

## 1. Introduction

Applied linguistics is a branch of linguistics. But before providing an account on this field, it is significant to shed some light on linguistics. Richard and Schmidt (2002), define linguistics as “the study of language as a system of human communication”. It includes many different areas of investigation, for example sound systems (phonetics phonology), sentence structure (syntax), relationships between language and cognition (cognitive linguistics), meaning systems (semantics, pragmatics, functions of language), as well as language and social factors (sociolinguistics).

Language: the signals (sounds, punctuation marks) that people use to communicate with each other. It is arbitrary, systematic, vocal/ visual, for communication, for human but not limited to them, acquired and has universal characteristics.

## 2. History of Applied Linguistics

The term Applied Linguistics (AL) is an Anglo-American coinage. It was founded first at the University of Edinburgh School of Applied Linguistics in 1956. Then at the Center of Applied Linguistics in Washington D.C. in 1957.

The British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) was formally established in 1967, and its target was “the advancement of education by fostering and promoting, by any lawful charitable means, the study of language use, language acquisition and language teaching and the fostering of inter-disciplinary collaboration in this study” (BAAL, 1994). During the 1960s and 1970s applied linguistics officially shifted its concern to language teaching.

## 3. What is Applied Linguistics?

### DEFINITIONS

It is by no means an easy task to provide a one definition for Applied linguistics because as Vivian Cook stated ‘Applied Linguistics means many things to many people’ (Cook 2006). It can also be defined as ‘A mediation between theory and practice (Kaplan and Widdowson 1992: 76).

According to Guy Cook applied linguistics refers to ‘the academic discipline concerned with the relation of knowledge about language to decision making in the real world’

✧ “AL is the utilisation of the knowledge about the *nature of language* achieved by linguistic

research for the improvement of the efficiency of some practical task in which language is a central component.” (Corder, 1974, p. 24)

✧ “Applied Linguistics is using what we know about (a) language, (b) how it is learned, and (c) how it is used, in order to achieve some purpose or solve some problem in the real world” (Schmitt & Celce-Murcia, 2002, p. 1).

#### **4. Applied Linguistics main Concern**

“The focus of applied linguistics is on trying to resolve language-based problems that people encounter in the real world, whether they are learners, teachers, supervisors, academics, lawyers, service providers, those who need social services, test takers, policy developers, dictionary makers, translators, or a whole range of business clients.” (Grabe, 2002, p. 9).

#### **5. Characteristics of Applied Linguistics**

- ◆ Autonomous, multidisciplinary and problem solving: it 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, service providers, etc

#### **6. What problems are related to language?**

Problems related to the following: language learning, language teaching, literacy, language contact (language & culture), language policy and planning, language assessment, language use, language and technology, translation and interpretation, language pathology

#### **7. What is the relationship between AL and other language related disciplines?**

Applied linguistics occupies an intermediary, mediating position between language related disciplines (linguistics, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics) and professional practice. Applied linguistics uses information from sociology, psychology, anthropology, and information theory as well as from linguistics in order to develop its own theoretical models of language and language use, and then uses this information and theory in practical areas such as syllabus design, speech therapy, language planning, stylistics, etc.

It uses theories/principles from language related disciplines in order to understand language related issues and to solve language related problems. The choice of which disciplines are involved in applied linguistics matters depends on the circumstances.