Typology: Syllabus

University of Konstanz

WiSe 2021-22

1 Course information

Instructor	Dr. Natasha Korotkova
Contact	n.korotkova@uni-konstanz.de
Language	English
Class meets	synchronously; online; Tuesday 13:30–15:00 (one exception, see schedule)
Office hours	Wednesday 15:00–16:00
Prerequisite	Introduction to Linguistics
Textbook	Tallerman, Maggie. 2014. *Understanding syntax*, 4th edition. Routledge.

Join Zoom Meeting
https://us06web.zoom.us/j/89803985049?pwd=Z0JObFZvNUc0OG1JZk8vQ0hSVnNXZz09

Meeting ID: 898 0398 5049
Passcode: Typo2122

I prefer to be addressed on a first name basis (Natasha), but if you're more comfortable with the last name, then go for it. Do not, however, use my legal name (Natalia) that you might have seen in various university systems such as Zeus or Ilias.

1.1 Course description

- Linguistic typology: subfield of linguistics that studies linguistic diversity and classifies languages into different types based on the shape of their grammar

- Languages may differ in many ways: some of them lack words for *a* and *the*, some of them have many words for *and*, some use only intonation to form a question, and some have different grammatical expressions for those events that happened recently vs. long ago.

- Bulk of this course: variation and universals in the syntax, analysis of data from many languages

- Prior knowledge of syntax: not required but will be helpful.

1.2 Why study typology

Linguistics studies the world around us. There are approximately 6,000 languages, counts differing depending on how 'language' is defined. However, formal linguistics, which uses mathematical modelling for natural language phenomena, has long focused on languages such as English and German. Just like one might need to travel far away from home to study volcano formation in order to better understand geology, we need to study other languages in order to understand human language. Many fascinating phenomena were discovered in languages distant from Europe,

and linguists would have missed out on them had they not looked further. Ultimately, drawing on data from multiple genetically and geographically unrelated languages allows linguists to understand what is and what is not universal in natural language and to determine the sources and loci of cross-linguistic variation.

1.3   Outcome

On top of learning new content, you will also acquire a skill set that is essential for linguists and is applicable elsewhere:

— work with data from previously unfamiliar languages;

— work with published sources, e.g. reference grammars and language-structure databases;

— using interlinear notation for non-English examples (so that people who do not know the language can understand what is going on);

— read and analyze research literature.

2   Requirements

- Attendance per se will not be taken but not attending can harm you as you are responsible for the entirety of class content, lectures or texbook.

- Some classes will start with ungraded quizzes that will cover the content of previous lectures and readings. This is a good preparation for the final exam.

- Assigned textbook chapters + two chapters from Moravcsik (don't hesitate to read more).

- Summaries of three research papers, see schedule for deadlines. All papers will be posted on Ilias in due course.

- Final project (essay), due January 25, 2022.

- Final exam, February 1, 2022. Depending on the situation, it will be held online or in person.

ACTIVITY	CONTRIBUTION TO THE FINAL GRADE
3 paper summaries (equally weighted)	30%
Final project	35%
Final exam	40%

3   Final project

The class has a final project that will result in an essay. You are asked to describe a phenomenon of choice in a language that was not discussed in class (lectures or textbook). This is a short paper, you should aim at 5–7 pages. The project can be based on secondary data from grammars, or on primary data if you have access to consultants or speak the language(s) yourself. Each project should include a short literature review. In the second half of the class, you are required to have at least two appointments with me to discuss your project: to discuss your proposed project and to discuss your progress. There will also be a mini-conference for project presentations, so that

you can get feedback before papers are due. I will not judge your English or writing skills; the goal is to learn, which can only be done through trial and error. Note that the department offers dedicated writing training (applicable beyond linguistics): https://www.ling.uni-konstanz.de/en/advising-and-services/writing-centre/.

PROJECT TIMELINE & CONTRIBUTION TO THE FINAL GRADE		
Week of December 13	choose a topic, schedule an appointement with me	2%
Week of January 11	submit a progress report, schedule an appointment with me	2%
Week of January 17	short in-class presentation	5%
January 25	essays are due	21%

4   Policies

- Everything will be submitted online via Ilias.

- Late submission will be penalized by taking 10% off the grade per late day. This does not apply to documented cases of illness and emergency.

- You are encouraged to discuss assignments with others but everyone should submit their own write-up. All cases of plagiarism will be reported.

5   Schedule

October 26	Introduction, history, classification	Moravcsik Ch.1.1, Comrie 2003
November 2	Universals and rarities, language sampling	Moravcsik Ch.1.2, Dryer 1989
November 9	Lexical typology	Moravcsik Ch.2 **Paper 1 assignment out**
November 16	Word classes & parts of speech	Text Ch.2, Handbook Ch.14 (pp.280-302) **Paper 1 assignment due**
November 23	Word order typology	Text Ch.6.1, 6.2, 6.5, 6.6; Handbook Ch.13 (pp.253-279), WALS Ch.81-97 **Paper 2 assignment out**
November 30	Case systems	Text Ch.6.3, 6.4; Handbook Ch.15 (pp.303-321) **Paper 2 assignment due** **Paper 3 assignment out**
December 7	**No class, consolidation week**	
December 14	Tense and aspect systems	Handbook Ch.20 (pp.445-465), WALS Ch.65-69 **Final project: Topic choice**

December 21	Questions and *wh*-dependencies	Text Ch.8.1, Handbook Ch.21 (pp.465-486) **Paper 3 assignment due**
December 28	**No class, Christmas break**	
January 4	**No class, Christmas break**	
January 11	Clausal complementation	Text Ch.3.2.1 **Final project: Progress report**
January 18	Clausal adjuncts and relative clauses	Text Ch.3.2, 3.3.2, 8.2; Handbook Ch.21 (pp.465-486), Keenan & Comrie 1977
TBA	**Project presentations**	
January 25	Semantic typology and universals	**Final project due**
February 1	Final exam	
February 8	**No class due to the extra session before**	

Readings other than the textbook to appear (more can be added later):

- *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Typology*. Jae Jung Song (Ed.). 2012. OUP.

- Comrie, Bernard. 2003. Languages of the world. In Mark Aronoff & Janie Rees-Miller (eds.), *The Handbook of Linguistics*.

- Dryer, Matthew S. 1989. Large linguistic areas and language sampling. *Studies in Language 13*, 257-292.

- Chapters from the *World Atlas of Language Structures Online*. Dryer, Matthew S. and Haspelmath, Martin (eds.) 2013. Leipzig: Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology. (Available online at http://wals.info/chapter).

- Keenan, Edward L. and Comrie, Bernard. 1977. Noun phrase accessibility and universal grammar. *Linguistic Inquiry 8*, 63-99.

- Moravcsik, Edith A. 2015. *Introducing Language Typology*, 2nd edition. Cambridge.