In the British Higher Education context, Linguistics is associated to the Social Sciences, whilst Modern Languages are part of the Humanities. However, Linguistics is a natural link between language and literature, as literature itself is a natural ‘language-dependent’ cultural vehicle, representing all kinds of artistic ways of using the language (Pountain 2017).

Adding explicit linguistic and philological content to a Modern Language university degree is a unique opportunity to make students explore the nature of human languages, what they are composed of and how they are used, hence facilitating their language learning (Muñoz-Basols et al 2017).

For the past five years, the Section of Spanish, Portuguese and Latin American Studies at the University of Edinburgh has integrated Hispanic Linguistics in the Spanish MA Honours programme. Throughout their four years of study, students reflect on the nature of human languages, their structure and use, applying this ‘new knowledge’ to the case of the language they are learning: Spanish. For that purpose, we have created different modules and optional courses, which explore concepts and perspectives related to prescriptive and descriptive Linguistics, the history and evolution of Spanish, the geographies and social considerations of the language, and the relations between language and communication.

With this presentation, I would like to share our experience, focusing on the new linguistic and metalinguistic knowledge that our students are gaining, and how it is enabling them to raise their ‘consciousness’ (Schmidt 1990) and to make connections between the structure of Spanish and relevant issues in contemporary Linguistics and Communication. I will share examples and evidence of how our students are learning and how they are applying these linguistic principles to other content areas of their degree.
References:


Biography:

Dr Carlos Soler Montes is a Lecturer at the University of Edinburgh where he teaches Hispanic Linguistics and advanced Spanish Language courses.

As a researcher, he is particularly interested in the area of language variation from a pan-Hispanic and pluricentric perspective and how this variation can be dealt with by native speakers, as well as learners of Spanish and new speakers of the language. This is reflected in his research trajectory in Hispanic Linguistics as he has examined the ways in which Spanish grammar varies across different Hispanic regions, its particularities, cultural connections and social contacts with other languages.

Carlos is very committed to teaching. He has obtained a thorough training in language pedagogy and has worked as a Spanish language teacher throughout his career, teaching Spanish at various North American Universities (Connecticut, New Mexico and Calgary) and at the Instituto Cervantes. He is the winner of the 2017 Edinburgh University Students' Association Teaching Award for Best Feedback.