

National Research University Higher School of Economics
Syllabus for master-classes of invited lecturers
Government of Russian Federation

Federal State Autonomous Educational Institution of High Education
«National Research University Higher School of Economics»

School of Linguistics
Master's programme 'Linguistic Theory and Language Description'

Syllabus for the course "Master-classes of invited lecturers"

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Head of the School of Linguistics E. V. Rakhilina

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This syllabus cannot be used by other university departments and other higher education institutions without the explicit permission of the School of Linguistics

Master classes: Invited lectures.

A syllabus for 2016-2017

Michael Daniel

The course is compulsory for the students of the MA program Linguistic theory and language description (NRU HSE). The course is a series of lectures by guest speakers, experts in various fields of theoretical linguistic. There are no prerequisites other than preparatory reading suggested by the guest lecturer; all background information is introduced in the opening lecture.

Abstract. The aim of the course is to introduce the students to the state of the art linguistic knowledge on different topics in theoretical linguistics. Specific topics are subject to change depending on the lecturer. Examples, to be discussed in the academic year 2016-2017, include: formal treatment of anaphora and reflexives; a typology of semantic shifts as a methodology of comparative linguistics; theory of Sprachbund's; statistical methods in application to linguistic data. The main idea of the course is a focus on methods of linguistic studies in various domains.

The **objectives** of the course is to introduce the students to the methods of and issues in modern linguistic research.

Intended outcomes include, for the students:

- understanding principles of approach to language studies in the domains determined by the selected fields
- acquiring skills in linguistic data analysis and interpretation
- training skills of critical academic reading and communication

Course plan. The course comprises several parts - topics selected for the specific year, from two to four. As an example, the topics for 2017 are provided:

Formal approaches to anaphora (0+20+60 hours): a study of issues in co-valuation and binding, including diversity in patterns of reflexivity. Cross-linguistic variation in local vs. non-local binding provides many issues often used within functional paradigm as arguments against generative approach to syntax. These lectures will explain how these problems may be

approached by extending and modifying rather than abandoning canonical binding theory. The lectures put additional emphasis on the division of labor between syntax and pragmatics.

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Typology of semantic shifts (0+14+60 hours): canonical comparative method emphasizes the strictness of phonetic laws and resulting sound correspondences between related languages, but is less keen on the laws of semantic change. However, semantic evolution is of no less importance to the validation of the results of linguistic reconstruction than is phonetic change. Implausible semantic change endangers reconstruction to the same extent as inaccurate phonetic calculation. In these lectures, we discuss modern advances in the study of typology of semantic shifts in the history of human languages as well as methods that can be used in their study.

The notion of Sprachbund: examples and issues in methodology (0+14+60 hours). The notion of Sprachbund is one of the oldest in sociolinguistics. However, the study of Sprachbund's is far from being a methodologically elaborated domain. Sprachbund has to be distinguished from a more general notion of linguistic area, on the one hand, and from much more specific idea of contact between individual languages. The difference is that of granularity, but the availability of means of mutual delimitation of these notions, and the very necessity of such delimitation, may be questioned. Further, the notion of Sprachbund is inherently fuzzy, because it deals with bundles of linguistic features that wane from the nucleus towards the periphery. This fuzziness, which is the essence of the areal nature of Sprachbund and could be attributed to historical diffusion of features, constitutes a methodological problem in itself.

Reading:

Reuland, Eric. Basic issues in the theory of grammar: towards a minimalist perspective. Ms.

Reuland, Eric. Why is reflexivity so special? Understanding the world of reflexives.

Matras, Ya. Language Contact. Cambridge: CUP, 2009.

Tomić, Olga M. Balkan Sprachbund Morpho-Syntactic Features [Studies in Natural Language and Linguistic Theory 67]. Dordrecht: Springer; 2006

Thomason S.G. Language Contact. An introduction. Edinburgh, Edinburgh Univ. Press. 2001.

Grading system is based on cumulative grading of all course elements in proportion to the number of the lectures read in the element. There is no final exam.

A student's success in each segment is **assessed** basing on a written assignment which may be a mini-research, an essay or a test, to be determined by the instructor responsible for this

segment and to be submitted / accomplished at the end of the segment. In the case of a mini-research, the grade is based on the coverage of the topic / relevancy of the methodology and outcomes to the topic of the segment. In the case of an essay, the grade is based on how exhaustively the topic is covered. Essays and mini-research may be done in small groups. In the case of the test, the grade is based on the number of questions answered in their entirety. If allowed by the director of the MA program, the student may be exempt from some topics that are of less relevance to his or her research interests. **There is no final examination.**

The course is delivered in lectures and classes, eventually including discussions of home reading. The course requires regular equipment for presentations.