UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

# COURSE SYLLABUS

# Psychology of Language in Typically and Atypically Developing Children

**2122-2-F5103P092**

## Learning area

Atypical development

## Learning objectives

*Knowledge and understanding*

- Theories of language development.
- Typical development pathways of the different communicative-linguistic components.
- Communication and language in atypical populations.
- Language delays and disorders.

*Applying knowledge and understanding*

- Integration of theories and methods for analyzing language development.
- Ability to monitor the process of language acquisition and development for early identification of risk factors.
- Ability to use procedures and tools for assessing communicative-linguistic competence in the various phases of development.

## Contents

The course aims to provide students with an in-deep knowledge of the main theoretical and methodological issues related to language acquisition and development. The main atypical language and communication pathways will also be analyzed, differentiating risk developmental profiles from clinical disorders.

## Detailed program

- Main theories of language development: innatist, emergentist and social-constructivist approaches.
- Early perceptual skills.
- Input and interaction in language acquisition.
- Vocal and gestural preverbal communication.
- Lexical development and early individual differences.
- Morphosyntactic development.
- Risk factors in language development.
- Delays in language development: *Late Talkers* and *Late Bloomers.*
- Communicative and linguistic development in preterm children.

- Developmental language disorders: early indicators, differential diagnosis and developmental prognosis.

## Prerequisites

A good knowledge of the fundamentals of Developmental Psychology enables a more informed use of the course contents.

## Teaching methods

In addition to classroom lectures, part of the teaching includes both video presentations and the discussion of scientific articles on teaching topics. These teaching methods aim to make the course content more usable and to involve students, facilitating knowledge acquisition. The material (slides of the lectures, any scientific articles) is made available on the teaching e-learning site, so that non-attending students can also use it.

*Lessons will be held in presence, unless further COVID-19 related restrictions are imposed.*

## Assessment methods

The exam will take place only in oral form. The questions are aimed at ascertaining the actual acquisition of both theoretical knowledge and the ability to apply them to the reality. The evaluation criteria are the correctness of the answers, the ability to argue critically, synthesize, and make conceptual connections.

## Textbooks and Reading Materials

D’Amico, S., & Devescovi, A. (2013). Psicologia dello sviluppo del linguaggio. Bologna: il Mulino (Capp. 1, 4, 5, 6, 7, 10, 12).

D’Odorico, L. (2005). Lo sviluppo linguistico. Bari: Laterza (Capp. 1, 2, 3, 4, 5).

Chilosi, A. M., Pfanner, L., Pecini, C., Salvadorini, R., Casalini, C., Brizzolara, D., & Cipriani, P. (2019). Which linguistic measures distinguish transient from persistent language problems in Late Talkers from 2 to 4 years? A study on Italian speaking children. *Research in Developmental Disabilities*, *89*, 59-68.

Armstrong, R., Scott, J. G., Whitehouse, A. J., Copland, D. A., Mcmahon, K. L., & Arnott, W. (2017). Late talkers and later language outcomes: Predicting the different language trajectories. *International Journal of Speech-Language Pathology*, *19*(3), 237-250.

Sansavini, A., & Faldella, G. (2013). Lo sviluppo dei bambini nati pretermine. *Aspetti neuropsicologici, metodi di valutazione e interventi* (pagg. 147-169).

Specific material prepared by the teacher will be available for the students.