

Language and Discourse

Code: 106215
ECTS Credits: 6

2025/2026

Degree	Type	Year
Science, Technology and Humanities	FB	1

Contact

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Teachers

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Teaching groups languages

You can view this information at the [end](#) of this document.

Prerequisites

As a basic subject, it has no prerequisites.

Objectives and Contextualisation

PART 1 - Spanish

- Understand the main changes introduced by the academic norms in force since 2010 and their practical applications.
- Apply normative criteria to scientific and technical writing, with special attention to formal correctness.
- Evaluate the regulatory function of language in specialized genres: style guides, scientific articles, technical reports, etc.
- Recognize the importance of lexical and terminological precision as a guarantee of communicative effectiveness in specialized texts.
- Understand specialized texts as communicative units governed by specific conventions.
- Learn the main features of scientific discourse: objectivity, clarity, use of passives, impersonality, etc.
- Learn to structure scientific texts with appropriateness, coherence, and cohesion.
- Apply writing techniques aimed at dissemination or specialization, depending on the target audience.
- Develop written competence in academic and professional contexts.

PART 2 - English

- Explain the evolution of biomedical categories over the history of science.
- Analyse metaphor, argumentation and narrative in scientific dissemination genres.

- Comprehend and apply basic principles of Critical Discourse Analysis.
- Trace the evolution of language choice in scientific publication.
- Reflect upon the centrality of English in scientific publication
- Describe and compare different multilingual strategies to communicate science.
- Communicate, orally and in writing, complex ideas in academic English.
- Understand and comment authentic materials in English.

Competences

- Construct discourse on scientific and technical knowledge using the linguistic resources of argument.
- Describe the interactions between art, literature and science as drivers of complex creative processes and in the dissemination of knowledge.
- Innovate in the methods and processes of this area of knowledge in response to the needs and wishes of society.
- Make critical use of digital tools and interpret specific documentary sources.
- Produce written papers and give effective oral presentations, adopting the appropriate register in different languages.
- Students must be capable of communicating information, ideas, problems and solutions to both specialised and non-specialised audiences.
- Students must have and understand knowledge of an area of study built on the basis of general secondary education, and while it relies on some advanced textbooks it also includes some aspects coming from the forefront of its field of study.
- Take sex- or gender-based inequalities into consideration when operating within one's own area of knowledge.

Learning Outcomes

1. Analyse discourse from different perspectives and suggest ways to improve the construction of this discourse.
2. Analyse discourse on scientific and technical knowledge throughout history, using the tools of the different traditions in discourse studies.
3. Analyse the sex-/gender-based inequalities and gender bias in one's own area of knowledge.
4. Communicate by making non-sexist, non-discriminatory use of language.
5. Construct texts or other communicative tools for passing on ideas and concepts.
6. Identify different linguistic and rhetorical resources used throughout the history of science and technology that have played a key role in the progress of the different disciplines.
7. Identifying the main and secondary ideas and expressing them with linguistic correctness.
8. Produce organised, correct discourse, oral and written, in the corresponding language.
9. Recognise the different discourse genres in the field of scientific literature, together with their sociohistorical nature.
10. Search for and select information sources, assess their importance, and use them in interpreting topics and issues of social interest.
11. Situate different visions of the world, together with their influence on scientific practice, in their socio-historical context, on the basis of textual analysis.
12. "Situate psychological or medical categories like ""madness"" or ""monstrosity"" in their sociohistorical context."
13. "Study the processes by which biomedical categories like ""normal""", ""pathological""", etc. have been constructed, from the perspective of discourse analysis."
14. Use digital tools to collect, classify, analyse and interpret significant data related to language studies.
15. Write text commentaries from a critical standpoint.

Content

PART 1 - Spanish

Topic 1.1.

Current Spanish language norms and their impact on specialized language and scientific discourse

This topic focuses on the most recent normative changes in Spanish, as proposed by the Association of Academies of the Spanish Language (ASALE) based on the academic norms in force since 2010 (*Ortografía de la lengua española* and *Nueva gramática de la lengua española*).

The approach will concentrate on specialized texts—particularly scientific, technical, and academic texts—where lexical and terminological precision, expository clarity, and adherence to the standard Spanish norm are essential.

The main changes and updates in syntactic, orthographic, and grammatical aspects will be examined, analyzing how they influence the writing, editing, and standardization of specialized discourse in Spanish.

Additionally, the course will include reflections on the role of academic norms in scientific communication, especially in terms of language standardization, terminological transparency, and the reliability of content in international contexts.

