics is concerned with practical problems of language and communication — in areas such as language teaching, speech problems, translation, language planning and testing — and it addresses them by drawing on linguistics and on many other disciplines. The handout draws three main implications about the nature of this work:

- **A jack of all trades:** real-world language problems can rarely be solved by looking at one aspect of language alone, so the applied linguist needs a working knowledge of many areas — language, philosophy, sociology, experimental design and more — and the ability to filter out whatever is relevant to the problem in hand.
- **A go-between, not an enforcer:** applied linguists act as consultants or servants rather than masters. They offer an interpretation and advice (“you could try this way of teaching”), while the client weighs all the other factors and decides. Like a garage mechanic, the applied linguist responds to problems raised by practitioners instead of deciding in advance what their problems are.
- **More than description:** sheer description of an area of language is descriptive linguistics, not applied linguistics. Description may contribute to a solution, but applied linguistics begins when knowledge is used to explore and change a real problem.

In short, applied linguistics is a quest for common ground between experience and expertise: it keeps language at its core, uses rigorous descriptive tools, and measures its success by the difference it makes to real language problems.

2. Trace the main stages of first language acquisition from birth to about five years of age.

Answer: Children are communicatively ready from birth and pass through a remarkably regular sequence of stages on the way to adult-like grammar:

- **Pre-linguistic stage:** infants cry in ways parents can interpret; by about 12 weeks cooing begins, and by six months cooing develops into babbling — one-syllable-like utterances that are essential preparation for speech.
- **Holophrastic stage (about 12–18 months):** first meaningful words appear around twelve months; the child uses one word as a whole sentence (“down” = “put me down”). Comprehension already exceeds production.
- **Two-word stage (from about 18 months):** children combine words (“baby chair”,

“doggy bark”) and begin using inflections, though syntactic categories are still limited.

- **Telegraphic stage (from about two years):** utterances grow longer and show phrase structure, but bound morphemes and function words are missing, so speech resembles a telegram (“I good boy”). Word order is usually correct.
- **Later development:** vocabulary grows rapidly — roughly a word per waking hour up to about 2,000 words by age five — and by three the grammatical complexity of utterances is close to colloquial adult language; by five, the child’s grammar is essentially adult-like.

The speed and uniformity of this process, despite imperfect input and little correction, is the main evidence behind Chomsky’s innateness hypothesis and Universal Grammar.

3. Compare the four schools of linguistic thought: functionalism, structuralism, generativism and cognitivism.

Answer: The four schools differ mainly in what they take language to be and where they locate explanation:

- **Functionalism** treats language first and foremost as an instrument of communication, shaped by the purposes it serves and the contexts of use. Examples include Halliday’s Systemic Linguistics and Role-and-Reference Grammar. Functionalists work with patterns, preferences and choices rather than rigid rules, which makes their accounts rich but hard to formalise.
- **Structuralism**, rooted in Saussure, holds that elements can only be understood within the larger structure. The sign is arbitrary, meaning is relational — a word means what it does through its differences from other words — and language (*langue*) underlies individual utterances (*parole*).
- **Generativism**, launched by Chomsky’s *Syntactic Structures* (1957), seeks an explicit model of the ideal speaker’s competence. It distinguishes deep from surface structure, explains their relation through transformations, and grounds acquisition in an innate Universal Grammar and the Language Acquisition Device.
- **Cognitivism** studies the mental processes inside the learner’s “black box” — sensation, perception, attention, encoding and memory — which behaviourism ignored. Emerging with the cognitive revolution of the 1950s, it influenced language teaching and instructional design from the 1970s onwards.

4. “Description and prescription are two hostile camps, yet each needs the other.” Discuss with reference to language study and teaching.

Answer: Linguistics takes a descriptive approach: it explains language as it actually is, uncovering the unconscious rules speakers follow. The schoolbook tradition is prescriptive: it

tells learners how they should speak and write, privileging a prestige variety and enforcing rules inherited largely from Latin-based traditional grammar. In practice, the two camps often treat each other with hostility — prescriptivists accuse descriptivists of wanting to abolish all rules, while descriptivists accuse prescriptivists of uninformed prejudice, and school textbooks keep copying outdated material instead of using the findings of linguistics.

- **Prescription depends on description:** a teacher can only prescribe rules that someone has first described accurately; good prescription is impossible without adequate prior description.
- **Learners need prescription:** adult foreign-language learners actively want to be told how to speak, so a purely descriptive stance does not meet classroom needs.
- **Why the conflict is emotional:** language is bound up with identity and group membership, so criticism of someone's language feels like a challenge to the self — unlike disagreements in physics, which nobody takes personally.

