



The role of applied linguistics in Arabic language teaching and learning

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Abstract

Applied linguistics is considered a multidisciplinary science due to its close connection with language and its levels of use, with a strong research focus that summarizes the functional dimensions of language to solve various related problems by finding practical and beneficial solutions that work to develop language and its understanding in various fields and areas of knowledge, particularly the field of teaching and learning Arabic, which relies on dynamic techniques that overcome all the difficulties that hinder the achievement of educational objectives.

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1. *Introduction*

Undoubtedly, applied linguistics has paved the way for new various research horizons with different applied scientific strategies and ways. This is through investing the findings of the linguistic researches to solve the problems related to language for scientific researches and studies that witnessed scientific accumulations which preoccupied the Western researchers mainly in the field of didactics with its various techniques that made a clear advance that contributed greatly to determining the successful methods and styles of teaching Arabic. This is through the effectiveness of applied linguistics and its resort to the other scientific references for finding solutions to the issues of teaching and learning.

Based on what has been said, we find ourselves obliged to grapple with some paramount questions mainly: what is the relationship between applied and educational linguistics? What is the importance of applied linguistics in activating and promoting the Arabic didactics?, what is the role of applied linguistics in Arabic language teaching and learning?

Before speaking about the complementary relation between applied and educational linguistics, we shall present all what is related to these two scientific fields to show their importance in the linguistic side

2. *What is Applied Linguistics?*

The concepts of applied linguistics are as various as the researches about this new

applied science. We shall discuss the important points set by scholars to reach a clear vision about this intersectional science.¹

"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. Those purposes are many and varied, as is evident in a definition given by Wilkins. .

In a broad sense, applied linguistics is concerned with increasing understanding of the role of language in human affairs and thereby with providing the knowledge necessary for those who are responsible for taking language-related decisions whether the need for it arises in the classroom, the workplace, the law court, or the laboratory²"

In his dictionary "Dictionnaire de linguistique", Jean Dubois defines applied linguistics as a set of researches that use the suitable linguistic measures to solve and process some issues related to the questions and problematic raised by the scholars of the other fields. Thus, it represents the applied side of the general linguistics.³

In addition, Crystale defines it as using the theories, styles, and findings of general linguistics to clarify the problems related to language that manifest in other fields and provide solutions. Applied linguistics is a large field that covers foreign language didactics, lexicology, stylistics, rhetorical analysis of speech, and the reader theory. Furthermore, Carter sees that it is applying the theories,

descriptions, and the linguistic styles in solving the linguistic problems that appear

in the humanistic, cultural, and social contexts⁴

Besides, Alan Davies says that it is a procedural field science that focuses on the strategies and styles that provide the learner and teacher with efficiency in working in the educational context. In addition, it provides the principle of the enlightened choice of the content of the educational lessons⁵.

From these definitions, we infer that applied linguistics is a field of study that works to solve the issues related to language in the various linguistic fields.

3. History of Applied Linguistics :

In the United States, applied linguistics also began narrowly as the application of insights from structural linguistics—first to the teaching of English in schools and subsequently to second and foreign language teaching. The *linguistics applied* approach to language teaching was promulgated most strenuously by Leonard Bloomfield, who developed the foundation for the Army Specialized Training Program, and by Charles C. Fries, who established the English Language Institute (ELI) at the University of Michigan in 1941. In 1946, Applied linguistics became a recognized field of study at the aforementioned university. In 1948, the Research Club at Michigan established *Language Learning: A Journal of Applied Linguistics*, the first journal to bear the term *applied linguistics*. In the late 1960s, applied linguistics began to establish its own identity as an interdisciplinary field of linguistics concerned with real-world language issues. The new identity was solidified by

the creation of the American Association for Applied Linguistics in 1977.⁶

4. The scientific reference of applied linguistics: Applied linguistics is a field that is open to other sciences from which it draws its topics with varying degrees to solve the problems related to language. Among these scientific direct sources we find linguistics, psycholinguistics,

sociolinguistics, and education science.

