## **General Linguistics**

## Prof. Giovanni Gobber

***COURSE AIMS AND INTENDED LEARNING OUTCOMES***

The course will firstly outline a hypothesis on the organisational principles of languages as communication tools; it will describe the processes of verbal communication and present the characteristics of the grammatical and lexical structures.

Subsequently, it will consider the linguistic spaces, especially the European and Mediterranean ones. Through the systematic use of empirical data, the course highlights the similarities and differences between languages, as well as their intrinsic variation and propensity for inter-linguistic contact. On the one hand, it recognises that variability and interference are natural linguistic phenomena; on the other hand, it highlights certain generally homogeneous trends within the expressions produced inside the social groups that make up a community of speakers.

At the end of the course, students will also have acquired the key tools for analysing texts. In particular:

- on the basis of preferential correlation between syntactic structures and types of textual sequences, they will bring to light the pragmatic function of a sequence of text, placing it within a wider communicative event;

- they will be able to identify the implicit components operating beneath a given text;

- they will be able to retrace the discursive functions linking the various sequences of a text.

Students will be able to describe the linguistic map of Europe, taking its variation into account, including within multilingual contexts. This perspective will allow them to recognise standard varietiesas “exemplary types” in comparison to other forms of the language.

Students will learn to analyse these standard varieties on a morphological, lexical and syntactical level. They will have previously learned to distinguish between pronunciation and spelling. In this respect, they will be familiar with the basic symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet used to describe the phonetics of Italian. They will also be able to apply the following skills and knowledge:

- describing the forms of words: in terms of form, they will be able to distinguish, for a given word form, the root or roots and any affixes (prefixes, suffixes or endings); on a functional level, they will be able to identify inflectional morphemes, lexical formatives (or derivational morphemes) and lexical morphemes.

- observing a given lexeme, they will be able to recognise its morphology, formation processes and lexicology. They will identify the relationships between the meanings of the same lemma (proper meaning, figurative meaning and expanded meaning), as well as their relationships with the meanings of other lemmas (synonymy, antonymy, meronymy, hypernymy/hyponymy/co-hyponymy);

- they will be able to describe idiomatic lexical structures, with or without compositionality;

- when confronted with model examples of products of linguistic contact, they will be able to distinguish between loan words, structural calques and semantic calques;

- they will be able to describe the microstructure of a given lemma by placing each piece of information in the respective area (the lemma, grammatical information, semantic information or complementary information).

- using their acquired knowledge of how syntax functions, they will be able to recognise the internal organisation of the prevailing Indo-European syntactical structures.

***COURSE CONTENT***

*Semester 1*

1. Verbal communication, implicit and explicit
2. Properties of languages and linguistic structures.

*Semester 2*

1. Language families and linguistic spaces. Languages as social institutions and as variation fields.
2. Language contacts: borrowing, structural and semantic loan words.

***READING LIST***

G. Gobber, *Linguistica generale*, Vita e Pensiero, Milano (in print)

Additional teaching materials will be made available in the virtual classroom.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Frontal lectures.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The exam will be divided into two parts: both will be written tests and contribute equally to the final mark.

The first exam covers the contents of Semester 1. There will be both open and closed questions to assess students’: a) capacity to recognise and classify linguistic phenomena; b) understanding of the fundamental methods used in linguistic science. The second exam focuses on the contents of Semester 2 and aims to verify the skills acquired, in particular the ability to apply the information and methods learned in lectures to concrete examples.

Students will be assessed on: 1) pertinence and fullness of their answers, 2) clear and accurate presentation of information and 3) their use of language with a focus on specialist terminology of general linguistics.

It is possible to take both parts of the exam in one sitting.

Once the exams have been marked, students will be able to see their papers and will receive appropriate feedback from the lecturer on their result.

Further information will be provided during lectures and in the virtual classroom.

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Course prerequisites are:good knowledge of the Italian language: spelling, grammar and vocabulary;

The ability to produce texts that are relevant in terms of content (i.e. respond to the assigned task) and internally coherent.

Further information can be found on the lecturer's webpage at http://docenti.unicatt.it/web/searchByName.do?language=ENG or on the Faculty notice board.