

Contrastive Linguistics

JP Prof. Dr. Eva Berlage

The course finishes with an exam.

Why do German speakers of English often devoice a word-final voiced plosive in words such as <bed>, <pub> or <blog>? Why is there no present-perfect equivalent of German sentences such as *Gestern bin ich im Kino gewesen* in English and what is the meaning of constructions such as *This dress washes well*?

In this course, we will be studying differences between English and German on all main levels of language description: phonetics and phonology, morphology, lexicology, syntax and semantics, with the main focus being on morphology and syntax. By closely analysing the language structures of English and German, we will find out which mistakes German learners of English typically make and whether there is a way to avoid them. The course will, however, not only be useful for future teachers of English but also for students with a theoretical interest in contrastive studies and German-English translation.

In addition to discussing individual differences between German and English, we will aim for the bigger picture and unearth systematic correspondences between the two languages. This concerns e.g. the question of which language is more vague and which codes information more explicitly. Also, we will be looking at possible explanations for why English and German pattern so differently.

Some of the essential literature is given below. A much more comprehensive list of references will be provided in class.

Recommended Readings:

Hawkins, John (1986). *A Comparative Typology of English and German. Unifying the Contrasts*. London: Croom Helm.

König, Ekkehard and Volker Gast (2009). *Understanding English-German Contrasts*. 2nd edition. Berlin: Erich Schmidt.

Requirements:

regular attendance via Zoom (each week, Wednesday, 10:15-11:45 am).

Please note: the link for joining the Zoom session will be sent to the e-mail address with which you register in Stine.

presentation (via Zoom)

final exam (in class – if sanctioned by the corona regulations in force at that time):

24 February 2021 (Note: there is no class on 17 February 2021).

First session:

4 November 2020