



HELLENIC REPUBLIC

National and Kapodistrian  
University of Athens

# Applied Linguistics to Foreign Language Teaching and Learning

Unit 1: An Introduction to Applied Linguistics

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# Main issues of this unit

- What is linguistics?
- What is the relation between linguistics and applied linguistics? How do they differ?
- What is applied linguistics?
- When did applied linguistics develop as an independent area of study?
- What are the main areas of concern of applied linguistics?
- What will this course focus on? How is this course organised?



# What is Linguistics? (1/2)

- **Linguistics** is the scientific study of language. **Linguists** do work on specific languages, but their primary goal is to understand the nature of Language in general.
- Linguistics is primarily concerned with the nature of language and communication. There are broadly three aspects to the study, including language **form**, language **meaning**, and language use in discursive and communicative contexts.



# What is Linguistics? (2/2)

- Linguistics deals with the study of particular languages, and the search for general properties common to all languages or large groups of languages.



# Some questions linguistics tries to answer (1/2)

- What distinguishes human language from other animal communication systems?
- What features are common to all human languages?
- How are the modes of linguistic communication (speech, writing, sign language of the deaf) related to each other?

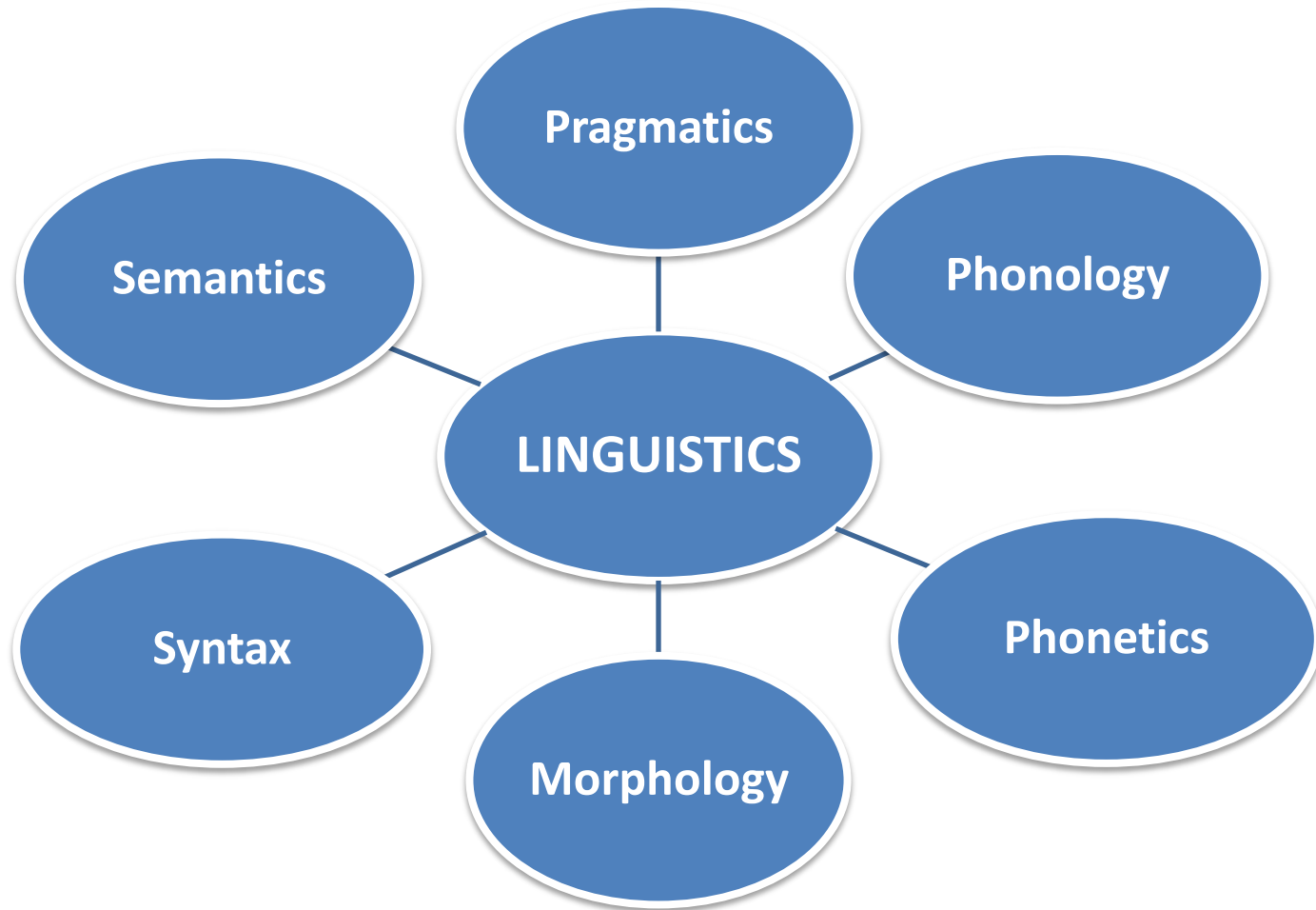


# Some questions linguistics tries to answer (2/2)

- How is language related to other types of human behaviour?
- What is language and how is it organized?
- How is it analysed? How are its units discovered and tested, etc.



