



# Introduction to Spsycholinguistics



Pr. Saliha Chelli



## Learning objectives

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

**Its objective is to show:**

# What is Psycholinguistics

Psycholinguistics is the study of how the brain processes language. It focuses on how people understand, produce, and store language, and how our cognitive processes (like memory and attention) are involved in language use.

It blends psychology and linguistics, helping us better understand language disorders, language learning, and effective communication.



## 2. Key Areas of Psycholinguistics

**1. Language Production:** This is the process of how we **produce language** when speaking or writing. It includes:

- **Formulating thoughts** into words.
- **Choosing the right words** (vocabulary).
- **Putting them together** into sentences (grammar).
- **Pronouncing the words** clearly.

For example, when you speak to someone, your brain has to quickly select words, construct sentences, and control your speech muscles.

○ **Short-term memory** helps us remember what we just heard or read.

○ **Long-term memory** stores vocabulary, grammar rules, and experiences related to language use.

**1. Language Comprehension:** This is how we **understand language** when listening or reading. It involves:

- **Recognizing words** (like reading a sign or hearing a word).
- **Understanding meaning** (grasping what the words or sentences mean).
- **Interpreting context** (understanding tone or mood in speech).

When you listen to someone speaking, your brain instantly processes the words and makes sense of the meaning behind them.

**2. Speech Perception:** This is how we **hear and interpret sounds** in language. Our brains convert sounds (like speech) into meaningful words.

For instance, when you hear someone say "cat," your brain recognizes the sound and connects it to the concept of a cat.

## 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.