Topic 1.2.

Production and analysis of specialized texts in Spanish

The main objective of this module is to develop discourse and textual competence in the field of languages for specific purposes, with special focus on scientific discourse in Spanish.

The course will address the key structural, linguistic, and communicative features of specialized texts, with emphasis on aspects such as lexical precision, expository clarity, argumentative coherence, and adequacy to the scientific-academic context.

Students will work with real examples of genres typical of scientific discourse (academic articles, abstracts, introductions, results, conclusions, oral scientific communications, etc.) and will develop strategies for textual analysis and production in these fields.

PART 2 - English

Topic 2.1.

Language in the history of science

- Evolution of multilingualism and English as a lingua franca
- Communicating science in crises

Topic 2.1. will be devoted to the evolution of language choice, notably English as a lingua franca, in scientific publication and public communication in crises. We will draw on both historical and contemporary documents to examine specific strategies to disseminate scientific findings.

Topic 2.2.

Scientific discourse

- Language, science and ideology
- Critical discourse analysis and the biomedical sciences

Topic 2.2. will examine the power of language in the production of scientific knowledge under specific sociohistorical conditions. Inspired by Michel Foucault's theories, we will use Critical Discourse Analysis tools to analyse how linguistic, narrative and visual resources construct scientific knowledge in the biomedical sciences.

Activities and Methodology

Title	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
Type: Directed			
Classroom practice and text commentary	16	0.64	1, 2, 10, 4, 5, 15, 8, 14, 6, 7, 9
Theoretical lessons	33	1.32	1, 2, 3, 10, 4, 5, 13, 14, 6, 7, 9, 12, 11
Type: Supervised			
Tutoring and work supervision	4.25	0.17	10, 4, 7, 9, 12
Type: Autonomous			
Study and preparation of work	84.75	3.39	2, 10, 4, 5, 13, 12, 11

The course is structured around a combination of guided, autonomous, and supervised learning activities, aimed at promoting active and progressive student engagement.

In-person sessions include theoretical lectures delivered by the teaching staff, practical exercises involving text analysis and commentary, and classroom discussions designed to foster critical thinking and argumentative skills. Student participation is considered an essential component of the learning process.

Independent work is a key aspect of the course and includes reading texts, preparing materials, completing exercises, individual study, and consulting normative and documentary sources. Students will be expected to read assigned texts and engage with audiovisual materials in preparation for class discussion and analysis (*flipped classroom methodology*).

Tutorials and supervised activities are intended to guide students in the completion of their assignments, clarify doubts, and provide individual follow-up throughout the learning process.

The course schedule and learning materials will be made available on the Virtual Campus. Additionally, in accordance with the official academic calendar, 15 minutes of one class session will be reserved for students to complete teaching and course evaluation surveys.

Annotation: Within the schedule set by the centre or degree programme, 15 minutes of one class will be reserved for students to evaluate their lecturers and their courses or modules through questionnaires.

Assessment

Continuous Assessment Activities

Title	Weighting	Hours	ECTS	Learning Outcomes
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Part 2 exam (key concepts, text commentary)	20 %	1.5	0.06	1, 2, 3, 4, 5, 13, 14, 6, 7, 9, 12, 11
Part 2 portfolio (practical exercises, Academic Reading Circles, reflections)	30 %	7.5	0.3	1, 2, 3, 10, 4, 5, 15, 8, 13, 14, 6, 7, 9, 12, 11
Questionnaire on rules and technical Spanish language	25 %	1.5	0.06	1, 2, 10, 4, 5, 15, 8, 14, 6, 7
Questionnaire on Spanish text production and analysis	25 %	1.5	0.06	1, 2, 10, 4, 5, 15, 14, 6, 7

Continuous assessment:

Students will be evaluated through four continuous assessment tasks, two corresponding to the Spanish section and two to the English section, each with a weight of 25% of the final grade.

The activities are designed to develop students' linguistic and discursive competence in academic, technical, and scientific contexts, with particular attention to current language norms and the conventions of specialized discourse.

Writing proficiency will be assessed as part of the evaluation process (spelling and grammatical errors may negatively affect the final grade). All assessment tasks are compulsory and will be completed on the dates scheduled at the beginning of the course (these will be announced on the subject's Virtual Campus in the first weeks of the semester).

Resits:

All assessment tasks are resit-eligible, provided that the student has obtained a minimum average mark of 3.5 out of 10.

