

Over the last twenty years, applied linguists have made significant empirical breakthroughs in understanding how people (both children and adults) acquire a second language. These findings have increasingly been incorporated into language teaching texts and handbooks; however, individual instructors are often ill-informed about the nature of these new insights. I will discuss both those aspects of applied linguistics, as well as those of more traditional linguistic analysis, which are particularly applicable to teaching students how to read Classical languages — especially Latin.

I. Using Linguistics to teach Latin. Students learning Latin face three great obstacles: vocabulary, complex morphology, and an unfamiliar syntax. Despite the difficulty of each of these, recent language-acquisition research has shown that the greatest obstacle to fluency is vocabulary (Coady 1996: *Second Language Vocabulary Acquisition: A Rationale for Pedagogy*; Lindzey 2004: *CAMWS* 14.2). Instructors must stress (in exercises, classroom work, and quizzes) the importance of a large reading vocabulary. When discussing vocabulary, instructors should cite modern cognates whenever possible, but this will sometimes entail introducing simple trends in historical linguistics so that students can use their knowledge of modern languages to help in the acquisition and reinforcement of Latin vocabulary. This is especially true when teaching students with substantial Spanish vocabularies where simple patterns are easily learned: e.g. Latin *ó* > Romance *ue* (*corpus* > *cuerpo*, *bonus* > *bueno* etc.).

Within morphology, instructors should begin with a focus on aspects of the paradigmatic system that are largely agglutinating, such as accusative singular *-m*, or the Latin imperfect's regular *-b-*. Only after these regular patterns are in place should they begin to drill students on more irregular ones, e.g. 3rd-conjugation perfects. I will discuss recent work on acquisition of morphology in second-language learners, focusing on studies of morpheme hierarchies. I will only briefly touch on syntactic issues, but it is important that instructors understand that students sometimes fail to understand grammar points not because of Latin's unfamiliarity but because of peculiarities of English syntax, which they are often confronting for the first time.

II. Using Latin to teach Linguistics. There is an equally important link between Classical languages and linguistics. Instructors must recognize that most Classical students will not continue beyond the second year of Greek or Latin, and a substantial number will not advance beyond the first. In this context, the traditional paradigmatic approach to teaching Latin and Greek — although it may not be the best for reading fluency — remains an excellent introduction to grammar and the lexical roots of English and Romance languages. It is an instructor's job to try to tie as many of these aspects together and give all students — not only Classical specialists — useful information to help them in all academic endeavors after they have completed their Classical courses.