

Syntax, Case and Lexicon (A006627)

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

Credits 5.0 **Study time 150 h**

Course offerings in academic year 2026-2027

A (semester 2) English Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Bentein, Klaas LW06 lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Linguistics)	5	A
Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature	5	A

Teaching languages

English

Keywords

syntax, lexicon, comparative linguistics, verbs, case, dative

Position of the course

The course provides a specialization in the study of grammatical case from both a comparative and a typological perspective, as well as its place in theoretical approaches focused on the lexicon and syntax.

Contents

The aim of this course is to familiarise students with various theoretical approaches to the relationship between lexicon and syntax from a comparative perspective. These theoretical approaches are illustrated by means of different hypotheses concerning the dative and the corresponding morphosyntactic structures in non-case-marking languages. Various types of dative constructions are analysed, such as the double object construction in English and Dutch, the possessive dative in the Romance languages, and subject datives in Icelandic and in the various Indo-European languages.

Each student is asked to "represent" a language he or she knows and to analyse the morphology and syntax of the dative in that language.

The students themselves carry out a small-scale comparative study and report on it in a paper.

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 an argumentation in the field of syntax
- 3 Assess linguistic hypotheses formulated scientifically
- 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

This course unit cannot be taken via an exam contract

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.

Study material

None

References

Barðdal, Jóhanna. 2009. The Development of Case in Germanic. The Role of Semantic, Pragmatic and Discourse Factors in the Development of Case, ed. by J. Barðdal & S. L. Chelliah, 123–159. Amsterdam: John Benjamins.

Barðdal, Jóhanna, Thomas Smitherman, Valgerður Bjarnadóttir, Serena Danesi, Gard B. Jensen & Barbara McGillivray. 2012. Reconstructing Constructional Semantics: The Dative Subject Construction in Old Norse-Icelandic, Latin, Ancient Greek, Old Russian and Old Lithuanian. *Studies in Language* 36(3): 511–547.

Butt, Miriam. 2009. Modern Approaches to Case: An Overview. The Oxford Handbook of Case, ed. by A. Malchukov & A. Spencer, 27–43. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Haspelmath, Martin. 2009. Terminology of Case. The Oxford Handbook of Case, ed. by A. Malchukov & A. Spencer, 505–517. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Li, Yen-hui Audrey. 2022. The Case for Case in Chinese. In *The Cambridge Handbook of Chinese Linguistics*, Chu-Ren Huang, Yen-Hwei Lin, I-Hsuan Chen, and Yu-Yin Hsu (eds.), Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 467–85.

Luraghi, Silvia and Kittilä, Seppo. 2014. Typology and diachrony of partitive case markers. In *Silvia Luraghi and Tuomas Huomo (eds.) Partitive Cases and Related Categories*. Berlin, Boston: De Gruyter Mouton: 17–62.

Nichols, Johanna. 1986. Head-marking and dependent-marking grammar. *Language* 62, 1, 56–119.

Other references will be provided during the classes.

Course content-related study coaching

Individual guidance

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

Presentation, 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 assessed (i) on a paper in which they study one of the topics covered, focusing on the language (or languages) of their choice, and (ii) on their participation in class (i.e. oral presentations).

Calculation of the examination mark

Paper 80%

Participation 20%

Facilities for Working Students

- 1 Possibility of exemption from attendance
- 2 Possibility of taking the examination at an alternative time during the academic year
- 3 Possibility of receiving feedback by email, or by appointment during or after office hours, on campus or online (via Google Docs)

For more information on flexible study arrangements:

