

LT5461: COGNITION AND LANGUAGE DIFFERENCES

Effective Term

Semester A 2025/26

Part I Course Overview

Course Title

Cognition and Language Differences

Subject Code

LT - Linguistics and Translation

Course Number

5461

Academic Unit

Linguistics and Translation (LT)

College/School

College of Liberal Arts and Social Sciences (CH)

Course Duration

One Semester

Credit Units

3

Level

P5, P6 - Postgraduate Degree

Medium of Instruction

English

Medium of Assessment

English

Prerequisites

Nil

Precursors

Nil

Equivalent Courses

Nil

Exclusive Courses

Nil

Part II Course Details

Abstract

This course provides students with fundamental concepts and approaches to the interaction between cognition, language, and culture. The course addresses questions related to the linguistic knowledge in human minds. It will guide students through analysing and interpreting empirical data, and exploring the ways in which research informs practice. How theoretical and methodological developments have shaped current research in linguistics as cognitive science will be surveyed. Students should view this course as an opportunity to identify questions related to the interaction between language and cognition in their future coursework and career.

Course Intended Learning Outcomes (CILOs)

CILOs		Weighting (if app.)	DEC-A1	DEC-A2	DEC-A3
1	Discuss the interaction between cognition and linguistic variation, demonstrating an expert and personally relevant understanding of human language.		x	x	
2	Describe major theories, methods, and findings in linguistics as a cognitive science.		x	x	
3	Explain key arguments in the literature on human language and cognition.		x	x	x
4	Apply linguistic argumentation to research on linguistic patterns.		x	x	x

A1: Attitude

Develop an attitude of discovery/innovation/creativity, as demonstrated by students possessing a strong sense of curiosity, asking questions actively, challenging assumptions or engaging in inquiry together with teachers.

A2: Ability

Develop the ability/skill needed to discover/innovate/create, as demonstrated by students possessing critical thinking skills to assess ideas, acquiring research skills, synthesizing knowledge across disciplines or applying academic knowledge to real-life problems.

A3: Accomplishments

Demonstrate accomplishment of discovery/innovation/creativity through producing /constructing creative works/new artefacts, effective solutions to real-life problems or new processes.

Learning and Teaching Activities (LTAs)

LTAs		Brief Description	CILO No.	Hours/week (if applicable)
1	Weekly reading	Students will engage with assigned papers related to the weekly topics.	1, 2, 3, 4	
2	Lecture	Students will participate in a three-hour weekly lecture that includes in-class activities and discusses key concepts from the course materials.	1, 2, 3, 4	3 hours

Assessment Tasks / Activities (ATs)

	ATs	CILO No.	Weighting (%)	Remarks ("- for nil entry)	Allow Use of GenAI?
1	Assignments Two written assignments.	1, 2, 3, 4	20	Students can use GenAI tools to brainstorm, gather information, solve problems, format references, and edit language. Students should not present texts generated or translated by GenAI tools as their own original work.	Yes
2	Group presentation Each group will deliver a 5-minute presentation, focusing on a research paper relevant to psycholinguistics that has not been covered in class.	1, 2, 3, 4	15	Students can use GenAI tools to brainstorm, gather information, solve problems, format references, and edit language. Students should not present texts generated or translated by GenAI tools as their own original work.	Yes
3	Final test A test will be given at the end of the semester to evaluate students' understanding of lecture contents.	1, 2, 3, 4	25	-	No

4	Research proposal Students will write a research proposal about a topic related to this course.	1, 2, 3, 4	40	Students can use GenAI tools to brainstorm, gather information, solve problems, format references, and edit language. Students should not present texts generated or translated by GenAI tools as their own original work.	Yes
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Continuous Assessment (%)

100

Assessment Rubrics (AR)**Assessment Task**

Assignments (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

The ability to understand the theoretical debate and evaluate relevant evidence in the literature to support arguments, reflected in the essays

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) The essays reflect the student's outstanding ability in forming arguments supported by reliable and relevant evidence in the literature

Good

(B+, B, B-) The essays reflect the student's good ability in this area in general, except for a few minor weaknesses

Fair

(C+, C, C-) The essays have major weaknesses but are satisfactory in general

Marginal

(D) The student's ability in this area is unsatisfactory or poor with many obvious weaknesses and gaps

Failure

(F) The essays reflect little learning progress in this course and poor ability in this area

Assessment Task

Group presentation (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Relevance and clarity of the chosen paper, understanding of the research, and effectiveness of oral delivery

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) The presentation introduces a highly relevant paper, demonstrates excellent understanding of its goals and methods, and communicates the content clearly and engagingly

Good

(B+, B, B-) The presentation introduces a relevant paper, shows good understanding of its content, and communicates it well, despite some minor weaknesses in clarity or delivery

Fair

(C+, C, C-) The paper is only moderately relevant or well understood, and the presentation lacks clarity or structure, though the main ideas are conveyed

Marginal

(D) The chosen paper is poorly explained or not clearly relevant, and the delivery is confusing or disorganised

