



Exploring English Grammar – the world of clauses

Course Notes Winter 2018/2019

online:

<http://www.spence.saar.de/courses/grammar>

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Grammar is a resource for making meaning.

0 Basic Organization

0.1 General information

0.1.1 Overall goal

This course provides an overview of English grammar from a SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL perspective, and is designed to help students develop their own repertoire of strategies for answering the following questions:

- “What do I need to pay attention to when I’m in the middle of doing a translation into English and have to make a choice about how to re-word a part of the meaning of the source text?”
- “How can I do it in such a way that the sentence I’m writing means what I want it to mean and doesn’t make a native speaker of English unexpectedly wince or laugh?”

0.1.2 Who this course is for

The course is designed for native or near-native speakers of one of the Romance languages French, Spanish, or Italian, and is intended specifically for Erasmus students. Other students are welcome to attend the course provided they have a reasonably sound knowledge of English. It is also assumed that students taking the course have some knowledge of German.

The main language of instruction is English, but sometimes German will be used, depending on the nature of the particular problem under discussion.

The course devotes special attention to the things that can go wrong when it is the grammar of a Romance language that is interfering with the grammar of English, but we will also look at some of the things that can go wrong when the source of the interference is the grammar of German.

0.1.3 How the course works

The course runs for one 15-week semester ($1 \times 2 \text{ SWS} = 2 \text{ SWS}$) and is held each Tuesday from 10:15 to 11:45. In summer semester, a companion course (*Exploring English Grammar — the world of groups and phrases*) is offered, which covers all the material that could not be covered in winter semester. Most of the material covered in summer is based around nominal or verbal groups, including a great deal of work on tense.

After each class (15 x 2 hours) there is a small amount of homework, consisting of exercises designed to review what has just been learnt and prepare the ground for what is to come. The total extent of the course is thus 30 (15 x 2) contact hours, plus an additional 45 to 60 hours devoted to homework, making a total of 75 to 90 hours for 3 credit points. (An equivalent amount of work is involved in the summer semester course, which is also worth 3 credit points.)

0.1.4 Communication

All students taking the course should make sure that their correct email address is on the course mailing list. (Online registration is available via LSF, but please try to get to the first lesson so that I can meet you in person!) When sending an email to the course leader, please make sure that the piece of text

[grammar]

(including the square brackets!) is included in the subject line. (This will happen automatically if you are reading any email I have already sent you concerning this course and you simply hit the "Reply" button.)

Each lesson is accompanied by a worksheet of questions which students are expected to answer. These questions will be discussed in class, but in general the worksheet does not need to be handed in.

Assessment for the course will be on the basis of a final examination (to be held during the normal class time in the last week of lectures) plus a small number of hand-in exercises spread throughout the semester. The examination itself will be based entirely on the questions contained in the weekly worksheets.

Most of the course materials, including the weekly worksheets, will be included in the course notes and placed on the website; certain additional materials will be distributed in the lessons; and other materials can be accessed by following the links on the course website.

0.1.5 Successful participation

Students are expected to attend regularly. *If you are unable to attend one of the lessons, it is vital that you contact me beforehand to let me know. Missing more than two lessons altogether would seriously compromise your chances of successfully completing the course.*

ERASMUS students taking the course can obtain a graded certificate (*benoteter Teilnahmechein*) for 3 ECTS points by attending regularly and passing the written test.

0.2 Provisional timetable

<i>Week</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Unit</i>	<i>Description</i>
01	16.x	00	Basic organization; initial orientation
02	23.x	01	Theoretical introduction (based on the guessing game from week 1)
03	30.x	02	Overview of English grammar within the SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL model of language
04	06.xi	03	Clause as message: THEME (Theme & Rheme)
05	13.xi	04a	Clause as exchange (1): MOOD, POLARITY, and MOOD TAGGING
06	20.xi	04b	Clause as exchange (2): MODALITY
07	27.xi	05a	Clause as representation (1): process types and participants
08	04.xii	05b	Clause as representation (2): the grammar of 'being'
09	11.xii	05c	Clause as representation (3): circumstances
10	18.xii	—	NO FORMAL CLASS (consultations)
11	09.i	07a	Above the clause (1): brief overview of clause complexes (PARATAXIS, HYPOTAXIS; EXPANSION, PROJECTION)
12	16.i	07b	Above the clause (2): reports vs. ideas vs. facts vs. acts
13	23.i	07c	Complexing below the clause: hypotactic verbal group complexes ('catenative structures'); overview of exam
14	29.i		General questions
15	05.ii		EXAM

In summer semester 2019 we will look at “the world of groups and phrases” (Unit 6), doing a lot of work on tense (Unit 6b) as well as on basic morphology (Unit 11). In addition, we look at information structure and the role of intonation in English grammar (unit 8), cohesion in English (unit 9), and “grammatical metaphor” (including nominalization) (Unit 10). If necessary, unit 7c could also be moved to summer semester.

0.3 A note on how to use these course notes

Each unit of this course typically consists of the following parts:

0. An attempt at a one-page executive **summary** of the unit in graphic form.
1. A set of **workpoints**—a list of contrastive examples designed to lead in to the unit by casting light upon a particular ‘region’ of the grammar of English and highlighting some of the differences between English and German.
2. A checklist of **learning goals** for the unit.
3. An **outline** of the relevant region of the grammar of English.
4. A discussion of the **problems** that each region of English grammar may pose for German-speaking learners.
5. A list of **references** which can be consulted for further information.
6. A **worksheet** containing exercises for guided practice.

At the very beginning of the course, we look not at the *grammar* of English but at the *grammatics* (theory of grammar) used by SYSTEMIC FUNCTIONAL LINGUISTICS. This is then immediately followed by a “bird’s eye view” of the whole of English grammar, before proceeding to the individual topics.

After each class, students should complete the corresponding worksheet; before the next class, they should study the next set of contrastive examples.

The examination at the end of the course will be based on the weekly worksheets.