Functional Approaches to Natural Language

1. Course description

1.1 Title of a course

Functional approaches to natural language is a course for 1st-year students of the Master's programme "Linguistic Theory and Language Description" of the National Research University Higher School of Economics.

1.2 Pre-requisites

The following knowledge and competence are required to study the discipline:

- A good command of the English language.
- A basic knowledge of linguistic theory.

1.3 Course type (compulsory, elective, optional)

Functional approaches to natural language is a compulsory course for 1st-year students of the Master's programme "Linguistic Theory and Language Description".

1.4 Abstract

The course presupposes an introduction to functional and cognitive linguistics as opposed to other approaches to natural language, such as structuralism or generative grammar. The course comprises several lectures on main tenets, methodological peculiarities and the most important domains of research in functional linguistics, as well as discussions of various case studies and program papers. Students enrolled in the course *Functional approaches to natural language* have to cope with several tasks before and in class: they go over the reading materials that their instructor sends to them, prepare presentations of the given papers in small groups, and complete several home tasks consisting in a functional analysis of some linguistic phenomena on the basis of data from available linguistic resources.

2. Learning Objectives

Learning objectives of the course *Functional Approaches to Natural Language* are to introduce students to:

- theoretical apparatus, key notions, history, heritage and main principles of functional and cognitive linguistics;
- the mainstream branches and schools of functional and cognitive linguistics;
- methodological aspects of functional and cognitive linguistics;
- critical thinking and reasoning within cognitive linguistics;
- the most salient papers (in English) on various aspects of functional and cognitive linguistics;
- running several case studies on the given topics of functional and cognitive linguistics.

3. Learning outcomes

After completing the study of the discipline *Functional Approaches to Natural Language* the student should:

- understand the subject of cognitive linguistics, its fields, connections with other (cognitive) sciences;
- understand main conceptions of the most significant scientific cognitive linguistics schools;
- be able to understand, interpret and discuss papers (in English) on various aspects of functional and cognitive linguistics;
- be able to critically analyze various theoretical points of functional and cognitive linguistics;
- be able to collect empirical data and apply methodological principles to various theoretical tasks;
- be able to make empirical observations and theoretical generalizations;
- be able to make inferences based on collected data relying on theoretical principles of cognitive linguistics;
- be able to present results of an undertaken study both in written and oral form.

4. Course Plan

1. Introduction to Functional and Cognitive Linguistics (further FL and CL)

Interaction between language and cognition as a fundamental principle of CL. History of FL and CL. FL and CL in the context of main trends in modern linguistics (structuralism, cognitive grammar, generative grammar) and their brief overview. Main principles of CL: cognitive principles and mechanisms not specific to language; anthropocentricity; language in use (usage-based model); non-autonomy of syntax; meaning as a primary focus of linguistic study; synchronous (not sequential) analysis of a linguistic unit on various language levels; lack of synchronic vs. diachronic dichotomy. Evolution of the main theoretical notions of FL and CL: walkthrough past and modern theories. Principal role of semantics in CL. Semantic roles and frame semantics. Presupposition and assertion vs. figure and ground (landmark and trajector). Deixis and absolute/relative orientation in space. Ambiguity: implicature and scope vs. semantic networks; language modules vs. constructions; etc.

2. Methodological issues

Basic methods of collecting empirical data in general linguistics and in CL: introspection, observation (that leads to corpus research), and experiment (that leads to experimental linguistics). Experimental linguistics and CL. Corpus linguistics and CL. Role of statistics in corpus linguistics and in CL.

3. Cognitive Models of Language Acquisition.

Models of language learning (L1 and L2). Heritage speakers. Learner Corpora.

4. Beyond (spoken) language

Sign language and sign languages. Co-speech gesticulation. Nonverbal communication and multimodal approach to language. Human language and animal communication.

5. Reading List

1.5 Required

1. Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics.
By: Dąbrowska, Ewa; Divjak, Dagmar. *De Gruyter Mouton.* ISBN: 978-3-11-029184-1, 978-3-11-029202-2, 978-3-11-039380-4. – ЭБС: EBSCO eBooks 2015.

