**Lesson 02 : Introduction to the Psycholinguistics- part 02-**

"Psycholinguistics is the study of the mental mechanisms that make it possible for people to use language. It is a scientific discipline whose goal is a coherent theory of the way in which language is produced and understood," says Alan Garnham in his book, "Psycholinguistics: Central

Topics."

According to David Carrol in "Psychology of Language," "At its heart, psycholinguistic work consists of two questions. One is, What **knowledge** of language is needed for us to use language? In a sense, we must know a language to use it, but we are not always fully aware of this knowledge....

The other primary psycholinguistic question is, What **cognitive processes** are involved in the ordinary use of language?

By 'ordinary use of language,' is meant such things as understanding a lecture, reading a book, writing a letter, and holding a conversation. By 'cognitive processes,' is meant processes such as perception, memory, and thinking. Although we do few things as often or as easily as speaking and

listening, we will find that considerable cognitive processing is going on during those activities."

From a pedagogical perspective, in his definition of speaking for instance, differentiates between **knowledge** that is the know how or the required amount of language grammar and vocabulary, and the **skill** which refers to a series of related **processes** during speech production like making decisions rapidly, adapting what we say to the actual situation, and adjusting our conversations as unexpected problems arise.

He also refers to Wilkins’ distinction between motor-perceptive skills namely perceiving, recalling, and articulating and considers this

aspect of speaking as the superficial one or the context-free one, and interaction skills where the learner moves from a language **learning**

situation to a language **using** situation. In fact, Bygates refers to these as being at the same time motor-perceptive and interaction skills since they

involve the ability to use language in order to satisfy particular demands.

This is why psycholinguistics is considered interdisciplinary and is studied in different fields such as psychology, cognitive science and

linguistics.

In the first place, psycholinguistics that means psychology of language is the study of the psychological and neurological factors that enable

humans to acquire, use, comprehend and produce language

Due mainly to a lack of cohesive data on how human brain functions, modern research makes use of biology (natural science concerned with the study of life and living organism), neuroscience (t h e scientific study of how information concerning faculties such as perception, language, reasoning , and emotion is represented and transformed in a human or other animal nervous system or machinery, linguistics and information theory( a branch of applied mathematics and electrical engineering involving the quantification of information.[[1]](#footnote-2)

Psycholinguistics is the study of the mental aspects of language and speech. It is essentially concerned with the ways in which language is

represented and processed in the brain. An interdisciplinary branch that encompasses both linguistics and psychology, psycholinguistics has been tremendously impacted by the filed of cognitive science in general.

Simply defined, it is the study of the relationship between human language and human mind.[[2]](#footnote-3)

Psycholinguistics is part of the emerging field of study called cognitive science. Cognitive science is an interdisciplinary venture that draws upon the insights of psychologists, linguists, computer scientists, neuroscientists, and philosophers to

study the mind and mental processes

Some of the topics that have been studied by cognitive scientists include problem solving, memory, imagery, and language. Anyone who is seriously interested in any of these topics

must be prepared to cross disciplinary lines, for the topics do not belong to any one field of study but rather are treated in distinctive and yet complementary ways by various disciplines.

As the name implies, psycholinguistics is principally an integration of the fields of psychology and linguistics. Linguistics is the branch of science that studies the origin, structure, and use of language. Like most interdisciplinary fields, however, psycholinguistics has a rich heritage that includes contributions from diverse intellectual traditions. These contrasting approaches have often led to controversies in how to best think of or study language processes.[[3]](#footnote-4)

1. Psycholinguistics is the study of the mental faculties involved in the perception, production, and acquisition of language.
2. “Psycholinguistics is the study of the mental mechanisms that make it possible for people to use language. It is a scientific discipline whose goal is a coherent theory of the way in which language is produced and understood.[[4]](#footnote-5)

Three important processes are investigated in psycholinguistics: language production, language comprehension, and language acquisition.

From many questions that psycholinguistics attempts to answer, it, specifically, addresses two questions what knowledge of language is needed for us to use language? and what cognitive processes are involved in the ordinary use of language?

In recent years, psycholinguistics has developed rapidly and expanded into several sub-disciplines as cited in Chaer (2015) below:

A. Theoretical psycholinguistics. It focused on theories of language relating to human mental processes in language, such as phonetics, diction, syntax design, discourse, and intonation.

B. Developmental psycholinguistics. It is related to language acquisition,both first language acquisition (L1) and second language acquisition (L2).

It examines phonological, semantic, and syntactic acquisition, process in stages, gradually, and integrated.

C. Social psycholinguistics related to the social aspects of language, including social identity.

D. Educational psycholinguistics discussed general aspects of formal education at school, including the role of language in teaching reading teaching proficiency, and improving language ability to express thoughts and feelings.

E. Neuro-psycholinguistics focused on the relationship between language, language production, and the human brain. Neurology experts have managed to analyze the biological structure of the brain and analyzed what happens with the input language and how language output

programmed and set up in the brain.

F. Experimental psycholinguistics covered and experimented in all language productions and language activities, language behavior, and

language outcome.

G. Applied psycholinguistics concerned with the application of the findings of six sub-disciplines of psycholinguistics explained before in certain areas that require it, including psychology, linguistics, language learning, neurology, psychiatry, communications, and literature. [[5]](#footnote-6)

Language plays such a crucial role in our daily lives. We take it for granted every day, yet what is language and how does it work? How do we communicate our thoughts to other people?[[6]](#footnote-7)

Language is a uniquely human capacity that enables us to communicate a limitless set of messages on any topic. While human languages candiffer greatly in certain respects, all are intricate, complex, rule-governedsystems.

Linguistics is the scientific study of these systems, their use forcommunication in rich social settings, and their cognitive underpinnings.[[7]](#footnote-8)

To study how brain processes language, there are a number of subdisciplines with non-invasive techniques for studying the neurological

workings of the brain, for example neurolinguistics has become a field in its own right.

Psycholinguistics covers the cognitive processes that make it possible to generate grammatical and meaningful sentences out of vocabulary and grammatical structure as well as the processes that make it possible to understand utterances, words, texts, etc.[[8]](#footnote-9)

1. SAKALE SANA and CHIBI MOUNIR : **Psycholinguistics** , Academic Year: 2020 / 2021, p07 [↑](#footnote-ref-2)
2. Maftoon, P., & Shakouri, N. (2012). **Psycholinguistic Approach to Second Language Acquisition.**

   The International Journal of Language Learning and Applied Linguistics World (IJLLALW. Vol 1 [↑](#footnote-ref-3)
3. DAVID W. CARROLL : Psychology of Language, University of Wisconsin---Superior , FIFTH EDITION , p04 [↑](#footnote-ref-4)
4. Alan Garnham, Psycho­linguistics: Central Topics. Psychology Press, 1985 [↑](#footnote-ref-5)
5. SAKALE SANA and CHIBI MOUNIR : **Psycholinguistics** , Academic Year: 2020 / 2021, P04 , 05 [↑](#footnote-ref-6)
6. Meredyth Krych-Appelbaum : **Psychology of Language (Psycholinguistics),** Montclair State University, Spring 2005, p01 [↑](#footnote-ref-7)
7. LINGUISTICS & PSYCHOLOGY, B.A. UCLA DEPARTMENT OF LINGUISTICS [↑](#footnote-ref-8)
8. Levelt, W. (2013 ). History of Psycholinguistics: The pre-Chomskyan Era. Oxford Scholarship online.

   Retrieved [↑](#footnote-ref-9)