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Sociolinguistics in Language Teaching

Course Policy

(Fall 2011)

Overview: This three-hour-per-week course is designed to provide students with a course in the issues surrounding the field of sociolinguistics. Sociolinguistics is an interesting and important area of language for teachers because it deals with how languages are used and thought of in the real world. Essentially sociolinguistics is the study of language variation. 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 (a wee bit) 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 combines 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.

Objectives: The most basic objective of this course is to provide the developing teachers with both knowledge and skills so that they might be better teachers of English as a language to be used for communicative purposes. In order to do this, however, students must first be introduced to the relevant theories of sociolinguistics, discourse, and pragmatics. Therefore, in order to enhance the students' prowess as teachers of speaking three distinct but related areas of study (Sociolinguistics, Discourse Analysis, and Interlanguage Pragmatics) must be introduced. By the end of the course the students will have improved their skill in being to teach English as a medium of communication but will also have a firm background in the underpinnings of speaking competence in language.

Texts

-Bauer, L. and P. Trudgill (1999). *Language myths*. New York: Penguin. ISBN 0-140-26023-4

This is the book we are going to use as our summer reading. It is a collection of myths pertaining to language, and particularly on social aspects of language. It sets the overall tone for this course and is a fun book to read.

-Kasper, G. and Rose, K. (2003). *Pragmatic development in a second language*. Malden, MA.: Wiley-Blackwell. ISBN-10: 0631234306, ISBN-13: 978-06312343

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This book encompasses an introduction to the field of interlanguage pragmatics. It is one of the few accessible introductions to this very new field and will hopefully prove to be an invaluable resource for the students.

-Mesthrie, R, J. Swann, A. Deumert and W. Leap. (2009). *Introducing sociolinguistics* (Second Edition). Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. ISBN 978 0 7486 3844 4

This book provides a basic and interesting introduction to some of the main ideas of sociolinguistics. We will be using not all but a fair bit of the book in the first half of the course.

Additional Texts:

In addition to the primary texts mentioned above, there at least one other resource we will be using. Other resources will emerge as the course develops, so please keep abreast of developments with the website.

-Johnstone, Barbara. (2008). *Discourse analysis* (Second Edition). Malden, MA.: Blackwell. ISBN-13: 978-1405144278

This rather simple book provides a basic introduction to discourse analysis focusing on spoken discourse but with some mention of writing. We will only be using a small portion of the entire book, but it is a good resource to have so I would encourage people to get it.

Methodology

English Only: Students are strongly encouraged to conduct all in-class course work in English. This means all writing, note-taking, and discussion should be in English. As this is an international setting, we should follow international standards of language use. Be mindful of how you use your language so as not to offend or make other uncomfortable. People who are found to be linguistically insensitive or exclusionary will find this reflected in their course grade.

Classroom: In the classroom, there will be both direct lecturing and more discussion-oriented activities. Students will be expected to demonstrate that they have done the reading and learned something by taking an active role in the class discussions. There are no clear cut answers to any of these concerns The students need to come up with their own ideas and further questions. In order to do this you need to do the reading. Please, always come prepared or you will be lost in class.

Attendance: Students are expected to attend all scheduled classes. Two or more absences will result in a significantly lowered final grade. Being late twice is counted as an absence. Arriving more than half an hour late is also counted as an absence. Students themselves are responsible for all material covered and assigned in class during their absence. If you are going to be absent and know it beforehand, make sure you contact me as far in advance as possible.

Assignments

Homework: The most important homework for this class is to do the reading every week and be ready to fully participate in class. This is a more theoretical course so the readings are pivotal. In order to ensure this and to improve the students writing ability, there will be written homework assigned each week. Check the website each week for the required homework assignments.

Projects

Midterm: The Mid-term will be due in the ninth week of class (November 2). It will be a written paper following three basic options. Students will be given these options several weeks in advance and are encouraged to come see mw and talk about the details of her/his project. The midterm generally functions as a rough draft of what will be done for the final project. No problems!!

Final Project: This will be where you get to show creatively how you can use the knowledge acquired in this course in a more practical sense. Basically, this will be a rewrite with further development on some of the ideas related to sociolinguistic variation, language as discourse and interlanguage pragmatics. It should be fun and enjoyable. You will be given more specific details later as to the different options.

Grades: Final grades will be based on performance in the following categories.

Homework	30%
Participation	25%
Midterm	15%
Final Project	30%

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P.S. There will also be a complimentary website for this class. I will be posting notes and summaries each week, so make sure you go and look at it. The address is:

<http://www.udveksling.com>