

Maria Kouneli

Linguistics Department
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Employment

- 2023–present **Department of Linguistics, Rutgers University**
Assistant Professor
- 2020–2023 **Institut für Linguistik, Universität Leipzig**
Assistant Professor (Juniorprofessorin, W1)
- 2019–2020 **Institut für Linguistik, Universität Leipzig**
Post-doctoral researcher

Education

- 2014–2019 **New York University**
Ph.D., Linguistics
Dissertation: The syntax of number and modification: An investigation of the Kipsigis DP
Committee: Stephanie Harves & Alec Marantz (co-chairs), Richard Kayne, Ruth Kramer, Gary Thoms
- 2010–2014 **Yale University**
B.A., Linguistics *with honors* and Economics
Senior thesis: The syntax of silent locative prepositions in Greek
Advisors: Bob Frank & Jim Wood

Grants

- 2020–2024 German Research Foundation (DFG) grant for project *Layers of morphosyntactic number in Eastern Sudanic* (project number: 439622645, award money: €424.800)
Part of the Collaborative Research Unit *Cyclic Optimization*
(The grant was transferred to Prof. Jochen Trommer when I moved to Rutgers)

Publications (peer-reviewed journal articles)¹

- under review Kouneli, Maria. Marked nominative in Nilo-Saharan: An inherent case analysis.

¹Joint first author in all co-authored publications.

- 2025 Fenger, Paula, Maria Kouneli and Jonathan Bobaljik. Dominant Domains in Vowel Harmony: A structural approach to a linear asymmetry. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory*.
- 2025 Driemel, Imke and Maria Kouneli. C-Agree is local subject-verb agreement in Kipsigis. *Natural Language & Linguistics Theory* 43: 223–272.
- 2023 Asimwe, Allen, Maria Kouneli, and Jenneke van der Wal. Determiner Spreading in Rukiga. *Linguistics* 61.5: 1285–1339.
- 2022 Kouneli, Maria. Inflectional classes in Kipsigis. *Glossa: a journal of general linguistics* 47(1).
- 2021 Kouneli, Maria and Yining Nie. Across-the-board tonal polarity in Kipsigis: Implications for the morphology-phonology interface. *Language* 97.2: e111–e138.
- 2021 Kouneli, Maria. Number-based noun classification: The view from Kipsigis. *Natural Language & Linguistic Theory* 39.4: 1195–1251.

Publications (peer-reviewed chapters in edited volumes)

- 2025 Fenger, Paula and Maria Kouneli. Words and Features. In Sjeff Barbiers, Norbert Corver & Maria Polinsky [eds.], *Cambridge Handbook of Comparative Syntax*: 295-330. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- 2018 Kouneli, Maria. Plural marking on mass nouns: Evidence from Greek. In Myriam Dali, Eric Mathieu & Gita Zareikar [eds.], *Gender and noun classification*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- 2013 Kouneli, Maria, Julien Meyer and Andrew Nevins. Whistled languages: including Greek in the continuum of endangerment situations and revitalization strategies. In Mari C. Jones & Sarah Ogilvie [eds.], *Keeping Languages Alive; Documentation, Pedagogy and Revitalization*:198–211. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Publications (conference proceedings and invited contributions)

- 2024 Kouneli, Maria. External possession in Kipsigis involves movement. In Silke Fischer, Doreen Georgi, Fabian Heck, Johannes Hein, Anke Himmelreich, Andrew Murphy, and Philipp Weisser [eds.], *Strict Cycling: A Festschrift for Gereon Müller*: 325-340. Leipzig: Universität Leipzig.

