UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Psycholinguistics

2526-2-E2004P009

Learning area

1: Linguistic and communicative processes and related cultural contexts.

Learning objectives

Knowledge and understanding

- Analysis and comprehension of linguistic (lexical, syntactic, semantic) ambiguity within a language processing perspective.
- Mechanisms underlying the parsing of words and sentences and mechanisms of processing.
- Comprehension of implicit content (including figures of speech used for different communication goals).
- Analysis of the experimental methodologies used in the investigation of the mechanisms involved in language processing.

Applying knowledge and understanding

- Analysis and comprehension of linguistic (lexical, syntactic, semantic) ambiguity within a language processing perspective.
- Mechanisms underlying the parsing of words and sentences and mechanisms of processing.
- Comprehension of implicit content (including figures of speech used for different communication goals).
- Analysis of the experimental methodologies used in the investigation of the mechanisms involved in language processing.
- Exploitation of linguistic ambiguity in special contexts (e.g., ads, brand naming, comics).

Independent Judgment

- Development of students' critical analysis skills, particularly regarding the interpretation of experimental data used to support research hypotheses.
- Enhancement of students' ability to critically evaluate research hypotheses and models of data interpretation, including those related to recent scientific debates in the field of psycholinguistics - such as inclusive language and the benefits of multilingualism.
  These objectives will be supported through active student participation during lectures and through group discussions on controversial topics, encouraging students' engagement and confrontation of diverse perspectives.

Communication Skills

- Development of active listening skills, the ability to argue one's ideas, and to engage in discussion within groups, including interdisciplinary ones.

- Development of the ability to understand and critically analyze different points of view.

- Development of the ability to communicate one’s perspective clearly and consciously, and to support one’s arguments by referring to scientific evidence as well as documented and verified data or information.

  These objectives will be supported by encouraging students' active engagement in class discussions.

Learning Skills

- Development of greater critical awareness and methodological sensitivity which will strehghten the students' ability to:
  1. analyze research data in a critical, detailed, and in-depth manner;
  2. critically evaluate the interpretation of scientific data — including consideration of alternative hypotheses or explanations;
  3. construct and defend arguments based on thoroughly analyzed and well-documented sources.

Contents

The course provides a comprehensive overview of the mechanisms underlying the processing of language focusing on (i) the different models of language processing; (ii) the different experimental techniques and paradigms used in psycholinguistic research; (iii) the processing of ambiguity and its use in special communicative situations (for example, in advertisement, journalism, comics).

Detailed program

1. Theories of lexical access.
2. Models of parsing.
3. Experimental methods and techniques used to investigate language processing.
4. Discussion of experimental research questions about the use and processing of language.
5. Parsing strategies in processing linguistic ambiguities and their effects on the use of language in communication.
6. Models of comprehension of figures of speech and their use in ads.
7. Discussion of hotly debated linguistic phenomena (e.g., inclusive language).

Prerequisites

Previous attendance of the courses of Linguistics and Philosophy of Language (1st year obligatory courses) is required, thus some basic notions of language structure (phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics) are taken for granted. Students lacking such basic knowledge should contact the instructor at the beginning of the course.

Teaching methods

The structure of the course includes:

- the delivery of content through lectures in the classroom (Lecture-based class, 75% of the total number of hours);
- classroom discussion of experimental works through the analysis of scientific articles and group or individual practical exercises on real examples of communication (Interactive Teaching, 25% of the total hours).
  The course amounts to a total of 56 teaching hours in the classroom, delivered in Italian.

Assessment methods

The exam is **written** and comprises:

- open questions in order to assess the acquisition of theoretical notions and the ability to extend this competence to cases of real communication;
- multiple choice questions in order to assess the acquisition of theoretical basic notions;
- the analysis of one of the graphs discussed in class, in order to assess the ability to interpret and discuss psycholinguistic data, as well as their theoretical impact on models of parsing;
- a series of exercises in which the student is required to extend the knowledge acquired to real examples of use of language

No intermediate exams will be offered.

International students can take the exam in English and prepare on English textbooks/articles (please contact the instructur prior the begining of the course to discuss this possibility).

Textbooks and Reading Materials

Bibliography also includes class materials published in elearning (slides and scientific reports)

Although classes will be taught in Italian and the textbook is in Italian, international students can take the exam in English. In this case, the bibliography will include some English textbooks, avaliable in the library:

- Julie Sedivy (2019). *Language in mind: An introduction to psycholinguistics*. Sinauer Associates (selected chapters - available as EBOOK from the library).

- Paul Warren (2015). *Introducing Psycholinguistics* (selected chapters - available as EBOOK from the library).

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | GENDER EQUALITY | REDUCED INEQUALITIES