Failure

(F) The presentation does not demonstrate understanding of the paper or fails to communicate its core content

Assessment Task

Final test (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Understanding of the cognitive approach to language, and the ability to analyse new empirical data

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Demonstrates accurate understanding of key concepts discussed across lectures

Good

(B+, B, B-) Demonstrates accurate understanding of key concepts discussed in most lectures

Fair

(C+, C, C-) Demonstrates accurate understanding of key concepts discussed in more than half of the lectures

Marginal

(D) Demonstrates accurate understanding of key concepts discussed only in some lectures

Failure

(F) Failure to demonstrate accurate understanding of key concepts discussed in most lectures

Assessment Task

Research Proposal (for students admitted before Semester A 2022/23 and in Semester A 2024/25 & thereafter)

Criterion

Relevance and originality of the research question, clarity of theoretical rationale, and coherence in structure and academic writing.

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) The proposal presents a highly relevant and original research question, builds a strong and coherent theoretical rationale, and is clearly structured with excellent academic writing

Good

(B+, B, B-) The proposal presents a relevant and somewhat original research question, with a mostly clear theoretical rationale and good writing quality, though minor weaknesses may be present

Fair

(C+, C, C-) The proposal presents a research question of limited relevance or originality, with a theoretical rationale that is underdeveloped or unclear, and contains structural or writing issues

Marginal

(D) The proposal lacks a clear or relevant research question, has significant problems in theoretical framing, and is poorly structured or written

Failure

(F) The proposal fails to present a coherent research question, theoretical rationale, or academic writing, and shows little evidence of learning

Assessment Task

Assignments (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

The ability to understand the theoretical debate and evaluate relevant evidence in the literature to support arguments, reflected in the essays

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) The essays reflect the student's outstanding ability in forming arguments supported by reliable and relevant evidence in the literature

Good

(B+, B) The essays reflect the student's good ability in this area in general, except for a few minor weaknesses

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) The student's ability in this area is unsatisfactory or poor with many obvious weaknesses and gaps

Failure

(F) The essays reflect little learning progress in this course and poor ability in this area

Assessment Task

Group presentation (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Relevance and clarity of the chosen paper, understanding of the research, and effectiveness of oral delivery

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) The presentation introduces a highly relevant paper, demonstrates excellent understanding of its goals and methods, and communicates the content clearly and engagingly

Good

(B+, B) The presentation introduces a relevant paper, shows good understanding of its content, and communicates it well, despite some minor weaknesses in clarity or delivery

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) The chosen paper is poorly explained or not clearly relevant, and the delivery is confusing or disorganised

Failure

(F) The presentation does not demonstrate understanding of the paper or fails to communicate its core content

Assessment Task

Final test (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Understanding of the cognitive approach to language, and the ability to analyse new empirical data

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) Demonstrates accurate understanding of key concepts discussed across lectures

Good

(B+, B) Demonstrates accurate understanding of key concepts discussed in most lectures

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) Demonstrates accurate understanding of key concepts discussed only in some lectures

Failure

(F) Failure to demonstrate accurate understanding of key concepts discussed in lectures

Assessment Task

Research Proposal (for students admitted from Semester A 2022/23 to Summer Term 2024)

Criterion

Relevance and originality of the research question, clarity of theoretical rationale, and coherence in structure and academic writing

Excellent

(A+, A, A-) The proposal presents a highly relevant and original research question, builds a strong and coherent theoretical rationale, and is clearly structured with excellent academic writing

Good

(B+, B) The proposal presents a relevant and somewhat original research question, with a mostly clear theoretical rationale and good writing quality, though minor weaknesses may be present

Marginal

(B-, C+, C) The proposal lacks a clear or relevant research question, has significant problems in theoretical framing, and is poorly structured or written

Failure

(F) The proposal fails to present a coherent research question, theoretical rationale, or and academic writing, and shows little evidence of learning

Part III Other Information

Keyword Syllabus

Linguistics as cognitive science, language and thought, conceptual representation, linguistic relativity, metaphor and abstraction, cultural cognition, bilingual cognition, linguistic diversity, linguistic representation, experimental methods

Reading List

Compulsory Readings

Title	
1	Harley, T. A. (2013). The psychology of language: From data to theory. Psychology press.

Additional Readings

Title	
1	Anderson, S. R. and Lightfoot, D. W. (2002). The Language Organ: Linguistics as Cognitive Physiology. New York, NY: Cambridge University Press.
2	Byrd, D., and Mintz T. (2010). Discovering Speech, Words, and Mind. Willey-Blackwell.
3	Aitchison, J. (2012). Words in the mind: An introduction to the mental lexicon. John Wiley & Sons.
4	Traxler, M. J. (2011). Introduction to psycholinguistics: Understanding language science.
5	Jackendoff, Ray (2012). A User's Guide to Thought and Meaning. Oxford: OUP.
6	Gentner, D., & Goldin-Meadow, S. (Eds.). (2003). Language in mind: Advances in the study of language and thought.
7	Field, J. (2005). Language and the Mind. London: Routledge.