

Program Proposal

Doctor of Philosophy in Applied Linguistics and Technology

Department of English, Iowa State University

1. Name of the proposed major: Applied Linguistics and Technology

The name "applied linguistics" is known world-wide to denote analytic and empirical linguistic approaches for investigating topics related to second language acquisition and language use in context. The name has been institutionalized in professional organizations (American Association of Applied Linguistics), a national research center and information clearinghouse (Center for Applied Linguistics), journal titles (*Applied Linguistics*, *Issues in Applied Linguistics*, *International Review of Applied Linguistics*), university department names (Department of Applied Linguistics at Portland State University), and five Applied Linguistics Ph.D. programs in the U.S. (UCLA, Georgetown, Georgia State, Northern Arizona, and USC). The full name of our proposed program, Applied Linguistics and Technology, is unique in the field.

2. Name of the degree

Doctor of Philosophy

3. Name of the department involved

English

4. Need for the proposed program

Technology and Global Contexts

Technology is playing an integral role in second language learning and assessment in all facets of society and it is our intention to begin to meet the need for applied linguists able to address problems in language analysis, assessment, teaching, and learning through the use of technology. Applied linguistics is a relatively new and rapidly developing field that investigates the interrelationships between people and the language they use in real, concrete settings. This field employs a variety of distinctive analytical and empirical methods to find solutions to such language problems as how best to teach English as a second language, how to evaluate language ability fairly, how to program a computer to recognize linguistic input, or how to analyze the linguistic structure of professional prose (e.g., the experimental scientific article) so that the structure can be taught effectively.

One reason a new program in applied linguistics and technology is needed is to prepare professionals who can work with the language issues associated with increasing internationalization and diversity in society. In Iowa and the United States generally a large proportion of the population uses nonstandard varieties of English and languages other than English – the most recent national figures place the number at 33,000,000.

The consequences of this linguistic diversity affect every aspect of life in the U.S. today. For example, many U.S. businesses instruct employees in English, schools educate teachers about learners from other cultures, and standardized testing institutions produce language tests and investigate test fairness of their products for examinees who do not come from the cultural mainstream. Research and practice in applied linguistics work to understand fundamental elements of this diversity in education, the workplace, and other areas of social and professional life, and they provide guidance in educational programs that seek to enhance awareness of diversity in society.

A second effect of the global context of communication is the need to increase our understanding of the fundamentals of communication through the study of language in specific contexts. For example, we need to investigate the problems associated with cross-disciplinary scholarly communication, international business negotiations, international academic exchange, communication in international air traffic control, physician/patient interaction in inner-city hospitals, increasing international migration, and technology transfer. Applied linguists are conducting research leading toward the understanding of problems associated with the burgeoning of international and intercultural communication in social, scientific, technical, educational and vocational contexts.

Despite the growing need for applied linguistics Ph.D.s, the number of comprehensive applied linguistics programs in the U.S. is likely to remain small because senior applied linguists faculty at U.S. universities currently are few in number and spread across the traditional disciplines. Few institutions in the country have a sufficient number of applied linguistics faculty, sufficient cross-disciplinary commitment, and clear vision to develop and maintain a Ph.D. program in applied linguistics and technology. Iowa State is an institution that has all three.

Students with a Ph.D. in applied linguistics and technology from Iowa State will be able to compete for a growing number of academic appointments in departments of applied linguistics and English. They will find an increasing number of professional opportunities for conducting applied linguistic research on English in research and development foundations, international publishing enterprises, and government agencies. Colleagues in applied linguistics programs elsewhere have reported that the majority of their graduating Ph.D.s enter tenure track positions in a variety of academic departments because the number of degrees in applied linguistics granted annually is not very large relative to the positions available. Graduates also find jobs administering ESL, doing research in research and development foundations, working in publishing, and for government agencies such as the Peace Corps and Foreign Service.

The Chair of TESL/Applied Linguistics at UCLA writes that trends "indicate that our Ph.D.s in Applied Linguistics are much more successful in landing good jobs after graduation than are their counterparts in, say, theoretical linguistics or English Lit...We really aren't worried very much about jobs for our graduates. The jobs seem to be out there." This observation is borne out by the growing number of jobs for professionals educated to teach and test ESL as well as to do research in this area and educate others. Each year we see an increase in the number of job announcements seeking applied linguists for positions at universities, colleges, community colleges, and businesses.

