

Course (codes): *Language Variation and Change (MLTA); Sociolinguistics (MDS)*

Master Program: Master in Theoretical and Applied Linguistics (MLTA); Master in Discourse Studies (MDS)

Year: 2014-15

Quarter: 1st

Number of ECTS credits:

Number of student's hours:

Type of course:

Professor/s: Joan Costa and Montserrat González

Language of instruction: English

1. Course presentation

The course offers a perspective on the study of language in its social context that allows us to explain its use from a sociolinguistic approach. Through the course the student will analyse situations of language variation and change directly related to the social use of the language, with practical tasks of analysis of oral transcriptions and real multilingual and language contact situations.

The course is divided in two blocks: (i) language variation and change focused on how the universality of human language shows up in specific languages, with the analysis of language change processes; (ii) social dimension of language, focused on language contact situations and on the relationship between language, culture and social prestige.

2. Objectives

The goal of the course is to develop the student's capacity to explore language variation and change from a sociolinguistic perspective, considering universal processes (human language showing up as different languages), internal language processes (geographical, social and generational variation; speaker's creativity, standardization, etc.) and language contact processes (diglossia, pidginization, creolization and standardization of a language).

3. Syllabus

Block (i)

Professor: Joan Costa

Language Variation

- The universality of human language: definition, properties, functions
- The diversity of human language
 - "Particular" languages: definition
 - Cross-linguistic variation
 - "Inside"/ Internal variation

Language change

- Definition
- Typology
- process

Block (ii)

Professor: Montserrat González

Social dimension of language

- Micro and macro sociolinguistics
- Language contact situations and processes: from pidginization to criolization and standardization.
- Language, culture, prestige: diglossia and code-switching

4. Assessment

The assessment of the course will be done by means of two activities (considered 'continuous assessment') and two final [end-of-the-blocks] papers:

Block (i)

- ✓ One activity on *language variation* or on *language change*
- ✓ One final (end-of-the-block) paper on the relationship between *language variation* and *language change*

Block (ii)

- ✓ One activity on a *language contact* phenomenon
- ✓ One final (end-of-the-block) paper on the relationship between language, culture, prestige (discussion and exemplification of one particular phenomenon)

The detailed description and requirements of the activities and papers will be done in due time (and uploaded in the *aula global-moodle* of the course).

In order to pass the course, the student has to present and pass the two activities and the two papers. In case s/he doesn't pass, the student will have a second opportunity with the re-writing and re-submission (in January) of the papers, only, not with the activities, which are considered part of the continuous assessment evaluation.

5. Methodology, activities, materials

The course is organized in the following way:

- 3-hours-session/week
- *Readings*: you will have a reading-pack and/or articles (uploaded in the moodle of the course) on the issues discussed in class. You will be expected to do the required reading **before** the class in which it is discussed.
- *Activities* and/or *in-class-exercises/oral presentations*: There will two activities and two papers related to the content blocks plus some in-class exercises or oral presentations the role of which is to give you the opportunity to make sure you understand the concepts that are discussed in class.

The sessions will have two parts, one consisting in the presentation and discussion of the concepts and methods that are necessary to understand the readings and do the activities, and another one that involves an active participation on the students' part, with oral presentations and in-class exercises. Active participation of the student is essential. The work to be done outside of class will mainly consist of the weekly readings.

6. Basic References

Block (I)

- Crystal, David (2010). *The Cambridge encyclopedia of language*. New York: Cambridge University Press. 3rd ed.
- Labov, William (1994-2010). *Principles of Linguistic Change*. Chichester (UK): Wiley-Blackwell. 3 vol.
- Chambers, J. K.; Natalie Schilling-Estes (Editors) (2013). *The Handbook of Language Variation and Change*. Chichester (UK): Wiley-Blackwell. 2nd Edition

Block (II)

- Coulmas, F. (ed.). 2005. *Sociolinguistics. The Study of Speakers' Choices*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Meyerhoff, M. 2006. *Introducing Sociolinguistics*. London: Routledge.
- Myers-Scotton. 1992. *Motivations for Code-Switching*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

- Romaine, S. 2000. *Language in Society: An Introduction to Sociolinguistics*. 2nd edn. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Spolsky, B. 1998. *Sociolinguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Tucker, G. Richard. 2003. 'Sociolinguistics. The essential readings'. In: Bratt Paulston, Christina (ed.). Oxford/Massachusetts: Blackwell.
- Trudgill, P. 1995. *Sociolinguistics: An Introduction to Language and Society*. (4rd edn. 2000), Harmondsworth, England: Penguin Books.