

THE LIBRARY OF CONGRESS

Dewey Section

To: Jonathan Furner, Chair
Decimal Classification Editorial Policy Committee

Cc: Members of the Decimal Classification Editorial Policy Committee
Karl E. Debus-López, Chief, U.S. Programs, Law, and Literature Division

From: Rebecca Green, Assistant Editor
Dewey Decimal Classification
OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc.

Via: Michael Panzer, Editor in Chief
Dewey Decimal Classification
OCLC Online Computer Library Center, Inc.

Re: Prescriptive linguistics and applied linguistics

Relocations

From	To	Topic
T4—071	T4—80071	Broad works on studying and teaching of a language that are not limited to the prescriptive approach
407.1	418.0071	

When Table 4 was re-introduced in DDC 18, the conundrum that governs T4—8 to this day was already evident. Despite modifications over the next several editions and another change with the current edition, an equivalence or near equivalence between applied linguistics and standard usage of the language / prescriptive linguistics in the DDC has been maintained throughout.

DDC 18:

T4—8 Standard usage of the language (Applied linguistics)

...

DDC 19:

T4—8 Standard usage of the language (Applied (Prescriptive) linguistics)

...

DDC 20:

T4—8 Standard usage of the language (Prescriptive linguistics) Applied linguistics

...

DDC 23:

T4—8 Standard usage of the language (Prescriptive linguistics)

...

Class here applied linguistics . . .

A common distinction considered with regard to language is that between prescriptive linguistics, with its focus on the so-called proper use of language, and descriptive linguistics, with its focus on the actual use of language.

What, if any, relationship exists between prescriptive linguistics and applied linguistics? To consider this question, we must first have a clear idea what applied linguistics encompasses. Excerpts from the page for applied linguistics on the website for the Linguistic Society of America (<http://www.linguisticsociety.org/resource/applied-linguistics>) are instructive:

Applied Linguistics

The term 'applied linguistics' refers to a broad range of activities which involve solving some language-related problem or addressing some language-related concern. It appears as though applied linguistics, at least in North America, was first officially recognized as an independent course at the University of Michigan in 1946. In those early days, the term was used both in the United States and in Great Britain to refer to applying a so-called 'scientific approach' to teaching foreign languages, including English for nonnative speakers. Early work to improve the quality of foreign language teaching by Professors Charles Fries (University of Michigan) and Robert Lado (University of Michigan, then Georgetown University) helped to bring definition to the field as did the 1948 publication of a new journal, *Language Learning: A Quarterly Journal of Applied Linguistics*.

During the late 1950s and the early 1960s, the use of the term was gradually broadened to include what was then referred to as 'automatic translation'. In 1964 following two years of preparatory work financed by the Council of Europe, the Association Internationale de Linguistique Appliquée (the International Association of Applied Linguistics usually referred to by the French acronym AILA) was founded and its first international congress was held in Nancy, France. Papers for the congress were solicited in two distinct strands—foreign language teaching and automatic translation.

Applied Linguistics Today

Over the intervening years, the foci of attention have continued to broaden. Today the governing board of AILA describes applied linguistics 'as a means to help solve specific problems in society...applied linguistics focuses on the numerous and complex areas in society in which language plays a role.' There appears to be consensus that the goal is to apply the findings and the techniques from research in linguistics and related disciplines to solve practical problems. To an observer, the most notable change in applied linguistics has been its rapid growth as an interdisciplinary field. In addition to foreign language teaching and machine translation, a partial sampling of issues considered central to the field of applied linguistics today includes topics such as language for special purposes (e.g. language and

communication problems related to aviation, language disorders, law, medicine, science), language policy and planning, and language and literacy issues. . . .

The American Association for Applied Linguistics (AAAL) gives a similar, but slightly broader, view of what applied linguistics encompasses: “language education, acquisition and loss, bilingualism, discourse analysis, literacy, rhetoric and stylistics, language for special purposes, psycholinguistics, second and foreign language pedagogy, language assessment, and language policy and planning” (<http://www.aaal.org/?page=AboutAAAL>).

