

Master's Dissertation Seminar: Methods for Language Didactic Research (A006756)

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

Montero Perez, Maribel

LW06

lecturer-in-charge

De Wilde, Vanessa

LW22

co-lecturer

Offered in the following programmes in 2026-2027

Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject African Languages and Cultures)

crdts

5

offering

A

Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject Applied Language Studies)

5

A

Master of Science in Teaching in Languages(main subject Linguistics and Literature)

5

A

Teaching languages

Dutch

Keywords

research methods, research design, language acquisition, second/foreign language acquisition, language didactics, literature didactics, language, mixed-methods research, educational research

Position of the course

The course is part of the integrated Master in Teaching languages (Languages and Literature/Applied Linguistics) and the Master in Teaching, African Languages and Cultures.

The course is included in year 1 of the Master in Teaching (languages) and prepares students for the master thesis (19 credits, Year 2).

Contents

The course prepares students from the Master in Teaching (languages) to conduct educational research with a focus on language, language didactics or (second/foreign) language acquisition in the Master in Teaching. Students learn to select, elaborate and evaluate suitable research methods to answer an educational research question.

The following content is covered:

- The components of a research report
- Literature research on an educational topic in the context of language, language acquisition and language didactics
- The steps of an educational research cycle
- Ethical aspects of research in an educational context
- A research question for educational research
- Techniques for data collection (tests, output production,...) in educational research on language, (second/foreign) language acquisition and language didactics
- Quantitative research methods: design of quantitative studies (variables, experimental research, study design)
- Qualitative and mixed-methods research: data collection techniques e.g. interview, focus groups, stimulated recall, think aloud, types of mixed-methods designs
- Corpus-based research techniques (e.g. lexical and grammatical complexity) and learner corpora in research on foreign language acquisition

- Basic data analysis techniques for quantitative and qualitative data.
- Results and pedagogical implications

This subject consists of a combination of theory, analysis of examples from recently published research, exercises and moments of discussion during class.

At the start of the academic year in which this course is taken, the programme provides students with a list of possible thesis topics and supervisors. As part of this course, students choose a topic that is the starting point for their Master thesis.

Initial competences

Having obtained a degree of 'Bachelor in Applied Linguistics' or 'Bachelor in Language and Literature', or acquired the final competencies in another way.

Final competences

- 1 Be able to name and distinguish different types of studies, designs and data collection techniques and use appropriate methodological terminology.
- 2 Know the structure of a research report.
- 3 Be able to select appropriate literature in relation to an educational research question.
- 4 Formulate appropriate research questions for educational research on language, language acquisition and language didactics.
- 5 Understand and apply the deontological aspects associated with data collection in an educational context.
- 6 Selecting appropriate data collection techniques and methods for quantitative research
- 7 Selecting appropriate data collection techniques and methods for qualitative research
- 8 Be able to justify and evaluate the appropriateness of research methods in relation to a specific research question.
- 9 Be able to apply basic principles of data analysis and interpretation in the context of educational research.

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

Group work, Seminar, Independent work

Extra information on the teaching methods

- Students participate in classes and prepare assignments in Ufora. The teaching materials are available in Ufora and consist of theory, exercises and assignments.
- Students receive feedback through Ufora and during interactive teaching moments.
- Online exercises are present in Ufora. Students receive immediate feedback on their answers. The exercises encourage further processing of the lesson content.
- Students prepare individual or group exercises during class and report on them.

Study material

Type: Handouts

Name: learning materials on Ufora

Indicative price: Free or paid by faculty

Optional: no

Language : English

Available on Ufora : Yes

Online Available : Yes

Available in the Library : No

Available through Student Association : No

Usability and Lifetime within the Course Unit : not applicable

Usability and Lifetime within the Study Programme : intensive

Usability and Lifetime after the Study Programme : occasionally

References

In addition to the slides (theory, applications and examples of published research),

we also use chapters from:

- Baarda et al (2017). *Basic book of methods and techniques. Quantitative practice-based research on a scientific basis*. Noordhoff Publishers.
- Mackey, A. & Gass, S. (2016). *Second Language Research. Methodology and design*. New York: Routledge.
- McKinley, J. & Rose, H. (2019). *The Routledge Handbook of Research Methods in Applied Linguistics*. New York: Routledge.

We also use recently published studies from the field.

All teaching materials are made available through Ufora.

Course content-related study coaching

Students receive support and feedback via Ufora, during sessions, via e-mail or by appointment.

Assessment moments

end-of-term and continuous assessment

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

Written assessment open-book

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

Written assessment open-book

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 in modified form

Extra information on the examination methods

Evaluation based on an assignment and a written (open-book) exam.

Assignment: students select appropriate references for a literature review in relation to the topic of the master thesis. Students analyze the literature and provide a written report.

Calculation of the examination mark

- Continuous assessment: 20% assignment and participation (attendance during class is therefore recommended)
- Exam: 80%

Facilities for Working Students

Possibility of exemption from attendance for certain parts with substitute assignments (1 assignment per lesson). Attendance is required for some class sessions.