# Branches of linguistics



# What is Interdisciplinary Linguistics?

Interdisciplinary studies involve two or more academic disciplines which are considered distinct. The most common interdisciplinary branches of Linguistics are:

- Historical Linguistics,
- Sociolinguistics,
- Psycholinguistics,
- Ethnolinguistics or Anthropological Linguistics,
- Computational Linguistics,
- Neurolinguistics.





# Applied Linguistics: When did it all begin? (1/2)

- 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**.



# Applied Linguistics: When did it all begin? (2/2)

- The British Association of Applied Linguistics (BAAL) was formally established in 1967, with the following aims: “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 interdisciplinary collaboration in this study” (BAAL, 1994).
- It was largely taken for granted in the 1960s and 1970s that applied linguistics was about language teaching.



# What is Applied Linguistics? (1/4)

- Applied Linguistics entails using what we know about language, about how it is used, and about how it is learned in order to solve some problem in the real world.
- Applied Linguistics uses language-related research in a wide variety of fields (e.g. language acquisition, language teaching, literacy, gender studies, language policy, speech therapy, discourse analysis, censorship, workplace communication, media studies, translation, lexicography, forensic linguistics).



# What is Applied Linguistics? (2/4)

“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)



# What is Applied Linguistics? (3/4)

“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).



# What is Applied Linguistics? (4/4)

“The focus of applied linguistics is on trying to resolve language-based problems that people encounter in the real world, whether they be 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).



# Defining characteristics of Applied Linguistics

- **Autonomous, 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, service providers, etc.



# What problems are related to language?

Problems related to:

- 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.





# A sample of questions Applied Linguistics addresses (1/2)

- How can we teach languages better?
- How can we diagnose speech pathologies better?
- How can we improve the training of translators?
- How can we develop valid language examinations?



# A sample of questions Applied Linguistics addresses (2/2)

- How can we determine the literacy levels of a population?
- What advice can we give the ministry of education on proposals to introduce a new teaching method?
- What advice can we give a defence lawyer on the authenticity of a police transcript of an interview with a suspect?



# What is the relationship between AL and other language related disciplines? (1/2)

- Applied linguistics occupies an intermediary, mediating position between language related disciplines (linguistics, psycholinguistics and sociolinguistics) and professional practice
- 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.



# What is the relationship between AL and other language related disciplines? (2/2)

- Applied linguistics conducts research into professional practice and on the basis of the results develops theory.



# Theoretical, Interdisciplinary and Applied Linguistics

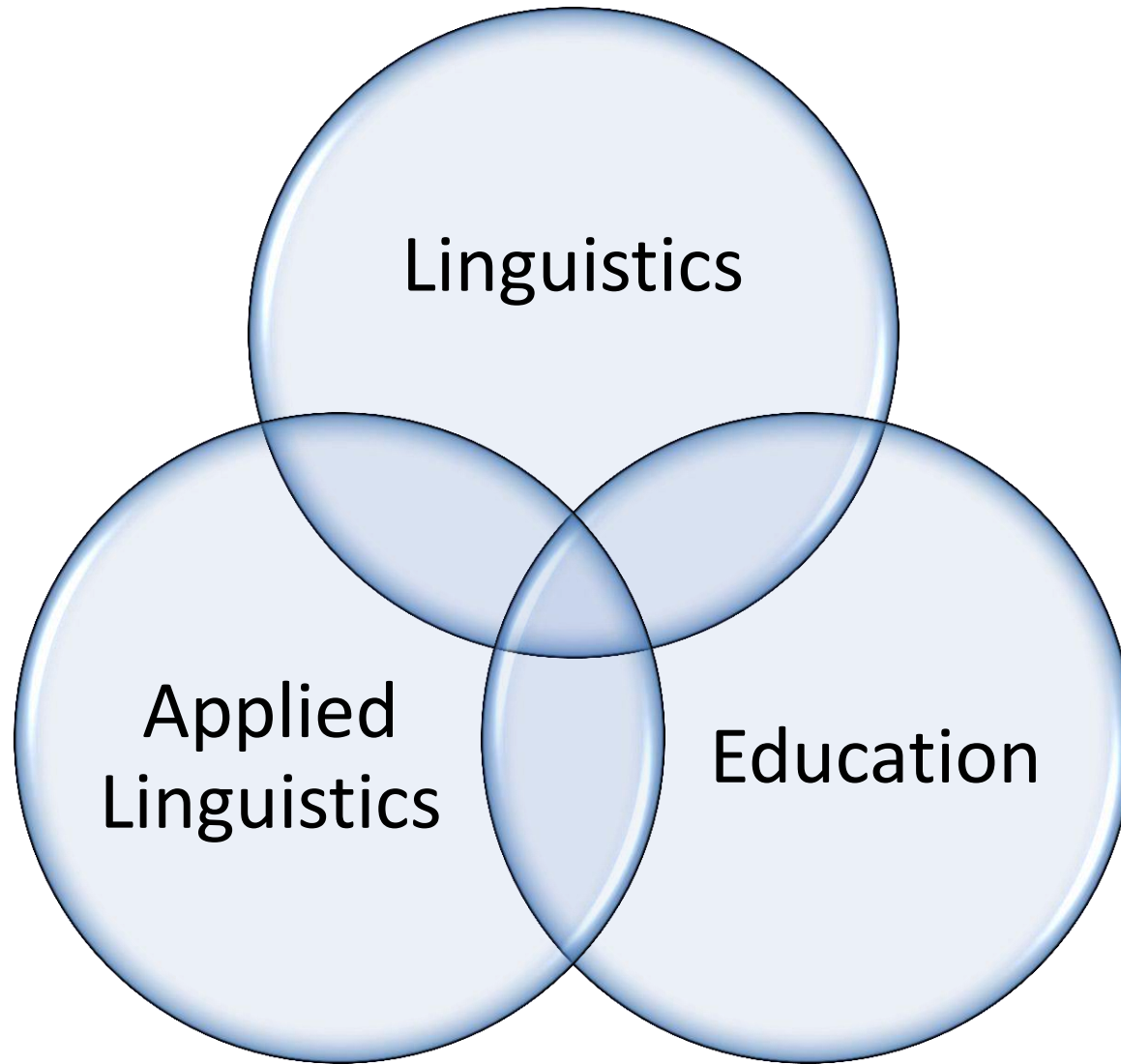
Theoretical linguistics	Interdisciplinary linguistics	Applied linguistics
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Phonology,</li><li>• Morphology,</li><li>• Syntax and structural grammar,</li><li>• Semantics,</li><li>• Historical linguistics.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Psycholinguistics,</li><li>• Sociolinguistics,</li><li>• Pragmatics,</li><li>• Discourse analysis.</li><li>• Computational and corpus linguistics.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Applied linguistics to language education,</li><li>• Applied linguistics to foreign language education,</li><li>• Translation studies,</li><li>• Lexicography.</li></ul>