4.1 Linguistics: The 1st and direct source of the topics of applied linguistics is language because it is a system of the human communication orally in the first place and visually in the second. Thus, the fields related to this study multiply. The study covers first pronunciation and writing through describing them regarding the sounds, semantics, syntax, and the lexicon. As for the second field, it is about transcribing a language per se into dialects. The third is studying the language in the society. The fourth is about the individual, his acquisition of language, and the relation of language with thought and diseases related to the language areas in the brain regarding understanding, restoring, controlling, speech, and the linguistic development of the child. The last is about studies in the philosophy of language⁷ as it is a system of signs that express the thoughts in order to achieve communication between the linguistic communities⁸.

4.2 Psycholinguistics: This field is in the first place about the mental processes of the speaker, before producing the language, and the hearer, after producing it. In addition, it focuses on the study of

the relation between the language and the abilities of the human related to language acquisition, understanding, and production⁹.

4.3 Sociolinguistics: It studies language as a social linguistic event. Based on this, this work studies the linguistic diversity in using the language in a given society or societies that speak a common language, or what is known as the social dialects or natural dialects regarding their phonological, syntactic, semantic, and morphological characteristics. Furthermore, it studies the issues of bilingualism or the multiple linguistic levels such as the standard and the vernacular and their relation, the language of the radio and press, the language of politics and religion, and the relation between language and culture¹⁰.

4.4 Education science: Teaching the language knows two attached questions that are: what do we teach from the language? And how do we teach it? This means what is the content to be taught and what styles should be followed? The 1st question is answered by sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics in some sides while the second is answered by education science and psycholinguistics in some sides.

4.5 The sides of education science: There is a set of issues attached to education science such as:

4.6 Learning theory: psycho-pedagogy and psycholinguistics focus on the learning theories. Learning comes after the acquisition. We find distinctiveness between the behaviorist and the innate methods. The first focuses on the palpable phenomena that are subject to observation and excludes the unapparent phenomena

because it sees that learning a language starts from the environment and is affected by external factors¹¹ which are imitation and reinforcement. The second sees that man is endowed with an inherent linguistic device that provides him with general suppositions about language. Thus, the learner tests the hypotheses continuously until reaching the natural laws of the language.

4.7 Characteristics of the learner: This includes the age of the learner, his readiness to learn the language, his abilities, and the incentives that motivate him to learn the language.

4.8 The educational procedures: We refer here to the educational procedures that take advantage of the educational program inside the classroom.

4.9 Educational tools: They are a necessary requirement for the teaching-learning process. These tools are in continuous development thanks to the technological development in the educational techniques¹¹.

These four sources from which applied linguistics draws its topics in teaching the language are all sources that provide linguistic theories to solve problems. However, this does not mean that applied linguistics draws its topic from these sources only. Rather, it takes advantage of any scientific source that contributes to solving problems related to language.

5. Domains of applied linguistics :

Applied linguistics determines its domain in the contemporary reality and its relation with the past to exploit the previous experiences only because it is not limited to the past and is fully attached to the

vivid contemporary life. Applied linguistics is used in education as it studies the problems of the language and provides solutions that must be used to limit the obstacles that face the language in use. It tackles the contemporary linguistic issues and gives many benefits including studies in linguistics with the exact meaning of the word and other researches that are related to the contemporary society. All this aims at looking scientifically to the nature of language and its functions in the society, and at finding solutions to the linguistics problems that face them¹². The main domains are:

5.1 Didactics: It is an applied science that aims at teaching languages either from the individual's origin or the acquired foreign languages. If we have a look on linguistics and didactics, we shall find the strong relation between them since they need each other continuously because the linguist investigates in didactics practically to test his scientific theories while the pedagogue builds his styles on the general laws proved by modern linguistics¹².

5.2 Lexicography: It is an applicable science that covers five main steps which Ali al Kacemi summed up in collecting data and facts, choosing and organizing the entries according to a certain system, writing the content, and then publishing the final result which is the lexicon¹³. This process needs the choice of paper and draws its sources from lexicology and the lexicon theory. Lately, the use of the computer in collecting and organizing the linguistic content became a decisive tool in lexicography. The world witnessed the

emergence of a new field known as computational lexicography¹⁴.

