UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Foundations of Linguistics

2526-1-E1902R005

Course title

Introduction to Linguistics

Topics and course structure

The course provides an introduction to linguistics, the scientific study of human language, with a particular focus on aspects most relevant for future educators. The course is structured in two main parts. The first part is dedicated to the fundamentals of linguistics, with special attention to the physiological development of language in the 0–6 age range. The second part addresses the principles of democratic language education, preceded by a sociolinguistic framework that explains the role of language both as a tool of discrimination and exclusion, and conversely, of inclusion and social empowerment.

Part 1: Fundamentals of Linguistics and Language Acquisition
Topics: the properties of human language; experimental evidence on language, drawing from linguistics, psycholinguistics, and cognitive neuroscience; language disorders in childhood; language disorders in adulthood; introduction to phonetics (with particular focus on articulatory phonetics and early phonetic productions in the 0–36 months range); introduction to phonology (with focus on phonological development in the 0–6 age range); introduction to the lexicon (with focus on the development of intentional communication and the formation of the mental lexicon); introduction to morphology; introduction to syntax; introduction to pragmatics (with special emphasis on the development of communicative competence).

Part 2: Fundamentals of Sociolinguistics and Principles of Democratic Language Education
Topics: introduction to sociolinguistics; linguistic deprivation; functional illiteracy; sociolinguistic variation; the Ten Theses for Democratic Language Education.

Objectives

The educational objective of this course is to develop in-depth knowledge of the functioning and development of human language in individuals and of the role of languages as tools for social inclusion.

The course contributes to the educational goals of the degree program by aiming to:

interpret, in contemporary contexts, the specific needs of the recipients of educational interventions;

promote, facilitate, and support the processes of emotional, cognitive, social, and cultural development;

provide support to recipients in conditions of psychological, material, and social vulnerability or disadvantage within educational, care, and protection settings, to foster their fulfillment within the community;

develop knowledge and skills related to languages and specialized language.

In particular, this course aims to support the following learning objectives:

1. Knowledge and understanding

Knowledge of the fundamental concepts and methods of linguistics

Knowledge of the typical stages of language development in the 0–6 age range

Understanding of the functioning of languages and language

Understanding of the role of languages as instruments of inclusion and exclusion in society

2. Applied knowledge and understanding

Ability to recognize various types of linguistic deprivation in the contexts in which they may occur

Ability to implement the principles of democratic language education in all educational settings

3. Critical thinking and judgment

Acquisition and consolidation of analytical and critical thinking skills in educational situations involving linguistic components, with the ability to adopt reflective ethical and epistemological stances characterized by professional responsibility

4. Communication skills

Development of the ability to effectively communicate the logic and criteria of inclusive educational interventions related to language development, both in typical development and in situations of atypical development and social marginalization

Knowledge and use of specific linguistic terminology as a tool for education, interaction, and communication in different contexts

5. Learning skills

Ability to process and organize knowledge

Ability to identify methods and tools to support one's own and others' personal and professional growth

Methodologies

Language of instruction:
The course is taught in Italian.

Teaching methods:
The lessons will be primarily lecture-based (DE – Direct Education, 70%), although interactive teaching moments (DI – Interactive Education, 30%) are always encouraged by the instructor. In-class excercises are programmed.

Types of learning activities:
Lectures and in-class exercises supervised by the instructor.

Part of the course will be delivered remotely, according to the following distribution:

20 two-hour lessons delivered in person

8 two-hour lessons delivered online

Online and offline teaching materials

The materials presented during the lessons are an integral part of the exam syllabus and will be made available on the e-learning platform.

Programme and references

Gloria Gagliardi. Linguistica per le professioni sanitarie. Patron editore. ISBN/EAN: 9788855534383. 2019.

GISCEL. Dieci tesi per l'educazione linguistica democratica. Document freely downloadable from the GISCEL website: https://giscel.it/dieci-tesi-per-leducazione-linguistica-democratica/

Giuliana Fiorentino. Variabilità linguistica. Temi e metodi della ricerca. Carocci. ISBN: 9788843090945. 2018. Only chapters 1, 2, 5.

ERASMUS STUDENTS
Students from foreign universities are kindly requested to contact the instructor to agree on the syllabus and reading list.

Assessment methods

Written Exam
The written exam consists of 6–8 questions. These may include:

EXERCISES (responses to simple questions requiring the application of specific principles or techniques);

CASE ANALYSIS (description of a situation or real-life example in which the interconnections between various elements/variables are analyzed through one or more theoretical paradigms);

A maximum of one OPEN QUESTION (equivalent to a very short essay).

This method will allow to verify the achievement of the teaching objectives in terms of acquisition of knowledge and skills, ability to apply and rework them to authentic data, also highlighting the autonomy of judgment, communication skills and learning capacity.

Assessment Criteria:
– Ability to organize and present the knowledge acquired through the course, the learning materials provided on the e-learning platform, and the study of the texts in the syllabus;
– Ability to apply course knowledge and methods in a reflective, analytical, critical, and autonomous manner;
– Ability to connect theory and practice and to identify relevant links between texts and course topics;
– Accuracy of expression and command of the specific terminology of the discipline.

Grading scale (out of 30 points):

Insufficient (0–17)
Poor preparation on the main topics covered in the course and its bibliography; very limited and poorly independent argumentation, analysis, and critical thinking skills; inadequate ability to connect theory and practice or identify relevant links between texts and course topics; inaccurate expression and misuse of disciplinary terminology.

Sufficient – Fairly Sufficient (18–23)
Generic preparation, with uncertainties or gaps on various topics in the syllabus; argumentation, analysis, and critical thinking somewhat limited and not fully autonomous; difficulties in connecting theory and practice and identifying relevant links between texts and course themes; only partially accurate expression and use of disciplinary vocabulary.

Good (24–27)
Adequate preparation on the main topics in the syllabus, though not always in-depth on more specific issues; generally sound argumentation, analysis, and critical thinking, though not always precise or independent; fair ability to connect theory and practice and identify relevant links between texts and course themes; mostly correct expression and use of disciplinary terminology.

Very Good – Excellent (28–30 cum laude)
Comprehensive and in-depth preparation on all course topics; well-structured, independent argumentation, analysis, and critical thinking; strong ability to connect theory and practice and to identify relevant links between texts and course topics; clear, accurate expression and full command of disciplinary terminology.

Office hours

Please contact the instructor via email to schedule an appointment (federica.cominetti1@unimib.it).

Programme validity

The syllabi are valid for two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

QUALITY EDUCATION | REDUCED INEQUALITIES | PEACE, JUSTICE AND STRONG INSTITUTIONS