# Linguistics and Applied Linguistics

- Linguistics is primarily concerned with language in itself and in findings ways of analysing language and building theories that describe language.
- Applied linguistics is concerned with the role of language in peoples' lives and problems associated with language use in peoples' lives.
- Linguistics is essential but not the only feeder discipline.





# Applied Linguistics

## Linguistics

(the study of the nature, structure and variation of language).

**Education** (teaching, learning, acquisition, assessment).

## Sociology

(the scientific study of human behavior and the study of society).

**Psychology** (the science of mind and behavior, and the application of such knowledge of various spheres of human activity).

## Anthropology

(the scientific study of the origin and behavior of man).





# Applied Linguistics or linguistics applied?

Widdowson (2000, p. 5) presents the question in terms of linguistics applied and applied linguistics:

“The differences between these modes of intervention is that in the case of linguistics applied the assumption is that the problem can be reformulated by the direct and unilateral application of concepts and terms deriving from linguistic enquiry itself. That is to say, language problems are amenable to linguistics solutions. In the case of applied linguistics, intervention is crucially a matter of mediation . . . applied linguistics . . . has to relate and reconcile different representations of reality, including that of linguistics without excluding others.”



# Subfields of Applied Linguistics

Language and education	Language, work and the law	Language, information and effect
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• First language education,</li><li>• Second language education,</li><li>• Foreign language education,</li><li>• Clinical linguistics,</li><li>• Language testing.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Workplace communication,</li><li>• Language planning,</li><li>• Forensic linguistics.</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Literary stylistics,</li><li>• Critical discourse analysis,</li><li>• Translation and Interpretation,</li><li>• Information design,</li><li>• Lexicography.</li></ul>



# Applied Linguistics to foreign language teaching and learning: Related sub-fields

- EAP, ESP, EYL,
- CALL/TELL,
- Materials development and evaluation,
- Syllabus design and language curriculum development,
- Language testing,
- Language teaching methods and techniques,
- Language teacher training and education,
- Research into second and foreign language learning,
- Language education policies and language planning,
- Educational technology and language learning,
- Immersion education,
- Language education in multilingual settings.



# Major Applied Linguistics Organisations

- **TESOL:** Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages.
- **IATEFL:** International Association of Teachers of English as a Foreign Language.
- **AAAL:** American Association for Applied Linguistics.



# Focus of this course: Foreign language didactics

## What

- How does one select and organise the content of what is to be taught and learnt?
- What do you teach?

## How

- How does one organise the teaching/learning process?
- How does one develop knowledge and skills?



# Issues discussed in the course (1/2)

## What?

- Methods in language teaching.
- Language theories and their effect on foreign language teaching.
- Syllabus design and curriculum development.
- Communicative competence.
- Communicative language teaching, task based language teaching and intercultural competence.



# Issues discussed in the course (2/2)

## How?

- Theories of language learning and their effect on foreign language teaching/learning.
- Individual characteristics and their effect on language learning.



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End of Unit

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Notes

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