

Field Methods

Linguistics 5380

Spring 2017 Friday, 11AM-1:50PM, University Hall 13

General Information

Instructor: Joey Sabbagh

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126 Hammond Hall

Office Hours: Monday 11AM-12PM or by appointment

TA: Kent Rasmussen

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Office Hours: By appointment

Course Overview

This course provides students with hands-on experience in the general task of investigating a language through one-on-one interviews with its speakers. Students will elicit, record and transcribe language data from the speaker of an unfamiliar language (**Dinka; Nilo-Saharan**), and will develop original analyses of those data.

The class as a whole will also work towards the creation of (i) a shared dictionary; and (ii) a shared archive of example phrases and sentences. We will, for the most part, be using FLEx software for this purpose. Instructions and details about FLEx will be presented on the first day of class.

This course will draw upon all aspects of students' linguistic training to date in the areas of phonology, phonetics, morphology, syntax, and semantics. The success of the course will depend partly on the ability of students with complementary skill sets to work **collaboratively** and **cooperatively**.

Learning Outcomes

Upon successful completion of the course, students will be in a position to carry out fieldwork on an unfamiliar language on their own or in teams. They will understand how to work with a native speaker consultant of a language, best practices of data management, and have fluency on using software applications designed to assist linguistic fieldwork.

Course Requirements

This will be a very time-intensive and collaborative course. Most of the work will consist of (i) transcription of class interview sessions, (ii) contributing to the class dictionary and archive materials, and (iii) a final paper.

–Active Attendance

This is very much a ‘learn-by-doing’ class; it is essentially a ‘lab practicum’ in linguistics. Outside of the first week, there will be very few readings and very few lectures. All the content of the course will be in what we do and what we learn during the interview sessions in class.

For this reason, mere attendance alone is not sufficient. Students must be actively engaged in and contribute to the class interview sessions.

–Special Assignments

From time-to-time, you may receive some short assignments emphasizing certain ideas or themes that came up in class. Depending on how things progress, I may also administer assignments relating to the phonology/grammar of the language (e.g. quizzes on agreement paradigms, basic sentence construction, etc.)

–Transcription Assignments

Each interview session in class will be digitally recorded. Per each interview session, approximately 3-4 students will be asked to lead the elicitation. Prior to the week in which you will be tasked with elicitation, you must consult with Kent or I on your “elicitation plan” (ideally, 1-2 days before your scheduled elicitation).

After each interview, we will then divide that recording into 6-8 approximately equal sections (each about 20-25 min.) as Praat files, and post them to the class website on Blackboard (or through a shared Dropbox folder). Each student will then be responsible for transcribing one section of the recordings using Praat, as well as adding to the FLEx data base (the dictionary and corpus of example phrases and sentences). The transcriptions will then be paired so that everyone’s work can be shared as we continue to add to the data-base.

–Individual Group Projects

Beginning around the 4th or 5th week, the class will be divided into 3-4 teams, which will meet with the consultant individually to investigate in detail some specific aspect of the language (e.g. aspect, questions, prosody, etc.). Each group will be responsible for delegating the work of transcription, adding material to the FLEx database, etc. The results of the field work for each of these groups will then culminate in a final, co-authored final paper. **It will**

be up to the groups to make sure that everyone is contributing equally to their project, but if there are problems, please notify Kent or I as soon as possible so that we can resolve any conflicts.

Grading

The transcriptions and the final paper will be assigned a certain number of points:

- Weekly transcriptions = 39pts (approx. 3 points each). Each transcription will receive between 0 and 3 points, based (generally) on the following criterion:
 - 0 = An incomplete transcription (=failure to do an assigned transcription of completion, or only 50% or less of the transcription assigned is considered incomplete).
 - 1 = A partially complete transcription (=more than 50%, but less than 80 % complete; contains numerous errors/failure to comply with agreed upon transcription conventions/requires numerous corrections by others/failure to upload transcribed material for all to view by deadline)
 - 2 = A complete transcription, but one filled with numerous errors (=completion of 90%-100% of the assigned transcription, but filled with multiple errors/ failure to comply with agreed upon transcription/failure to acknowledge previously acquired knowledge/failure to upload material for all to view by deadline)
 - 3 = Complete, few errors (=completed 100% of the transcription, with very few errors. Transcriptions are consistent with agreed upon conventions/uploaded on time/informed by previously obtained knowledge).

NOTE: Kent and I are working on this project with you! Therefore, you should discuss your transcription work with us early and often, especially (but not only) if you are experiencing difficulties. If you exercise good time-management skills, and begin your work early, there is no reason why you should not be able to complete your weekly transcription assignments.

- Final paper = 21pts [A more detailed rubric will be assigned by week 5]

Overall, there are 60 possible points. Final grades will be assigned as follows: 60-54 points (=A); 53-47 points (=B); 46-40 points (=C); 39-33 (=D); 32- (=F)

Software

For this course, you will need to have FLEx and Praat software installed on your computers. *If you do not wish to install this software on your computer, then you should plan to use the non-Mac computers in the Lab.*

On the first day of class, Kent will give us a tutorial on FLEx. We will, however, be assuming familiarity with Praat. If you experience difficulty with these softwares as we go along, please get help immediately from Kent or I, or your classmates.

University Policies

Drop Policy: Students may drop or swap (adding and dropping a class concurrently) classes through self-service in MyMav from the beginning of the registration period through the late registration period. After the late registration period, students must see their academic advisor to drop a class or withdraw. Undeclared students must see an advisor in the University Advising Center. Drops can continue through a point two-thirds of the way through the term or session. It is the student's responsibility to officially withdraw if they do not plan to attend after registering. Students will not be automatically dropped for non-attendance. Repayment of certain types of financial aid administered through the University may be required as the result of dropping classes or withdrawing. For more information, contact the Office of Financial Aid and Scholarships (<http://www.uta.edu/aao/fao/>).

Disability Accommodations: UT Arlington is on record as being committed to both the spirit and letter of all federal equal opportunity legislation, including The Americans with Disabilities Act (ADA), The Americans with Disabilities Amendments Act (ADAAA), and Section 504 of the Rehabilitation Act. All instructors at UT Arlington are required by law to provide "reasonable accommodations" to students with disabilities, so as not to discriminate on the basis of disability. Students are responsible for providing the instructor with official notification in the form of a letter certified by the Office for Students with Disabilities (OSD). Students experiencing a range of conditions (Physical, Learning, Chronic Health, Mental Health, and Sensory) that may cause diminished academic performance or other barriers to learning may seek services and/or accommodations by contacting: The Office for Students with Disabilities, (OSD) www.uta.edu/disability or calling 817-272-3364. Counseling and Psychological Services, (CAPS) www.uta.edu/caps/ or calling 817-272-3671.

Only those students who have officially documented a need for an accommodation will have their request honored. Information regarding diagnostic criteria and policies for obtaining disability-based academic accommodations can be found at www.uta.edu/disability or by calling the Office for Students with Disabilities at (817) 272-3364.

Non-Discrimination Policy: The University of Texas at Arlington does not discriminate on the basis of race, color, national origin, religion, age, gender, sexual orientation, disabilities, genetic information, and/or veteran status in its educational programs or activities it operates. For more information, visit uta.edu/eos.

Title IX: The University of Texas at Arlington ("University") is committed to maintaining a learning and working environment that is free from discrimination based on sex in accordance with Title IX of the Higher Education Amendments of 1972 (Title IX), which prohibits discrimination on the basis of sex in educational programs or activities; Title VII of

the Civil Rights Act of 1964 (Title VII), which prohibits sex discrimination in employment; and the Campus Sexual Violence Elimination Act (SaVE Act). Sexual misconduct is a form of sex discrimination and will not be tolerated. For information regarding Title IX, visit www.uta.edu/titleIX or contact Ms. Jean Hood, Vice President and Title IX Coordinator at (817) 272-7091 or jmhood@uta.edu.

Academic Integrity: Students enrolled all UT Arlington courses are expected to adhere to the UT Arlington Honor Code:

I pledge, on my honor, to uphold UT Arlington's tradition of academic integrity, a tradition that values hard work and honest effort in the pursuit of academic excellence. I promise that I will submit only work that I personally create or contribute to group collaborations, and I will appropriately reference any work from other sources. I will follow the highest standards of integrity and uphold the spirit of the Honor Code.

UT Arlington faculty members may employ the Honor Code as they see fit in their courses, including (but not limited to) having students acknowledge the honor code as part of an examination or requiring students to incorporate the honor code into any work submitted. Per UT System Regents' Rule 50101, Section 2.2, suspected violations of university's standards for academic integrity (including the Honor Code) will be referred to the Office of Student Conduct. Violators will be disciplined in accordance with University policy, which may result in the student's suspension or expulsion from the University.

Electronic Communication: UT Arlington has adopted MavMail as its official means to communicate with students about important deadlines and events, as well as to transact university-related business regarding financial aid, tuition, grades, graduation, etc. All students are assigned a MavMail account and are responsible for checking the inbox regularly. There is no additional charge to students for using this account, which remains active even after graduation. Information about activating and using MavMail is available at <http://www.uta.edu/oit/cs/email/mavmail.php>.

Campus Carry: Effective August 1, 2016, the Campus Carry law (Senate Bill 11) allows those licensed individuals to carry a concealed handgun in buildings on public university campuses, except in locations the University establishes as prohibited. Under the new law, openly carrying handguns is not allowed on college campuses. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/news/info/campus-carry/>

Student Feedback Survey: At the end of each term, students enrolled in classes categorized as "lecture," "seminar," or "laboratory" shall be directed to complete an online Student Feedback Survey (SFS). Instructions on how to access the SFS for this course will be sent directly to each student through MavMail approximately 10 days before the end of the term. Each student's feedback enters the SFS database anonymously and is aggregated with that of other students enrolled in the course. UT Arlington's effort to solicit, gather, tabulate, and publish student feedback is required by state law; students are strongly urged to participate. For more information, visit <http://www.uta.edu/sfs>.

Final Review Week: A period of five class days prior to the first day of final examinations in the long sessions shall be designated as Final Review Week. The purpose of this week is to allow students sufficient time to prepare for final examinations. During this week, there shall be no scheduled activities such as required field trips or performances; and no instructor shall assign any themes, research problems or exercises of similar scope that have a completion date during or following this week unless specified in the class syllabus. During Final Review Week, an instructor shall not give any examinations constituting 10% or more of the final grade, except makeup tests and laboratory examinations. In addition, no instructor shall give any portion of the final examination during Final Review Week. During this week, classes are held as scheduled. In addition, instructors are not required to limit content to topics that have been previously covered; they may introduce new concepts as appropriate.

Emergency Exit Procedures: Should we experience an emergency event that requires us to vacate the building, students should exit the room and move toward the nearest exit. When exiting the building during an emergency, one should never take an elevator but should use the stairwells. Faculty members and instructional staff will assist students in selecting the safest route for evacuation and will make arrangements to assist individuals with disabilities.