



COURSE UNIT (MODULE) DESCRIPTION

Course unit (module) title	Code
Introduction to Sociolinguistics / Sociolingvistikos įvadas	

Lecturer(s)	Department(s) where the course unit (module) is delivered
Coordinator: Lect. Jekaterina Šukalova	Department of English Philology, Faculty of Philology

Study cycle	Type of the course unit (module)
1 st , BA	Optional

Mode of delivery	The period when the course unit (module) is delivered	Language(s) of instruction
Face to face	7 th semester (autumn)	English

Requirements for students	
Prerequisites: B2-C1 level of English	Additional requirements (if any): None.

Course (module) volume in credits	Total student workload	Contact hours	Self-study hours
5	130	32	98

Purpose of the course unit (module): programme competences to be developed

The aim of the course is to provide students with an understanding of sociolinguistic theories. Students will learn to recognize and identify different social factors and social dimensions of language use. This course will be devoted to sociolinguistic analysis of language in use, exploring how language varies and functions across different social contexts, identities, and communities.

By the end of the course, students will be able to identify and analyze sociolinguistic phenomena in authentic language data, applying appropriate theoretical concepts to real-world examples. They will develop the ability to observe, collect, and critically interpret language use in its social context, as well as to formulate and support analytical insights. Students will also gain experience in presenting sociolinguistic analyses in both written and oral formats through short analytical tasks and presentations. In addition, the course aims to foster students' critical awareness of language as a social phenomenon and to encourage reflection on language use in contemporary society.

Generic competences:

1. Responsibility: the ability to set goals, make plans, and take responsibility for them

- will be able to set goals, choose and use resources necessary for the completion of a task, plan their time and follow deadlines
- will be able to take responsibility for their work/study results and learn from mistakes

2. Intercultural competence: respect and openness to other cultures, the ability to work in a multicultural environment

- will be able to study, work, and communicate with people from different cultural backgrounds and develop awareness, respect, and openness to cultural diversity

3. Problem solving: the ability to solve problems by relying on analytical, critical, and creative thinking

- will be able to identify problems and challenges in their own and related fields
- will be able to identify problems by finding, analysing, and critically assessing relevant information, generate new ideas, choose the most optimal solutions

4. Openness to change: the ability to understand the necessity of change and the intention to constantly improve oneself

- will be familiar not only with the changes taking place in their field of interest, but also their causes, challenges, opportunities
- will be open to new ideas, strive to change, and be creative and innovative
- will be able to evaluate the quality of their actions and achievements and will strive to acquire the competencies necessary for future change

Subject-specific competences:

5. Essential knowledge and skills in linguistics: perception of language as a phenomenon and perception of linguistics as a scientific discipline

- will know, understand and be able to define linguistics as a scientific discipline and to properly use and interpret the basic concepts and terms of linguistics
- will acquire knowledge of the main branches and methods of linguistics

6. Communication skills in English (C1-C2): listening, reading, speaking, writing, mediation

- will be able to understand, translate, edit and create texts of various genres in English, taking into account the communication intention, addressee, etc. and mediate in various communication situations
- will be able to communicate correctly and effectively in English in various situations, taking into account the communication intention, addressee, social environment, etc. (C1 according to CEFR)

7. Competence of a researcher of language and literature: the ability to independently conduct linguistic, literary or interdisciplinary research applying the acquired philological knowledge and skills in practice

- will be able to identify a linguistic, literary, cultural or interdisciplinary problem and choose appropriate empirical material, research methods and bibliographic sources
- will be able to collect, analyse, systematise and critically evaluate material from various sources and adequately apply philological research methods to investigate the selected research problem

8. Ability to apply philological knowledge and skills in practice within and outside the University

- will be able to apply the acquired knowledge and skills of English philology during communication and cooperation in an intercultural (and multilingual) environment, creating, translating and editing various texts, teaching English as a foreign language, etc.
- will be able to use modern information technologies, data resources and research resources to conduct linguistic and literary analysis of English texts and present the results of analysis and/or interpretation to the public in order to contribute to the practical applicability of English philology studies (corpora, dictionaries, term banks and glossaries, thematic websites, literature maps, etc.).