2. The Oxford Handbook of Cognitive Linguistics.
By: Hubert Cuyckens; Dirk Geeraerts. *Oxford University Press.* ISBN: 978-0-19-514378-2, 978-0-19-973863-2, 978-0-19-803288-5, 978-0-19-989002-6, 978-0-19-994021-9. – ЭБС: Oxford Handbook Foundation Collection 2010.

3. Cognitive Linguistics: An Introduction
By: Evans, Vyvyan; Green, Melanie. *Edinburgh University Press.* ISBN: 978-0-7486-1832-3, 978-0-7486-2650-2, 978-1-280-50144-9. – ЭБС: ProQuest Ebook Central - Academic Complete 2006.

1.6 Optional

1. Handbook of Bilingualism: Psycholinguistic Approaches.
By: Kroll, Judith F; Kroll; Groot, A. M. B. de. *Oxford University Press.* ISBN: 978-0-19-515177-0, 978-0-19-537365-3, 978-0-19-028812-9, 978-0-19-803461-2, 978-1-280-83763-0, 978-1-4294-2039-6. Linguistics. – ЭБС: ProQuest Ebook Central - Academic Complete 2005.

2. Cognitive Grammar: A Basic Introduction (Oxford scholarship online)
By: Langacker, Ronald W. *Oxford University Press.* ISBN: 978-0-19-533195-0, 978-0-19-533196-7, 978-0-19-804419-2, 978-0-19-986820-9, 978-0-19-988720-0, 978-1-4356-3061-1. – ЭБС: ProQuest Ebook Central - Academic Complete 2008.

3. Continuum Companion to Systemic Functional Linguistics (Systemic Functional Linguistics)
By: Webster, Jonathan; Halliday, M. A. K. *Continuum International Publishing Group Ltd.* ISBN: 978-0-8264-9447-4, 978-0-8264-9448-1, 978-1-282-87397-1, 978-1-4411-3317-5. Literature & Writing (General). – ЭБС: ProQuest Ebook Central - Academic Complete 2009.

6. Grading System

Type of grading	**Type of work**	**Characteristics**		
		1	2	
Continuous	Home assigned reading	X	X	Reading of materials for seminars.
	Home assigned exercises	1	2	Case-studies
	Class participation	X	X	Discussion of case-studies and home reading papers
Final	Exam		X	Oral examination

Continuous assessment: students have to demonstrate their acquaintance with basic facts, concepts, notions, and theories in cognitive linguistics. Students are expected to be able to apply their knowledge in their independent work on topics connected with the discipline.

Final assessment: students have to demonstrate the knowledge of basic facts, their command of methodology of analysing the problems connected with cognitive linguistics, and their ability to understand and interpret these problems.

7. Guidelines for Knowledge Assessment

Cumulative grade ($\mathbf{G_c}$) for the student's work during the module(s) consists of lecturer's assessment of the student's work at seminars and lectures (presence, participation, quality and quantity of answers) ($\mathbf{G_p}$) and home exercises ($\mathbf{G_h}$).

$$\mathbf{G_c} = 0.5\mathbf{G_p} + 0.5\mathbf{G_h},$$

The finale grade ($\mathbf{G_f}$) is the sum of cumulative grade ($\mathbf{G_c}$) and the final assessment (exam) mark ($\mathbf{G_e}$):

$$\mathbf{G_f} = 0.6\mathbf{G_c} + 0.4\mathbf{G_e}$$

The grades are rounded in favour of the student.

Table of Grade Accordance

Ten-point Grading Scale	**Five-point Grading Scale**	
1 - very bad 2 – bad 3 – no pass	no pass – 2	**FAIL**
4 – pass 5 – highly pass	pass – 3	**PASS**
6 – good 7 – very good	good – 4	
8 – almost excellent 9 – excellent 10 – perfect	excellent – 5	

During *the re-examination*, the student has no option to obtain additional mark to heighten the grade for current or intermediate controls.

The resultant grade for the course goes to the certificate of Master's degree.

8. Methods of Instruction

The following educational technologies are used in the study process:

- group preparation of presentations;
- group discussion and analysis of the results of home exercises and home reading;
- group projects;
- demonstration of cognitive linguistics effects and phenomena in a classroom;
- case studies.

9. Special Equipment and Software Support

The course requires a laptop, projector, and acoustic systems.