



UNIVERSITÀ
di VERONA



Freie Universität Bozen
Libera Università di Bolzano
Università Lìdia de Bulsan



Universität
Marburg

PhD program in Linguistics

Course Catalogue, Academic Year 2025/2026 and 2026/2027

Updated: 13 July 2026

Overview

<i>Date</i>	<i>Short title</i>	<i>Instructor (Proponent)</i>
21.07.2026	Climate Crisis Discourse in Motion: Metaphor, Power, and Public Imagination	Augé (Gatti)
15.09.2026	Bilingualism and Developmental Language Disorder	Cilibrasi (Melloni, Vender)
02-03.12.2026	Migration and (second) dialect acquisition across Europe	Røyneland (Abel)
25-29.01.2027	Winter School in Linguistic, UniVR	
	Intercomprehension: psycholinguistic foundations and implications for L2 acquisition	Saturno
	Relative Clauses as a Window into Syntactic Complexity	Bertollo
03/04.2027	Quantitative Methods in Linguistics	Vietti

Title	Climate Crisis Discourse in Motion: Metaphor, Power, and Public Imagination
Teacher	Anaïs Augé (Catholic University of Louvain)
Coordinator UniVR/unibz	Maria Cristina Gatti
Compulsory/free choice?	Free choice
Teaching hours/ECTS credits	2/0,5
When?	21/07/2026, 14:30
Where?	Online: https://teams.microsoft.com/meet/352997028489475?p=uWp6iMat67PvdXIMVN
Language of instruction	English
Assessment	none
Learning outcomes	By the end of the seminar, participants will have developed a critical understanding of the metaphors and argumentative frameworks that shape scientific, activist, and political discourses on the climate crisis. They will be able to identify key differences between political “green” imaginaries and scientific representations of climate risks, while also reflecting on the factors that influence public resistance to or acceptance of these discourses. The seminar will further introduce participants to a range of methodological approaches for analysing large corpora, identifying arguments in discourse, and integrating citizens’ perspectives into research.
Course contents	This seminar will present the various metaphors and arguments that prevail across scientific, activist, and political discourses. The first part of the presentation will focus on the argumentative strengths of climate crisis discourse and metaphors. I will also demonstrate the significant distinctions that appear across discourses (e.g. political “green” imaginaries versus scientific representation of the risks). The second part will evaluate the public resistance or acceptance to political, scientific, and activist discourses about the climate crisis. This seminar will offer a range of methodological procedures that can be applied when one aims at analysing large corpora, identifying arguments in discourse, and including citizens’ perspectives in their research. This seminar will also show how the results obtained in PhD theses can form a stepping stone to build new projects and address new research questions.
Reading	

Title	Bilingualism and Developmental Language Disorder
Teacher	Luca Cilibrasi
Coordinator UniVR/unibz	Chiara Melloni, Maria Vender
Compulsory/free choice?	Free choice

Teaching hours/ECTS credits	4/1
When?	15/09/2026
Where?	Università di Verona
Language of instruction	English
Assessment	none
Learning outcomes	1. Critically evaluate the main challenges involved in identifying Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) in bilingual and multilingual children, with particular attention to the risk of over- and under-diagnosis. 2. Apply key theoretical and methodological insights from current research on bilingualism and DLD to the interpretation of language assessment data in children who speak more than one language.
Course contents	The course addresses the challenges that arise when assessing Developmental Language Disorder (DLD) in children who speak more than one language.
Reading	Marinis, T., Armon-Lotem, S., & Pontikas, G. (2017). Language impairment in bilingual children: State of the art 2017. <i>Linguistic Approaches to Bilingualism</i> , 7(3-4), 265-276.

Title	Migration and (second) dialect acquisition across Europe
Teacher	Unn Røyneland (University of Oslo)
Coordinator UniVR/unibz	Andrea Abel
Compulsory/free choice?	Free choice
Teaching hours/ECTS credits	8/2
When?	2-3/12/2026, 10:00-12:00 and 13:00-15:00
Where?	Campus Brixen, unbz, room A2.02
Language of instruction	English
Assessment	In class
Learning outcomes	- Integrate and compare findings from different national and local contexts to discuss how migration reshapes dialect landscapes and contributes to new forms of social and linguistic stratification in Europe. - Engage in advanced scholarly debate on authenticity, legitimacy, "new speakers", and the politics of belonging in multilingual, migratory settings, drawing explicitly on the course readings. - Reflect critically and ethically on the researcher's role and positionality in studies involving migrant communities, including questions of representation, linguistic stereotyping, and power. - Communicate complex sociolinguistic insights from the course literature in clear, well-structured written and oral formats, aimed at both specialist audiences (researchers, Ph.D. peers) and relevant non-specialist

