Modern primary teachers must adapt literacy programmes and ensure efficient learning for all. They must also support children with language and literacy difficulties, children learning English as an additional language and possibly teach a modern foreign language. To do this effectively, they need to understand the applied linguistics research that underpins so many different areas of the language and literacy curriculum. This book illustrates the impact of applied linguistics on curriculum frameworks and pedagogy. It captures the range of applied linguistics knowledge that teachers need, and illustrates how this is framed and is used by policy makers, researchers, teacher educators and the other professions who work with teachers in schools. It considers how to effect professional development that works. It is essential reading for primary teachers but also for speech and language therapists, educational psychologists, learning support teachers and all those doing language or literacy research in the primary classroom.

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Applied Linguistics and Primary School Teaching

Edited by

Sue Ellis
and
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‘non-standard’ linguistic varieties, and the relationship between language, education and social class.

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Many of the chapters in this edited collection began as papers given at an invited seminar series sponsored by the University of Strathclyde, the British Association of Applied Linguistics and Cambridge University Press. The seminars, *Applied linguistics: what should primary teachers know, and how?*, explored the relationship between applied linguistics, primary education and teacher knowledge. They sought to review some of the ways that applied linguistics impacts on the modern primary school curriculum and our understanding of it, and to explore the type of understandings of applied linguistics that could empower primary school teachers to create an effective and appropriate curriculum for all children in their charge.

In proposing the seminar series, four important themes were considered. One was the direct contribution that applied linguistics researchers have made to the content of the language and literacy curriculum in primary schools and to how it is framed and taught. A second explored the role of applied linguistics in understanding how language is used in schools and communities, and the wider implications of this for teachers and education policy makers. The third theme concerned the implications of legislation for inclusive education: as primary school classes increasingly include children with speech, language and communication difficulties, class teachers must work effectively with professionals such as educational psychologists, learning-support teachers and speech and language therapists to adapt curriculum content and delivery in order to support and develop the speech, language and communication of such educationally vulnerable children. The fourth theme concerned the variety of languages spoken in the modern primary school and the new knowledge demands this makes of teachers.

Discussion of the papers ranged across both what modern primary teachers might be expected to know and how such knowledge might most usefully be contextualised and developed effectively. Seminar participants explored the changing context of primary education, the range of demands on primary teachers to engage with applied linguistics ideas and frameworks, and the explicit and implicit assumptions and beliefs about the knowledge that class teachers might be expected to have. The debates reflected different views of
the core knowledge that is needed, the form that such knowledge might take if it is effectively to enhance teaching capacity, and the most efficient and helpful ways to develop applied linguistics knowledge in initial and continuing teacher education, as well as the role of educational policy in driving, shaping and institutionalising this new knowledge.

Seminar speakers and participants were cross-disciplinary researchers from the fields of linguistics and ethnographic-, discourse- and corpus-linguistics; psycho-linguistics; literature; psychology; English language learning; foreign language learning and speech and language therapy, as well as education policy makers, and those involved in initial primary teacher education and continuing professional development. We have sought to maintain this broad range of perspectives in the selection and content of chapters for this book.

We should like to thank the University of Strathclyde, the British Association of Applied Linguistics and Cambridge University Press for sponsoring the seminar series, which led to the commissioning of this book, and to David Alcock, former Education Librarian, University of Strathclyde, for bibliographic expertise. Our thanks go also to the seminar participants and speakers for stimulating papers and thought-provoking discussion.
Editors’ notes and conventions

In adopting editorial conventions for this volume, we have been concerned with accessibility, and therefore with keeping technical language to a minimum. Where authors have wished to highlight specific letters, letter combinations or words, we have either underlined them, or used brackets, single quotation marks or italics. Words in foreign and ancient languages are also italicised.

Where the context is non-specific, we have used the term ‘child’ throughout, rather than ‘pupil’ or ‘student’, to avoid international confusion or confusion with student teachers, and to avoid privileging educational terms over those used outside school. We have in general used UK professional titles, but have asked all authors to be highly specific about the countries and jurisdictions to which they are referring, as policies and practices are often limited to designated geographical and political areas. Please note that the Former Department for Children, Schools and Families (DCSF) in England changed to the Department for Education on 12th May 2010. The current web address is: www.education.gov.uk.

We have used Scottish English modern spelling throughout, which happily is identical to that of British English.