The Wikipedia article on applied linguistics (http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Applied_linguistics) again gives a similar, yet still broader, enumeration of what applied linguistics includes:

Applied linguistics is an interdisciplinary field of linguistics. Major branches of applied linguistics include bilingualism and multilingualism, computer-mediated communication (CMC), conversation analysis, contrastive linguistics, sign linguistics, language assessment, literacies, discourse analysis, language pedagogy, second language acquisition, lexicography, language planning and policy, interlinguistics, stylistics, pragmatics, forensic linguistics and translation.

What then is the connection—if any—between prescriptive linguistics and applied linguistics? One pivot point only appears to exist: language education, a core aspect of applied linguistics, often focuses on standard (or proper) usage of language.

Treating applied linguistics as a subject that approximates the whole of a class about standard usage of language or prescriptive linguistics is unhelpful and confusing. To tease them apart appropriately, we first need to identify where prescriptive linguistics and applied linguistics are covered in the classification.

Prescriptive linguistics in the DDC

The Manual note at 410 gives guidance on implementing the prescriptive vs. nonprescriptive distinction:

Prescriptive linguistics

Use 410, 411–417, 419, and 420–490 plus notation 1–7 from Table 4 for works on nonprescriptive approaches to linguistics (e.g., descriptive and theoretical linguistics), which are concerned with describing or explaining language usage as it does or did exist, without regard to an ideal of correct usage. Use 418 and 419–490 plus notation 8 from Table 4 for works on prescriptive approaches, which are concerned with promoting standard or correct usage of language, i.e., trying to learn to speak or write like educated native users of a standard form of a language. For example, use 415 and notation 5 from Table 4 for descriptive works about grammar, but use 418 and notation 82 from Table 4 for prescriptive works about grammar, e.g., descriptive works on French grammar 445, prescriptive works on French grammar 448.2. However, use 413 and notation 3 from Table 4 for dictionaries, regardless of whether they are prescriptive or descriptive, e.g., French dictionaries 443.

Use the number for nonprescriptive approaches for comprehensive works containing both nonprescriptive and prescriptive linguistics, e.g., a collection containing both descriptive and prescriptive papers about grammar in general or the grammar of many different languages 415. If in doubt, prefer the number for nonprescriptive approaches.

This Manual note implies that all of 418 and, by extension, T4—8 fall under the rubric of prescriptive linguistics. This is possibly true for many of the works classed using 418.4 or T4—81–86, but what is inherently prescriptive in translating (T4—802–804, 418.02–418.04) or in use of a spoken language or a manually coded form of a spoken language for communication with and by deaf people (T4—89)? These topics are not prescriptive in nature, but, as we will see, they are aspects of applied linguistics. Prescriptive linguistics is limited to T4—81–86.

We also have another problem. Not only do we have T4—8¹ Standard usage of the language (Prescriptive linguistics), but we also have T4—1–5 Description and analysis of the standard form of the language. A class-elsewhere note at T4—8 instructs us to “class purely descriptive linguistics in –1–5.” How can the classes in the T4—1–5 span be purely descriptive if they are limited to standard forms of the language²?

The core problem here is that “standard” is being used in two ways: (1) to differentiate between a standard form of the language and variations (e.g., dialects) of the language and (2) to differentiate between prescriptive and descriptive approaches to language. The phrases “standard *form* of the language” and “standard *usage* of the language” were probably meant to differentiate between these two uses.³ But actual language use is criterial of *descriptive* linguistics, making “standard usage” a poor indicator at T4—8 of *prescriptive* linguistics. We tentatively recommend resolving the issues here by doing two things: (1) rewording the class-elsewhere note at T4—8 to say “class descriptive linguistics in –1–5” and (2) deleting “standard usage of the language” from the caption at T4—8. Both recommendations, however, will be revisited.

Applied linguistics in the DDC

Table 1 below indicates where specific applied linguistics topics are indexed in Table 4, in the 400s, or, if the interdisciplinary number is not in the 400s, elsewhere in the classification.⁴

The table makes clear that the various aspects of applied linguistics are not collocated in the DDC. The interdisciplinary numbers for some applied linguistics topics fall outside Table 4 and the 400s, while applied linguistics topics inside Table 4 and the 400s are dispersed. This

¹ Parallels are found in the 400s, but we focus on T4 because its development is fuller.

² The Manual note at T4—1–5, T4—8, vs. T4—7 notes that a language may have multiple standard forms, but seems to imply there is only one standard form per locale.

