UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Lis Styles and Registers

2526-3-E2005P022

Learning area

Acquisition of linguistic skills in LIS, LIST, and Italian

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding of

- human language modality: comparative analysis of spoken and signed languages
- methodologies used in the register, genre, and style analyses
- construction of materials for the linguistic analysis of registers, genres, and styles
- structure of sign language text annotation
- detailed analysis of descriptive results (graphs and percentage distributions)
- formulation of research hypotheses and analysis of behavioral data
- writing scientific prose of an analytical text

Contents

The properties of registers, genres, and styles in spoken and sign languages will be described. Detailed data analyses will be developed. Content to be analyzed will be constructed using computer tools. This content will then be analyzed in class.

Detailed program

The course is divided in two parts, one aims to provide a theoretically informed overview of the discipline, while the other aims to provide knowledge about practical tools and methods of analysis using concrete data.
The theoretical part of the course aims to offer a general framework for the linguistics of registers, styles, and genres. It will provide the basis for understanding how linguistic variation in language use can help identify specific registers, styles, and genres. The practical application will be in the field of sign languages, particularly LIS. Once the field of application has been defined and the methods and tools of this field of linguistics have been understood, the sector will be framed within sociolinguistics, with particular reference to variationist sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistic variation in sign languages, and in particular in LIS, will be addressed. The theoretical framework emerging from the lessons will be used to address issues related to the planning of language policies for sign languages and the linguistic rights of deaf and deaf-blind people.
The applied part of the course will focus on learning the tools and methods for data collection, annotation, and analysis of sign languages. Students will choose a topic from among those proposed in class and develop hypotheses. If necessary, they will collect and analyze data, carrying out field research.

Prerequisites

Advanced knowledge of LIS and its grammar.
Advanced knowledge of Italian and its grammar.
Basic knowledge of English.

Teaching methods

The teaching philosophy is based on two fundamental criteria: collaborative learning and learning by doing. These two criteria require:
• constant interaction during class hours
• active participation
• equal participation
• shared knowledge building
• frontal consolidation
• individual consolidation

In addition to attending classes, the texts needed to further develop skills (slides, scientific articles, books – see the reference bibliography) will be indicated on a case-by-case basis. All compulsory study materials will be uploaded to the E-Learning platform. For the practical part, specific videos will be created, and other videos will be shared by the teacher. The practical part requires the use of a computer.

Assessment methods

The course will be assessed on the basis of a written paper in which students will demonstrate their understanding of the essential aspects of the discipline by applying them to a concrete case. The paper must also include, as an attachment, the notes and analysis produced in accordance with the guidelines provided during the lessons.

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Reference bibliography (provisional)

Bayley, Robert, and Ceil Lucas. 2007. Sociolinguistic Variation: Theories, Methods, and Applications. In Sociolinguistic Variation: Theories, Methods, and Applications. Cambridge Univeristy Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9780511619496.

Berruto, Gaetano. 2007a. Fondamenti di sociolinguistica. 4. ed. Manuali di base 9. Laterza.

Berruto, Gaetano. 2007b. Prima lezione di sociolinguistica. 5. ed. Universale Laterza 848. GLF editori Laterza.

Biber, Douglas, and Susan Conrad. 2019. Register, Genre, and Style. Second edition. Cambridge Textbooks in Linguistics. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/9781108686136.

Branchini, Chiara, and Lara Mantovan, eds. 2020. A Grammar of Italian Sign Language (LIS). In A Grammar of Italian Sign Language (LIS). Edizioni Ca' Foscari. https://doi.org/10.30687/978-88-6969-474-5.

Cardinaletti, Anna, Carlo Cecchetto, and Caterina Donati. 2011. Grammatica, Lessico e Dimensioni Di Variazione Nella LIS. Edited by Anna Cardinaletti, Carlo Cecchetto, and Caterina Donati. Franco Angeli.

De Fina, Anna, and Alexandra Georgakopoulou. 2024. The Cambridge Handbook of Discourse Studies. First paperback edition. Cambridge Handbooks in Language and Linguistics. Cambridge University Press.

Geraci, Carlo. 2012. "Language Policy and Planning: The Case of Italian Sign Language." Sign Language Studies 12 (4): 494–518. https://doi.org/10.1353/sls.2012.0006.

Geraci, Carlo, and Humberto Insolera. 2019. "The `Language Issue' The Struggle and Path to the Recognition of LIS." In The Legal Recognition of Sign Languages, edited by Maartje De Meulder, Joseph J. Murray, and Rachel McKee. Multilinugal Matters.

Kanekal, Divya. 2025. ELAN. Nijmegen.

Lucas, Ceil, and Robert Bayley. 2005. "Variation in ASL: The Role of Grammatical Function." Sign Language Studies 6 (1): 38–75. https://doi.org/10.1353/sls.2006.0005.

Lucas, Ceil, Robert Bayley, and Clayton Valli. 2001. Sociolinguistic Variation in American Sign Language. Gallaudet University Press.

Lucas, Ceil, Robert Bayley, and Clayton Valli. 2003. What's Your Sign for PIZZA? Gallaudet University Press.

Mccaskill, Carolyn, Ceil Lucas, Robert Bayley, and Joseph C. Hill. 2011. The Hidden Trasure of Black ASL. Gallaudet University Press.

Roy, Cynthia B., ed. 2011. Discourse in Signed Languages. Sociolinguistics in Deaf Communities Series, v. 17. Gallaudet University Press.

Russo, Tommaso. 2004. "Iconicity and Productivity in Sign Language Discourse: An Analysis of Three LIS Discourse Registers." Sign Language Studies 4 (2): 164–97. https://doi.org/10.1353/sls.2004.0006.

Schembri, Adam C., and Ceil Lucas. 2015. Sociolinguistics and Deaf Communities. In Sociolinguistics and Deaf Communities, edited by Adam C. Schembri and Ceil Lucas. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/CBO9781107280298.

Shaw, Risa. 1987. "Determining Register in Sign-to-English Interpreting." Sign Language Studies 57 (1): 295–322. https://doi.org/10.1353/sls.1987.0019.

Zimmer, June. 1990. "From ASL to English in Two Versions: An Analysis of Differences in Register." WORD 41 (1): 19–34. https://doi.org/10.1080/00437956.1990.11435811.

Sustainable Development Goals

REDUCED INEQUALITIES