

Veranstalter	Prof. Thomas Berg
Thema	Complexity in Language [AA-V1ab, AA-V2ab, ENG-10, ENG-11, AA9, LAA8, LAA11, AA-W, AA-WB]
Art der Veranstaltung	Seminar II
Veranstaltungsnummer	53- 516
Zeit	2st. Do 14-16
Raum	Phil 1250
Beginn	02. April 2015
<p>Course description: Is English really an easy language to learn, as many people believe? And is German a difficult one? These questions take for granted that languages can be arranged on a scale from simple to complex. Interestingly, this lay conception conflicts with a long tradition in linguistics of regarding all languages as equally complex. This surprising conviction rests on the unproven assumption that simple and complex aspects of a particular language all balance out in the final analysis. It is even more surprising that linguists use the term “complexity” in the absence of an adequate definition. In fact, we do not know what we mean by complexity. All we know is that complexity is itself a complex notion.</p> <p>In this course, we will work our way through a number of definitions of complexity and apply these to languages as entities as well as subsystems of language. We will learn to distinguish various types of complexity, in particular the distinction between structural and processing (including learning) complexity. We will compare so-called simple and difficult languages and more specifically, take a look at pidgin and creole languages as the best-known cases of simple languages and see how they compare to “full-fledged” languages such as English and German.</p>	
<p>Recommended reading: Hawkins, John A.: <i>Efficiency and complexity in grammars</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2004. Kortmann, Bernd & Benedikt Szmrecsanyi (eds.): <i>Linguistic complexity</i>. Berlin: Walter de Gruyter, 2012. Miestamo, Matti, Kaius Sinnemäki & Fred Karlsson (eds.): <i>Language complexity: typology, contact, change</i>. Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2008. Sampson, Geoffrey, David Gil & Peter Trudgill (eds.): <i>Language complexity as an evolving variable</i>. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2009.</p>	
Sprechstunde während der Vorlesungszeit:	Bitte beachten Sie die Sprechstundenlisten.
Sprechstunde während der vorlesungsfreien Zeit:	Bitte beachten Sie die Sprechstundenlisten.