- 2024 Kouneli, Maria, Paula Fenger, and Jonathan Bobaljik. Syntactic Limitations on Phonological Dominance. In Jiayi Lu, Erika Petersen, Anissa Zaitsu, and Boris Harizanov [eds.], *Proceedings of WCCFL 40*: 173–181. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- 2024 Driemel, Imke, and Maria Kouneli. <v,t>-type complementation in Kipsigis. In Robert Autry, Gabriela de la Cruz, Luis A. Irizarry Figueroa, Kristina Mihajlovic, Tianyi Ni, Ryan Smith, and Heidi Harley [eds.], *Proceedings of WCCFL 39*: 135–145. Somerville, MA: Cascadilla Proceedings Project.
- 2022 Kouneli, Maria, and Yuriy Kushnir. Failed clitic doubling of plural indirect objects in Greek. In Özge Bakay, Breanna Pratley, Eva Neu and Peyton Deal [eds.], *NELS 52: Proceedings of the Fifty-Second Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society*, Vol. 2: 159-172. Amherst: GLSA.
- 2022 Driemel, Imke, and Maria Kouneli. A dedicated topic position in Kipsigis. In Henrison Hsieh [ed.], *Proceedings of TripleA 8: Fieldwork Perspectives on the Semantics of Understudied Languages of Africa, Asia, Australia, and Oceania*, 1-20. Singapore: NUS ScholarBank.
- 2021 Kouneli, Maria. Low (in)transitivity: Evidence from Kipsigis. In Alessa Farinella & Angelica Hill [eds.], *Proceedings of the Fifty-First Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society (NELS 51)*, 53-66. Amherst: GLSA.
- 2019 Kouneli, Maria. Determiner spreading and modification in Kipsigis. In Ronai, Eszter, Laura Stigliano, and Yen-an Sun [eds.], *Proceedings of the 54th Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society (CLS 54)*, 237–252. Chicago: CLS.
- 2017 Kouneli, Maria. The morphological expression of number in Kalenjin. In Andrew Lamont & Katerina Tetzloff [eds.], *Proceedings of the 47th Annual Meeting of the North East Linguistic Society (NELS 47)*, Vol.2: 167-176. Amherst: GLSA.

Invited Talks

- 2026 Kouneli, Maria. TBD. Colloquium talk at CUNY - Graduate Center.
- 2024 Kouneli, Maria. Marked nominative as a type of ergative. Invited talk given at the workshop *Grammatical Structures of Nilo-Saharan* at Universität Leipzig, May 13.
- 2024 Kouneli, Maria. Marked nominative as a type of ergative. Colloquium talk given at Georgetown University, April 19.

- 2024 Kouneli, Maria. Marked nominative as a type of ergative. Keynote talk given at *WCCFL 42*, UC Berkeley, April 12–14.
- 2024 Kouneli, Maria. Marked nominative is ergative in disguise. Invited talk given at the *1st Workshop on Morphology at Princeton (WOMP)*, March 22–24.
- 2023 Kouneli, Maria. Movement within *vP*: the case of possessor raising in Kipsigis. Keynote talk at the workshop *The syntax at the vP edge in African languages* at the Goethe Universität Frankfurt, June 29–30.
- 2021 Kouneli, Maria. Fieldwork in generative linguistics. Keynote talk at the 69th StuTS (Studentische Tagung Sprachwissenschaft) at Universität Leipzig.
- 2019 Kouneli, Maria. A relative clause analysis of Determiner Spreading. Colloquium talk at Yale University, October 21.
- 2014 Kouneli, Maria. Methods of revitalization of the whistled language (Τρόποι διάσωσης της σφύριχτης γλώσσας). First international workshop on the whistled language, Antia, Greece, August 23.
- 2014 Kouneli, Maria. The whistled language of Antia: strategies for revitalization. Hellenic Studies Program Speakers Series, Yale University, February 10.

Conference presentations (peer-reviewed)

- 2025 Ahn, Dorothy, and Maria Kouneli. The semantics of demonstrative spreading in Kipsigis. NELS 56 at NYU, October 17–19 2025. [poster]
- 2025 Kouneli, Maria. Reconstruction for Principle C: The view from Nilotic. *56th Annual Conference on African Linguistics (ACAL 56)*, University of Minnesota, May 15–17 2025. [talk]
- 2024 Kouneli, Maria. Kipsigis comparatives: syntax matters. *55th Annual Conference on African Linguistics (ACAL 55)*, McGill University, May 2–4 2024 [talk]
- 2023 Kouneli, Maria. External possession in Kipsigis. *54th Annual Conference on African Linguistics (ACAL 54)*, University of Connecticut, June 12–14 2023. [talk]
- 2022 Kouneli, Maria. Demonstratives as heads (in some languages). *Nominal Determination: form, function, and else* at Universidade Federal de Alagoas, Maceió, Brazil, Nov 3-4. [talk]

