

# MM2 — Lexical decomposition

## 1 Course description

Starting in the 1990s, a substantial amount of effort has gone into exploring the idea that syntactic structures are significantly more complex than they appear at first sight. The hypothesis underlying this effort is called *lexical decomposition*, and it amounts to saying that a morpheme can be the spell out of multiple, syntactically independent, lexical and/or functional items (for example, it is fairly well-accepted that verbs consist of a lexical core topped with several functional heads contributing things like agentivity, resultativity, affectedness, and so on). The primary goal of this course is to review and discuss the evidence adduced in favor of various types of lexical decomposition; the secondary goal is to see how these analysis fit into a larger model of syntax and its interaction with the phonological component.

## 2 Practical information

<b>Instructor</b>	Dr. Luis Vicente ( <a href="mailto:vicente@uni-potsdam.de">vicente@uni-potsdam.de</a> )
<b>Office</b>	Golm, Haus 14, Raum 0.09
<b>Office hours</b>	Wednesdays 09:00–12:00, or by email appointment
<b>Time and date</b>	Tuesdays 10:00–12:00
<b>Location</b>	Golm, 05.0.04
<b>Course website</b>	<a href="http://luisvicente.net/coursematerials/ss16-mm2">luisvicente.net/coursematerials/ss16-mm2</a> (it contains handouts, assignments, and readings. Some materials are password-protected; ask me for the password)
<b>Language policy</b>	Lectures will happen in English, given that all the relevant literature is also in English. For the presentations, the squibs, and the paper, either German or English is acceptable.
<b>Work submission</b>	All work needs to be submitted to me by email (only .pdf or .txt files, please). To help me keep organized, please include the course module and your name in the Subject field, e.g.,  Subject: MM2 Anna Grosz, question about Squib 1

**Late submission** For the squibs and the paper, I will subtract 10% of the grade for each day you are late.

<b>Grading</b>	Participation	10%	(Ask questions! Make comments!)
	In-class presentation	20%	
	Squibs	30%	(two, each worth 15%)
	Final paper	40%	
		100%	

<b>Conversion</b>	Percentage	<50	51-55	56-60	61-65	66-70	71-75
	UP grade	5.0	4.0	3.7	3.3	3.0	2.7
	Percentage	76-80	81-85	86-90	91-95	96-100	
	UP grade	2.3	2.0	1.7	1.3	1.0	

## 3 Presentations

Each student will have to do one, based on a reading (or readings) selected by me. We will decide on the readings for each presentation at least one full week in advance. The following rules apply.

- Each presentation should last between 20 and 30 minutes.
- The readings are longer than you can effectively communicate in 30 minutes, so you need to make decisions about what is important and what is not.
- Besides understanding the reading, you also have to be able to communicate it with clarity.
- Other students (or me) may interrupt you with questions. You will have to answer them, to the extent you can.
- Prepare a handout. If you are thinking about slides, read Tufte's *The cognitive style of PowerPoint* first (available from the course website).

## 4 Squibs

A squib is a *very short* paper (two pages at most; one page is perfectly acceptable; in a previous course, the absolute best squib was less than 100 words long) that shows your ability to

identify interesting problems and/or data sets. Check out [ledonline.it/snippets](http://ledonline.it/snippets) to see many examples of what a good squib looks like. It is up to you to come up with squib topics, but you can consult with me if you need help. The following rules apply.

- I will be looking out for original thinking. It is *not enough* to just describe a dataset or summarize an analysis you find in the literature. You also have to say something new as to why it is interesting or problematic.
- The fact that squibs are short means that every word counts. Don't write anything that isn't absolutely essential.
- Deadline squib 1: Monday, May 30 at 23:59.
- Deadline squib 2: Monday, June 18 at 23:59.

## 5 Final paper

A longer paper in which you research a topic of your own choice in more detail. You can use one of your squibs as the basis of your paper. As with the squib, you can ask me for help if you can't come up with a good topic. The following rules apply.

- A large part of your success in writing a good paper will depend on choosing a good topic. Start thinking about this early.

## 7 Tentative schedule

This schedule is “tentative” because you, as a group, can always decide that you are particularly interested in some specific topic (including one that doesn't appear here) and ask me to spend one or two sessions talking about it instead of something else.

Date	Topic	Selected readings
13.04	General introduction	Borer 2004, ch. 1–2
19.04 – 07.06	The nominal domain: $\phi$ -features, case morphology, determiners, quantifiers, adpositions	Matthewson 2001; Harley and Ritter 2002; Déchaine and Wiltschko 2003; Asbury 2008; Elbourne 2008; Giannakidou and Etxeberria 2008; Kratzer 2008; Caha 2009; Schwartz 2009; Grosz and Patel-Grosz 2015
14.06 – 19.07	The verbal/inflectional domain: $\theta$ -role assignment; aspectual verb classes; tense and agreement; argument and event structure	Hale and Keyser 1993, 2002; Harley 1995; Pesetsky 1995; Ramchand 1996, 2008; Bobaljik and Thráinsson 1998; Meegerdoornian 2003; Borer 2004;

- Paper parameters: 15 to 20 single-spaced pages (excluding references and title page), 25mm margins all around, 12pt font. Don't try to cheat with a large font, large margins, or double-spacing: I will notice it and I won't like it.
- Paper deadline: Sunday, September 4 at 23:59.

## 6 Recommended background reading

There is no textbook for this course. If you are missing some background, the following textbooks should be helpful. Ask me for help if you don't know which one you should read.

Adger, David. 2002. *Core syntax*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Carnie, Andrew. 2006. *Syntax: a generative introduction*. Oxford: Blackwell.

Heim, Irene, and Angelika Kratzer. 1998. *Semantics in Generative Grammar*. Oxford: Blackwell (for those interested in the syntax-semantics interface).

Johnson, Kyle. 2007. *Introduction to Transformational Grammar*. Ms., University of Massachusetts, Amherst ([people.umass.edu/kbj/homepage/Content/601\\_lectures.pdf](http://people.umass.edu/kbj/homepage/Content/601_lectures.pdf)).

Nunes, Jairo, Norbert Hornstein, and Kleanthes Grohmann. 2006. *Understanding minimalism*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Radford, Andrew. 2004. *Minimalist syntax: Exploring the structure of English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.