Field Methods of Linguistics / Linguistic Field Research
LING 415 / LING 610 — Winter 2017
M,W 2:25–3:55, Linguistics 117

Instructors

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Jessica Coon</th>
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<tbody>
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<td>1085 Dr. Penfield, 227</td>
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<tr>
<td>office hours</td>
<td>by appt.</td>
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<td>Tuesdays 3:00–4:30pm, by appt.</td>
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Language consultant — Mpoke Mimpongo

Content of the course

The primary goals of this course are to learn how to collect and analyze reliable and accurate language data through direct work with a native speaker, as well as to gain practice in formulating and testing linguistic hypotheses. In doing this, we’ll also learn about topics in linguistic typology, create a collaborative language database, as well as focus on topics specific to the grammar of the language at hand. We’ll read and discuss fieldwork best practices, but primarily we will learn by doing. You’ll gain practice writing up your findings and supporting proposals with linguistic data.

Requirements and evaluation

We will investigate the above topics through a combination of readings, short-assignments, in-class discussion, group work, and—most importantly—active elicitation. The evaluation break-down is as follows:

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>LING 415</th>
<th>LING 610</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>short assignments</td>
<td>55%</td>
<td>35%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>participation (in-class plus blog posts)</td>
<td>15%</td>
<td>15%</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>final paper &amp; presentation</td>
<td>30%</td>
<td>50%</td>
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Participation in in-class sessions

This class is a workshop, not a lecture, and active participation in class and in your group is absolutely essential to its—and your!—success. Participating in class means asking questions, contributing ideas, and taking careful notes. After the add/drop deadline (January 17), the class will be divided into 6 (possibly 7) small groups. These groups will meet together with Mpoke during the out-of-class sessions, and will be responsible for planning and guiding elicitations for certain in-class sessions (see schedule below). While certain groups will be responsible for guiding our elicitation on any given meeting, everyone should be participating actively in all class sessions.

Participation in out-of-class sessions

Groups will meet regularly with Mpoke outside of class beginning in Week 4. Attendance and participation in these sessions is mandatory; the extra hour will be offset by reduced Wednesday meeting time for 415 students.

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1Beginning Week 4, Wednesday’s class will finish at 3:25pm for LING 415 students and the out-of-class elicitation schedule will begin; schedule details TBA.

2Note that these office hours are also general advising office hours, which may be busy depending on the time of year.
These out-of-class sessions are designed to allow you to get more direct elicitation time, delve deeper into certain topics, and to develop independent projects. After each out-of-class session, your group is responsible for making a short blog post with notes about what you did and any highlights from the session.

**Class blog and database**

**Database:** In order to organize the Lingala data collected both in and outside of class, we will have a password-protected class database (app.dative.ca). It is your responsibility to ensure that all data you elicit is entered into the database. Because we are learning about the language as we go along, the database will contain errors, mistakes, and there will be parts that we don’t understand. Nonetheless, it is crucial that all information is kept in a single shareable location so that we have a record of our progress.

**Blog:** The database will help us organize our data, and the blog will be our forum for discussing it. The blog can be used to highlight interesting data you have found; to discuss working hypotheses; and to ask questions or solicit advice from classmates. Your regular blog posts (roughly one/week, beginning in week 4), to be discussed more in class, are an important part of your participation grade.

**Leading elicitation**

Together with your group, you will be responsible for leading in-class elicitation for one week during the semester, either on the topic assigned for the week, or on a modification of the topic mutually agreed upon by the class. This will involve completing the reading for the week and coming up with a plan for material to elicit. You will submit your plan by email to the instructors (1–2 pages, including specific example sentences), the preceding Friday by 5pm. Your group will be responsible for ensuring that the online database is up-to-date with the material elicited in class that week.

**Assignments and late policy**

Over the course of the semester, you will have 5 assignments to turn in, roughly every other week. These assignments are due on MyCourses in PDF format at **5pm on Friday of the week it is listed.** You have one free late-pass which you may use to turn in one of your assignments 24 hours late. In order to use your late pass, you must let us know you are using it by the original deadline. Once this pass has been used, late work cannot be accepted for grades without a documented medical excuse.

**Final paper and presentation**

You will be asked to write a final paper on a topic in the grammar of the language of your choosing (in consultation with us). Final papers are due April 21st, and will be discussed further in class. You will give a short presentation on your chosen topic the last week of class.

