UNIVERSITÀ
DEGLI STUDI DI MILANO-BICOCCA

COURSE SYLLABUS

Foundations of Linguistics

2627-1-E1902R005

Course title

Introduction to Linguistics

Topics and course structure

This course provides an introduction to linguistics, the scientific study of human language, with a particular focus on the aspects most relevant to future early childhood educators. The course is divided into two parts.

The first part introduces the foundations of linguistics, with particular attention to language development (both physiological and cognitive/social) in children aged 0–6 years.

The second part focuses on the principles of democratic language education and is preceded by an introduction to sociolinguistics, illustrating the role of language as a tool for social inclusion and empowerment, as well as, conversely, for discrimination and exclusion.

Part 1: Foundations of Linguistics and Language Acquisition

Topics:

The properties of human language
Experimental evidence on language from linguistics, psycholinguistics, and cognitive neuroscience
Developmental language disorders in childhood
Language disorders in adulthood
Introduction to phonetics, with particular emphasis on articulatory phonetics and phonetic production in children aged 0–36 months
Introduction to phonology, with particular emphasis on phonological development in children aged 0–6 years
Introduction to the lexicon, with particular emphasis on the development of intentional communication and the

formation of the mental lexicon
Introduction to morphology
Introduction to syntax
Introduction to pragmatics, with particular emphasis on the development of communicative competence
Part 2: Foundations of Sociolinguistics and Principles of Democratic Language Education

Topics:

Introduction to sociolinguistics
Linguistic deprivation
Functional illiteracy
The Ten Theses for Democratic Language Education

Objectives

Through this course, supported by regular and active participation in class, students are expected to achieve the following learning outcomes:

1. Knowledge and Understanding

Knowledge of the fundamental concepts and methods of linguistics.
Knowledge of the typical stages of language development in children aged 0–6 years.
Understanding of how languages and language function.

2. Applying Knowledge and Understanding

Ability to relate and integrate different bodies of knowledge and theoretical models.
Ability to apply knowledge and theoretical models to real-world data.

3. Making Judgements

Understanding of the role of languages as instruments of social inclusion and exclusion.

4. Communication Skills

Ability to understand and use specialist terminology.
Ability to communicate effectively with different groups of individuals (e.g. children aged 0–6 years and people from diverse cultural backgrounds).

5. Learning Skills

Ability to interpret real-world situations in the light of the knowledge acquired.

Methodologies

Language: Italian

The course is delivered primarily through lectures (80%), complemented by interactive teaching activities (20%). Students are encouraged to actively participate in class discussions and other interactive learning opportunities

throughout the course.

Types of Learning Activities
Lectures
In-class exercises and practical activities supervised by the instructor

All classes will be delivered in person

Online and offline teaching materials

The materials presented during lectures are an integral part of the course syllabus and the examination programme. They will be made available through the University's 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. Documento liberamente scaricabile dal sito del GISCEL: 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.

Assessment methods

Assessment consists of a 60-minute written examination comprising 6–8 questions.

The examination may include:

Exercises, requiring the application of specific linguistic concepts, principles, or analytical techniques;
Case analysis, based on the description of a real or realistic situation, requiring students to analyse the relationships among different elements or variables in light of one or more theoretical frameworks;
Up to one open-ended question, equivalent to a short essay.

This assessment format is consistent with the learning objectives of the course and is designed to evaluate the extent to which these objectives have been achieved.

The examination assesses:

knowledge and understanding of the topics covered in the course;
the ability to apply theoretical models and analytical frameworks to real-world data;
the ability to justify and critically discuss the answers provided;
the appropriate use of specialist linguistic terminology.

No mid-term assessments are scheduled.

Grading Criteria

Final grades are awarded on a 30-point scale, according to the following criteria:

Fail
Insufficient knowledge of the main topics covered in the course syllabus and required readings; very limited and largely non-autonomous abilities in argumentation, analysis, and critical reflection; inadequate ability to relate theory to practice or to identify meaningful connections among course topics and readings; inaccurate use of disciplinary terminology and inadequate communication skills.

Satisfactory – Fair (18–23)
General knowledge of the course content, with uncertainties or gaps in several topics covered in the syllabus and required readings; argumentation, analysis, and critical reflection are sometimes limited and lack autonomy; some difficulty in relating theory to practice and in identifying meaningful connections among course topics and readings; partially appropriate use of disciplinary terminology and communication skills.

Good (24–27)
Adequate knowledge of the main topics covered in the course syllabus and required readings, although some more specialised topics are addressed less thoroughly; satisfactory ability in argumentation, analysis, and critical reflection, though not always precise or fully autonomous; good ability to relate theory to practice and to identify meaningful connections among course topics and readings; generally accurate use of disciplinary terminology and effective communication skills.

Very Good – Excellent (28–30/30 with honours)
Comprehensive and in-depth knowledge of all topics covered in the course syllabus and required readings; well-developed, independent skills in argumentation, analysis, and critical reflection; very good to excellent ability to relate theory to practice and to identify meaningful connections among course topics and readings; excellent communication skills and confident command of specialist disciplinary terminology.

Office hours

Students are requested to contact the instructor by email to arrange an appointment: federica.cominetti1@unimib.it.

Programme validity

The course syllabus is valid for two academic years.

Course tutors and assistants

Sustainable Development Goals

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