5.3 Speech troubles and therapy: They are long-term troubles in speech production, comprehension, and cognition. Some children suffer these troubles such as stuttering and aphasia due to their inability to understand the spoken or produce speech. Finding the therapeutic styles to these problems is the task of the linguist, the psychologist, and sociologist to know the causes and find the right solutions¹⁵.

5.4 Bilingualism and linguistic duality: Linguistic duality refers to the existence of 02 language levels. One level is formal used in official events and scientific and literary writing. The other is informal used in daily communication¹⁷. As for bilingualism, it is the use of two languages in a certain region by the individual or a linguistic community such as the use of French and German in Switzerland¹⁶.

6 The educational procedures of applied linguistics:

6.1 The concept of didactics:

Didactics establishes an effective educational system that the scholars study in order to understand its strategic dimensions and applicable procedures. If we look at the circumstances of the emergence of the term "didactics" in the educational and linguistic thought, we find that it refers to Makey who used the old term didactics to speak about the educational system. Here, a scholar asks why we do not speak about language didactics instead of applied linguistics because this shall remove vagueness and give language didactics its merits¹⁷.

Thus, it aims at helping the learner develop and activate his abilities and resources in the educational process through the efforts and activities organized in a way that aims at learning linguistic skills and competencies and at using them in the different communicative situations.¹⁸

Hence, didactics is an interactive process that focuses on the strategies, activities, and the educational styles to help the teacher and learner in the process of language learning, organizing learning situations, and achieving the underlined objectives in all the educational levels.

6.2 The poles of the educational process:

6.2.1 The teacher: This term is academic and used to refer to the one who makes the process of teaching in specific phases. Pedagogically speaking, it refers the one who transmits knowledge to learners in a scientific manner and aims at being a model in his thought, actions, and verbs¹⁹.

6.2.2 The learner: The educational process is based on the interaction between the learner and teacher in an environment that allows the good conduct of the lesson and transmitting the content according to the required program. This leads to the effective role of the learner to achieve the success of the educational process. This pushed the stakeholders to set curricula that focus on the ethics, morals, and abilities during the teaching. The learner is the important element in the educational process and in promoting the level of education through focusing on his nature and characteristics since he is one of the factors of determining the lesson on which content, ways of clarification, and styles of teaching and achieving

interaction with the teacher in the classroom are determined²⁰.

6.2.3 The subject matter: It is one of the main elements of the educational process that covers a set of information and skills in an excellent sample of a specific scientific domain learned by the learner to invest his abilities and competencies in various life situations²¹.

7. The effect of applied linguistics on promoting the educational process:

Undeniably, there is a strong relation between linguistics and language didactics currently. This field took advantage of its styles, methods, tools, and theories. New problems have been triggered in language didactics and various studies in language didactics have been made through three axes that are the branches of linguistics such as general linguistics where the learner is taught syntax, vocabulary, sounds and the other levels of the language; psychology that studies language acquisition and learning; and the mechanisms of language linguistic achievement that studies the use of language and the rules of linguistic communication.

On this basis, linguistics became a fundamental and decisive referential field in the language didactics researches because it is the axis and the starting point of any research about language learning or teaching. This importance does not emerge from the dominance of linguistics on language didactics as much as it is due to the fact that linguistic theories provide to the researcher in didactics the possibility of thinking and pondering its content, structure, and method that govern it mainly that many educational models in didactic base on linguistic theories and

approaches. Hence, the linguistic thought represents a part of the didactic strategy because it provides it with concepts, analysis method, thought perspective, and at the same time, draws from it some of its hypotheses and topics²².

The applied domain of linguistics is a real image of the scientific research per se. The existence of the theoretical scientific research requires a practical side which is a methodological increase of the results which are applied in reality to be tested, audited, invested, and taken advantage of in another field of the humanities. This justification can be enough for the existence of the pedagogic and methodological relation between linguistics and didactics. This relation is the nexus between different interests and fields because the practice field requires effective participation of many researchers who have different specialties because didactics does not concern the linguist only; rather, it concerns the linguist, psychologist, and pedagogue. This is a strong proof of the collective nature of the applied research that guarantees the positive results and the effective solutions. Undoubtedly, learning is a dynamic process based on what the learner is provided with and what he does to acquire, strengthen, and continuously improve knowledge and skills because the learner is the main axis of the success of the educational process²³.

