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## **INTERDISCIPLINARY APPROACHES IN MODERN LINGUISTICS: PERSPECTIVES AND CHALLENGES**

Language is a complex phenomenon which is not only the main means of communication, but plays a central role in our conduct, and cannot be separated from such constructs as consciousness, thinking and mental activity. Linguistics as a study of languages is forced to overcome its boundaries and get into other fields, such as philosophy, history, area and regional studies, arts, music, drama, logics, statistics and math, artificial intelligence and computer programming, law and criminology, clinical studies and medicine, genetics, anthropology, language teaching, and even physics.

Interdisciplinary nature of linguistic research comes into action as soon as we move on from such a traditional descriptivist question as “*What?*” to proper data interpretation and analysis, therefore, ask more fundamental questions like “*Why?*” and “*How?*” These two obviously cannot be answered within a purely linguistic paradigm of research and will consequently demand insights into other disciplines related to the field of study.

Polish researchers Monika Połczyńska, Łukasz P. Pakuła, Dorota Jaworska state: “Whatever attitude to interdisciplinarity one has, it seems almost trivial to state that sciences do converge. Even a cursory glance at the methodologies adopted in modern linguistic research reveals that it is via blending paradigms that scientists arrive at new and more nuanced insights. Because it pushes the boundaries of knowledge, interdisciplinarity gives birth to new research fields. Complexities which might have been overlooked or ironed out now come to light. Above all, the movement towards interdisciplinarity can be viewed as a testimony to the fact that

language does not exist in a vacuum” [4, 11]. Therefore, it is obvious and logical that linguistic research can demand establishing links with other scientific disciplines.

Although arguments for an integrative approach to research and learning advanced from Plato to von Humboldt, “interdisciplinarity”, as it is generally understood today, probably originated in the mid-1920s [1]. According to R.J. Ellis interdisciplinarity in Humanities/Social Sciences teaching since the mid-1970s has come to be defined as a learning mode involving the exploration of issues, problems and knowledge through integration and synthesis of theoretical and/or methodological procedures which draw upon more than one discipline or challenge conventional disciplinary approaches [1]. It has proved particularly relevant to linguistics, which has developed strongly-defined interdisciplines (such as psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics) and to area studies (both within and without modern European language departments), which characteristically draws upon several disciplines [1]. In fact, combining methodologies of different disciplines has created a number of borderline disciplines like psycholinguistics, neurolinguistics, forensic linguistics, sociolinguistics, ethnolinguistics, ecolinguistics, historical linguistics, clinical linguistics, corpus and computational linguistics etc.

Interdisciplinarity and the tendency to use various approaches from different disciplines and combine them under a common denominator have become fashionable and now in terms of popularity can compete with so call cognitive paradigm in linguistics. Professor Henry Widowson reasonably notes “It has to be said that the term ‘interdisciplinary’ has taken on something of the character of a buzzword, a token expression of general approbation, not dissimilar from expressions like *multicultural*, *democratic values*, *international community*” [3, 95]. At the same time developing interdisciplinary approaches proves to be challenging. Moreover, talking about integrative paradigms in linguistics does not imply simple manifestation of its vitality and topicality, but should lead to successful solutions of real life issues. One of the problems which arise while proceeding from a pure theory to practice is the lack of professionals ready for an interdisciplinary research and able to conduct it. Therefore, what is really crucial is training professionals who are if not specialized in

two or more disciplines, at least are trained and prepared for conducting interdisciplinary research and are open for gaining new knowledge required for solving current scientific issues. Consequently, it demands a considerable rethinking of the role of other disciplines in the process of a prospective language professional training and bringing some changes both into the curriculum itself (it means that a set of subjects studied by a student should satisfy his/hers cognitive interests) and, definitely, into the content of the studies disciplines and methodology of teaching them. Such programs are already created and are practiced at some universities. For example at Western University in Canada they are realizing a project of interdisciplinary approaches to linguistics. According to the team's idea they are to realize two aims: first, to consolidate and expand existing interdisciplinary research on language – understood in the broad sense of a system of symbols which is known and used; second, to introduce specific initiatives in undergraduate and graduate instruction and in research to expand and improve linguistics as construed in an inclusive and interdisciplinary sense [see: 2].

Interdisciplinarity in linguistics, no matter how natural and axiomatic may seem at first sight, demands its own well-trained professionals and, of course, sufficient funding. The sooner we understand the importance of taking real steps towards creating systematic bridges between disciplines, the sooner we will come to real outcomes and scientific breakthroughs in linguistics.

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