

ET118-30 Linguistics: Understanding Language

24/25

Department

Applied Linguistics

Level

Undergraduate Level 1

Module leader

Evi Sifaki

Credit value

30

Module duration

20 weeks

Assessment

Multiple

Study location

University of Warwick main campus, Coventry

Description

Introductory description

Understanding how language works will provide you with insights that can be used not only in your academic course but also in your future professional and personal life. This module will introduce you to how language is structured (morphology and syntax) and how it is used to construct meaning (semantics and pragmatics), to its sounds and sound patterns (phonetics and phonology) and written form. You'll have the chance to explore examples from different languages and to develop practical analytical skills.

[Module web page](#)

Module aims

The module aims to introduce students to the study of formal linguistics and its main branches; familiarise them with the analysis of language, including its sounds (phonetics and phonology), structures (morphology and syntax) and meaning (semantics and pragmatics); introduce students to similarities and differences among languages; enable students to carry out some practical analysis of real language data.

Outline syllabus

This is an indicative module outline only to give an indication of the sort of topics that may be covered. Actual sessions held may differ.

Introduction to linguistics

phonetics

phonology

morphology

syntax

semantics

pragmatics

selected topics: e.g. language contact and multilingualism, language diversity and change

Learning outcomes

By the end of the module, students should be able to:

- Upon successful completion of this course, students should have an understanding of linguistics. Students should then be able to:
 - use disciplinary terminology to describe the sounds, sound patterns, morphology, syntax, and meaning of languages
 - describe and discuss similarities and differences among languages
 - apply their knowledge of linguistics to carry out practical analysis of language data, and justify this analysis with evidence
 - transcribe language data with the International Phonetic Alphabet
 - draw syntactic trees to capture different argument structures in the clausal architecture
 - apply their semantic and pragmatic knowledge (i.e., metaphorical language, entailment and presupposition, implicatures in everyday life, and speech acts, etc) in order to carry out a practical analysis of language data
 - critically evaluate alternative analyses and choose the one that best suits the data at hand
 - construct coherent lines of scientific argumentation

Indicative reading list

Ashby, P. (2013). Understanding phonetics. Routledge.

Fromkin, V., Rodman, R. & Hyams, N. (2017). An Introduction to Language. (7th Edition). Andover: Cengage Learning.

Genetti, C. (Ed.) (2019) How languages work: An introduction to language and linguistics. Cambridge: CUP

Gussenhoven, C., & Jacobs, H. (2013). Understanding phonology. Routledge.

Saeed, J. (2016). Semantics. Oxford: Blackwells.

Tallerman, M. (2020). Understanding Syntax. Routledge.

Yule, G. (2014). The study of language. Fifth Edition. Cambridge: CUP.

[View reading list on Talis Aspire](#)

Interdisciplinary

Students will learn to utilise the micro-analytic toolkit introduced in this module in all languages they get exposed to. The linguistic skills and knowledge that students acquire in this module will be applied in other applied linguistics modules such as sociolinguistics, qualitative research, and psycholinguistics, which are inherently interdisciplinary and encourage linguistic analysis. Furthermore, these linguistic skills and knowledge students acquire will assist them in learning foreign languages, but also enhanced by the study of foreign languages.

International

Understanding how language works goes hand-in-hand with understanding how language works in social contexts locally, nationally and internationally. Through the study of semantics (meaning) and pragmatics (meaning in context), you will develop a better understanding of intercultural communication and, along with the study of the sounds and structures of the world's languages, you will develop a better appreciation for the human capacity for language and how it interacts with our cultures.

Subject specific skills

Demonstrate familiarity with the main concepts and terminology of formal linguistics. Demonstrate an ability to describe the sounds, sound systems, syntactic and morphological structures and meaning of language(s). Demonstrate the ability to analyse language data and justify this analysis with evidence. Transcribe language data with the International Phonetic Alphabet, use rules to explain sound distributions, identify and classify different morphological processes, draw trees to capture different syntactic structures, analyse word and sentence meaning, and apply sentence meaning in different contexts.

Transferable skills

Exercise inferential thinking when analysing language data. Write up analyses in an informative and structured way. Communicate clearly in academic discussion and debates. Retrieve, critically evaluate, and select relevant information to construct and support coherent lines of scientific argumentation. Demonstrate independence of thought and attention to detail by exercising their micro-analytic linguistic skills.

Study

Study time

Type	Required
Lectures	18 sessions of 2 hours (12%)
Seminars	18 sessions of 1 hour (6%)
Other activity	6 hours (2%)
Total	300 hours

Type	Required
Private study	240 hours (80%)
Total	300 hours

Private study description

Reading subject materials
Homework tasks
Formative assessments
Revision

Other activity description

Revision sessions after Easter

Costs

No further costs have been identified for this module.

Assessment

You do not need to pass all assessment components to pass the module.

Assessment group D

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
In-class test 1 MCQ	10%		No
In-class test 2 MCQ	10%		No
Online Examination Unseen examination ~Platforms - WAS	80%		No

- Online examination: No Answerbook required

Assessment group R

	Weighting	Study time	Eligible for self-certification
Online Examination unseen examination	100%		No

- Online examination: No Answerbook required

Feedback on assessment

In-class tests will be marked automatically via Moodle.

[Past exam papers for ET118](#)

Availability

Post-requisite modules

If you pass this module, you can take:

- ET229-15 Phonetics and Phonology

Courses

This module is Core for:

- Year 1 of ULNA-R1Q2 Undergraduate French Studies with Linguistics
- Year 1 of ULNA-R1Q3 Undergraduate French and Linguistics
- Year 1 of ULNA-R2Q2 Undergraduate German Studies with Linguistics
- Year 1 of ULNA-R2Q3 Undergraduate German and Linguistics
- Year 1 of ULNA-R4Q1 Undergraduate Hispanic Studies and Linguistics
- Year 1 of ULNA-R3Q3 Undergraduate Italian and Linguistics
- Year 1 of UETA-X3Q5 Undergraduate Language, Culture and Communication
- Year 1 of UETA-X3Q8 Undergraduate Language, Culture and Communication (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 1 of UETA-Q1A9 Undergraduate Linguistics with Arabic (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 1 of UETA-Q1A7 Undergraduate Linguistics with Chinese (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 1 of UETA-Q1A1 Undergraduate Linguistics with French (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 1 of UETA-Q1A2 Undergraduate Linguistics with German (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 1 of UETA-Q1A3 Undergraduate Linguistics with Italian (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 1 of UETA-Q1A8 Undergraduate Linguistics with Japanese (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 1 of UETA-Q1A5 Undergraduate Linguistics with Portuguese (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 1 of UETA-Q1A6 Undergraduate Linguistics with Russian (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 1 of UETA-Q1A4 Undergraduate Linguistics with Spanish (with Intercalated Year)
- Year 1 of ULNA-R9Q1 Undergraduate Modern Languages and Linguistics

- Year 1 of UPSA-C802 Undergraduate Psychology with Linguistics
- Year 1 of UETA-Q311 in English Language and Linguistics (with Intercalated year)

This module is Core optional for:

- Year 1 of ULNA-R4Q1 Undergraduate Hispanic Studies and Linguistics
- Year 1 of UPSA-C802 Undergraduate Psychology with Linguistics