

QUESTÕES E PROBLEMAS/SQUIB

Peace linguistics for language teachers

Linguística da paz para professores de línguas

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ABSTRACT

This text aims at presenting the concept of Peace Linguistics – origins and recent developments -- as being implemented in the author's ongoing work in that emerging branch of Applied Linguistics. Examples of applicational possibilities are given, with a focus on language teaching-learning and a Checklist is provided, of topics for suggested linguistic-educational research, centered on communicative peace.

Key-words: *Peace Linguistics; Language Teachers; Communicative Peace.*

RESUMO

O texto objetiva apresentar o conceito de Linguística da Paz-- origens e desenvolvimento recente -- como está sendo implementado pelo autor em seu trabalho naquele ramo emergente da Linguística Aplicada. Apresentam-se exemplos de possibilidades aplicativas do referido conceito, com foco no ensino-aprendizagem de línguas ,oferecendo-se também um Checklist com tópicos sugeridos para pesquisa linguístico-educacional, centrada na paz comunicativa.

Palavras-chave: *Linguística da Paz; Professores de Línguas; Paz Comunicativa.*

Peace Linguistics-origins and recent developments

The embryo of what was to become a new branch of Linguistics

Peace Linguistics - appears in an entry written for a Posfácio (an Afterword) to Mattoso Camara's *Dicionário de Linguística e Gramática* (Gomes de Matos, 1977). In that brief piece, called *Linguística Humana* (Human Linguistics), a dual question was asked: How can language users and methods-materials for language education be further humanized linguistically? A brief answer to such question was published 10 years later in an article for a Greek publication in *Applied Linguistics* in which I made a case for Peace as a new universal in language education (Gomes de Matos, 1987). An important step toward the birth of Peace Linguistics took place when with the publication of an entry by Crystal (1999) in which we are told that that way of doing Linguistics is "an approach which emerged in the 1990s among many linguists and language teachers in which linguistic principles, methods, findings and applications were seen as a means of promoting peace and human rights at a global level. It emphasized the value of linguistic diversity and multilingualism ". Since that applied linguist's pioneering definition, the concept of Peace Linguistics has been extended. Thus, in Gomes de Matos (2005), Peace Linguistics is characterized as interdisciplinary approach aimed at helping educational systems create conditions for the preparation of human beings as peaceful language users.

More recently, this author defined Peace Linguistics in terms of what peace linguists are expected to do, by prioritizing the humanizing nature of language use and also being aware of the other side of communicative reality: dehumanizing uses of languages (Gomes de Matos, 2012). The importance of a focus on the dual nature of communicative life - both humanizing and dehumanizing can be seen by the recent launch of The **Journal of Language Aggression and Conflict** (published by John Benjamins since January 2013). This editorial initiative provides researchers with a source which can be said to be complementary to **Peace and Conflict: Journal of Peace Psychology** (by published by the American Psychological Association).

In proposing an Applied Peace Linguistics, there is a dual challenge involved: on the one hand, appliers are challenged to identify states of agreement, harmony, communicative dignity, communicative peace and also identify states of disagreement and disharmony such as communicative conflict, discord, contention, and dissension. Given such twofold responsibility, applied peace linguists would probe research questions such as these:

1. What is a lack of harmony marked by, communicatively: Hostility? Bad-tempered quarrel?
2. What communicative exchanges involve disagreement or conflict?
3. What vocabulary and phraseologies does a person rely on when arguing, quarelling, squabbling, or bickering?
4. Communicatively, what are public disputes like?
5. How are offensive remarks reacted to in public (in a TV debate, for instance)?
6. How do language users apologize they cause humiliation?
7. How do language users monitor/reword/rephrase communicative insensitivity or contemptuous rudeness?
8. How do we make regretful acknowledgment of an offense or an insult?

9. What culturally-influenced phraseologies are used when language users ask pardon for an unintended offense?
10. How do we blame someone/persons when we consider them responsible for a misdeed or a failure: do we treat them with communicative dignity?

Peace linguists and appliers of Peace Linguistics can benefit from Principles and Practices for Conflict Resolution such as presented by peace psychologist Coleman (2012). In an insightful, inspiring chapter section aimed at as a Basic Primer, he states 13 principles and 23 procedures which “applied correctly, can go a long way toward shepherding most conflicts in a positive and satisfying direction, and enhancing the general health and well-being of individuals and communities” (p.63). Interestingly, two of Coleman’s principles are of a specific communicative nature: Listen carefully, Be fair, firm, and friendly (p.59). Among Coleman’s 23 procedures, two stand out for their applicability to peace linguistics contexts:

Dialogue (enhancement of empathy, compassion and understanding) and **Reconciliation** (based on apology, forgiveness, and new trust), (61-62). **A LIF-PLUS approach and two key-concepts in Peace Linguistics.**

In Gomes de Matos (2012) an approach to Peace Linguistics is proposed which is embedded in two concepts: **communicative peace** and **communicative dignity**. By LIF-PLUS is meant the communicative life-improving force of peaceful language use. This author’s experience in conducting workshops and seminars for language teachers (in English and Portuguese) has convinced him that the improvement of communicative life can benefit from two convictions:

1. Life can be improved communicatively when language use is thought of - and implemented - as a peacebuilding force and
2. Life can be communicatively improved when language users are educated to learn to use languages peacefully for the good of persons, groups, Humankind.

