

## The morphosyntax around German *d*

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**Abstract** While *d*, as a voiced coronal stop, is a rather ordinary almost boring speech sound (cf. English *duh*), *d* qua morpheme in German is, when looked at the right way, perhaps the most intriguing and insight-granting single grammatical element in human language discovered to date. This mini-course is about what makes me think so. In particular, I argue that it is this one morpheme *d* that we find in the seemingly distinct morphosyntactic environments of *der* ‘the’, *dieser* ‘this’, *jeder* ‘every’, *dass* ‘that<sub>C</sub>’, and that its syntactic properties are pivotal in understanding aspects of (i) V2 and (ii) the weak/strong adjectival declension alternation. The latter point has important consequences for our understanding of dative and genitive morphology. The former point gives a meaning to the *-finite* in *definite*, leading us to think about the relevance of *d* in the German tense system. This in turn may have consequences for the analysis of verbal inflection.

This *d* being basically the definite article, its traditional terminological companion would be *ein*, the indefinite article. But the two are about as good a natural pair as the Sun and the Moon. Yet, just like *d*, *ein* too is morphosyntactically implicated in the formation of a number of determiners. Time permitting, we will thus complement the discussion of *d*-determiners with some discussion of derivations involving *ein*.

**Readings** The course will, to a good extent, be based on the material and proposals in Leu (2015a,b, 2017).

### References

- Leu, Thomas. 2015a. *The Architecture of Determiners*. Oxford and New York: Oxford University Press.
- Leu, Thomas. 2015b. Generalized x-to-C in Germanic. *Studia Linguistica* 69:272–303.
- Leu, Thomas. 2017. Ein is ein and that is that: A note on anti-homophony and meta-morphology. In *The structure of words at the interfaces*, ed. Heather Newell, Maire Noonan, Glyne Piggott, and Lisa Travis, chapter 9, 185–208. Oxford University Press.