

APPLIED LINGUISTICS: EVOLUTION OF THE CONCEPT

In modern academic discourse, applied linguistics is viewed as a dynamic, transdisciplinary field that not only integrates traditional branches of linguistics but also actively interacts with information technologies, cognitive science, sociology, pedagogy, and the philosophy of language [3]. The concept of applied linguistics has significantly expanded compared to its initial understanding in the mid-20th century, when it was mainly associated with foreign language teaching, textbook development, and dictionary compilation.

The origins of applied linguistics as an independent scientific field are traditionally associated with the post-war period (1950s-1960s), when there was an urgent need for effective language instruction in the context of globalization, diplomacy, economic cooperation, and international security. During this time, applied linguistics was shaped under the influence of behaviorist psychology, the audiolingual method, and the structural approach to language [2].

However, by the 1970s-1980s, new vectors began to emerge: cognitive, communicative, and sociolinguistic paradigms that shifted the focus from formal structures to the processes of speech production, perception, and interpretation. New areas such as psycholinguistics, discourse analysis, and pragmalinguistics emerged, which emphasized not only the structure of language but also how it is used and understood.

In the United States, applied linguistics was initially oriented toward the needs of the military and diplomacy, and later toward immigration challenges and mass language education (TESOL – Teaching English to Speakers of Other Languages, TOEFL – Test of English as a Foreign Language). In the United Kingdom, it developed within functional linguistics and pedagogy, closely related to the practice of teaching English as a foreign language (EFL – English as a Foreign Language). The German tradition focused on linguistic expertise, terminology, and language policy. In the post-Soviet space, applied linguistics was long equated with mathematical methods of language analysis, automated translation, and engineering linguistics.

By the turn of the 21st century, applied linguistics began to transform rapidly in response to societal needs, technological innovations, and paradigm shifts in knowledge production [3; 1]. The discipline evolved from a classical model, in which language was studied as an isolated system, to one where language is seen as an integral component of social, cultural, professional, and digital interaction.

In the contemporary context, applied linguistics encompasses the following key areas:

- Language Didactics: theory and practice of language teaching/learning, development of teaching materials, testing, intercultural competence;
- Computational Linguistics and Natural Language Processing (NLP): development of algorithms for syntactic analysis, speech recognition, machine translation, and text generation;
- Sociolinguistics and Discourse Linguistics: study of social factors affecting language, language policy, and discourse related to gender, ideology, and national identity;

- Language Engineering and Terminology Management in IT: creation of text corpora, ontologies, terminology databases, and interface specifications;
- Forensic Linguistics: language analysis in legal and forensic contexts, authorship identification, and speaker profiling;
- Critical Applied Linguistics: exploration of language as a tool of power, control, discrimination, and identity formation;
- Multimodal Linguistics: study of language in combination with visual, gestural, digital, and other communicative modes.

As a result of analyzing contemporary approaches, *applied linguistics* is conceptualized as a transdisciplinary field of linguistics that investigates, models, and applies language-based tools and approaches to solve communicative, social, educational, technological, and legal problems in real and digital environments.

Modern applied linguistics actively integrates information and communication technologies. The development and use of electronic text corpora, automated translation systems (e.g., Google Translate, DeepL), and large language models (e.g., GPT – Generative Pre-trained Transformer, BERT – Bidirectional Encoder Representations from Transformers), as well as educational platforms (e.g., Moodle, Duolingo, Grammarly, Wordwall), have become standard practice in research and language instruction [1; 4].

In Ukraine, applied linguistics is actively developing at leading institutions of higher education such as Taras Shevchenko National University of Kyiv, Lesya Ukrainka Volyn National University, V. N. Karazin Kharkiv National University, Zhytomyr Polytechnic State University, Cherkasy State Technological University implements programs in innovative translation, terminology management, and digital language didactics.

Today, applied linguistics is not merely ‘linguistics in use,’ but a platform for addressing complex real-world communicative challenges. It builds bridges between linguistic theory, information technologies, educational practices, and societal needs. Key challenges include ensuring ethical use of AI in education and language analysis, inclusiveness of language policies, and adaptation of research strategies to rapidly evolving technological contexts. Applied linguistics must respond to wartime challenges, particularly concerning terminology security, information hygiene, and the linguistic representation of social trauma.

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