For example, just within a recent three month period, eleven job opportunities were advertised for applied linguists, including four in language testing, three in teaching English as a second language, one each in socio-linguistics, computer assisted instruction, and the training of international teaching assistants, and one open. Many of these positions, particularly overseas, are now filled by marginally qualified graduates.

Market Survey

In January, 2002, eighteen leading M.A. in TESL or Applied Linguistics programs were identified as programs with similarities to Iowa State's current MA program. Each program's Web site was examined for its requirements before contacting the head or a designated faculty member responsible for information about each of the programs. Faculty from 11 programs were successfully contacted:

Columbia University	University of Hawai'i-Manoa	Pennsylvania State University
Georgia State University	Michigan State University	University of Utah
University of Illinois, Urbana-Champaign	University of Minnesota San Francisco State University	Northern Arizona University School for International Training

Nine of the 11 programs are state-supported universities. Two had enrollments between 11-25, 2 between 26-50, four between 51-99, and three 100 and over. Six of the programs have Ph.D. programs in Applied Linguistics. Overall, 10-20 % of M.A. candidates continue on for a Ph.D. The number of those continuing is lower at institutions that only grant an M.A. and over 30% at three programs that have both an M.A. and a Ph.D.

One question asked of each program concerned the availability of courses emphasizing professional uses of technology, such as corpus linguistics or computer assisted language learning. While all of the programs recognize the importance of this area, only seven of the programs offered regular opportunities in at least one of these areas. Of these, only four offered regular courses, with the other programs offering short-term training seminars or special topics courses.

We also inquired whether the faculty members were aware of students who would be interested in a Ph.D. program in Applied Linguistics with an emphasis on the uses of technology. Seven were enthusiastic about the possibility of such a program, with several of them aware of 2-3 students currently looking for such a program. Because no Ph.D. currently focuses on applied linguistics and technology, such students currently enroll in Education, Computer Science, or piece together a program with a variety of courses and independent study options.

Corroborating this evidence about the existence of a ready market for our proposed doctoral program is the fact that each year two or three of our current MA students go on to PhD programs elsewhere, students who would stay at Iowa State for doctoral studies in applied linguistics and technology. For example, currently, five of our MA students have applied to doctoral programs elsewhere. In addition, members of our faculty regularly receive inquiries via e-mail or in person from prospective students concerning the availability of a doctoral program in applied linguistics with focus on technology at Iowa State.

In sum, respondents to this survey as well as our own experiences have indicated a very positive environment for our proposed doctoral program.

5. Objectives of the proposed program including the student learning outcomes

The proposed program is intended to educate graduate students about English language teaching and assessment with particular emphasis on issues and practices related to technology use in these areas.

In terms of learning outcomes, students will:

- synthesize fundamental issues and concepts in applied linguistics
- be able to use computer technology for constructing and implementing materials for teaching and assessing English
- conduct empirical research and engage in critical analysis to evaluate computer applications for English language teaching and assessment
- engage in innovative teaching and assessments through the use of technology
- evaluate multiple perspectives on the spread of technology and its roles throughout world, particularly as they relate to English language teaching

Measures for evaluating a student's success in meeting these objectives include:

- reformulation of knowledge from coursework in applied linguistics to course projects, portfolio materials, and dissertation
- development of software for course assignments and for technology in teaching
- participation in evaluation projects in technology courses and in dissertation research
- use of technology in teaching and in technology practicum courses
- reasoned selection of critical perspective toward technology in course papers and the dissertation

This proposed program will entail coursework falling into three main content areas: applied linguistics, technology, and research methods.

6. General description of the program.

The proposed curriculum for the program consists of coursework distributed among the following areas: a series of Foundation Courses; Core Courses in Applied Linguistics; Core Courses in Technology; Research Methods; Electives; and Dissertation Research. Students will also be required to pass a portfolio assessment, a preliminary examination, and a final oral examination.

a. Twelve credits of Foundation courses:

Computer Methods in Applied Linguistics (Engl 510)
Introduction to Linguistic Analysis (Engl 511)
Grammatical Analysis (Engl 516)

Sociolinguistics (Engl 514)

b. Fifteen credits of Applied Linguistics courses:

Second Language Acquisition (Engl 517)

Second Language Assessment (Engl 519)

Literacy: Issues and Methods for Nonnative Speakers of English (Engl 524)

Methods in Teaching Listening and Speaking Skills to Nonnative Speakers of English (Engl 525)

English for Specific Purposes (Engl 528)

c. Nine credits in Technology in Applied Linguistics

Computer-Assisted Language Learning (Engl 526)

