

Theoretical Applications

The courses in this stream cover a wide range of issues in the theoretical background of language and language learning with a forward look toward applications in language teaching. The underlying idea guiding each of these courses is that teachers, to be more responsive and reflective in the classroom, need to know not only what they are doing but also why they are doing certain things. This is why theories can be important.

21023432 Introduction to Linguistics* (more basic)

As language teachers we deal with language almost exclusively on the surface level. This also includes not only basic descriptions but also more formal descriptions of linguistic behavior such as structural phenomenon, meaning and, crucially, use. Yet there is a wide range of theories that postulate linguistic systems working below the surface and these systems work to explain and/or constrain what is possible in language. It, therefore, seems that as professionals working in the field of language, we need to look below the surface to see what kind of system(s) language is really composed of. This three-hour-per-week course, therefore, is designed to provide students with instruction in the underlying psychological system(s) of language and English in particular from the theoretical perspective of cognitive linguistics. We explore together how this pivotal body of knowledge can be of benefit to English language teachers in the classroom and beyond.

The main objective of this course is to help the students to better understand the nature of language itself by looking at how language is supposed to work from a cognitive linguistic or usage-based perspective. Basically, students should leave this course with a sound but basic comprehension of how language works as viewed by the cognitive linguistic theoretical model. In addition to this, the course will be geared toward how all this knowledge can be used by working teachers of language. In short, the second goal of this course is to answer the question all teachers who study linguistics need to ask themselves; how can I use this in the way I teach? It is intended that this class, at the very least, will affect teachers' beliefs about how language works and, at best, will provide specific ideas that can be used in the language classroom.

21023723 Second Language Learning Theories* (more basic)

This course is going to be different from many other courses on SLA and also what we have done in the past in that it will not focus on specific theories or approaches to the very complex phenomenon of second language learning (For a neutral discussion of *approaches* to SLA see Mitchell, R. and F. Myles. (2004). *Second language learning theories* (2nd Edition). London: Arnold). The problem is that these approaches are not only confusing but also not always helpful to the language teacher. The reality is that despite all that has been researched and discussed not one of these approaches provides a comprehensive model for successful consecutive language learning. Rather, they each approach certain issues from different perspectives. It, therefore, seems that it is the issues rather than the approaches that need to be addressed and that is what we are going to do in this course.

This three-hour-per-week course is designed to provide language teachers/students with a comprehensive overview of some of the main issues associated with second language learning. After a brief introduction to the form and purpose of language in general, we will be focusing in turn on different issues identified and investigated by leading researchers related to the question of how second languages are learned and what affects this. In addition, a strong connection will be made between specific issues in SLA and certain language teaching methodologies, focusing more specifically on the connections between theories and practices in second language and foreign language situations. By the end of the course, students should have acquired not only a wide overview of issues related to second language learning but also how these different issues have been and can be used to generate specific teaching practices in the foreign language classroom.

21023382 Developing Bilingualism (more advanced)**

This three-hour-per-week course is designed to provide students with a course in issues and practices related to the development and/or enhancement of bilingualism and the theoretical underpinnings of this rapidly developing area of language research. A bilingual individual is defined loosely as someone, according to Mohanty (1994)*, who has the ability, "to meet the communicative demands of the self and society in their normal functioning of two or more languages in their interaction with the other speakers of any or all of these languages". Based on this definition, we can see that bilinguals do not need to be equally proficient in all their languages and that what really defines them is language **use**. It is from this perspective that we will look at the issue of language development and enhancement this semester. In this course, we will be looking at ways of developing bilingualism (or aspects thereof) in our students particularly from a psycholinguistic and what is called a `dynamic approach` to multilingualism. In doing so we will quickly discover that socio-cultural considerations have a large effect on language use and language development, particularly in multilingual systems. In this way we will be taking rather interesting theory and using it to develop practical approaches in language teaching. This course will be rather heavy on the reading, but should be interesting. The course is also designed with no prerequisites with the material being approached from the point of view of a beginner to the field.

*Mohanty, A.K. (1994). *Bilingualism in a multilingual society: Psychological and pedagogical implications*. Mysore: Central Institute of Indian Languages.

21023434 Human Learning and Cognition (more advanced)**

This three-hour-per-week course focuses on the brain, its structure and mechanisms, in particular in how they relate to how people learn regarding memory and language. The course has two main areas that are to be covered. The first of these is the learning and memory component. The second component revolves around brain structure and functioning as it relates specifically to language. Here we will be looking at different elements of language and how they can be explained through theories of brain structure and functioning. In effect, we are looking for ways in this course to tie together the brain, memory, and language in a holistic, principled way.

The objective of this class is to give the students an opportunity to delve deeply into some of the newer theories about the brain and memory, which are going to have a tremendous impact in the area of language learning and teaching in the near future. As usual, the objectives of the course revolve around acquisition of the concepts covered as well as their practical application in the classroom. By the end of the course students should have a strong overview of current theories of the brain particularly in relation to memory, language and cognition. In addition, students should be able to take this new knowledge and use it to craft informed approaches, design materials and create lessons for language development that correspond to these new ideas for a greater overall effect.

21023432 Sociolinguistics in Language Teaching (more advanced)**

This course is designed to provide students with instruction and practice dealing with the issues surrounding the field of sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics is an interesting and important area for language for teachers because it deals with how languages are used and thought of in the real world. In this course we will review some of the basic ideas underlying language use by looking at language from three different but overlapping theoretical viewpoints. We will be taking a look at sociolinguistics, discourse analysis and interlanguage pragmatics. Based on this, students are expected to be exposed to and to generate a full picture of how language use develops and is to be assessed and taught and specifically in subsequent language learners. As such, this course is seen as being a basic course and one which marries necessary theories in SLA with practical outcomes related to language use. Students will be encouraged to come up with real- world applications of the theories discussed in class for use in their own teaching.