

Dutch Linguistics: Historical Sociolinguistics (A006693)

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)

Dutch

Gent

Lecturers in academic year 2026-2027

Vogl, Ulrike

LW06

lecturer-in-charge

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

	crdts	offering
Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject Linguistics and Literature)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - English)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - French)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - German)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Greek)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Italian)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Latin)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Scandinavian Studies)	5	A
Master of Arts in Linguistics and Literature(main subject Dutch - Spanish)	5	A
Master of Arts in Historical Linguistics and Literature	5	A
Exchange Programme Linguistics and Literature	5	A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

historical sociolinguistics, language variation, 16th-20th century, language history from below

Position of the course

An introduction to the history of Dutch is a standard component of any curriculum in Dutch language and literature. The development of Dutch is often presented as a process of increasing standardization, culminating in the present-day Standard Dutch. Key moments in this development include the division of the language area after the fall of Antwerp (1585), the subordinate position of Dutch in the southern regions during the 17th to early 19th centuries, the reunification under King William I (1815–1830), and the role of the Flemish Movement in promoting language emancipation from the second half of the 19th century onwards. Milestones in the standardization process include the appearance of the first grammars and dictionaries, the regulation of spelling in the early 19th century, and the standardization of spoken Dutch in the late 19th century. Since the rise of historical sociolinguistics, however, this traditional, linear narrative has been critically examined.

Contents

In this course, students are introduced to the approaches and methods of historical sociolinguistics. Central to this field is the perspective of “language history from below,” which focuses on often-overlooked sources such as texts written by the lower and lower middle classes, oral language use, the language practices of women, and phenomena such as multilingualism and code-switching. Research in this tradition within Dutch studies has, in recent years, provided new insights into

the linguistic history of the Low Countries. Studies of naming practices in monolingual and multilingual grammars, for instance, reveal how fluid language boundaries were for early modern speakers. Similarly, research into the relationship between prescribed language norms and actual language use in the early modern period challenges the traditional narrative of standardization, suggesting it was far less linear and goal-driven than previously thought. The course is divided into two parts. Following a theoretical introduction (via blended learning), students engage with recent studies in historical sociolinguistics, supplemented by (online) guest lectures. In the second half of the semester, students develop their own research concept, which they present (1) in a short oral presentation, (2) in the form of a written research proposal (exposé) and (3) a scientific poster. Students may choose to work individually or in pairs.

Initial competences

basic knowledge of the Dutch language system and language use, as provided in ba1, ba2, and ba3

Final competences

- 1 Explain and contextualise periods, actors, and milestones in the linguistic history of the Low Countries, contrasting the traditional "standardisation narrative" with insights from historical sociolinguistics.
- 2 Knowing what are the relevant research questions in historical sociolinguistics and knowing which sources are available to analyze earlier stages of spoken Dutch.
- 3 Being able to deal with the methodological and ideological challenges when reconstructing (the social stratification of) spoken Dutch on the basis of written sources.
- 4 Design a feasible, original research project in historical sociolinguistics: formulate a research question, select appropriate data and methods, and articulate the projected scholarly contribution in a written exposé.
- 5 Communicate research by producing and presenting a professional-quality scientific poster.

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, Lecture, Independent work, Peer teaching

Extra information on the teaching methods

This course combines a theoretical and methodological introduction delivered through blended learning with interactive activities, both online and on campus, such as group discussions and presentations of students' own research. All online lessons are recorded and the lesson recording is made available to all students, until after the second exam period. Interactive on-campus lessons are not recorded.

Study material

Type: Slides

Name: Slides for lectures
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : Dutch
Number of Slides : 200
Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Reader

Name: Selected scholarly articles
Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty
Optional: no
Language : English
Number of Pages : 150

Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Audiovisual Material

Name: video lessons

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : Dutch

Available on Ufora : Yes

Type: Other

Name: Poster

Indicative price: € 20

Optional: no

Language : Dutch

References

- Elspeß, Stephan (2021). Language standardization in a view 'from below'. In Global approaches to multilingualism and standardisation (93-114). Cambridge University Press.
- Krämer, Philipp, et al. (2022). Language Making. International Journal of the Sociology of Language 274, 1-27.
- Krogull, Andreas & Jeroen Darquennes (2020). 'How to learn from history? Some policy-relevant research possibilities on the circulation of ideas and beliefs about language', Languages, Society and Policy.
- Krogull, Andreas, & Gijsbert Rutten (2025). Introduction: sociolinguistic perspectives on historical multilingualism in Europe. Sociolinguistica: International Yearbook Of European Sociolinguistics, 39(1), 1-8. doi:10.1515/soci-2025-0009
- Milroy, James (2001). Language ideologies and the consequences of standardization. In: Journal of Sociolinguistics 5 (4), 530–555.
- Rutten, Gijsbert (2024). Historische sociolinguïstiek. In WODN Werkgroep Onderzoek Didactiek Nederlands (Ed.), Handboek Didactiek Nederlands. Levende Talen.Geraadpleegd [datum] via: <https://didactieknederlands.nl/handboek/2024/03/historische-sociolinguïstiek/>
- Vierendeels, Ilias & Laurence Mettewie (2023). De historische dynamiek van taalideologieën: een pleidooi voor meer empirisch onderzoek. Handelingen - Koninklijke Zuid-Nederlandse maatschappij voor Taal- en Letterkunde en Geschiedenis.

Course content-related study coaching

In a collective (during lectures) and a private way (by appointment).

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, Presentation, Peer and/or self assessment, Assignment

Possibilities of retake in case of permanent assessment

examination during the second examination period is possible in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

Students briefly present their idea for a research design orally, write an exposé in which they explain their research proposal in writing (approx. 2000 words), present their proposal in the form of a scientific poster and give peer feedback. Students can make use of GenAI-applications for their presentation, exposé and poster, but they have to report the use of AI and they remain fully responsible for form and content

Calculation of the examination mark

- Short presentation research idea (20%), written exposé (research proposal) (40%), poster presentation about research proposal (30%), peer feedback (10%)

- In case students do not participate in all evaluations or get a score lower than 8/20 for one form of evaluation, they cannot pass the course. In this case, if the average of the partial evaluations yields a score of 10 or higher, it will be reduced to 9/20.
- We expect from our students of Dutch that they further develop their reading, listening, writing and speech competences when they participate in this course unit. When evaluating students we expect a level of language proficiency that corresponds to the level of the course unit and its structural position in the curriculum.

Facilities for Working Students

- High flexibility because of hybride format
- Feedback is given via Ufora, by email or via MSTeams