Learning outcomes of the course unit (module)	Teaching and learning methods	Assessment methods
<p>At the end of the course, students will acquire:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - ability to identify language issues and relate them to social factors and social dimensions; - ability to explain social factors and social dimensions and use sociolinguistic terminology; - ability to present own findings and use sociolinguistic evidence to support own arguments; - enhanced group and individual work skills; - enhanced analytical writing and presentation skills. 	<p>Seminars will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - presentations to introduce key theoretical concepts; - theoretical background discussions, providing students with foundational frameworks for analysis; - discussions of assigned readings; - student-led micro-presentations based on individual fieldwork; - collaborative tasks and small-group analyses. <p>Homework will include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - preparing for discussions by reading and critically analyzing key concepts in the assigned texts; - collecting authentic examples of language use from real-life contexts (e.g., conversations, social media, public discourse, media 	<p><u>Accumulative evaluation:</u></p> <p>Task 1 (Sociolinguistic Fieldwork Portfolio) (40%), Task 2 (Sociolinguistic Analysis Project) (50%), and participation in discussions (10%)</p>

	<p>content);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">- conducting short written analyses of collected data as part of the Sociolinguistic Fieldwork Portfolio;- preparing and refining a short micro-presentation based on one selected analysis.	
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Content: breakdown of the topics	Contact hours							Self-study work: time and assignments	
	Lectures	Tutorials	Seminars	Exercises	Laboratory work	Internship/work	Contact hours	Self-study hours	Assignments
1. Introduction to the course. Contents, assessment criteria, and assignments. Introduction to sociolinguistics. Language vs a language. Social factors and dimensions. Neighboring and overlapping fields.			4				4	4	Key reading materials and theoretical background: - Holmes, J. & N. Wilson. 2017. Chapter 1.
2. Language in communities. Monolingualism, bilingualism, multilingualism. Varieties, codes, and choices: diglossia and codeswitching. Social factors affecting code choice. Functions of codeswitching. Codeswitching vs lexical borrowing.			4				4	14	- Holmes, J. & N. Wilson. 2017. Chapter 2.
3. Language maintenance and shift. Language contact. Minority languages. Shifting languages. Language maintenance and revival. Language birth and death. Pidgins and creoles.			4				4	14	- Holmes, J. & N. Wilson. 2017. Chapter 3. Case studies of Irish Gaelic, Te Reo Māori, Cornish, Ainu, among others.
4. Variation in language. Class, ethnicity, gender, and age. Regional and social dialects. Language change. Style, context, and register. Accommodation theory.			2				2	10	- Holmes, J. & N. Wilson. 2017. Chapters 6-9.
5. Task 1: Sociolinguistic Fieldwork Portfolio. Each student gives a 5-minute presentation on one portfolio task, explaining their data, key concept(s), and main insight.			4				4	10	
6. Language ideologies and attitudes. Language and power. Language and nationalism, racial and social stereotyping. Language ideologies in intergenerational communication. The 'us-them' divide. Linguistic inequality.			2				2	12	- Bell, A. 2014. Chapter 10. - Fuller, J. M. 2018. Recommended: - Hudson, R. A. 1996. Chapter 6. - Holmes, J. & N. Wilson. Chapter 15. - Peterson, E. 2020. Chapter 5.
7. Language and identity. Language and ethnicity, nationality, and social networks. Linguistic identities. Sociolinguistic identity performance.			2				2	6	- Bell, A. 2014. Chapter 11. - Holmes, J. & N. Wilson. Chapter 8.
8. Language and gender. Gender differences in language use. Gendered discourse patterns. Feminist language reform. Language and gender roles. Language and sexual orientation. Language ideologies, gender, identity, and prestige.			2				2	6	- Cameron, D. 2014. - Holmes, J. & N. Wilson. Chapter 12. Recommended: - Salmon, W. 2015.
9. Language and social class. Language and social stratification, social mobility, and education. Bourdieu's linguistic capital and symbolic power.			2				2	6	- Holmes, J. & N. Wilson. Chapter 10. - Bourdieu, P. 1991.
10. Language and technology. Characteristics of computer-mediated communication. Language and social media. Leetspeak, netspeak, digitalk, algospeak, slang.			2				2	6	- Androutsopoulos, J. 2006. - Steen, E., K. Yurechko, & D. Klug. 2023.
11. Task 2: Sociolinguistic Analysis Project			4				4	10	
Total: 130			32				32	98	