- 2022 Barabas-Weil, Leonie, Nadja Fiebig, Armel Jolin, Maria Kouneli, Katie McCann, Robin Ortlepp and Helene Streffer. Verbal number suppletion in nominalizations. *2022 Meeting of the LAGB* at Ulster University. [talk]
- 2022 Kouneli, Maria, Paula Fenger and Jonathan Bobaljik. Syntactic limitations on phonological dominance. *WCCFL 40* at Stanford University, May 13-15 (online) [talk]
- 2021 Kouneli, Maria and Yuriy Kushnir. Failed clitic doubling of plural indirect objects in Greek. *NELS 52* at Rutgers University, Oct 29-31 (online) [talk]
- 2021 Kouneli, Maria and Yuriy Kushnir. Failed clitic doubling of plural indirect objects in Greek. *SinFonJIA 14* at the University of Novi Sad, Sep 22-24 (online) [talk]
- 2021 Driemel, Imke and Maria Kouneli. A dedicated topic position in Kipsigis. *TripleA 8* at the University of Singapore, Jun 23-25 (online) [talk]
- 2021 Kouneli, Maria. Conjugation class and transitivity in Kipsigis. Workshop on *Thematic Vowels in (V)P Structure and beyond* at the University of Graz, Apr 22-23 (online) [talk]
- 2021 Driemel, Imke and Maria Kouneli. C-Agree is local subject-verb agreement in Kipsigis. *GLOW 44*, Apr 15-17 (online) [flash talk]
- 2021 Kouneli, Maria. High vs. Low external arguments: evidence from Kipsigis. Workshop on *Syntactic Asymmetries in African Languages*, University of Potsdam, Apr 15-16 (online) [talk]
- 2021 Driemel, Imke and Maria Kouneli. < *v, t* >-type complementation in Kipsigis. *WCCFL 39*, University of Arizona, Apr 8-11 (online) [talk]
- 2021 Driemel, Imke and Maria Kouneli. Verb-y and noun-y complementation in Kipsigis. Workshop *On the nouniness of propositional arguments* at the 43rd Annual Conference of the German Linguistic Society (DGfS), Freiburg, Feb 24-26 (online) [talk]
- 2020 Driemel, Imke and Maria Kouneli. ‘Say’-based complementation: Insights from Kipsigis. *BCGL 13: The syntax and semantics of clausal complementation*, Dec 17-18 (online) [talk]
- 2020 Kouneli, Maria. Low (in)transitivity: Evidence from Kipsigis. *North East Linguistic Society (NELS) 51* at UQAM, Nov 6-8 (online) [talk]
- 2020 Kouneli, Maria. N-to-D movement in the Kipsigis DP. *Linearising Constituents Across Domains Workshop*, Bled Institute, Slovenia, Oct 15-16 (online) [talk]
- 2020 Kouneli, Maria. Low (in)transitivity in Kipsigis. *51st Annual Conference on African Linguistics (ACAL 51)*, Rutgers University [cancelled due to COVID-19]

