

53-507: Introduction to English Linguistics

Course description:

Have you ever wondered why we say “children” rather than “childs”? Or what we do with our mouth to make a s sound different from a z? Or why we often say one thing and actually mean another? In this course, we will try to tackle these questions that have always intrigued the linguists.

There are many branches in linguistics: some look at the history of a language and languages (Historical Linguistics); others are interested in how languages are embedded in society (Sociolinguistics), i.e. how men and women or different ethnic groups speak differently, as well as how languages change over time; there are linguists who examine how children acquire language or how we learn a second language; Other linguists study how humans produce sounds, how to categorize sounds into different groups, and how different sound systems are in different languages (Phonetics and Phonology), etc. Before going to each of these specific fields, we need to have some basic knowledge of the core subjects of linguistics.

This course will introduce you to the world of linguistics taking English linguistics as an example, but we will also take an excursion to other languages such as German and Chinese. We will first focus on the core subfields of linguistics: morphology, phonetics, phonology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics. These subfields are not only areas of active research, but also prerequisite to working in a number of other subfields of linguistics which we will cover near the end of the course, including sociolinguistics and contact linguistics. With the support of the basic linguistic terminology that is offered in the course, you will soon be able to comment both on variety between languages, as well as on a single language's internal structure.

Requirements:

- regular and active participation in class and tutorial
- final exam: 90 minutes, multiple choices and written texts

Recommended books:

Kortmann, Bernd (2005). *English Linguistics: Essential*. Berlin: Cornelsen Verlag.

Becker, Anette & Bieswanger, Markus (2006). *Introduction to English Linguistics*. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto Verlag.