Assessment strategy	Weight,%	Assessment criteria
Task 1: Sociolinguistic Fieldwork Portfolio	40%	<p>Task 1: Sociolinguistic Fieldwork Portfolio (40%): Students will complete a Sociolinguistic Fieldwork Portfolio consisting of three short analytical tasks combined with a short in-class presentation. Each task requires students to collect real-world language data and apply key sociolinguistic concepts to its analysis. The portfolio emphasizes continuous engagement, critical observation, and the application of theory to authentic language use. Each submission (approx. 400-600 words) will focus on a different thematic area of the course (the task must cover topics 2-4).</p>
Task 2: Sociolinguistic Analysis Project	50%	
Participation in discussions	10%	
		<p>Written Component (Portfolio Entries)</p>
		<p>Students will submit three short analytical texts (400-600 words each). Each entry should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • focus on a different course topic • include a clearly described example of real-world language use • apply relevant sociolinguistic concepts and terminology • provide analytical insight (not only description) <p>Oral Component (Micro-Presentation)</p> <p>In addition, each student will deliver a short presentation (approx. 5 minutes) during a seminar. The presentation should be based on one of their submitted analyses and should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • briefly introduce the selected example • highlight the key sociolinguistic concept(s) • summarise the main analytical insight <p>The presentation is designed as an informal sharing of findings and aims to encourage discussion and peer engagement.</p> <p>Task 2: Sociolinguistic Analysis Project (50%): For the final assessment, students will complete an individual or group project applying sociolinguistic theories to a selected topic. The project requires students to analyze real-world language data and demonstrate their understanding of how language interacts with social structures, identities, and ideologies (the project must cover topics 6-10). Students may choose between an oral presentation (group or individual project) and a written paper (individual project). Regardless of format, students must:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Use real-world language data • Apply at least 2 sociolinguistic concepts/theories • Include analysis (not just description). <p>If students choose a presentation (group or individual), it should be 10-12 minutes long and must include examples and analysis. If it is a written paper (individual), it should be approximately 1,500-2,000 words (about 5 pages long) and include examples and analysis.</p> <p>Both projects (presentation and written assignment) must apply relevant theoretical frameworks and linguistic concepts discussed during the course.</p> <p>Participation in discussions (10%): Active participation in seminar discussions constitutes 10% of the final grade. Students are expected to engage with course readings, contribute to discussions, respond to peers, and demonstrate ongoing involvement in seminar activities.</p>
Attendance		
<p>The attendance of seminars is compulsory. Students are allowed no more than 30% of unexcused absences. Students with more than 30% of unexcused absences are not eligible to pass the course.</p>		
Course policy regarding the use of electronic devices in class		

The usage of electronic devices (laptops, tablets, cell phones, smartphones, e-readers, music players, etc.) during class is only allowed for study and research purposes, when it is required for in-class assignments (assigned by the course instructor), for contacting group members (when such need arises), or in cases of emergency. Mobile phones should be silenced and put away during the entire seminar, unless they are used for above-mentioned learning purposes and prior permission to use them from the course instructor is granted. If a student has an emergency situation which requires to keep his/her phone on, he/she must inform the course instructor beforehand. Taking photos, videos and making sound recordings in class are forbidden, unless instructed otherwise by the professor or unless students provide documents which outline the requirements for necessary accommodations of the use of electronic devices due to disability or other diagnosed health issues.

Course literature

Author	Year of publication	Title	Issue of a periodical or volume of a publication	Publishing place and house or web link
Compulsory reading				
Androutsopoulos, J.	2006	Introduction: Sociolinguistics and computer-mediated communication	<i>Journal of Sociolinguistics</i> 10(4), 419-438	
Bell, A.	2014	<i>The Guidebook to Sociolinguistics</i>		Wiley Blackwell
Bourdieu, P.	1991	<i>Language and Symbolic Power</i>		Polity Press
Cameron, D.	2014	Gender and Language Ideologies	<i>The Handbook of Language, Gender, and Sexuality</i> (2 nd edition)	John Wiley & Sons, Ltd.
Fuller, J. M.	2018	Ideologies of Language, Bilingualism, and Monolingualism	<i>The Cambridge Handbook of Bilingualism</i> , pp. 119 – 134.	Cambridge: CUP
Holmes, J. & N. Wilson	2017	<i>An Introduction to Sociolinguistics</i>	5 th edition	Routledge
Salmon, W.	2015	<i>Language Ideology, Gender, and Varieties of Belizean Kriol</i>	<i>Journal of Black Studies</i> 46(6), 605-625	https://www.jstor.org/stable/24572901
Steen, E., K. Yurechko, & D. Klug	2023	You Can (Not) Say What You Want: Using Algospeak to Contest and Evade Algorithmic Content Moderation on TikTok	<i>Social Media + Society</i> , 1-17.	
Optional reading				
Aleksic, A.	2025	<i>Algospeak: How Social Media Is Transforming the Future of Language</i>		Knopf
Hudson, R. A.	1996	<i>Sociolinguistics</i>	2 nd edition	Cambridge University Press
Peterson, E.	2020	<i>Making Sense of “Bad English” : An Introduction to Language Attitudes and Ideologies</i>		Routledge
Schneider, E.W	2020	<i>English around the World: An Introduction.</i>	2 nd edition	Cambridge: Cambridge University Press
Trudgill P.	2000	<i>Sociolinguistics. An introduction to language and society.</i>		London: Penguin Books.

Last updated: 9 April 2026