

Topics in Language Research: Resultatives

BTAN40025BA – K3

offered for 3rd-year students in the B.A. program in English Studies

3-credit seminar

Fall 2025

Course Description

In this course we will discuss five papers, which are all concerned with the resultative construction typically illustrated by examples such as *hammer the metal flat* and *wipe the table clean*. While focusing on data from two Germanic languages (English and German), we will aim to understand what properties have made this construction so thoroughly researched by both semanticists and syntacticians in the past four decades or so. After reading a handbook article and a seminal paper on resultatives in general, we will look into the syntax and semantics of less canonical types such as *shoot somebody dead off the horse* and intransitive *push open* as in *The door pushed open*. Towards the end of the semester, we also discuss an experimental study on the interpretation of *wipe the table clean*-type resultatives in German and that of simple transitives. The course concludes with a test and student presentations.

Grading

Your final grade will be based on the grades you receive on the endterm test and your presentation.

Presentations

In your 10-minute presentation you will be required to describe an interesting puzzle that resultatives pose for linguistic theory based on the literature that we discuss in the course. Since you will have to assume an audience of non-experts in this task (e.g. high school students with little background in linguistics), it is essential that you find a puzzle that you understand well and can explain in simple terms. You will also have to answer some questions in the Q&A following your presentation.

Attendance

No more than three absences are allowed, illness included.

Weekly Syllabus

	Class topic	Papers
Week 1	A general overview of resultatives 1	Beavers, John. 2012. Resultative constructions. In R. I. Binnick (ed.), <i>The Oxford Handbook of Tense and Aspect</i> , 908-933. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
Week 2	YoUDay No class meeting	

Week 3	A general overview of resultatives 2	
Week 4	A constructional view of the English resultative 1	Goldberg, Adele E. & Ray Jackendoff. 2004. The English Resultative as a Family of Constructions . <i>Language</i> 80(3): 532-568.
Week 5	A constructional view of the English resultative 2	
Week 6	Resultatives with two result phrases 1	Ausensi, Josep & Alessandro Bigolin. 2021. Resultatives and low depictives in English . <i>The Linguistic Review</i> 38(4): 573-604.
Week 7	Fall break No class meeting	
Week 8	Resultatives with two result phrases 2	
Week 9	The intransitive <i>push open</i> pattern	Levin, Beth. An unusual English resultative construction . In C. O'Shannessy, J. Gray, and D. Angelo (eds.) <i>Projecting Voices: Studies in Language and Linguistics in Honour of Jane Simpson</i> , Asia-Pacific Linguistics, Australian National University, Canberra, ACT. To appear.
Week 10	An experimental investigation of resultatives 1	Weicker, Merle, Lea Heßler-Reusch & Petra Schulz. 2024. Wipe the table clean – German speakers construe telicity differently in adjectival resultatives and transitives . <i>Glossa: a journal of general linguistics</i> 9(1): 1-28.

Week 11	An experimental investigation of resultatives 2	
Week 12	Endterm test	
Week 13	Student presentations	
Week 14	Student presentations	

Place and Time

Room 56

Wednesday 2:00 p.m. – 3:40 p.m.

Contact

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Thursday 10:00 a.m. – 11:00 a.m.