³ In the Relative Index, the phrase “standard language” is used for both, with only the absence/presence of the subheading “applied linguistics” distinguishing between them.

⁴ Several applied linguistics topics identified previously—computer-mediated communication (CMC), forensic linguistics, interlinguistics—have not been indexed and are not included.

Applied linguistics topics	Corresponding DDC numbers		
	T4	400	Elsewhere
Bilingualism and multilingualism	T4—042	404.2	306.446
Contrastive linguistics		410, 418	
Conversation analysis			302.346
Discourse analysis	T4—0141	401.41	
Foreign language teaching	T4—019, T4—8	401.93, 418	
Language acquisition and loss	T4—019	401.93	
Language and literacy issues	T4—84	418.4	
Language assessment	T4—076	407.6	
Language education	T4—80071	407.1, 418.0071	
Language for special purposes	T4—0147	401.47	
Language policy and planning			306.449
Lexicography	T4—3028	413.028	
Machine translation	T4—8020285635	418.020285635	
Pragmatics	T4—0145	401.45	
Psycholinguistics	T4—019	401.9	
Rhetoric and stylistics			808
Second language acquisition	T4—019, T4—8	401.93, 418	
Sign linguistics	T4—89	419	
Translation	T4—802	418.02	

Table 1. Location of applied linguistic topics in DDC

suggests that a series of see references are needed from the number for comprehensive works on applied linguistics to its various aspects.

But where should comprehensive works for applied linguistics be classed? For this question, we need to talk about 418 rather than T4—8 (since the latter is not an assignable number). It would be convenient to let 418 itself be the number for comprehensive works on applied linguistics, because of the relevance of the topics at 418.0x. But what about comprehensive works on prescriptive linguistics? Shouldn't they also be classed in 418? But if comprehensive works on both applied linguistics and prescriptive linguistics are in the same number, as is the case now, we haven't really solved our problem.

What kinds of works are actually classed in 418 and its standard subdivisions (418.00x)? Here we find a big difference in favor of applied linguistics. A WorldCat search on “applied linguistics” as a subject under 418 or its standard subdivisions (Applied linguistics being an LCSH) retrieves 1125 hits. A WorldCat search on “Standard language” as a subject (this being the LCSH for prescriptive grammar, the closest we get among LCSHs for prescriptive linguistics) under 418 and its standard subdivisions retrieves only 40 hits. Comprehensive works on prescriptive linguistics do not exist in the numbers that comprehensive works on applied linguistics do. We therefore propose to class comprehensive works on applied linguistics in 418 and tentatively conclude not to class comprehensive works on prescriptive linguistics there.

Revisiting both applied linguistics and prescriptive linguistics

We previously identified language education as a pivot point between applied linguistics and prescriptive linguistics. All (formal) language education is inherently applied linguistics. At the same time, much of formal language education is probably driven by a prescriptive approach to language.

The Manual note at 407.1, T1—071 vs. 401.93, 410.71, 418.0071, T4—80071 indicates that 407.1 should be used “for broad works on language education not limited to the prescriptive approach and comprehensive works on the study and teaching of both language and literature,” while 418.0071 should be used for works on how to study or teach language using a prescriptive approach. (A similar distinction is made between the use of T4—071 and T4—80071.) But as we have seen, language education, whether using a prescriptive approach or a non-prescriptive approach, qualifies as applied linguistics. Moreover, discerning whether language education is limited to a prescriptive approach is not easily done. We therefore propose to limit 407.1 and T4—071 to comprehensive works on both language and literature, leaving 418.0071 and T4—80071 for works on how to study or teach language, whether the approach is explicitly prescriptive or not.

