Course: LIN 627 Field methods I – Syllabus
Term: Fall 2004
Instructor: Bohnemeyer
Text: Vaux & Cooper 1999 (copies of selected chapters will be handed
out in class)

Aims of the course: This is the first 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 will work as a collective under the instructor's supervision, with a native speaker of Kinyarwanda. 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 (save the first – see below), the students will be organized into teams, and different tasks will be assigned to different teams. The teams will conduct elicitation and analysis sessions with the consultant, which they prepare in consultation with the instructor. All the other students, as well as the instructor, attend these sessions as observers. Afterwards the teams meet to process their data. They regularly present their results to in-class discussion and pool data and description in a web archive maintained by the instructor.

Meetings: M 14:00-15:30 (class); W 17:15-18:45 and F 14:00-15:30 (elicitation sessions)
224 Clemens (Michelle Gregory's lab)
Instructor: Dr. Juergen Bohnemeyer – Office 627 Baldy Phone 645-2177 ext. 727
E-mail jb77@buffalo.edu Office hours MF 10:00-10:30 W 13:00-14:00
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: Monday 14:00-15:30: 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 week. Wednesday 17:15-18:45 and Friday 14:00-15:30: two weekly slots for the elicitation sessions with the native speaker consultant. Each slot will be divided into two to four sessions. Students will be organized into teams that prepare the sessions, submit the prepared schedule in a short written action plan to the instructor, who will critique it, 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.

Syllabus

Phase I – Word lists and phonemic analysis – Week 1-4

Practice: Wordlists * transcription * rough articulatory sketch of perceived speech sounds * preliminary phonemic analysis * getting started on the lexicon database * ethnography: greetings and farewells

Technology: Transcribing in IPA * making audio and video recordings and digitizing them * setting up a Toolbox lexicon database - *download & install Toolbox 1.2; download, unzip, and run Toolbox Training 1.0 (http://www.sil.org/computing/catalog/show_software.asp?id=79) * To practice your IPA: http://www.sil.org/computing/catalog/show_software.asp?id=16*

Theory: What is field work? * getting started: finding field sites and consultants * framing your objectives for consultants and the community * monolingual vs. bilingual field work * types of elicitation and their pitfalls * word lists and how to use them * phonemic analysis * from phonetic to phonemic transcription * broad vs. narrow transcription

Reading: Week 1: Nida 1949: 175-180; Vaux & Cooper 1999: 26-34; 39-49 * *optional/advanced:* Agar 1980: 21-39 (downloadable); Hyman 2001 **Week 2:** Hockett 1958: 102-111; Vaux & Cooper 1999: 61-65; 80-83 * *optional/advanced:* Hale 2001: 76-86; Maddieson 2001: 214-221 **Week 3:** Pike 1975: 67-83 * *optional/advanced:* Pike 1975: 84-115 **Week 4:** Vaux & Cooper 1999: 5-25 * *optional/advanced:* Dimmendahl 2001: 55-66

Phase II – Simple phrases and sentences – Week 5-6

Practice: Eliciting simple phrases and sentences on the basis of the word lists * initial assessment of basic clause structure and predication types * first crack at parts of speech and noun/verb inflectional morphology * phonological processes * revising and expanding the record of the phonology and lexicon * ethnography: greetings and farewells

Theory: Wellformedness judgments * phrase structure and clause structure * lexical categories

Reading: Week 5: Elson & Pickett 1988: 65-72; Vaux & Cooper 1999: 115-124; Van Valin 2001: ch. 1 * *optional/advanced:* Gil 2001: 102-122 **Week 6:** Payne 1997: 32-46; 61-62; 69-70; Van Valin 2001: ch. 2 * *optional/advanced:* Hale 2001: 86-95

Phase III – Recorded discourse – Week 7-9

Practice: Recording and transcribing a short text (folk tale?) * morphological analysis of the text * setting up the lexicon database for automated morpheme parsing * consolidating and expanding the record of the morphosyntax on the basis of the text * more on (morpho-)phonological processes * revising and expanding the record of the phonology and lexicon * ethnography: transactional speech acts

Technology: Transcribing digitized recordings in Transcriber (http://www.ldc.upenn.edu/mirror/Transcriber/) * Importing transcribed text into a Toolbox project * setting up and using the Toolbox morpheme parser

Theory: Sources of data: elicitation vs. recorded texts * morphological analysis * collecting different discourse genres * documentary vs. descriptive goals

Reading: Week 7: Elson & Pickett 1988: 1-19; Vaux & Cooper 1999: 93-103 * *optional/advanced:* Hale 2001: 95-101 **Week 8:** Elson & Pickett 1988: 41-52; Vaux & Cooper 1999: 104-113 * *optional/advanced:* Chelliah 2001 **Week 9:** Payne 1997: 92-110; Mithun 2001 *optional/advanced:* Himmelmann 1998

Phase IV – Questionnaires – Week 10-12

Practice: Eliciting Dahl's 1985 Tense-Mood-Aspect questionnaire, mainly to get a better grip at noun and verb inflectional morphology * expanding and revising the record of the grammar, lexicon, and phonology on the basis of the findings * eliciting wellformedness judgments on the syntax of verbal and nominal projections * preliminary assessment of grammatical relations * ethnography: politeness (how to make requests or voice criticism depending on who you are talking to)

Technology: Transcribing in IPA (paper & pencil) * making audio and video recordings and digitizing them * setting up a Toolbox lexicon database - download & install Toolbox 1.2; download, unzip, and run Toolbox Training 1.0 (http://www.sil.org/computing/catalog/show_software.asp?id=79)

Theory: Wellformedness judgments *

Reading: Week 1: Vaux & Cooper 1999: 115-124 * *optional/advanced:* ???
Week 2: ??? * *optional/advanced:* ??? **Week 3:** ??? * ???

Phase V – Term projects – Week 13-15

Some suggested topics: elicit, transcribe, and analyze further texts; elicit data with some of the Nijmegen stimuli and analyze them (e.g., BowPed; Cut & Break; 25 Demonstrative Scenes); or pick a topic in Kinyarwanda grammar or lexicon and work on it eliciting data anyway appropriate!

Preview: objectives of the spring semester

- Acoustic and articulatory phonetics
- Lexical semantics
- Complex syntax
- Information perspective
- Grammatical relations revisited
- Argument structure
- Spatial, temporal, and causal relations

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