Four guidelines based on the two beliefs

I - Language should have peacebuilding, peacesupporting, peacesustaining function in human life

II - Languages should be taught/learned/used for human-improving, dignifying purposes

III - Language users/learners should learn how to interact and be interacted with in constructive, character-elevating ways

IV - Language teachers should be educated to know how to help their students communicate in peaceful ways, with a focus on communicative peace as a deeper dimension of everyday communicative competence.

In the next section, attention will be focused on how Peace Linguistics can be translated into classroom practices.

Peace Linguistics applied to Second Language Learning

The following set of rhymed reflections will give you you an idea of how insights from Peace Linguistics can be placed at the service of communicatively peaceful pedagogical purposes. Each pair of **rhymed reflections(RR)** has been labeled, so as to systematize the presentation. Language teachers are asked to create their own RRs, so as to activate another important cognitive ability: their linguistic creativity.

On humanizing your correction

When your student`text production you decide to correct,
Their linguistic creativity do you know how to respect?

On harmonizing disagreement

When in a discussion, students seriously disagree do you take on the challenge and cordially help them eye-to-eye to see?

On promoting intercultural understanding

When students unintentionally offend another culture, how do you help them recognize and respect intercultural differences?

On communicative peace

Communicative peace and communicative dignity relies on the pursuit of good communicative conduct always applies

On communicative problem resolution

To a student's verbally aggressive behavior, finding an effective solution calls for the application of constructive communicative problem resolution

Humanizing a student's grade

In dealing with a student's questioning over a grade, how can you find a mutually satisfactory solution?

By humbly reconsidering your assessment and promoting mutual peace of mind

On peaceful phraseology

If we use peaceful phraseologies, tensions can be reduced or alleviated and our responsibility as communicative peacemakers will be demonstrated

Use of Peace Linguistics by teachers

Language teachers who on Peace Linguistics rely on communication-improving actions dignifyingly apply

Classroom relations improvement

Relations between your students you can help improve

When to be friendly to all your students you prove

The language teacher as a Peace Linguistics applier: questions for research

How can my (name of language) language students:

1. express their communicative dignity in speaking, writing, or signing?
2. nurture compassion communicatively?
3. convey communicative harmony during classroom interactions and in on line communication?
4. improve mutual understanding, bilingually or multilingually?
5. cultivate communicative serenity (through uses of prose or poetry)?
6. prevents acts of communicative aggression?
7. improve their communicative humility by apologizing when being unfair to someone?
8. use languages to improve intra and intergroup communicative harmony?
9. help peace initiatives, movements, projects (of a local, national, regional, or international scope)?
10. imagine and establish a Peaceful Language Users` Club in your school or community?
11. humanize their critical/questioning competence in a discussion?
12. encourage peaceful uses of languages through artistic productions?
13. contribute to strengthening uses of languages on the Internet for international cooperation and solidarity?
14. use languages peacefully as communicative-life-improving forces?
15. educate themselves and others (in their family, for instance) to learn to use languages peacefully for the good of all living beings?

Conclusion

The author's concluding remarks will be presented through **alliterations**, a technique which can further enhance the human-improving relevance of Peace Linguistics. Teachers are asked to add their alliterations and thus show how else they can apply the insights presented in this brief article.

Note that alliterations can be crafted on either phonetic or spelling basis.

In this case, we opt for the initial repetition of the same consonant in a meaningful, memorable phrase:

AAA Apologize right after addressing a person aggressively

BBB Build bridges for a better world

CCC Communicate cooperatively and cordially

MMM Make your messages models of communication moderation

PPP Plan your prose/poetic posters peacefully

RRR Refrain from replying rudely

More could be said about the applications of Peace Linguistics for Second Language Education but in this digital age, additional sources can be easily accessed, so readers are urged to google and download the online references provided below.

A chapter summary through rhymed reflections

Peace Linguistics language teachers can apply
if with two principles they committedly comply

The first principle is called Communicative Peace:
doing one's best for all kinds of conflict to cease

The second principle of Peace Linguistics as Communicative
Dignity is known

It is realized when elevation of character, conduct and communication is sown

Language teachers apply Peace Linguistics when they treat their students with respect and in every interaction with students, a teacher creates a constructive effect

When Language teachers apply Peace Linguistics, they educate students to use languages for the good of Humankind and always nurture each student's peace of mind

When in all language-learning environments, Peace Linguistics be given a permanent place Language Education will change and put on a happy, peacebuilding face.

For a recent, complementary perspective to Peace Linguistics, see Friedrich (2012), the first book on Nonkilling Linguistics, with a focus on Practical Applications. Chapter 8 may be of interest to language teachers: it is that applied linguist's interview with Francisco Gomes de Matos, who makes suggestions on the applicability of Nonkilling Linguistics for language education purposes.

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