Computational Analysis of English (New course: Engl 520)

Practicum in Technology and Applied Linguistics (New course: Engl 688)

d. Twelve credits in Research Methods

Discourse Analysis (Engl 527)

Research methods in applied linguistics (New course: Engl 623)

A course in Qualitative Research Methods (e.g., Stat 401)

A course in Quantitative Research Methods (e.g., Soc 513)

e. Twelve credits of Electives

Four courses, two of which must be Seminars in Applied Linguistics and one of which must be in technology. The Seminar in Applied Linguistics (Engl 630) is a new, repeatable course with differing topics, such as feedback in CALL programs, response analysis in assessment programs, computer-based assessment of Business English, programming for interlanguage analysis. Students must take this course twice to fulfill this requirement. The course in technology may be either a seminar in applied linguistics or a course in another discipline.

Other electives may be taken in disciplines such as the following:

English Literature

Education

Anthropology

Foreign Language Literature and Linguistics

Rhetoric and Professional Communication

Computer Science

f. 12 dissertation credits

Total: 72 credits

New Courses

Computational Analysis of English (Engl 520)

This course will focus on the use of computers to analyze spoken and written texts, recognize elements of discourse and content, and output natural language. Students will also study the use of natural language processing technologies in ESL instruction and assessment (Proposal attached).

Research Methods in Applied Linguistics (Engl 623)

This course will cover major issues in research design and analysis with specific focus on applied linguistic work, including both quantitative studies and qualitative methodologies such as ethnographies of online language learning (Proposal attached).

Practicum in Technology and Applied Linguistics (Engl 688)

Students will work with faculty in the program and in other departments on English language-related projects by applying technology to address pedagogical, research, and assessment problems in academic and professional contexts (Proposal attached).

Seminar in Applied Linguistics and Technology (Engl 630)

Applied linguistics seminars will offer in-depth study of a specific technology-related applied linguistics problem. It will survey the existing literature and research methods and require a research project designed to give students experience at conducting empirical research. The Applied Linguistics seminars are repeatable courses since different topics will be covered each year (Proposal attached).

Examinations

Portfolio Assessment: Doctoral students in Applied Linguistics and Technology will submit a portfolio for assessment of their academic writing ability, no later than their third semester in the program. The portfolio should represent the best scholarly work of Ph.D. students to determine their readiness to complete research and writing tasks in applied linguistics by evaluating their ability to define problems/issues, make and Support scholarly claims, cite and synthesize previous research literature, and sustain a coherent argument. The portfolio will include the following, completed during the student's coursework for the Ph.D. in Applied Linguistics and Technology at Iowa State (i.e., work completed in an MA program prior to entry into the Ph.D. may not be included):

- A research paper of 10-20 typed, double-spaced pages. This should be on a topic related to the student's research interests.

- A shorter paper of 2-5 typed double spaced pages (may not be longer than the research paper) such as a book, test, or software review, an analysis of issues, or an annotated bibliography
- A review of the literature on a current topic in applied linguistics and technology

Each portfolio will be evaluated by an Examination Committee for proficiency in scholarly writing and for indications of potential for completing the work for the degree

Preliminary Examination: The preliminary exam will be taken just after the student finishes course work and is ready to concentrate on the dissertation. The student will submit a dissertation proposal and pilot study to the POS committee. The committee will then set one or two questions that will move the student along in thinking about the dissertation research, addressing areas not fully covered in the proposal or pilot study. The student will have three weeks to write the answers to the questions.

The final oral exam will be the defense of the dissertation.

Foreign Language Requirement

Given the international and intercultural nature of applied linguistics, holders of doctorates in the field should have personal experience learning a second language and be able to conduct some research or teaching activities in a language other than English. Students may, however, vary with respect to the focus they want to give to oral or written skills. We therefore propose a language requirement with the following options:

Students who are native speakers of English can satisfy the language requirement by

1. Passing an oral examination in a foreign language, conducted under the supervision of the student's POS Committee, that ensures the student demonstrates language ability at the Advanced Level of the American Council on the Teaching of Foreign Languages proficiency scale OR
2. Passing a reading/translation test, translating published work in applied linguistics from a foreign language into English OR
3. Completing three years or the equivalent of college-level study in a single foreign language with grades of A or B.

Non-native speakers of English from countries where English is not the medium of instruction do not need to satisfy one of the above criteria. The TOEFL score submitted for admission and the ability to do doctoral-level work in English is considered evidence of their ability to use a second language for their scholarly activities.