An applied linguistic perspective therefore seeks a working partnership: linguists describe, and pedagogues turn sound descriptions into teaching materials.

5. Compare the Grammar Translation Method, the Direct Method and the Audio-Lingual Method in terms of goals, use of the mother tongue, and attitude towards errors.

Answer: The three methods represent successive reactions to one another in the history of language teaching:

- **Grammar Translation Method:** aims at reading literature in the target language and training mental discipline. Classes are conducted in the mother tongue; rules are learnt deductively and by rote and practised through drills and translation of classical texts. Speaking, listening and pronunciation are neglected, so learners usually cannot communicate. Error is treated as failure to apply the memorised rule.
- **Direct Method:** arose as a reaction against GTM at the end of the nineteenth century. Its goal is the ability to communicate in the target language. Translation is prohibited, meaning is conveyed through objects, contexts and demonstration, grammar is taught inductively, and the skills follow the natural order — listening, speaking, reading, writing. Self-correction is encouraged: the teacher gives the learner a second chance rather than simply supplying the answer.
- **Audio-Lingual Method:** emerged in the USA in the late 1950s under behaviourist learning theory. Language learning is habit formation: learners respond to stimuli through pattern drills and dialogue memorisation, with the teacher modelling, directing and immediately correcting performance. Learners are discouraged from initiating interaction because mistakes might become bad habits; accuracy of response is reinforced at every step.

6. Explain the main principles of Communicative Language Teaching and the Natural Approach.

Answer: Both approaches put communication, rather than grammatical form alone, at the centre of language teaching, but they build on it in different ways:

- **CLT origins:** it grew out of the notional/functional syllabus, which organises teaching around notions learners need to express and functions they need to perform, integrating formal and functional properties of language.
- **CLT classroom practice:** learner-centred pedagogists make the form–meaning connection explicit and use activities such as pair work, group work, role play, simulations and information-gap tasks, in which learners must pool information or solve a problem; success is judged by whether the intended message gets across.
- **Natural Approach:** developed by Krashen and Terrell, it claims that learning should reproduce natural first-language acquisition. The teacher supplies comprehensible input slightly above the learners' level ($i + 1$), keeps the affective filter low, does not force speech before learners are ready, and does not correct errors directly.
- **Learner development:** production grows through pre-production, early-production and speech-emergent stages, with learners deciding when to speak and taking responsibility for securing comprehensible input.

7. What is error analysis? Describe Corder's five stages of error analysis.

Answer: Error analysis (EA) is the linguistic study of the errors second-language learners make, comparing the errors found in learner language with the target language itself. Established in the 1960s by S. Pit Corder, it replaced the behaviourist confidence of contrastive analysis by showing that many errors cannot be predicted from L1–L2 differences but come from learners' own faulty inferences about the new language. Corder (1974) proposed five stages:

- **Collection of data:** samples of learner language are gathered — massive samples from many learners, a specific sample from a few learners, or an incidental sample from a single learner, in speech or writing.
- **Identification of errors:** deviations are identified and separated from mere mistakes or slips; the analyst also decides the target-language norm, and distinguishes overt errors (clearly malformed) from covert errors (well-formed but not meaning what the learner intended).
- **Description of errors:** errors are classified, commonly as omission, addition, substitution/mis-information and mis-ordering, or by systematicity into pre-systematic, systematic and post-systematic errors.
- **Explanation of errors:** the sources of errors are established — interlingual transfer,

intralingual processes, or psycholinguistic, sociolinguistic and discourse factors.

- **Evaluation of errors:** the seriousness of errors is judged and correction decisions are taken, through teacher correction, self-correction or peer correction techniques.

8. Discuss the major causes and sources of learner errors.

Answer: Error analysts trace learner errors to two broad sources, together with several specific classroom causes:

- **Interlingual errors:** caused by mother tongue interference — when learning new habits, the learner's old L1 habits intrude, for example by translating an L1 sentence word by word into the target language.
- **Intralingual errors:** arising inside the target language during learning. Richards lists overgeneralization (creating a deviant structure from other target-language structures), ignorance of rule restrictions (applying a rule where it does not belong), incomplete application of rules (failing to develop a structure fully) and false hypotheses (misunderstanding a distinction, e.g. using "was" as a general past-tense marker).
- **Overgeneralization:** the learner extends a regular rule to irregular cases — "goed", "foots" — a process that passes through phases until exceptions are learnt.
- **Other causes:** carelessness linked with low motivation, the inherent difficulties of the target language (e.g. *teached* modelled on *reached*, or *beeth* on *teeth*), and reliance on loan words whose spelling is easier to remember.

