



VNIVERSIDAD
DSALAMANCA

CAMPUS OF INTERNATIONAL EXCELLENCE

Metacognitive Approaches to Discourse Semantics

*6 creds.,
1st semester*

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Aims and Objectives

A metacognitive approach to text and discourse semantics provides excellent tools for learning about meaning in human communication in all its complexity, including its cognitive and contextual components. Its practice increases our awareness of the many resources and strategies which may be employed by participants in the most varied communicative situations.

This course intends to address these issues by promoting conscious awareness of language processes through the empirical analysis of authentic texts; the discussion of the theoretical texts and the data obtained from the analyses will develop our capacity for research on the field of EFL; it will also open ways to improve our teaching and learning skills.

When students have successfully completed this course, they will be able to:

- Identify the different constituents, linguistic and non-linguistic, which interact in the construction of discourse meaning.
- Use language awareness as a research and methodological tool to improve students' oral and written production and their understanding and interpretive skills.
- Analyse the minimal semantic units (lexical items, propositions and episodes) and their contribution to the construction of global discourse meaning.
- Identify and demonstrate understanding of the cognitive organization which underlies the semantic structure of discourse, with special emphasis on mental representations and cognitive operations.
- Analyse the semantic structure of texts and discourse in English. Identify the mechanisms of cohesion and coherence in written and spoken material.
- Analyse the process of discourse production and discourse reception as communicative interaction.
- Be able to design / adapt and try out communicative discourse-based activities and materials for use in the classroom.

Course Program

Part 1

1. Discourse meaning
2. Cognition, social cognition and metacognition
2. Aspects of discourse cohesion and discourse coherence
3. The construction of a global topic of discourse
4. Research methods based on metacognitive awareness of semantic discourse analysis

Part 2

5. Metacognitive awareness in the design of communicative discourse-based classroom activities and materials

Methodology

Classes will consist of lectures, class activities, discussions and presentations. Classes will include work on research skills and reflection on research-oriented questions and methodologies, through the reading, comparison, contrast, and analysis of the theoretical material assigned. Strong emphasis will be put on the practice of critical reading, the understanding of theoretical concepts, and the practical analysis of authentic discourse.

Assessment

Formative and summative evaluation will be combined.

Part 1

Students will be asked to thoroughly read, compare, and contrast the assigned theoretical readings listed for each meeting before coming to class. During the sessions, every student is expected to provide thoughtful comments on them and to participate in the discussion. In-depth reflection on these readings and discussions, together with class practical work will be the basis for the final assessment paper.

Part 2

Students will develop and present short papers; these sessions will be followed by a general discussion of the points tackled and the methodology used. They will have to do a final research based on the theoretical concepts studied in the class sessions.

Evaluation will be done on the basis of class participation and assigned/class work (50%), and quality of the presentations (50%).

To take into account:

1. Clarity and coherence in the oral and written presentations.
2. Analytical objectivity and scientific rigour.
3. Language correction.

Work through problems in tutorials.

Bibliography and Resources

Students will be provided with a course reader before the start of the course.

- Alonso, P. (2007). Knowledge structures and discourse patterns in EFL learning. In R. Durán & S. Sánchez-Reyes (Eds.), *El componente lingüístico en la didáctica de la lengua inglesa* (pp. 43–59). Ediciones Universidad de Salamanca.
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- Lakoff, G. (1987). *Women, fire, and dangerous things: What categories reveal about the mind*. University of Chicago Press.
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- Tanskanen, S. (2006). *Collaborating towards coherence: Lexical cohesion in English discourse*. John Benjamins.