



VNIVERSIDAD
D SALAMANCA

CAMPUS OF INTERNATIONAL EXCELLENCE

METACOGNITIVE APPROACHES TO DISCOURSE SEMANTICS

*6creds.,
1st semester*

*Dr. Pilar Alonso
alonso@usal.es
Universidad de Salamanca*

*Dr. Ana Alonso
analonso@usal.es
Universidad de Salamanca*

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

1. Meaning, cognition, and metacognition
2. Text and discourse meaning
3. The linguistic and non-linguistic constituents
4. Lexical patterns, mental spaces and mental models
5. Local and global coherence
6. Meaning relations
7. The construction of a global topic of discourse
8. Research methods based on metacognitive awareness of semantic discourse analysis

Methodology

Classes will consist of lectures, class activities, discussions and presentations. Strong emphasis will be put on the use of authentic material by students, and examples of language learning methods and language class activities based on semantic discourse analysis will be provided and studied in detail.

Assessment

Formative and summative evaluation will be combined. Self-evaluation and peer evaluation will be a part of the paper presentation.

Students will develop and present short papers; these sessions will be followed by a general discussion of the points tackled and the methodology used.

Evaluation will be done on the basis of class participation and 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, (Forthcoming). *A Multi-dimensional Approach to Discourse Coherence: From Standardness to Creativity*. Peter Lang.

Alonso, P. (2007) "Discourse coherence: some micro and macro-meaning relations and their cognitive implications." In Estébanez, C. (Ed.) *Language Awareness in English and Spanish*. Valladolid: Publicaciones Universidad de Valladolid

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- Sanders, T. & Spooren W. (2009). "The cognition of discourse coherence." In J. Renkema (Ed.), *Discourse, of course*. (pp. 197-212). Amsterdam: Benjamins.
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