Unlike the behaviourist view of errors as failure, the mentalistic view treats them as inevitable evidence of the learner's developing competence.

9. Define syllabus design and explain the two great dichotomies of syllabuses: analytic/synthetic and product/process.

Answer: A syllabus is a specification of the content of language teaching — a statement of what is to be learnt, selected and graded so that teaching and learning become more effective; in Breen's words, it is a plan of what is to be achieved through teaching and learning. Syllabus design is traditionally debated through two dichotomies:

- **Synthetic vs analytic (Wilkins, 1976):** a synthetic syllabus teaches the parts of language separately and step by step, grading items by grammatical complexity, frequency and contrastive difficulty, so that the whole structure is accumulated gradually. An analytic syllabus starts instead from the communicative purposes of the learner; content is drawn from situations, topics and tasks, and learning is treated as holistic.
- **Product vs process:** a product-oriented syllabus focuses on outcomes — the knowledge and skills learners will have at the end, as in grammatical and notional-

functional syllabuses. A process-oriented syllabus focuses on the learning processes and skills themselves; the procedural syllabus and the process syllabus are its main examples.

In practice, most real syllabuses combine both orientations rather than belonging purely to one side.

10. Describe the situational, functional-notional and task-based syllabuses.

Answer: These three syllabus types all grew out of the communicative approach, which aims at communicative competence:

- **Situational syllabus:** units are organised around specific situations such as “At the Post Office” or “The Job Interview”, usually taught through dialogues whose value lies in their communicative effectiveness within the situation. It gives concrete, motivating contexts, but the situations themselves dictate the structures learnt, so full communicative competence is not guaranteed.
- **Functional-notional syllabus:** content is organised around functions — the communicative purposes of the speaker (personal, interpersonal, directive, referential, imaginative) — and notions, the meaning elements (expressed through nouns, verbs, prepositions and so on) needed to realise them; the actual utterances used are called exponents.
- **Task-based syllabus:** built around tasks — goal-directed activities in which meaning is primary, the outcome is evaluated, and there is a real-world relationship (Skehan, 1998). In its strong form the task is the unit of instruction; in its weak form tasks are embedded alongside other teaching components.

11. “Needs analysis is the first step in syllabus design.” Explain, describing what is analysed and how data are collected.

Answer: Needs analysis is the set of techniques and procedures used to obtain information about learners, and about the situations and purposes for which they need the language, before any course is designed. Recognised as a stage of syllabus design only in the early 1980s — first in ESP — it is now the starting point of the great majority of language courses, because a course designed without it may simply be the wrong course for the learners in front of the teacher.

- **Present situation analysis:** the learners’ current proficiency, the deficiencies and gaps between present and target proficiency, educational and social background, age, occupation, preferred learning styles, motivation, aptitude and time available.
- **Target situation analysis:** the communicative tasks learners must perform, their immediate needs, and the goals held at three possibly conflicting levels — the learners’

own wants, the expectations of the institution that will use their skills, and the general curriculum of the teaching institution — plus the expected standard of performance.

- **Data collection:** interviews and questionnaires with learners, consultation with employers and colleagues, analysis of documents learners will have to read, observation of the situations of use, discussion with experienced teachers, and placement tests or review of previously covered textbooks.

The results determine the goals, duration, intensity, method, objectives and the selection, sequencing and gradation of course content.

12. Describe the main kinds of language tests, and list the characteristics of a good test.

Answer: Language tests are classified by their purpose and by the way they are constructed and scored:

- **Proficiency tests** measure general command of the language against a standard (e.g. Cambridge examinations), regardless of any course taken. **Achievement tests** measure how far course objectives have been achieved — final achievement tests at the end of a course and progress tests during it. **Diagnostic tests**, given at the start, pinpoint strengths and weaknesses to guide further teaching, while **placement tests** assign learners to the level or class appropriate to their abilities.
- **Construction contrasts:** direct testing requires the exact skill being measured (writing tested by writing), while indirect testing measures underlying abilities; discrete-point tests examine one element at a time, whereas integrative tests (composition, cloze, dictation) combine many elements; norm-referenced tests compare candidates with each other, criterion-referenced tests compare them with a fixed standard of what they can do; objective tests have fixed right answers, subjective tests require scorer judgement. Communicative language testing assesses the ability to perform context-specific tasks in the target language.
- **Characteristics of a good test:** objectivity, objective-basedness, comprehensiveness, validity, reliability, comparability, practicability, simplicity and scorability.