Linguistics is the objective scientific study of the linguistic phenomenon and is a scientific and methodological tool needed to determine the procedural domain of the teaching-learning process through clarifying the educational objectives and aims, and reducing the obstacles and

barriers. If the teacher does not refer to the various linguistic theories, he will find difficulties in recognizing the comprehension of language by the speaker and hearer and determining the linguistic elements that form the system of the language to be taught through focusing on the contributions of the 1st linguistic theory in the field of the description of the language, and its analysis which deepens our knowledge about language²⁴.

8. The role of applied linguistics in Arabic language

Arabic Language Learning and Teaching is a branch of applied linguistics related to the Arabic language, considered in all its varieties. As a whole, this branch deals with issues that are similar to those examined by Language Education, for instance: translation study, teaching methodologies, language strategies and activities (reading, writing, listening, speaking and interacting), language testing, etc. In this sense, Arabic Language Learning and Teaching (ALLT) highlights and dedicates much attention to both the learner's and the teacher's own points of view.²⁵

Arabic is made up of a set of sounds that can be distinguished through a set of divisive values that are the sound production areas the characteristics used by this language in distinguishing the sounds that are distributed according to their range and production areas starting with the labial sounds till the guttural sounds²⁶. The sound sequence pays attention to the sound production areas that are close to each other in voice production. For instance, the sound B and W are easier than A. Thus, the learner starts with what is easy and goes to what

is difficult. This is what has been indicated by the studies which said that the child starts producing the sounds that are near the lips such as B and M and then moves to the guttural²⁷. Based on this, we must pay attention to some aspects of the educational process through gradation from easy to difficult in choosing the pronunciation parts. This is what has been confirmed by the studies that said that the children omit some sounds or parts that they cannot pronounce, or they substitute them with other sounds or parts. For example, the word (Tuffaha) is pronounced by the Arab child (faha) and the word (raha) is pronounced (aha) etc. The child, at any age phase, does not produce the sound in isolation; rather, in a sequence of sounds²⁸.

In addition to these voice considerations, we move to speaking about the study of the word morphologically through pointing to the relation of the acquisition of morphemes and morphological features of the child with the psychological and cognitive aspects of the development which are the acquisition of the concrete before the abstract, the near before the far, and the direct before the indirect. In addition, it is linked with functional communicative aspects that are the importance of morpheme in communication. Furthermore, it is noticed that the child does not acquire the tools and functional terms before acquiring the lexical words such as "the book is on the table"²⁹. The child starts this phase with the pronunciation of pivotal words which are limited words related to content words such as many and big and on and under,

and in expressions such as a big cup, dad is on...etc³⁰.

In the light of the linguistic data and their results, we see that it is impossible to teach a language in one block. Rather, it is taught according to a methodology that chooses, classifies, and organizes the educational linguistic contents according to certain linguistic criteria. The linguistic data are as various as the methods and theories. Therefore, it is necessary to choose the most suitable ones to deal with the educational problems raised in a certain environment that has its special conditions and circumstances, on a distinctive group of learners who have special educational level, acceptability degree, and their interest in the target language, and based on the quality of the linguistic objectives and skills that the teacher must achieve and develop³¹.

Faced with such fundamental problems concerning language learning and teaching, problems such as how to plan for the optimum starting age for language teaching in a school or education system, problems such as how to assess language learning success most validly, and how to know whether or not this is being achieved, applied linguistics has developed a series of methodological approaches to the collection of relevant language data.³²

9. CONCLUSION

In conclusion, the relation between applied linguistics and Arabic didactics is a complementary pedagogic methodological relation that reflects the strong ties between them in representing the applied scientific research to clarify the educational objectives and aims, and to find solutions to the difficulties and obstacles that face the learner and teacher to support the success of the teaching-learning process in all the educational phases.

Applied linguistics is an essential science that is deeply interested in learning and teaching the Arabic language to apply linguistic knowledge in the educational field by focusing on all elements of the educational triangle.

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