



Language variation and change (3102G06066/2013)

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Office hours: On Monday and Wednesday from 10:30 to 11:30.

The subject: One of the most distinctive characteristics of *Language Variation and Change* is that the subject is covered broadly, although it can be more specialized and offer a wider range of options whenever it is required. The main advantage of being planned out in this way is the fact that it offers flexibility and choice on the study of language variation. You may not feel like having any specialized knowledge of these concepts. The subject schedule allows for this, as you can either aim at achieving a general standard knowledge on them, or delay specializing until you have had the chance to fully explore the subject and then state which areas you are most interested in.

Main topics: *Language Variation and Change* is divided into 9 topics (6 compulsory topics + 3 optional topics)

- 1. Introduction:** Basic principles of linguistic variation and change.
- 2. Linguistic change:** Universals of language change: Syntheticity and Analycity. Grammaticalisation. Reanalysis. Endogenous vs. Exogenous Linguistic Change.
- 3. Linguistic variation:** Variation. Varieties. Analysis of dialects/languages according to their societal functions. Classification by speaker/societal usage. Standard vs. Non-standard Varieties.
- 4. Areal variation:** Characteristics of geographical variation.
- 5. Social variation:** Main features of social variation.
- 6. Stylistic variation:** Variation concerning style and register. Written vs. Oral Speech. Formal vs. Informal Speech.
- 7. Catalan accents:** Present distribution and main distinctive features.
- 8. Spanish accents:** Present distribution of Spanish. Variation in Spain and The Canary Islands. Variation in Spanish America. Variation in Judeo-Spanish.
- 9. English accents:** Present distribution of English. English in the British Isles. English in England. English in Scotland. English in Ireland. English in North America. English in New Zealand.

The three latter topics are more specific and there is no need to go into these topics in depth if you just want to achieve a broad knowledge on the subject. You can just listen to the digital recording files and get a general idea of the diversity of Catalan, Spanish and/or English accents. In case you wanted to get into these issues in a deepening manner, you are also provided with proper descriptions on each of them, as well as some optional bibliographical references which can help you proceed further in these specific matters. It is a tough challenge, but it also presents you with great relish.

Practical exercises: Practical exercises teach you the hands-on skills and techniques that you need to be able to apply your knowledge in the subject, as well as to reach the appropriate level of English. They are mainly reading, listening and writing exercises (including 'filling in the blanks', 'rewriting sentences' and 'multiple choice' ones).

A supportive atmosphere: optional supervisions. Students who are struggling with a particular problem or feeling a bit lost will not go unnoticed. Optional supervisions allow them to gain further insights into the subject, to clarify anything they are not clear about, to discuss their own work and ideas, and receive regular feedback. They have two hour-long optional supervisions each week. They are expected to do some preparatory work for each supervision (e.g. reading, write a summary, work through some problems), which they then discuss in the supervised session.

Lectures: Lectures cover the basics of the subject and act as a starting point for your own study. They provide the opportunity to explore a particular topic in more detail. They are led by the lecturer, but you are expected to contribute actively to the discussions.

Assessment: The subject offers a good compromise between the continuous assessment and the final exam. Each part of the subject is self-contained. Written short summaries (125 words) are the main form of assessment used in each of the 9 topics. There are exercises and summaries at the end of them. Besides, you must pass a short final examination on aspects of general interest.

Skills and competence

- CTUdG01 Utilitzar la llengua anglesa
- CTUdG02 Recollir i seleccionar informació de manera eficaç
- CTUdG05 Comunicar-se oralment i per escrit
- CTUdG04 Treballar en equip
- CTUdG08 Dissenyar propostes creatives
- CTUdG11 Avaluar la pròpia activitat i el propi aprenentatge i elaborar estratègies per millorar-los
- E8. Aplicar l'estudi científic a l'anàlisi lingüística i literària de manera rigorosa, mitjançant l'ús dels diferents mètodes científics proposats per diferents escoles i utilitzant les eines informàtiques (bases de dades, aplicacions d'anàlisi, etc.) adients per aconseguir resultats de qualitat.

Some bibliographical references.

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