- 2019 Kouneli, Maria. The singulative of abundance: when one means a lot. *North East Linguistic Society (NELS) 50*, MIT, Oct 25-27 2019. [talk]
- 2019 Kouneli, Maria. Countability distinctions in languages with a tripartite system of number marking. Workshop on *Countability Distinctions of the Berkeley Linguistic Society*, UC Berkeley, Feb 8-9 2019. [talk]
- 2018 Kouneli, Maria, and Yining Nie. Paradigmatic tonal polarity in Kipsigis. *North East Linguistic Society (NELS) 49*, Cornell University, Oct 5-7 2018. [talk]
- 2018 Kouneli, Maria. Determiner spreading and modification in Kipsigis. *Chicago Linguistic Society (CLS) 54*, University of Chicago, Apr 26-28 2018. [talk]
- 2018 Kouneli, Maria. Adjectival modification in Kipsigis. *GLOW 41*, Budapest, Apr 10-14 2018. [poster]
- 2018 Kouneli, Maria, and Deniz Ozyildiz. Graded nominal tense in Kipsigis. *49th Annual Conference on African Linguistics (ACAL 49)*, Michigan State University, Mar 22-25 2018. [poster]
- 2018 Kouneli, Maria. Determiner spreading in Kipsigis. *49th Annual Conference on African Linguistics (ACAL 49)*, Michigan State University, Mar 22-25 2018. [poster]
- 2018 Kouneli, Maria. Does Kipsigis have adjectives? *44th Incontro di Grammatica Generativa (IGG)*, Università Roma Tre, Mar 1-3 2018. [poster]
- 2016 Kouneli, Maria. Acoustics of epenthetic vowels in Brazilian Portuguese. *ASA/ASJ joint meeting*, Honolulu, November 28 – Dec 2, 2016. [poster]
- 2016 Kouneli, Maria. The morphological expression of nominal number in Kalenjin. *North East Linguistic Society (NELS) 47*, University of Massachusetts Amherst, Oct 14-16, 2016. [poster]
- 2015 Kouneli, Maria. Plural marking on mass nouns: Evidence from Greek. *Gender, Class, and Determination: A Conference on the Nominal Spine*, University of Ottawa, 18 Sep 2015. [talk]
- 2011 Kouneli, Maria, Julien Meyer & Andrew Nevins. Whistled Languages: A Continuum of Endangerment Situations and Strategies for Revitalisation. *University of Cambridge CRASSH Conference on Language Endangerment: Documentation, Pedagogy, and Revitalization*, University of Cambridge, 25 Mar 2011. [talk]

Presentations (non-peer-reviewed)

- 2025 Kouneli, Maria. Reconstruction for Principle C: The view from Nilotic. Talk given at Princeton University, 14 November 2025.
- 2024 Kouneli, Maria. Movement asymmetries in external possession as a diagnostic for possessor raising. Talk given at the Syntax Brown Bag, NYU, 2 February 2023.
- 2022 Kouneli, Maria. Causative-Applicative interactions and the Mirror Principle. Talk given at UFRJ, Rio de Janeiro, 31 October 2022.
- 2022 Barabas-Weil, Leonie, Nadja Fiebig, Armel Jolin, Maria Kouneli, Katie McCann, Robin Ortlepp and Helene Streffer. Verbal number suppletion in nominalizations. Talk at *GG5 46* at Universität Stuttgart.
- 2020 Kouneli, Maria. Low (in)transitivity: Evidence from Kipsigis. Talk at RUESHel lab meeting of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 23 November 2020.
- 2020 Kouneli, Maria. The causative alternation in Kipsigis. Talk at ComSyn, Leiden University, Oct 1st 2020
- 2020 Driemel, Imke & Maria Kouneli. “Say”-complementation and agreement in Kipsigis. Talk at the NYU Syntax Brown Bag Talk series, May 1st 2020
- 2020 Driemel, Imke & Maria Kouneli. “Say”-complementation and agreement in Kipsigis. Talk at the University of Potsdam Kolloquium, April 28 2020.
- 2019 Kouneli, Maria. A typology of determiner spreading. Talk at the Workshop on *Iterativity in Grammar*, University of Leipzig, December 2-3 2019.
- 2019 Kouneli, Maria. Some remarks on Kipsigis nominalizations. Talk at RUESHel lab meeting of Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin, 18 November 2019.