	stakeholders (e.g. educators, policymakers, community groups).
Course contents	In this course, we examine how dialects are acquired by speakers with another L1 or D1, and how new “lects” or speech styles emerge among migrant populations in different parts of Europe. We begin with an overview of key patterns in the acquisition and use of dialectal, standard, and multiethnolectal features in migratory contexts. Building on this, we turn to case studies, first from Scandinavia (Norway, Denmark, Finland), and then from the Netherlands, Germany, Switzerland, France, and Great Britain. The studies considered in the course highlight different dimensions of migration (e.g. generation, mobility, urban vs rural settings), dialect acquisition, and new (dia)lect formation. They also draw on a wide range of sociolinguistic theoretical perspectives and methodological approaches, including variationist, ethnographic, interactional, and experimental work.
Reading	Articles from a special issue on this topic: Auer, P. & Røyneland, U. (Eds.) (2025/2020 online). Migration and Dialect Acquisition in Europe. <i>Special issue of Journal of Multilingual and Multicultural Development (JMMD)</i> Detailed readings will be given at a later date and/or during the course

Title	Intercomprehension: psycholinguistic foundations and implications for L2 acquisition
Teacher	Jacopo Saturno
Coordinator UniVR/unibz	UniVR
Compulsory/free choice?	Compulsory
Teaching hours/ECTS credits	10/2.5
When?	25-29/01/2027
Where?	Università di Verona (co-working room)
Language of instruction	English
Assessment	(Optional) term paper
Learning outcomes	The participants will acquire theoretical knowledge on the following topics: - Operationalisation of linguistic distance. - Consequences of various degrees of linguistic distance on mutual intelligibility. - Psycholinguistic bases of intercomprehension: partial competences, approximation, word recognition, the mental lexicon. Through a hands-on exercise on Romance intercomprehension, these theoretical issues will also be experienced from the perspective of the lay language user.

Course contents	The seminar will present an introduction to intercomprehension, with specific reference to the Romance and the Slavic language groups. The following topics will be discussed. - Psycholinguistic foundations of intercomprehension - Conceptualising and measuring linguistic distance - Spontaneous and acquired intercomprehension - Intercomprehension and multilingualism - Mutual intelligibility and L2 acquisition - A practical exercise in Romance intercomprehension
Reading	Blees, Gerda J. & Mak, Willem M. & ten Thije, Jan D. 2014. English as a lingua franca versus lingua receptiva in problem-solving conversations between Dutch and German students. <i>Applied Linguistics Review</i> 5(1). 173–193. (doi:10.1515/applirev-2014-0008) Bonvino, Elisabetta & Fiorenza, Elisa & Cortés Velásquez, Diego. 2018. Observing Strategies in Intercomprehension Reading. Some Clues for Assessment in Plurilingual Settings. <i>Frontiers in Communication</i> 3. 29. (doi:10.3389/fcomm.2018.00029) Heeringa, Wilbert & Gooskens, Charlotte & Van Heuven, Vincent. 2023. Comparing Germanic, Romance and Slavic: Relationships among linguistic distances. <i>Lingua</i> 287. (doi:10.1016/j.lingua.2023.103512) Melo-Pfeifer, Sílvia. 2014. Intercomprehension between Romance Languages and the role of English: a study of multilingual chat rooms. <i>International Journal of Multilingualism</i> 11(1). 120–137. (doi:10.1080/14790718.2012.679276) Möller, Robert & Zeevaert, Ludger. 2015. Investigating word recognition in intercomprehension: Methods and findings. <i>Linguistics</i> 53(2). 313–352. (doi:https://doi.org/10.1515/ling-2015-0006) Piccoli, Vanessa. 2017. À la recherche des bons indices : inférences et recherches de mot entre locuteurs de langues romanes. <i>Cahiers de praxématique</i> (68). (doi:10.4000/praxematique.4587) (http://journals.openedition.org/praxematique/4587) (Accessed January 30, 2023.) Sudhoff, Stefan & Ten Thije, Jan. 2024. Lingua Receptiva in Higher Education. In Sudhoff, Stefan & Ten Thije, Jan (eds.), <i>Multilingualism in Academic and Educational Constellations</i>, 99–124. Münster: Waxmann Verlag GmbH. (doi:10.31244/9783830997887) ten Thije, Jan. 2020. Lingua Receptiva at the Directorate-General for Translation (DGT) of the European Commission. In Beerkens, Roos & Le Pichon-Vorstman, Emmanuelle & Supheert, Roselinde & Ten Thije, Jan (eds.), <i>Enhancing Intercultural Communication in Organizations</i>, 45–52. Routledge. (doi:10.4324/9781003006794)

