

Course: LIN 528 Field methods II – Syllabus
Term: Spring 2011
Instructor: Bohnemeyer
Text: Vaux & Cooper 1999 or Vaux, Cooper, & Tucker 2007 (copies of selected chapters will be handed out in class)

Aims of the course: This is the second half of a two-semester course that provides thorough hands-on experience in collecting, processing, and analyzing linguistic data for the purposes of language documentation and description. The course should benefit not only prospective field workers, but any student of linguistics interested in working with primary data other than their own native speaker intuitions.

Procedure: The students work as a collective under the instructor's supervision, with a native speaker of **Gen** (or **Mina**), a member of the Gbe cluster within the East Kwa (= West Benue-Congo = Volta-Niger) family of languages spoken by a combined 327,000 people in Togo and Benin (Lewis 2009).¹ The goal is to jointly elaborate, over the course of 30 weeks, a sketch of the language, comprising descriptions of the consultant's mental grammar and lexicon and a small text corpus. This joint project will be divided into a sequence of phases, each defined by a set of local goals and methods. For each phase, the students are assigned a different task.

Meetings: T 17:00-18:30 – instruction and reports; (W 14:00 – 15:30 – optional tutorial sessions with the speaker;) R 17:00-19:00 – regular elicitation sessions. In 617 Baldy (the Archiving Lab.)

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Assessment:

- 50% participation, based on written elicitation plans, carrying out elicitation sessions and processing data, written and oral presentation of results, etc.
- participation will be graded at the end of every one of the first four phases of the course
- 50% term project during the final phase of the course, resulting in term paper

Reading: Selected chapters of Vaux & Cooper 1991 and Newman & Ratliff 2001 will be handed out in class. All the books listed in the bibliography below are of course on reserve in the Undergrad Library, and the chapters and articles listed can be downloaded from online reserve.

Weekly workflow: Tuesdays 17:00-18:30: instruction on theoretical issues (on ethical, epistemological, or technological aspects of field work, the logistics of planning and organizing a field trip, anthropological and sociological issues, etc.); presentations of elicitation results by the students; planning for the elicitation sessions of the following week. Thursdays 17:00 – 19:00: elicitation sessions with the native speaker consultant. Students will prepare the sessions, submit a short written script for critique, carry out the elicitation, and afterwards process the data and write up and present the findings in class. All those who are not eliciting during a session are attentive but quiet observers. At the conclusion of each slot there will be a post-mortem analysis of the elicitation sessions.

¹ ISO 639-3: gej.

Outline

Phase	week	day	date	topic	readings
Phase VI: Ethnographic documentation	1	T	1/18	instruction VI/1: documenting and describing speech events, with special emphasis on politeness; eliciting cultural information	Foley 1997: ch.s 6, 13-14, 16; Himmelmann 1998
		R	1/20	elicitation VI/1	
	2	T	1/25	instruction VI/2: speech act theory; ethnography of communication; politeness and “face”; kinship term systems; ethnography in language documentation	
		R	1/27	elicitation VI/2	
	3	T	2/1	final reports on Phase VI instruction VII/1: phonetics; palatography	
Phase VII – Acoustic and articulatory phonetics	4	T	2/8	instruction VII/2: acoustic phonetics: creating and analyzing spectrograms with Praat, Speech Analyzer	Vaux & Cooper 1999: ch. 5-6; Ladefoged 1997 Ladefoged 1993: ch. 8 118-125
		R	2/10	“elicitation” VII/2: spectrograms	
	5	T	2/15	reports VII; instruction VIII/1: folk definitions and the lexicon	
		R	2/17	elicitation VIII/1	
	6	T	2/22	instruction VIII/2: another shot at Toolsubox ☹️☹️☹️; field semantics; semantic elicitation	
Phase VIII: The lexicon, with special emphasis on semantics	7	T	3/1	instruction VIII/3: the empirical basis of field semantics; diagnostics in lexical semantics	Bohnenmeyer 2003; Casagrande & Hale 1967; Cruse 1986: ch. 1; Dixon 1971; Clark 1970; Hale 1971; Vaux & Cooper 1999: ch.4
		R	3/3	elicitation VIII/3	
	8	T	3/8	reports VIII; instruction IX/1: elicitation with non-verbal stimuli; the Cut & Break clips; ECOM Causality Revisited	
		R	3/10	elicitation IX/1	
Phase IX: The syntax-semantics interface	9	T	3/15	SPRING RECESS	Bohnenmeyer et al. (in press a, b) Bohnenmeyer (2007); Bohnemeyer, Brown, & Bowerman (2001); Bohnemeyer & Majid (2001); Van Valin & Lapolla 1997: ch. 6;
		R	3/17		
	10	T	3/22	instruction IX/2: coding data; syntactic elicitation; argument structure; causatives and causal relations	
		R	3/24	elicitation IX/2	
	11	T	3/29	instruction IX/3: voice and grammatical relations	

		R	3/31	elicitation IX/3	
	12	T	4/5	final reports IX; term project planning	
Phase X: Term projects		R	4/7	elicitation X/1	tba.
	13	T	4/12	instruction X/1: quantitative analysis	
		R	4/14	elicitation X/2	
	14	T	4/19	interim reports X; instruction X/2: the structure of language descriptions	
		R	4/21	elicitation X/3	
	15	T	4/26	instruction X/3: field work in the real world: getting funded and published; ethics again	
		R	4/28	elicitation X/4	

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