

Grammar of a non-European language

Author: Michael Daniel

1. Course description

Course title: Introduction to the grammar of a non-European language

Pre-requisites: general knowledge about language structure, basic knowledge of typology and cross-linguistic variation

Course type: compulsory for the students of the MA program Linguistic theory and language description (first year).

Abstract: The course consists of several series of lectures introducing a grammar of a language whose grammar significantly deviates from the grammar of widely known languages of Europe (Standard Average European). The aim of the course is to provide students with a window to language diversity by discussing the data from non-SAE, structurally diverse languages representing various areas of the world. The course provides a brief introduction to the sociolinguistic situation of a language, describes different aspects of its grammar, from phonetics to lexicon, focusing on those features that represent typological interest, and ends with reading natural texts, first as home assignment and then in the classroom.

2. Learning objectives

The **objectives** of the course is to introduce the students to linguistic diversity.

3. Learning outcomes

Intended outcomes include:

- broadening students' view of structural diversity of human languages, especially in the domain of grammar
- skills of working with descriptive grammars and dictionaries
- skills in grammatical analysis of texts in an unknown language, including morphological glossing

4. Course plan.

The course comprises overviews of several 'lesser known' languages from different linguistic families. Overview includes the following components (note that some of the elements below may be reduced in order to put more focus on typologically rare or salient features of the language):

Introductory lecture: the aims and the structure of the course. (0+2+4 hours)

Sociolinguistic setting. An overview of the phonetics: The lecture introduces the students to the geographical and demographic landscape of the languages, and gives a quick survey of its phonetics and phonology.

Morphophonology and morphology: The lectures investigate formal morphology of the language and its inflection, providing an overview of the categories expressed by means of morphological marking or peripherastically, their semantics. Special focus is done on typologically salient features.

Syntax and lexicon: The lectures and classes cover basic syntactic patterns of a language, including NP structure, co-ordination of NPs and clause subordination. They also provide an overview of the structure of the language's lexicon and its salient typological properties.

Reading classes: In the class, the students present their analysis of sentences coming from natural discourse, discuss the morphological glossing and syntactic features showing up in the constructions involved.

5. Reading list

The reading includes materials provided by the lecturers (their field records, sketches, handouts etc.)

6. Grading system

Grading is based on the results of the student's work on texts in the language.

7. Methods of Instruction

The course is delivered in lectures and classes, eventually including discussions of home tasks.

8. Special equipment and software support

The course requires regular equipment for presentations (laptop and beamer).