

Language, Policy and Education (A006763)

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)

Dutch

Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Deygers, Bart

LW22

lecturer-in-charge

Van Houtte, Mieke

PS04

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

crdts

offering

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

Language policy, education policy, linguistic diversity, sociology of education, language ideology, assessment, evidence-based policy

Position of the course

This course approaches the relationship between language, linguistic diversity, and education from an integrated perspective that combines applied linguistics, sociology of education, and policy analysis. The aim is to provide students with insight into how education policy shapes linguistic diversity and how language practices, in turn, influence social inequality, participation, and mobility. Students analyse how education functions as a policy domain and as an instrument of social policy, and how language plays a central role in processes of selection, inclusion, and participation. Particular attention is paid to language acquisition and to language planning, including status, corpus, and acquisition planning, as policy instruments.

Contents

The course is structured around three thematic strands.

Education as a policy domain

This component provides an analysis of education as a policy domain within a broader societal and institutional framework. Students become familiar with the structure of the education system and the role of language within it.

Attention is given to the role of language within institutional educational contexts, education as an instrument of social policy, and evidence-based education policy, with particular focus on the tensions between technocracy, data, and political reality.

Language, education, and the sociology of education

This part centres on the interplay between language and education, with explicit attention to sociological perspectives on education.

Students analyse how language education is organised, how education can reproduce or mitigate social inequality, the tension between selection and emancipation, and how language ideologies and policy choices can be evaluated against empirical studies.

Language policy and selection in educational practice

In the final part, students apply the analytical frameworks developed throughout the course to concrete policy issues.

Topics include the role of language testing and assessment in selection processes,

the implementation and manifestations of language policy in educational contexts, and comparative policy analysis aimed at formulating alternative, evidence-based policy options.

Initial competences

The basic competences that can be expected of an academic bachelor in a discipline related to the programme.

Final competences

- 1 The student has an in-depth understanding of the interplay between linguistic diversity, education policy, and societal structures, and can analyse these in educational and policy contexts.
- 2 The student can identify and evaluate determinants and process-related factors of language policy in education, with attention to educational effectiveness and equity.
- 3 The student can analyse dominant patterns of thinking in education and evaluate them on the basis of empirical data.
- 4 The student can apply theoretical frameworks from applied linguistics, sociology of education, and public administration in an integrated way to complex issues related to language policy and linguistic diversity in education.
- 5 The student can formulate evidence-based policy proposals and translate scientific findings into educational and policy strategies.
- 6 The student can independently conduct research on language and diversity issues in education and communicate the results clearly, purposefully, and in a policy-relevant manner.

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is determined after successful competences assessment

Conditions for exam contract

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

Teaching methods

Seminar, Lecture, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

Integrated lectures and seminars:

The sessions are organised as integrated lectures and seminars, where the teaching format is aligned with the intended learning objectives for each topic. Conceptual frameworks and empirical insights from applied linguistics, sociology of education, and policy analysis are introduced through lecture components and further developed through interactive formats.

Independent work:

Students analyse policy documents, academic literature, and empirical data, and apply these insights to educational contexts.

Application and case-based learning:

Students work on concrete issues related to linguistic diversity in education. They apply theoretical and analytical frameworks to real-world policy problems. This course unit is based on the responsible use of generative artificial intelligence (GAI). During the course, it will be explained what is meant by this.

Study material

None

References

- Broadfoot, P. (2021). *The Sociology of Assessment: Comparative and Policy Perspectives. The Selected Works of Patricia Broadfoot*. Routledge. <https://doi.org/10.4324/9780429262609>
- Gazzola, M., Grin, F., Cardinal, L., & Heugh, K. (2023). *The Routledge Handbook of Language Policy and Planning*. Taylor & Francis.
- May, S., & Hornberger, N. H. (Eds.). (2008). *Language Policy and Political Issues in Education: Encyclopedia of Language and Education Volume 1* (2008th edition). Springer.

Course content-related study coaching

Students can consult the lecturer(s) by appointment.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Written assessment

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

Written assessment

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Explanation of period-bound assessment (written exam):

The written exam consists of open-ended questions and/or case-based tasks in which students demonstrate their knowledge and understanding of the theoretical frameworks covered in the course. The assessment evaluates the ability to:

- correctly apply key concepts and analytical frameworks from applied linguistics, sociology of education, and policy analysis;
- establish connections between theory, empirical findings, and educational contexts;
- formulate well-founded arguments about policy choices and their societal impact.

The emphasis is on understanding, application, and critical reflection, rather than on mere reproduction of course content.

Explanation of non-period-bound assessment (group assignment):

The non-period-bound assessment consists of a group assignment in which students analyse and evaluate a specific policy measure or case within the domain of language, diversity, and education.

Students situate the policy issue, analyse the objectives and implementation of the policy, and evaluate it based on available data and scientific literature. On this basis, they formulate well-founded, evidence-based policy recommendations that take into account the specific educational context and relevant societal factors.

The assessment takes into account the quality of the analysis, the substantiation of the evaluation, the use of data and literature, the relevance and feasibility of the policy recommendations, and the clarity of the reporting.

Calculation of the examination mark

Periodic assessment (written exam): 75%

Non-periodic assessment (group assignment): 25%

Facilities for Working Students

To be determined in consultation with the course coordinator.