## **General Linguistics**

## Prof. Giovanni Gobber

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

The course will first outline a hypothesis on the organisational principles of languages as communication tools. It will next consider linguistic spaces, particularly European and Mediterranean, before highlighting similarities and differences between languages, as well as their intrinsic variation and propensity for interlinguistic contact.

Later, the focus will shift to verbal communication in politics (*tà politiká*) and the polylinguistic discipline will be introduced, with attention on the argumentative dimension and linguistic categorisation of terms in political debate.

By the end of the course, students will have acquired the basic tools for analysing texts. Specifically:

– they will be able to highlight the pragmatic function of a text sequence, placing it within a broader communicative event;

– for a given text, they will be able to identify the implicit components at play in association with each element of the text;

– they will reconstruct the network of argumentational roles linking different sequences of a text, with a focus on the use of languages in politics.

They will be able to describe the language map of Europe, taking variation into account, including within multilingual contexts. This perspective will allow them to recognise standard varieties as “exemplary types” compared to other forms of language manifestation.

As for the structures of a standard variety, students will be able to perform analysis on morphological, lexical and syntactic levels. Previously, they will have become aware of the difference between pronunciation and spelling. In this regard, they will be familiar with the fundamental symbols of the International Phonetic Alphabet applied to the description of Italian phonetics. They will also have achieved the following ability to apply skills and knowledge:

– they will be able to describe the forms of words: by applying a formal criterion, and identify, based on the form of a word, the root(s) and any affixes (prefixes, suffixes, endings); in terms of function, they will be able to detect flexional, formative lexical morphemes (or derivational morphemes) and lexical morphemes.

– by observing a given lexicon, they will be able to, in terms of morphology, recognise the processes of formation and, in terms of lexicology, identify the relationships between meanings of the same lemma (proper sense, figured sense, extended sense), as well as relationships with the meanings of other lemmas (synonymy, antonymy, meronymy, hypernymy/hyponymy/cohyponymy);

– analysing a lemma, they will be able to describe its microstructure, locating each piece of information in its respective area (entry, grammatical information, semantic information or supplementary information).

– analysing example cases of contact outcomes, they will be able to determine whether a word is a loan word, structural calque or semantic calque.

***COURSE CONTENT***

*Semester 1*

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

*Semester 2*

1. Languages as social institutions and as fields of variation. Language families and language spaces. Language contacts: loan words, structural calques and semantic calques.
2. Aspects of polylinguistics.

***READING LIST***

G. Gobber, *Linguistica generale*, Vita e Pensiero, Milan 2022.

Further reading materials will be made available in the virtual classroom.

***TEACHING METHOD***

Classroom lectures.

***ASSESSMENT METHOD AND CRITERIA***

The examination is divided into two parts; both parts are in written form and contribute equally to the final mark. A first test assesses students on the content from the lectures of semester 1. A second test focuses on the content of semester 2 and aims to test the actual skills acquired – in particular the ability to apply the content and methods learned in the lectures in practice. For both tests, the questions are in open and closed form and serve to test the ability to recognise and classify language and linguistic phenomena, in light of principles and fundamental methods of linguistics.

The assessment will take into account (1) the relevance and completeness of the answers, (2) the clarity and correctness of the statements, as well as (3) language skill, with a focus on the use of the specialist terms of general linguistics.

Students who do not pass the first interim test must take both parts on a single exam date.

After the tests have been assessed, students will be able to review their papers and receive adequate explanation from the lecturer about the result. The lecturer will specify the date for reviewing the tests.

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

***NOTES AND PREREQUISITES***

Students require:

a strong grasp of the rules of Italian, in terms of spelling, grammar and vocabulary;

the ability to draft a text that is relevant (i.e. corresponds to the assigned brief) 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.