VNIVERSITAT DE VALÈNCIA

Course Guide
44413 Research in language: Diachronic perspectives

COURSE DATA

DATA SUBJECT

Code: 44413
Name: Research in language: Diachronic perspectives
Cycle: Master's Degree
ECTS Credits: 5
Academic year: 2025-26

STUDY (S)

Degree	Center	Acad. year	Period
2207 - Master's Degree in Language and Literature Research	Facultat de Filologia, Traducció i Comunicació	1	Second quarter

SUBJECT-MATTER

Degree	Subject-matter	Character
2207 - Master's Degree in Language and Literature Research	Advanced research in languages and literatures	ELECTIVES

COORDINATION

JIMENEZ MARTINEZ JESUS

SUMMARY

44413 Research in Language: Diachronic Perspectives is an elective module that is part of the subject *Advanced Research in Languages and Literatures*, designed as a specialization to deepen the techniques and methodologies acquired in the compulsory modules. The module will introduce students to advanced aspects of language research from a diachronic perspective.

The objective of the first part of the module, **Genealogy and Evolution of Languages**, is to familiarize students with a very specific aspect of diachronic linguistics: the phases of a language or linguistic continuum that are not directly documented. Therefore, special attention is often given to the original stages of a linguistic entity or to certain aspects of it.

The second part of the module, the course **Nature of Linguistic Change**, will focus on analyzing phonological and morphological changes, using examples from different languages and based on current theoretical models such as Optimality Theory, cognitive linguistics, and natural morphology.

PREVIOUS KNOWLEDGE

RELATIONSHIP TO OTHER SUBJECTS OF THE SAME DEGREE

There are no specified enrollment restrictions with other subjects of the curriculum.

OTHER REQUIREMENTS

It is recommended to have a sufficient command of Spanish to understand the oral presentation of academic content, to read all types of academic and literary texts, and to work with the recommended bibliography.

COMPETENCES / LEARNING OUTCOMES

2207 - Master's Degree in Language and Literature Research

Know how to apply acquired knowledge and problem-solving skills in new or unfamiliar environments within broader (or multidisciplinary) contexts related to their area of study.

Possess the learning skills that will allow them to continue studying in a way that will be largely self-directed or autonomous.

Students should possess and understand foundational knowledge that enables original thinking and research in the field.

To acquire an interest in encouraging, through academic and professional concepts, the scientific, social and cultural progress of a society based on the knowledge of the field of languages and literatures.

To acquire the appropriate methodologies for scientific research in languages and literatures.

To be able to contribute, through monographs, analytical works, and, especially, the Master's Thesis, to expanding the boundaries of knowledge by developing a corpus worthy of publication.

To be able to integrate knowledge and face the complexity of formulating judgments from information that, being incomplete or limited, includes reflections on the social and ethical responsibilities linked to the application of their knowledge and judgments.

To be capable of conceiving, designing and implementing a research process in the field of languages and literatures with responsibility and scientific rigour.

To be capable of locating, managing and synthesising specialised bibliographic information, in both the target language used in the Masters Degree and other modern languages, either in libraries or in physical or online archives.

To develop an ethical commitment, focusing on aspects such as gender equality, equality of opportunities, values of culture of peace, democratic values and environmental and sustainability issues, as well as the knowledge and appreciation of diversity and multiculturalism.

DESCRIPTION OF CONTENTS

Genealogy and evolution of languages

1. Hypothesis about the origin of language

1.1. Mythical origins and early philosophical reflections: Adamic language. The curse of Babel. Biblical mythology; Indo-European mythology and early philosophical reflections on the origin of language

1.2. Different modern approaches to the origin of language: Discontinuity Theory and Continuity Theory; Monogenetic hypothesis and polygenetic hypothesis

1.3. Evolutionary linguistics and comparative linguistics: Historical overview; Reconstruction procedures. Linguistic palaeontology. Glottochronology
2. Linguistic families
2.1. Geographical distribution
2.2. Natural languages: Geographical distribution; Superfamilies proposed; Creoles, pidgins, lingua francas
2.3. Artificial languages: Artistic languages and private languages; Experimental languages; Auxiliary languages

Nature of linguistic changes

1. Phonological change
1.1. Introduction: modalities of phonological change and Optimality Theory
1.2. The syllable as engine for change
1.3. The system as engine for change
1.4. Changes within level intersection
2. Morphological change
2.1. Modalities of morphological change
2.2. Morphologisation of phonological rules
2.3. Analogy
2.4. Gramaticalisation and reanalysis

The expected learning outcomes for this module include the ability to locate, assess, and compare relevant bibliography on an assigned topic; to analyse and evaluate differences between languages at various levels of linguistic description; to examine phenomena arising from language contact; to identify trends in synchronic and diachronic linguistics; to recognise genetic relationships between languages, and to apply basic procedures of linguistic reconstruction.