Teaching (as main instructor)

At Rutgers University:

- Spring 2026 Undergraduate course, Syntax
- Spring 2026 Undergraduate course, Investigations into an Unfamiliar Language (language: Luganda)
- Fall 2025 Graduate course, Seminar in syntax: The syntax of causation
- Fall 2025 Graduate course, Qualifying Paper Workshop
- Spring 2025 Graduate course, Field Methods (language: Yemba)
- Fall 2024 Undergraduate course, Introduction to Linguistic Theory

Spring 2023	Undergraduate course, Syntax
Spring 2023	Graduate course, Syntax II
Fall 2023	Graduate course, Syntax seminar: The syntax of the noun phrase

At the University of Leipzig:

Summer Semester 2023	BA course, Syntax seminar: The syntax of African languages
Summer Semester 2023	MA/PhD course, The morphosyntax of number
Winter Semester 2022–2023	MA/PhD course, Morphology
Winter Semester 2022–2023	PhD course, The Mirror Principle and the relation between syntax and morphology (co-taught with Philipp Weisser)
Summer Semester 2022	BA course, Syntax seminar: Agreement
Summer Semester 2022	MA/PhD course, Field Methods (Ngemba)
Winter Semester 2021	BA course (double credits), Structure of Kipsigis
Summer Semester 2021	BA course, Introduction to Distributed Morphology
Summer Semester 2021	PhD course, IGRA 08: Topics in the syntax of argument structure
Winter Semester 2020–2021	MA/PhD course, Morphology
Winter Semester 2020–2021	BA course, Topics in the morphosyntax of Nilo-Saharan languages
Summer Semester 2020	MA/PhD course, Topics in Morphology: The Morphosyntax of Gender
Summer Semester 2020	MA/PhD course, Field Methods (Kikuyu)
Winter Semester 2019–2020	PhD course, IGRA 02: Interacting Building Blocks in Phonology, Morphology, and Syntax II: Excitatory and Inhibitory Simultaneous Interactions (co-taught with Gereon Müller and Ezer Rasin)

At Summer Schools:

EGG 2021 (online)	Determiner Spreading
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Teaching (as teaching assistant)

Spring 2018	TA for Language, with Hadas Kotek, NYU
Spring 2017	TA for Grammatical Analysis, with Chris Collins, NYU
Spring 2016	TA for Language, with Lucas Champollion, NYU
2011-2014	Official tutor of the Yale Center for Language Study for Greek and Portuguese, Yale University

Advising at Rutgers University

Dissertations, committee member:

in progress	Gérard Avelino
in progress	Vincent Czarnecki
in progress	Ying Zhang

Qualifying paper, chair:

2025	Aidan Sharma (<i>Determiner Spreading in Magahi</i>)
2025	Utku Zobarlar (<i>Rethinking Exceptional Stress Assignment in Turkish</i>)
2025	Marjorie Leduc (<i>A Distributed Morphology Analysis of Number in Didinga</i>)

Qualifying paper, committee member:

in progress	Fahad Almalki (<i>Lateral vocalization in Omani Mehri: An OT analysis</i>)
2025	Fahad Almalki (<i>On the Complementizer Pinna in Modern Standard Arabic: A reappraisal</i>)
2025	Quartz Colvin (<i>The semantics of Hmong (in)definiteness</i>)
2024	Gérard Avelino (<i>Noncanonical Tagalog sluicing and Philippine-type voice</i>)
2024	Thuong Bui (<i>On mình in Vietnamese</i>)
2024	Jiayuan Chen (<i>Turning common nouns into names: the semantics of quasi-names</i>)
2024	Ariela Ye (<i>A Say verb or Complementizer: Analyzing shuo following communicatives and non-communicatives</i>)
2024	Aidan Sharma (<i>Uyghur umlaut as vowel reduction</i>)

Advising at the University of Leipzig

Dissertations, chair:²

in progress	Nadja Fiebig
in progress	Armel Jolin
2025	Helene Richter (<i>Morphosyntax through the lens of first person agreement in Didinga</i>)
2025	Leonie Barabas-Weil (<i>Long Distance Dependencies in Turkana</i>)

²Since my move to Rutgers in 2023, I have nominally been the external committee member of these students.

