

English Linguistics: Sociolinguistic Aspects (A006743)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 1) English Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

De Soete, Alexander LW06 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject Linguistics and Literature)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - English)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Latin)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject English - Spanish)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject French - English)	5	A
Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

English, linguistics, sociolinguistic aspects, English in a multilingual environment, globalisation

Position of the course

This course provides a thorough introduction to sociolinguistics, its key themes and traditions, from its beginnings in the 1960s and up to an including the current era. The course is aimed at students with a background in linguistics and builds on the linguistic courses offered in the first and second year.

One of the central sociolinguistic themes is language/education, incl. the complex interdynamics between linguistic background, developments in social background and educational achievement.

Position of the course in terms of language proficiency: In the master programme in English, students are expected to develop from an initial CEFR C1 level into a first-stage C2 level ("Mastery").

Contents

Discussion of the aims, hypotheses, methods and important aspects of sociolinguistics.

1. THE FORMULATION OF A SOCIOLINGUISTIC PROJECT, incl. an early map of language variation (Labov, Trudgill)
2. THE SOCIOLINGUISTICS OF COMMUNITY: the early language education debate (Bernstein, Labov, Hymes), language policy and planning, language attitudes, Folk linguistics, language accommodation, person-oriented features (age, gender), dialects, diatypic variation, codeswitching, varieties of English, incl. pidgins and creoles.
3. THEORETICAL AND METHODOLOGICAL DEVELOPMENTS OF RECENT DECADES:

paradigm shifts, methodological hybridity and evolving interdisciplinary engagements

4. A SOCIOLINGUISTICS OF GLOBALISATION: migration-affected sociolinguistic diversity in advanced industrial societies; postcolonial contexts of English; linguistic theoretical challenges (how to understand what is meant by "(a) language", "community", "multilingualism"); language, educational success and inequality re-visited; the implications of multilingualism for the functioning of institutions; language shift/loss, language attrition and the hegemony of English, linguistic citizenship.

5. THEMATIC TRAJECTORY (5 sessions towards the end of term): Multilingualism and education in the global South and North.

Initial competences

To have successfully completed the bachelor courses in English linguistics I or to have acquired the necessary skills by other means.

Mastery of English at CEFR C1 level ("Expert"/"Effective operational" proficiency).

Final competences

- 1 To have knowledge of the sociolinguistic themes discussed in the lectures, in particular of the research questions, methods and aims of sociolinguistic research, since the beginning in the 1960s and including the present era of globalisation
- 2 To be able to read, summarise and comment on sociolinguistic key texts.
- 3 To be able to provide a synthetic and coherent account of the most important results of the research discussed in the lectures.
- 4 To be able to establish links between different sociolinguistic traditions, incl. the key concepts and the methodological choices that were/are made.
- 5 To be able to reflect critically on the nature, role and function of language in society.
- 6 To be able to take the examination in fluent and idiomatic (academic) English.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Lecture

Extra information on the teaching methods

Lectures.

The lecture-based sessions are recorded and made available to specific target groups (upon request). The thematic trajectory sessions are not recorded.

Study material

None

References

Course content-related study coaching

In group.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Oral assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

not applicable

Extra information on the examination methods

Assessment format

Periodical

Oral examination with written preparation.

Language proficiency affects the final score within a range of +/- 1/20.

NPE = participation in thematic trajectory, based on processing of case study literature.

Calculation of the examination mark

70 % periodical evaluation

30% NPE

Facilities for Working Students

1. Exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance is possible, but not from NPE-assignment.

2. It is possible to reschedule the examination to a different time in the same academic year.

3. Feedback can be given by email or by appointment.

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy