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## Motivation for this course

In teacher education programmes for foreign languages, students who wish to become teachers often study side by side with students who would, for example, like to work in academia, in journalism or in publishing. As a consequence, students aiming to become teachers often do not recognize the relevance of their linguistic studies for their future profession (e.g. Kreyer & Güldenring 2016). They are not aware of the manifold ways in which linguistic knowledge and resources can be useful for teaching English as a Foreign Language (TEFL). University courses that integrate teaching-related issues into linguistic classes are hardly on offer, although a more systematic teaching of the connections between linguistics and language pedagogy has been long a long-standing request in research literature on TEFL and on coherence in teacher education (for an overview, see Rosen & Beuter, under review). Teaching experts criticise that future teachers seem to acquire sufficient linguistic knowledge at university but do not know how to apply this in teaching contexts and lack diagnostic competences (e.g. Polzin-Haumann 2008). The present course concept seeks to remedy this situation.

-  Kreyer, Rolf & Güldenring, Barbara Ann. 2016. "But sometimes this potential is not used at all' Views on linguistics in EFL teacher training and teaching." R. Kreyer et al., eds. *Angewandte Linguistik in Schule und Hochschule. Neue Wege für Sprachunterricht und Ausbildung*. Frankfurt: Peter Lang. 267-297.
- Polzin-Haumann, Claudia. 2008. "Lernziel kommunikative Kompetenz: Beitrag zu einem Dialog von (romanistischer) Sprachwissenschaft mit Sprachlehrforschung und Fremdsprachendidaktik." Adelheid Schumann & Lieselotte Steinbrügge, eds. *Didaktische Transformation und Konstruktion. Zum Verhältnis von Fachwissenschaft und Fremdsprachendidaktik*. Frankfurt a.M.: Peter Lang, 147-166.
- Rosen, Anna & Katharina Beuter (eds.). Under review. *Englische Sprachwissenschaft und Fachdidaktik im Dialog: Chancen zur Stärkung der Lehrkräftebildung*.

## Course concept

The primary aim of this course is to show future teachers to what extent their newly acquired knowledge of linguistics is relevant to teaching English at (German) secondary schools and in what ways linguistic insights, methods and tools can be applied in the foreign language classroom (see Figure 1). In a

reflective and research-based approach, the concept centres around students carrying out their own research projects and analysing and discussing samples of learner language produced by students from local secondary schools. This helps students to trace the complex processes when learning a foreign language and allows them to develop key skills for foreign language teaching. They are thus trained to carry out a well-considered, empirically-based assessment of the kind of learner language that they will encounter in their future profession. The course concept thus aims to bridge the gap between academic education and practical relevance that is so often called for in university teacher education programmes.

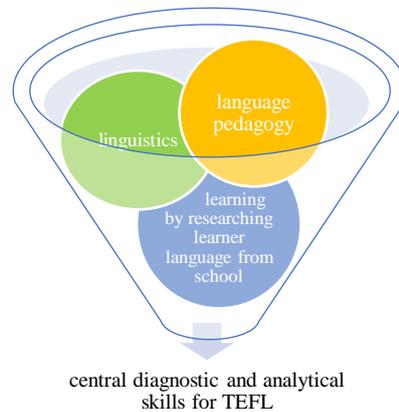


Figure 1: Basic approach to connecting linguistics and foreign language teacher education

This class should ideally be taught to more advanced students who have already been introduced to a number of linguistic fields, contrastive linguistics and second language acquisition among them. But some tasks and activities can be used – with adaptations, if necessary – at all levels of university education. When it comes to matters of coherence, some of the activities and tasks, especially those labelled reflection activities and tasks, aim to strengthen students’ perception of coherence in their teacher education programme. Other parts of this class actually implement coherence principles in the sense that they make students use formerly acquired knowledge in linguistics in a new, teaching-related context.

### Intended learning outcomes

Upon successful completion of this course, students will

- be aware of links between linguistics and EFL teaching and of linguistic issues that will have to be tackled in school;
- be able to apply linguistic knowledge that they acquired previously to the school context and to explore concepts from linguistics and second language acquisition in more practical terms;
- be able to diagnose strengths and weaknesses in learners’ productions following linguistic criteria;
- be able to use linguistic tools, such as dictionaries, collocation tools and corpora, to judge the appropriateness and acceptability of learner language and to give constructive and adequate feedback;
- have gained a better understanding of the complex processes that take place when learning a foreign language;
- have improved their analytical and diagnostic skills for assessing learner language.

## Course outline

Based on the learning objectives above, the course is divided into four units, which – after a more general introduction to the links between linguistics and TEFL – mirror the phases of a research cycle. Ideally you have some (half-day) sessions at the beginning of a term or a semester, an interlude where course participants work on their research projects, and a full-day session at the end of the course. In brackets you will find links to examples of materials, tasks and activities used for teaching these units.

### Unit I Bridging the gap between linguistics and foreign language teacher education

- Introduction [reflection activity]
- The relevance of linguistics for the English/foreign language classroom [reflection task]

### Unit II Preparing research projects on learner language and considering theoretical implications

- (Revision of) Basic concepts in SLA and contrastive linguistics [revision activity]
- Requirements for project reports [handout]
- Analysing learner language I: What is our target? [awareness-raising task]
- Analysing learner language II: Using dictionaries, grammars and linguistic online tools
- Analysing learner language III: Using corpora [survey]
- Analysing learner language IV: How to give (corrective) feedback

### Unit III Conducting and evaluating research projects on learner language

[Examples of research questions and findings](#)  (in German)

### Unit IV Presenting and discussing project findings and final reflection

- Project reports and analysing samples of learner language [presentation of projects]
- Learner language through the lens of development: Analysing and comparing samples of learner language from year 5 up to year 12
- Wrap-up and final reflection [reflection activity]

## Reflection activity

This activity can serve as a first introduction to thinking about links between academic and professional training and between insights from linguistics and teaching a foreign language. Reflecting on their experience as students in foreign language teacher education, students position themselves on an imaginary line in the classroom between the poles of teacher education as a purely academic or a professional and practical training. As in a think-pair-share activity, they share their reasons for their position on this imaginary line first with their neighbours and, if they wish, with everyone in class.



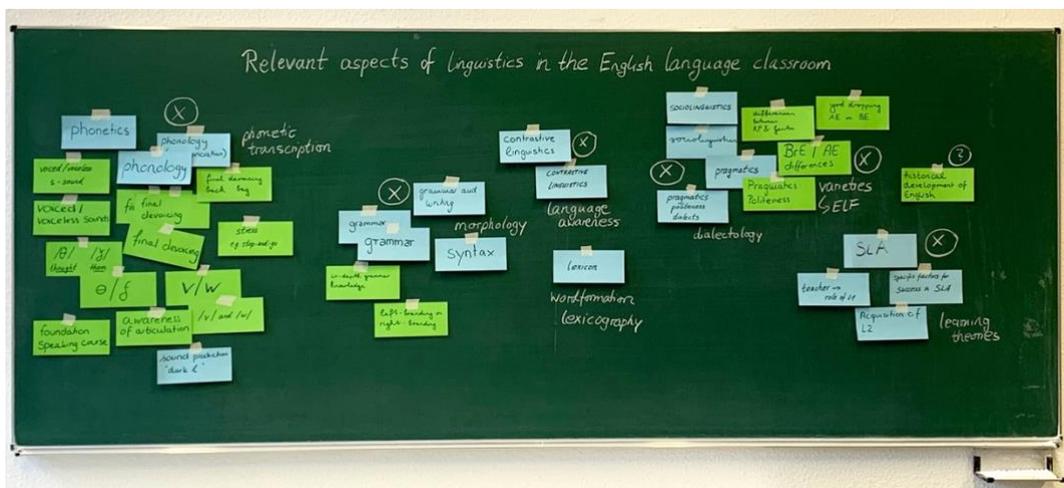
Second, the students are shown quotations about **coherence** in teacher education and the relevance of linguistics for teacher education and are asked for each quote to position themselves on the imaginary line between the poles of “I completely agree” and “I don’t agree at all”. They then discuss their impressions and opinions.

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## Reflection task

This task aims to systematize the connections between linguistic insights/fields and teaching a foreign language. Ideally, it should also provide students with a **sense of coherence** in their studies. Students reflect on their biographies as language learners and students of linguistics. They first try to find answers to the following questions on their own. Next, they share their ideas in a small group and note down key terms. They present their findings with the help of these key terms, which are then arranged on slips of paper on the blackboard (use different colours for question 1, their experience as learners – here in green, and question 2, their ideas about connections – here in blue).

1. Which insights and findings from linguistics that you've heard about in your studies seemed interesting or useful to you as a learner of English?
2. Which fields of linguistics seem directly relevant to teaching English (either from the student or the teacher perspective)?



3. In a final step, students examine school curricula for TEFL and analyse a selection of current textbooks to find out more about the connections between (fields of) linguistics and TEFL and fill in gaps.

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## **Revision activity**

This task intends to activate knowledge about important concepts in second language acquisition that students have either acquired in other courses or that they have read about in preparation for this class.

Group task: Arrange the cards with key terms from SLA on a table in a way that makes sense. Make sure in your group that you know what these terms and concepts are all about.

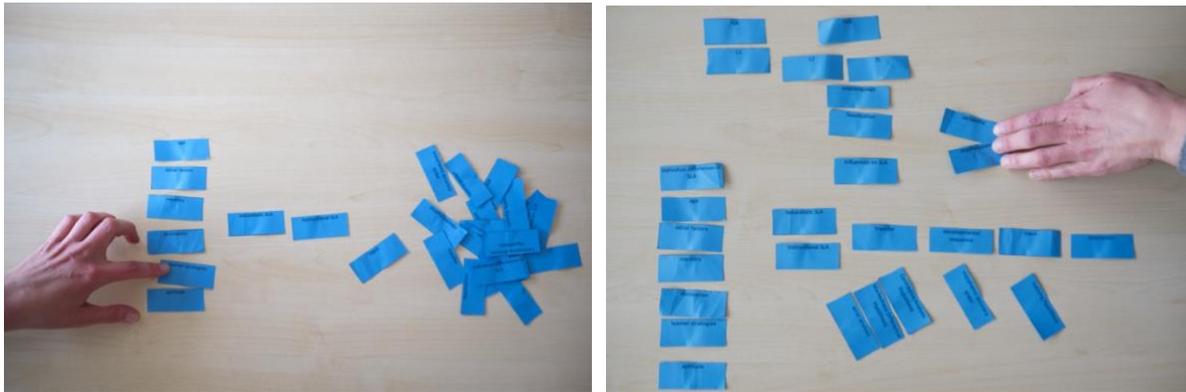


Illustration of a group activity to revise key terms from SLA

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## Handout      Requirements for research projects and project reports

NB: Learner data for the research projects in this course were collected from several local secondary schools. There are samples of both written and spoken texts from various years of instruction. The projects are thus based on data that represents the kind of learner language future teachers will have to deal with in their professional lives. Students work on their projects in teams.

Project tasks:

- 1) Have a look at the project material, i.e. the Corpus of Learner Language at Secondary Schools in Freiburg (CLASS-Freiburg)<sup>1</sup>, on ILIAS. If necessary for your research focus, you can get access to audio recordings.
  - 2) Come up with one or two research questions about your data sample. Your project could focus on one or several of the following areas:
    - pronunciation: pronunciation of individual sounds (vowels and consonants), pronunciation in connected speech, final devoicing, stress, intonation
    - grammar: morphemes, syntax (i.e. word order, sentence-building)
    - lexis: denotation, collocation, idioms, lexical fields
    - pragmatics: appropriate choice of register, speech acts, use of discourse markers
    - communication strategies
    - Which errors are more serious than others because they are more likely to interfere with intelligibility?
    - Which types of errors are made most frequently?
    - What are the strengths and weaknesses of your sample? Are there any overall tendencies?
- ➔ Make an appointment to talk to me about your research question(s) and your ideas before you start analysing the data.**
- 3) Analyse your data. Document what tools you used to establish if something is acceptable in the target language.
  - 4) Try to explain your findings in the light of current SLA theories and draw some conclusions.

Oral project reports:

- Describe the context of your data. Does the task or situation require a particular register or pragmatic behaviour?
- State your overall research question(s) and describe how you analysed the data. Give some examples of how you worked with linguistic tools (online sources, corpora, dictionaries...). Reflect on your difficulties when analysing the material.
- Present the (most important) findings. You can also mention general weaknesses and strengths of the learner language you analysed. Are there any general trends? Are there any striking features? Give examples.
- Explain your (main) findings in the light of current SLA literature.
- You can also make some suggestions for feedback to the learners or about what to teach this group of learners next.
- Use visual support during your presentation.
- Provide a brief handout that is understandable to someone who has not listened to your report. All figures and graphs should be self-explanatory.

You will find the assessment criteria on our learning platform.

**Please make an appointment to talk to me before your presentation.**

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<sup>1</sup> The project material was compiled into a 200,000 word-corpus, which is only accessible, unfortunately, to students of the University of Freiburg. Similar corpora or datasets might, however, exist in your region or home country.



## Awareness-raising task

This task promotes the understanding of difficulties of what can and should be considered the target language when teaching English at a German secondary school (→ English as a global language with various standards, English as a Lingua Franca).

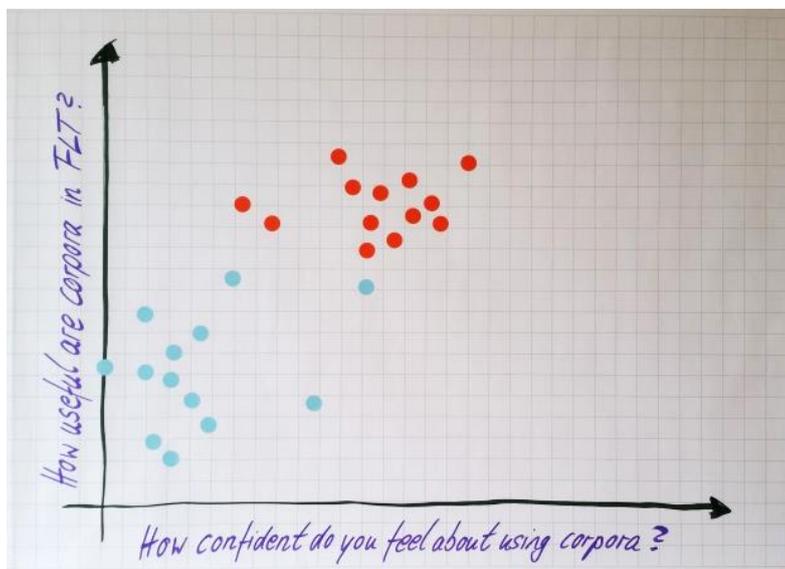
Task: Comment on the following sentences from essays on Freiburg as a tourist destination by learners of English in their 4<sup>th</sup> year of instruction and give feedback.

- 1) Freiburg and the area around is very green.
- 2) Freiburg used to be quite rich, you can even see that now in the pretty houses and churches.
- 3) You really should visit it at least once.
- 4) They did not visit Freiburg yet.

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## Survey activity

Students are asked to assess the usefulness of corpora in foreign language teaching and how confident they feel about using corpora by putting a sticker on a diagram. They do this before and after being introduced to corpora as a tool to create exercises for the classroom and to check phenomena of learner language.



Result of survey activity about the use of corpora in foreign language teaching

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## **Presentation of projects**

Ideally organised as a conference day. Students present their projects as a team while the audience gets a handout with the main result and statistics. In addition, every team designs a task for the audience based on their data sample so that everyone has a good impression of the kind of data the team dealt with. Assessment criteria are made available beforehand. This conference day gives all students a more comprehensive overview of the various stages of learner language at a German secondary school and allows everyone to discuss the complexities of dealing with such learner language.

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## Reflection activity

This activity allows for a final reflection on the course contents in the form of a “written discussion”. Students first think about the following questions. They then put their thoughts on posters hanging on the walls around the classroom and comment on others’ ideas, contribution, and associations in a silent discussion. This method usually creates a moment of concentration and inspiration. The posters are photographed and shared afterwards.

- *What surprised you the most when carrying out your research projects?*
- *What will be important to you when correcting learner language in school?*
- *What did you realise over the course of this semester that might have an impact on your teaching?*
- *What, if anything, would you teach your pupils when it comes to linguistics?*

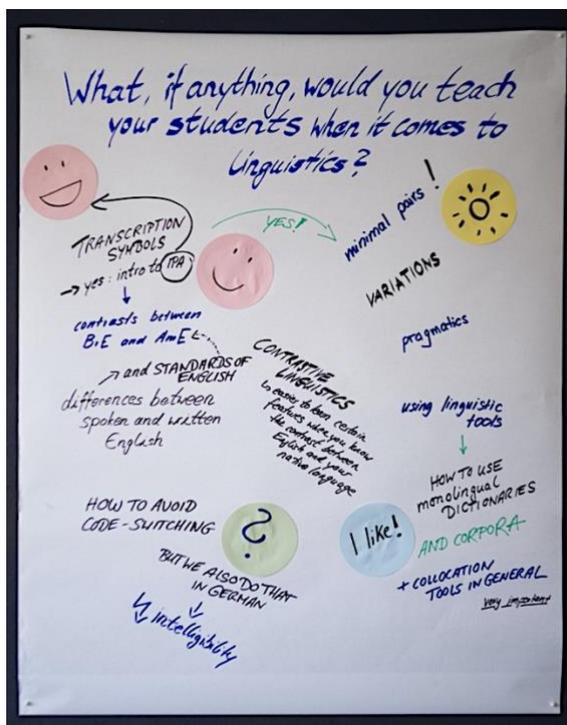


Illustration of final reflection activity

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