

Contrastive Linguistics: Syntax & Lexicon (A004225)

Course size *(nominal values; actual values may depend on programme)*

Credits 6.0 **Study time 180 h**

Course offerings and teaching methods in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 1)	English	Gent	independent work seminar
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Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Bardagil Mas, Bernat	LW06	lecturer-in-charge
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Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

Master of Arts in Advanced Studies in Linguistics (main subject Linguistics in a Comparative Perspective)	crdts	offering
	6	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

syntax, lexicon, comparative linguistics, typology, case, alignment

Position of the course

The course provides a specialization in the comparative study of the relationship between lexicon and syntax.

Contents

In this course we will investigate grammatical case, a hotly debated issue in descriptive and theoretical linguistics, from a contrastive and typological perspective. What are the reasons why languages mark elements in this way, and what are the attested ways in which different languages manifest case? The contrastive approach is illustrated by means of a wide typological and areal range of languages spanning from Europe and Asia to the Amazon and Australia. The overview of existing theoretical approaches is complemented with different hypotheses on case assignment and its morphological patterns, and the corresponding syntactic structures. Several types of phenomena and analyses of grammatical case are explored by means of case studies, such as alignment typology, hierarchy effects, differential case marking, or the diachrony of case systems. Each student will be asked to write a small comparative study, presented both orally and in a written paper, either by picking a language of their choice and analyzing the morphological and syntactic patterns of case marking in this language, or by focusing on a specific phenomenon related to case with a wider comparative approach.

Initial competences

Previous knowledge of linguistics at master's level is required.

Final competences

- 1 Assess highly specialized scientific articles in the field of syntax
- 2 Reconstruct and assess the argumentation in the field of syntax
- 3 Assess linguistic hypotheses
- 4 Apply language-specific hypotheses to other languages
- 5 Build a linguistic argumentation
- 6 Evaluate the relevance of data with respect to a hypothesis

Conditions for credit contract

Access to this course unit via a credit contract is unrestricted: the student takes into consideration the conditions mentioned

in 'Starting Competences'

Conditions for exam contract

Access to this course unit via an exam contract is unrestricted

Teaching methods

Seminar, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

The seminars consist of discussions of scientific articles.

The guided tutorial consists of the reading of scientific articles, which are commented and discussed in class.

Students write a paper on a chosen topic that is closely related to the theme of the course.

The students deliver short presentations on certain constructions in the language of their choice.

Study material

None

References

Haspelmath M. 2009, "Terminology of case". In: Malchukov, Andrej & Spencer, Andrew (eds.). The Oxford handbook of case. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 505-517.

Other references will be provided during the classes.

Course content-related study coaching

Individual counseling

Assessment moments

continuous assessment

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the first examination period

Examination methods in case of periodic assessment during the second examination period

Examination methods in case of permanent assessment

Participation, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible

Extra information on the examination methods

Students are evaluated (i) on a paper in which they study one of the issues discussed during the classes in the language(s) of their choice and (ii) on their participation in the classes (more specifically the oral presentations).

Calculation of the examination mark

Paper 80%

Participation 20%

Facilities for Working Students

1. Possible exemption from educational activities requiring student attendance.
2. Possible rescheduling of the examination to a different time in the same academic year
3. Feedback can be given by email, or during an appointment during or after office hours, on campus or online (google docs)

For more information concerning flexible learning: contact the monitoring service of the faculty of Arts and philosophy