The syntax of comparative constructions

Lehrkraft: Dr. Julia Bacskai-Atkari
Leistungspunkte: 6
Semester: Sommersemester 2020
Zeit: Dienstag 10.00–11.30
Ort: G308

Description
The aim of this course is to provide an overview of the syntax of comparative constructions, introducing students to the most important issues concerning the topic that have been addressed in the literature from the 1970s onwards. Though all of these questions are strongly related to comparatives, we will see that providing an adequate answer to them has a bearing on other structures, too. In particular, we are going to discuss the structure of degree expressions, the phenomenon of Comparative Deletion, as well as the role of various optional ellipsis phenomena taking place in the subclause. While the main focus of this class is on English, the course takes a cross-linguistic perspective to highlight the particular properties of English. The classes will be taught in English.

Languages
● classes: English
● assignments: English
● end-term test: English
● contact: English or German (please choose the language you are more competent in, i.e. *please write in German if your first language is German*)

Literature
There is no set textbook for the course, but students may find it useful to have access to the following book: Bacskai-Atkari, Julia. 2018. *Deletion phenomena in comparative constructions: English comparatives in a cross-linguistic perspective*. Berlin: Language Science Press.
There is one research article set for the reading assignment:
Reglero, Lara. 2006. Spanish subcomparatives: The "obligatory gapping" strategy'. In: Nuria Sagarra & Almeida Jacqueline Toribio (eds.) *Selected proceedings of the 9th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium*, 67–78. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings.

Requirement: there are two options, see below.
Note that the end-term test gives less than 100% of the grade for the course: this also means that receiving a 5.0 for the test does not automatically result in failing the course. However, the end-term test **must** be taken: not taking the end-term test results in failing the course.

The final grade is given by two or three components. Depending on which option you choose, the final grade is calculated as follows:

- OPTION 1:
    - end-term test: 50%
    - mini-essay: 30%
    - reading assignment: 20%

- OPTION 2:
    - end-term test: 80%
    - reading assignment: 20%

Recommendation: Option 1
- Writing an essay is fun!
- It involves less risk than relying 80% on the result of the test.
- **You have nothing to lose**: in case you submit the mini-essay but the calculation according to Option 2 would give you a better grade than the one according to Option 1, you will automatically receive the better grade.

Below you find additional information on the individual requirements.

End-term test
- It MUST be taken, no matter whether you choose Option 1 or Option 2 above.
- Language: English
- Date: 14 July 2020, 10.00–11.30

Reading assignment
- It is based on the following article: Reglero, Lara. 2006. Spanish subcomparatives: The "obligatory gapping" strategy'. In: Nuria Sagarra & Almeida Jacqueline Toribio (eds.) *Selected proceedings of the 9th Hispanic Linguistics Symposium*, 67–78. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings.
- Language: English
- Deadline: 15 June 2020, 10.00

Mini-essay
- Possible topics given in the relevant task sheet
- NO page limit (ideally it should be ca. 4–7 pages long)
- Language: English
- Deadline: 7 July 2020

Preliminary schedule:

21.04.2020	Introduction
28.04.2020	The structure of degree expressions I
05.05.2020	The structure of degree expressions II
12.05.2020	Comparative Deletion I
19.05.2020	Comparative Deletion II
26.05.2020	Attributive Comparative Deletion I
02.06.2020	Attributive Comparative Deletion II
09.06.2020	Revision: Topics 1–7
16.06.2020	Lower copies and movement chains I
23.06.2020	Lower copies and movement chains II
30.06.2020	Ellipsis without Comparative Deletion I
07.07.2020	Ellipsis without Comparative Deletion II
14.07.2020	EXAM