**Readings**

There are two books for this course, available at the McGill bookstore:


We will read most of the Payne book, which will familiarize you with linguistic typology, discuss what kinds of questions we need to ask, and provide background and structure to our class elicitation sessions. The topics for each given week may serve as the topic for elicitation, or we may decide to modify topics as needed.
Though there are general good practices for conducting field work, there is no magic formula. In this class we will learn by doing, and on the whole we will not devote much in-class time to discussing the assigned readings on fieldwork methodology. Nonetheless, there are a number of good resources on the topic, and many of the course readings are intended to give you a sense for some of the issues we will want to keep in mind as we go along. Your responsibility is to complete the reading before coming to class. Altogether, you can expect to read approximately 2–3 articles or chapters per week.

Class policies and university regulations

Respect and use of electronics

Classroom dynamics affect all of us. While vigorous discussion and conflicting opinions are always welcome, personal attacks, disrespectful comments, or sexist, racist, homophobic, transphobic, ableist, or other discriminatory remarks are not tolerated. Since disruptive behaviors are not always explicit and immediately apparent, all are encouraged to think critically and self-reflexively about listening and communication strategies and to take responsibility for group dynamics, in order to create an environment conducive to respectful dialogue.

Electronic devices may be used for taking notes and accessing information directly related to class content. Out of respect for the group, electronic devices should not be used for any other purposes.

Academic integrity

McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the code of student conduct and disciplinary procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

Right to submit in French

In accord with McGill University’s Charter of Students’ Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Readings

Course outline (readings subject to modification)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>date</th>
<th>topic/to do</th>
<th>readings: □ = required, ☆ = optional</th>
<th>due</th>
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| 1/4  | Introduction      | □ - Bowern (2008), ch. 11 – Ethical field research  
□ - Meeuwis (2013) – Lingala, secs. 1–3  
☆ - Rice (2001) – Learning as one goes  |       |
| 1/9  | Phonology         | □ - Bowern (2008), chs. 1 & 3 – Introduction  
☆ - Vaux and Cooper (2003), chs. 2 & 3 – Transcription  
□ - Bowern (2008), ch. 5 & app. C – Phonetics and phonology  | $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 1/11 |                   | □ - Yu (2014) – Tonal fieldwork  |       |
| 1/16 | Phonology cont.   | □ - Vaux and Cooper (2003), chs. 7 & 8  
☆ - Ladefoged (2003), chs. 4–6  |       |
| 1/18 |                   | □ - Maddieson (2001) – Phonetic fieldwork  
□/☆ - Ladefoged and Johnson (2011) - review as needed: ch. 1, Part III  | $\frac{1}{2}$ |
| 1/23 | TBA               |                                                                                                        |       |
| 1/25 | TBA               |                                                                                                        |       |
| 1/30 | Typological overview | □ - Bowern (2008), ch. 6 – Eliciting basics  
□ - Payne (1997), chs. 0–3 – Describing morphosyntax  
□ - Matthewson (2004) – Methodology of semantic fieldwork  | $\frac{2}{2}$ |
| 2/1  | Group 1: Constituent order | □ - Payne (1997), ch. 4 – Constituent order typology  
□ - Vaux and Cooper (2003), ch. 11 – Syntax  | $\frac{2}{2}$ |
| 2/13 | Group 3: Predicate nominals | □ - Payne (1997), ch. 5 – Noun and NP operationa  
☆ - Rice (2006) – Letting the language tell its story  | $\frac{3}{3}$ |
| 2/20 | Group 4: Grammatical relations | □ - Payne (1997), ch. 6 – Predicate nominals  
☆ - Mithun (2001) – Who shapes the record?  |       |
| 3/6  | Group 5: Voice and valence | □ - Payne (1997), ch. 7 – Grammatical relations  | $\frac{4}{4}$ |
| 3/8  | Group 6: Other VP operations | □ - Payne (1997), ch. 8 – Voice and valence operations  |       |
| 3/13 | Group 5: Voice and valence | □ - Payne (1997), ch. 8 – Voice and valence operations  |       |
| 3/20 | Group 6: Other VP operations | □ - Payne (1997), ch. 9 – Other verb and VP operations  | $\frac{5}{5}$ |
| 3/27 | Pragmatically marked structures | □ - Payne (1997), ch. 10 – Pragmatically marked structures  |       |
| 4/3  | TBA               |                                                                                                        |       |
| 4/5  | — Class presentations — |                                                                                                        |       |
| 4/10 | — Class presentations — |                                                                                                        |       |

Final papers due April 21st, 5pm