2025 Sasha Belkind (*Inherent Case Features and Case Assignment in Double Object Constructions in Kazym Khanty*)

Dissertations, committee member:

2023 Madeline Bossi (UC Berkeley - external committee member, dissertation title: *Epistemic modality across syntactic categories in Kipsigis*)

MA thesis, main supervisor:

2023 Tsan Tsai Chan (*A biclausal approach to Western Austronesian voice*)

2022 Armel Jolin (*Topics in the morphophonology of tonal case in Southern Nilotic languages*)

2021 Helene Streffer (*Gender Syncretism*)

MA thesis, second reader:

2021 Nadja Fiebig (*Unmarked Gender in Animal Nouns*)

BA thesis, main supervisor:

2022 Robin Ortlepp (*On Post- and Presyntactic Impoverishment and Obliteration*)

2021 Paula Baer (*The Katcha Number and Gender System Under a Minimalist Lens*)

2021 Sinoël Dohlen (*Theoretical approaches to syncretism in marked-nominative languages*)

BA thesis, second reader:

2023 Pauline Wölflick (*Die Interpretation von relativen und absoluten Adjektiven im Griechischen*)

2022 Hendrik Pigola (*SAY-complementation*)

2022 Nora Geppert (*Linearisierung Pronominaler Possessivaffixe im Sprachvergleich*)

Awards

2014–2019 Henry H. MacCracken Fellowship, New York University

2018 GSAS Dean's Student Travel Grant, New York University (\$500)

2017, 2018 The Student Senators Council (SSC) Conference Fund award, New York University (2x\$1000)

2014 Engberg Fellowship (for top student of the incoming PhD cohort), New York University (\$1000)

2013 Yale Jackson Institute Fellowship to conduct summer research on Honey Care, Kenya (\$5000)

Service

2025-present	Member of the LSA Fist Generation Access and Equity Committee
Spring 2025	Senior thesis reader for the Linguistics major at Rutgers University
2024-present	Member of the graduate admissions committee at the Rutgers Linguistics Department
2024-2025	Search committee member for tenure-track position in Semantics and Pragmatics at the Rutgers Linguistics Department
2020-2023	Organizer of the IGRA lecture series at Universität Leipzig
2015-2018	Member of the Colloquium Organizing Committee, Department of Linguistics, New York University
2013	Student representative at the Organizing Committee of the Portuguese Department at Yale University

Reviewing - Journals

2025	Natural Language & Linguistic Theory (x1), Linguistic Inquiry (x1), Snippets (x1), Languages (x1)
2024	Phonology (x1), Linguistic Inquiry (x1), Glossa (x1)
2023	ACAL Proceedings (x1)
2022	Natural Language & Linguistic Theory (x1), Phonology (x1), Glossa (x4), ACAL Proceedings (x1), Cambridge Handbook of Comparative Syntax (x1)
2021	Natural Language & Linguistic Theory (x3), Linguistic Inquiry (x1), Phonology (x1), Journal of the Language Association of East Africa (x1), Glossa (x1)
2020	Journal of Comparative Germanic Linguistics (x1), Natural Language & Linguistic Theory (x1), Acta Linguistica Academica (x1)
2019	Linguistic Inquiry (x1)

Reviewing - Abstracts

2024	GLOW 47
2023	WCCFL 42
2022	LAGB, NELS 53
2021	NELS 52
2020	NELS 51
2018	Stony Brook-Yale-NYU-CUNY (SYNC) mini-conference, Tu+4 (4th workshop on Turkic and languages in contact with Turkic)

Summer Schools (as a student)

2017	CreteLing Summer School, University of Crete
2015	LSA Summer Institute, University of Chicago
2011	Yale Summer Session in Brazil Portuguese language and Brazilian culture courses
2010	Universidad Complutense de Madrid Summer courses in advanced level Spanish
2008	Harvard Extension School Introduction to Linguistics, Introduction to Syntax

Languages

Native	Modern Greek
Fluent	English, Spanish, (Brazilian) Portuguese
Advanced	French
Intermediate	German (European level B2)
Conversational	Kipsigis
Basic reading	Classical Greek
Elicitation	Kalenjin dialects (Kipsigis, Nandi, Endo-Marakwet, Pokot), Ewe, Didinga, Kikuyu, Ngemba, Yemba