Introduction to Applied Linguistics

Pr. Saliha Chelli

Learning objectives

This lesson provides students with a basic understanding of the field of Applied Linguistics.

Its objective is to show:

- How Applied Linguistics has evolved within the broader field of linguistics,

- how it has developed to address real-world language-related issues,

- and its interdisciplinary nature.

What is Applied Linguistics

Applied linguistics is a branch of linguistics that focuses on practical applications of language studies.

- In other words, it involves the practical application of linguistics-related concepts.

- It is a field of study that identifies, investigates, and offers solutions to language-related problems. Thus, it helps linguists to gain insight into practical problems such as what are the best methods to teach languages or what are the existing issues in language policy formulation.

2. Difference between Linguistics and Applied Linguistics

Linguistics is the scientific study of language in its general form. It involves analyzing the structure, sounds, meaning, and evolution of language while Applied Linguistics focuses on using insights from linguistics to solve real-world problems related to language. It takes the theories and principles developed in linguistics and applies them to practical issues.

In short, linguistics is more theoretical and focuses on understanding the structure and function of language, while applied linguistics is more practical, using this knowledge to solve real-world language-related problems.

History of Applied Lingusitics

- Applied Linguistics (AL) developed from a focus on grammar and translation in the early stages to a formal discipline addressing practical language issues.

- In the 20th century, it expanded with the influence of structuralism and behaviorism, incorporating language teaching and real-world applications.

- By the 1960s and 1970s, new subfields like sociolinguistics and second language acquisition emerged.

- From the 1980s onward, AL diversified to include areas like corpus linguistics and language technology, embracing advancements like Natural Language Processing. Today, AL addresses a broad range of language-related issues using an interdisciplinary approac

4. Characteristics of Applied Linguistics

It is multidisciplinary and problem solving: uses and draws on theory from other related fields concerned with language and generates its own theory in order to find solutions to language related problems and issues in the real world. Practical concerns have an important role in shaping the questions that AL will address .Language related problems concern learners, teachers, academics, lawyers, translators, test takers etc.

5. Subfields of Applied Linguistics

Applied Linguistics (AL) is a broad field, encompassing a variety of subfields that focus on solving real-world problems related to language. Here are some key subfields of Applied Linguistics:

1. **Language Acquisition**: Focuses on how people learn languages, including both first and second language acquisition.

2. **Language Teaching and Pedagogy**: Covers methods, materials, curriculum design, and assessment for teaching languages.

3. **Sociolinguistics**: Examines the relationship between language and society, including language variation based on social factors like gender, ethnicity, and class.

4. **Psycholinguistics**: Investigates how the brain processes and understands language, including language production and comprehension.

5. **Discourse Analysis**: Studies language use in context, analyzing texts and spoken communication beyond sentence-level structures.

6. Translation and Interpreting: Focuses on the practice and theory of translating texts and interpreting spoken language between different languages.**Language and Technology**: Explores the intersection of language and technology, including fields like Natural Language Processing (NLP) and educational tools for language learning. This includes **Computational Linguistics** which is the study and development of computational models for understanding and processing human language. It focuses on using computers and algorithms to analyze, generate, and understand language

7. Language Policy and Planning: Involves creating and implementing language-related policies in education, government, and other sectors.

8. Forensic Linguistics: Applies linguistic analysis to legal matters, such as authorship identification and language used in legal texts.

9. Corpus Linguistics: Uses large collections of texts (corpora) to analyze language patterns and usage through computational tools.

These subfields illustrate how **Applied Linguistics** combines theoretical insights with practical applications to solve real-world language issues.

Few Key Figures who contributed to the development of Applied Linguistics

The field of applied linguistics has several key figures who are considered to be "fathers" or major contributors to its development. Here are a few of them:

1. **Leonard Bloomfield**: He is often considered one of the founding figures in the development of applied linguistics, particularly due to his work in structural linguistics and his influence on language teaching methods.

2. **Charles C. Fries**: A major figure in applied linguistics, Fries contributed significantly to the development of language teaching methods, especially in the mid-20th century. He was a proponent of structural linguistics and emphasized the importance of teaching language structures.

3. **Michael Halliday**: Halliday's work in systemic functional linguistics greatly influenced applied linguistics, especially in areas such as language education, discourse analysis, and the study of language in social contexts.