- The maximum grade for re-assessed items is 5/10

Plagiarism:

If a student engages in any irregularity that significantly affects the grade of an assessment task, that task will be graded with a 0, regardless of any disciplinary procedure that may follow. If multiple irregularities are detected in the assessment tasks of a single subject, the final grade for that subject will be 0.

Artificial Intelligence (AI):

The use of Artificial Intelligence (AI) tools is not permitted at any stage of academic work in this subject. Any task that includes AI-generated content will be considered a case of academic dishonesty and will be awarded a non-recoverable 0, or more serious sanctions in cases of greater severity.

Part 1 - Spanish language

- Test 1 (25%): Online questionnaire (50 questions) on current Spanish language norms and their impact on specialized language and scientific discourse. The test assesses the student's knowledge and application of the most recent normative changes (ASALE, 2010), with particular attention to formal accuracy, lexical precision, and expository clarity.
- Test 2 (25%): Online questionnaire (50 questions) on the production and analysis of specialized texts. The test evaluates understanding of the textual mechanisms typical of scientific, technical, and professional discourse: coherence, cohesion, paragraph structure, and appropriate use of linguistic resources.

Part 2 - English language

The student's command of English and the use of gender inclusive language will be considered when marking coursework.

- Individual portfolio (30%) The portfolio will include practical exercises, contributions to Academic Reading Circles and personal reflections on key issues that the student has completed during the semester.
- Written exam (20%) The exam will assess the comprehension and application of key ideas and theories in the course to both historical and contemporary texts that disseminate scientific research and knowledge.

Single assessment:

- Part 1 (Spanish): In-person exam (questionnaire format) - 50%
- Part 2 (English): Submission of a portfolio - 25% and in-person exam-25%

The portfolio must be submitted on the same day as the in-person exams. The exam date for students opting for single assessment will coincide with the date scheduled for the last continuous assessment exam. Please contact Maria Rosa Garrido for more information about the portfolio tasks.

Resit procedure:

The same resit conditions apply as for the continuous assessment system.

INCOMING MOBILITY STUDENTS:

Students requesting to reschedule an exam or assessment to an earlier date must present the instructor with a written document from their home university justifying their request.

Bibliography

PART 1 - Spanish

- Alvar Ezquerra, Manuel (1999). *Manual de redacción y estilo*. Madrid: Ediciones AKAL.
- Calvi, M. V., Bordonaba Zabalza, C., Mapelli, G., & Santos López, J. (2023). *Las lenguas de especialidad en español*. Rome: Carocci editore.
- Cassany, Daniel (1995). *La cocina de la escritura*. Barcelona: Anagrama.
- Gómez Torrego, Leonardo (2013). *Las normas académicas: últimos cambios*. Madrid: EDICIONES SM.
- Official online resources: Fundéu, *Diccionario panhispánico de dudas*, Centro Virtual Cervantes, among others.

PART 2 - English

The lecturer will provide a reading list and complementary material on Moodle. More specific references will be provided at the onset of each topic.

- Foucault, Michel (1971). Orders of discourse. Lecture delivered at the Collège de France. *Social Science Information* 10 (2), 7-30.
- Gordin, Michael (2015). *Scientific Babel: How science was done before and after Global English*. University of Chicago Press.
- Handford, Michael and Gee, James P. (Eds.), *The Routledge Handbook of Discourse Analysis* (2nd Ed.). Routledge.
- Morgan, Mary S.; Hajek, Kim M.; & Berry, Dominic J. (2022). *Narrative Science: Reasoning, Representing and Knowing since 1800*. Cambridge University Press.

- Piller, Ingrid; Zhang, Jie; and Li, Jia (2020). Linguistic diversity in a Time of Crisis: Language Challenges of the COVID-19 Pandemic. *Multilingua*, 39 (5), 503-515.
- Semino, Elena; Demjén, Zsófia; Hardie, Andrew; Payne, Sheila and Rayson, Paul (2018). *Metaphor, Cancer and the End of Life: A Corpus-Based Study*. Routledge.

Audiovisual resources:

BBC Radio 4: Word of Mouth [selected episodes]

<https://www.bbc.co.uk/programmes/b006qtnz>

Language on The Move [selected blog entries]

<https://www.languageonthemove.com/>

Software

No specific software is required.

Groups and Languages

Please note that this information is provisional until 30 November 2025. You can check it through this [link](#). To consult the language you will need to enter the CODE of the subject.

Name	Group	Language	Semester	Turn
(PAUL) Classroom practices	1	English	first semester	morning-mixed
(TE) Theory	1	Spanish	first semester	morning-mixed