Title	Relative Clauses as a Window into Syntactic Complexity
Teacher	Sabrina Bertollo
Coordinator UniVR/UniBZ	UniVR
Compulsory/free choice?	compulsory
Teaching hours/ECTS credits	10/2,5
When?	25-29/01/2027
Where?	Università di Verona (co-working room)
Language of instruction	English
Assessment	(Optional) term paper
Learning outcomes	- Critically analyse complex syntactic phenomena, with a focus on relative clauses. - Integrate theoretical and empirical approaches to model and evaluate syntactic structures. - Formulate and investigate research questions that extend beyond individual specializations, applying rigorous methodological and analytical reasoning. - Assess linguistic variation and change, including effects of case morphology, relativizer strategies, and language contact.
Course contents	The course aims to provide an approach to the analysis of syntactic phenomena, especially those characterized by a high degree of complexity in terms of parsing and acquisition. To do so, relative clauses (henceforth RCs) will be used as a case study. RCs are a widespread construction in the languages of the world and are typically associated with complexity, as shown also by acquisitional studies. Moreover, RCs are not only inherently difficult to process, but they also display varying degrees of complexity within the construction itself, influenced by several factors, including the interplay between syntax and morphology. Through dialogic lessons, the class will engage with different research questions aimed at fostering students' ability to address linguistic issues that go beyond their specific research fields. The discussion will be based on data from both standard and dialectal varieties and will rely on relevant literature. - How are RCs introduced, and how does the nature of the introducer affect the construction? - Is there a correlation between case markedness and access to relativization? If so, how does the syntactic function of the relativized element relate to the scalar complexity of the construction? - How can the structure of RCs be modelled within Generative Grammar? - From the perspective of economy, is the use of a single complex relativizer (e.g. Italian <i>al quale</i>) always more advantageous than a "doubling" strategy (e.g. substandard Italian <i>che + gli</i>)?

	- What does language contact reveal about the resilience of RCs? Are restrictive RCs more or less prone to change than non-restrictive RCs? - Setting standardization processes aside, are inflected pronominal introducers of RCs more or less resilient than invariable relativizers in diachronic change?
Reading	The suggested readings are not necessarily a prerequisite to successfully attend the class but are rather to be considered as a (non-exhaustive) reference list: Bertollo, S. (2024). Unconventional relatives and antecedents in disguise: German clefts and free relative clauses. <i>Quiedit</i>. Bertollo, S., Madaro, R. & Tomaselli, A. (to appear). Relative clauses in the Alpine Germanic varieties: some cues from the diachrony of Cimbrian and Timavese under the pressure of (Italo)Romance. <i>Journal of Historical Syntax</i>. Chesi, C., & Moro, A. (2014). <i>Computational complexity in the brain</i>. In F. J. Newmeyer & L. B. Preston (Eds.), <i>Measuring grammatical complexity</i> (pp. 264–280). Oxford University Press. Cinque, G. (2020). <i>The syntax of relative clauses: A unified analysis</i>. Cambridge University Press. Gelderen (van), J. (2004). <i>Grammaticalization as economy</i>. John Benjamins. Keenan, E. L., & Comrie, B. (1977). <i>Noun phrase accessibility and universal grammar</i>. <i>Linguistic Inquiry</i>, 8(1), 63–99. Poletto, C. (2008). <i>Doubling as splitting</i>. In S. Barbiers, O. Koenenman, M. Lekakou, & M. van der Ham (Eds.), <i>Microvariation in syntactic doubling</i> (pp. 37–68). Emerald / Brill.

Title	Quantitative Methods in Linguistics
Teacher	Alessandro Vietti (unibz)
Coordinator UniVR/UniBZ	Alessandro Vietti
Compulsory/free choice?	Free choice
Teaching hours/ECTS credits	20/5
When?	March-April 2027
Where?	Bozen
Language of instruction	English
Assessment	Learning outcomes will be assessed through in-class exercises designed to evaluate students' ability to solve practical problems in linguistic analysis using the R programming language.
Learning outcomes	By the end of the course, students will have mastered the basic principles and methodologies of quantitative analysis in linguistics. In addition to these skills, students will acquire more technical skills by learning to use the R programming

	language. Thanks to the knowledge acquired, particularly through the laboratory component, students will be able to perform basic and intermediate statistical analyses on linguistic data drawn from real-world case studies. The R programming language, a standard in quantitative research, will be used for the description, analysis, and graphical representation of linguistic data.
Course contents	The course will cover the methodological foundations of quantitative research and introduce basic techniques for the statistical analysis of linguistic data, with a particular focus on the role of statistical models, such as linear regression, in the analysis of linguistic behavior. Specifically, the course will address the following topics: - Fundamentals of quantitative analysis; - Data exploration and description (descriptive statistics, distributions, and measures of central tendency and dispersion); - Linear regression models (logistic regression and mixed-effects models); - Statistical inference. The topics introduced and discussed in the course will be addressed through practical exercises using the R programming language.
Reading	Winter B., 2020, Statistics for Linguists: An Introduction Using R, Routledge.