Where does this leave prescriptive linguistics? We have already noted that no LCSH exists for prescriptive linguistics per se. Indeed, a search on “prescriptive linguistics” in WorldCat titles retrieves only 2 titles: (1) a 1963 work entitled *Language standardization: studies in prescriptive linguistics* and a 1986 technical report entitled *Prescriptive linguistics and plain English: the case of "whiz-deletions"*. This leaves us to ask if we even need to account for prescriptive linguistics. As it turns out, the DDC makes use of the distinction between prescriptive and descriptive approaches in only two contexts (differentiating between prescriptive vs. descriptive approaches to punctuation and between prescriptive vs. descriptive approaches to grammar), but these provide sufficient justification for maintaining the distinction. In Table 4, the distinction applies between T4—1–5 and T4—81–86, but because of the sparse development under 418, the distinction in the 400s applies between 411–415 and all of 418. For the sake of uniformity, we choose not to create a centered entry at T4—81–86; instead we propose to mention prescriptive linguistics in the class-here notes at T4—8 and 418 rather than in the caption. The caption at T4—8 and 418 then becomes Applied linguistics. This still leaves us with applied linguistics and prescriptive linguistics in the same number, but the presence of prescriptive linguistics at T4—8 and at 418 is to support the prescriptive vs. descriptive distinction in two specific contexts via hierarchical force.

The major changes we propose to make are these:

- At T4—8 and 418: Change the caption from Standard usage of the language (Prescriptive linguistics) / Standard usage (Prescriptive linguistics to Applied linguistics; replace applied linguistics with prescriptive linguistics in the class-here note. Add a scatter see reference for aspects of applied linguistics. Revise notes at T4—8 and 418, as appropriate.
- Relocate broad works on language education / study and teaching of a language not limited to the prescriptive approach from 407.1 to 418.0071 and from T4—071 to T4—80071 by rewording the Manual note at 407.1, T1—071 vs. 401.93, 410.71, 418.0071, T4—80071 and providing history notes at all ends of the relocations.

407.1, T1—071 vs. 401.93, T4—019, 410.71, 418.0071, T4—80071**Education in language vs. Language acquisition**

Use 407.1 for comprehensive works on the study and teaching of both language and literature. Use 410.71 for works on the study and teaching of linguistics. Use 418.0071 for works on how to study or teach language.

Use notation for the specific language, plus notation 071 from Table 1 (which is incorporated in Table 4), for works on studying and teaching the linguistics of that language and comprehensive works on studying and teaching both the language and its literature, e.g., comprehensive works on studying and teaching French language and literature 440.71. Use notation 80071 from Table 4 for works on how to study or teach a specific language, e.g., how to teach basic French 448.0071. If in doubt, prefer T1—071.

Use 401.93 for works on the psychology of learning language informally, as a child learns from its parents. Use T4—019 for the psychology of learning a specific language informally. Use 418.0071, or T4—80071 for a specific language, for the psychology of formal study and teaching of language. Use 401.93, or T4—019 for a specific language, for comprehensive works on the psychology of learning language both formally and informally. If in doubt, prefer 401.93 or T4—019.

> **—1–5 Description and analysis of the standard form of the language**

Class writing systems, phonology, etymology, dictionaries, grammar of historical and geographic variations, of modern nongeographic variations of the language in —7; class applied linguistics, prescriptive linguistics in —8; class comprehensive works in the base number for the language (adding 0 when required to make a three-figure number), e.g., comprehensive works on phonology, etymology, dictionaries, grammar of standard French 440

See Manual at T4—1–5, T4—8 vs. T4—7

—8 Applied linguistics

Class here works for people learning a second language, prescriptive works for native speakers learning the acceptable patterns of their own language

Class descriptive linguistics in —1–5; class dictionaries in —3; class applied linguistics applied to historical and geographic variations, to modern nongeographic variations of the language in —7

For a specific aspect of applied linguistics provided for elsewhere, see the aspect, e.g., language for special purposes —0147, rhetoric 808.04

See Manual at T4—1–5, T4—8 vs. T4—7; also at 410

418 Applied linguistics

Including comprehensive works on instruction in lipreading with respect to multiple languages, comprehensive works on use of signs and fingerspelling for manual coding of multiple standard spoken languages

Class here prescriptive linguistics

Class descriptive linguistics in 411–415; class dictionaries in 413; class lexicography in 413.028; class applied linguistics applied to geographic variations, to modern nongeographic variations of languages in 417.2

For use of signs and fingerspelling for manual coding of a specific spoken language, see the language, plus notation 891 from Table 4, e.g., use of signs and fingerspelling to represent standard English 428.91, use of British Sign Language signs to represent standard English 428.9141; for lipreading a specific language, see the language, plus notation 8954 from Table 4, e.g., lipreading English 428.954; for a specific aspect of applied linguistics provided for elsewhere, see the aspect, e.g., language for special purposes 401.47, rhetoric 808.04