WORKLOAD

PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Theory	32,50
Total hours	**32,50**

NON PRESENCIAL ACTIVITIES

Activity	Hours
Attendance at other activities	0,00
Individual or group project	0,00
Independent study and work	92,50
Preparation of lessons	0,00
Preparation for assessment activities	0,00
Resolution of case studies	0,00
Total hours	**92,50**

TEACHING METHODOLOGY

Basically, classes consist in presenting topics and materials (TM1), proposing many particular scientific issues related to the subject presented. In order to resolve those issues, students are encouraged to participate through spontaneous dialogue or given a few days or weeks to do research (TM2). The proposals and responses put forward are discussed in class, analyzing the possible rights or wrongs done throughout the research process (TM5).

Among the non-presential activities, students must prepare a critical summary and an oral presentation on

one of the topics proposed by the teaching staff (TM4). Other activities include preparing lectures, solving problems, and revising for assessment tests.

Among the activities to be done at home, students must elaborate a critical summary of one of the articles proposed by the teachers (TM4). Other activities include preparing lectures, solving problems and revising for assessment tests.

Teachers and students may use the Virtual Learning Environment (Aula Virtual) and electronic mail to communicate changes, details on their practical work, etc. However, it is recommended that students attend face-to-face tutorials to address individual or specific issues or doubts (TM8).

SDGs 4 (*Quality Education*) and 11 (*Sustainable Cities and Communities*) are taken into account by addressing linguistic diversity, its historical evolution, and mechanisms of change as part of cultural heritage and scientific knowledge. Additionally, SDG 5 (Gender Equality) is incorporated, as linguistic equality and diversity are approached, also addressing gender-related issues within the field of linguistics.

EVALUATION

The assessment of students' learning will be carried out taking into account the following aspects:

a) Attendance and active class participation, divided into two parts (ES1):

1. Attendance and students' participation during the lesson (up to 40%).

2. Students will carry out either a question paper or a written test on the contents of the course, up to 40% of the final grade.

b) A critical summary and presentation on one of the topics proposed by the teaching staff (ES2; up to 20%).

With the exception of attendance and class participation, all other assessed activities may be recovered in the second assessment period.

Assessment overview:

a) Active class participation (80%):

1. Attendance and participation (40%)

2. Written test on the contents presented in class (40%)

b) Assessment of a written assignment: critical summary and oral presentation (20%)

Intellectual honesty is vital to an academic community, and for the fair evaluation of students' work. All work submitted for this course must be originally authored by every student. No student shall engage in unauthorized collaboration or make use of ChatGPT or other AI composition software, unless their use is part of the contents of the course and is authorised by the teaching staff.

The general grading system will comply with the regulations of the University of Valencia, approved by the Governing Council on 30 May 2017. ACGUV 108/2017.

REFERENCES

ECO, Umberto (1999): *La búsqueda de la lengua perfecta*. Ed. Crítica.

HAARMANN, Harald (2006): *Weltgeschichte der Sprachen. Von der Frühzeit des Menschen bis zur Gegenwart* [World history of languages. From the early period of humans up to the present]. Munich. Becksche Reihe.

HUALDE, José Ignacio (2011): Sound change.Van Oostendorp, Marc et al. (eds), *The Blackwell companion to Phonology*, vol. IV, Malden / Oxford / Chichester, Wiley-Blackwell, p. 2214-2235.

LASS, Roger (1997): *Historical linguistics and language change*, Cambridge, Cambridge University Press.

TALLERMAN, Maggie; GIBSON, Kathleen Rita (2012): *The Oxford handbook of language evolution*. Oxford / New York, Oxford University Press.

TUSON, Jesús (2006): *Les llengües del món*, Barcelona, UOC.