Linguistic Fieldwork

Teacher:
        What is the highest technique you hope to achieve?
(character played by) Bruce Lee:
        To have no technique.

                                        from *Enter the dragon*

"It will take everything you know about everything." (paraphrase of advice to Jimmy Kimmel before taking on *The Tonight Show*)

Course description

        This class provides a survey of some of the methodological issues involved in doing fieldwork, one of the primary ways in which linguists obtain data. Sources of data in linguistics can be roughly divided into 'old' and 'new':

	Old data		New data	
method	philology	corpus linguistics	introspection	fieldwork
source	mss. and media, published or unpublished	computer files	self: tap intuitions about own language	native speakers/ signers of a language that a linguist does not speak/sign natively
advantage	relatively easy logistics	large amounts of data	relatively easy logistics; new questions can be answered	open corpus: new questions can be answered
disadvantage	closed corpus: new questions may not be answerable	programming skills required to access	must be native speaker/signer	time-consuming, expensive, logistically difficult

        If fieldwork is time-consuming, expensive and logistically difficult, then why bother with it?

- Theoretical linguistics needs detailed descriptions of languages, and is enriched by knowledge of linguistic diversity.
- By some estimates, ninety per cent of the world's languages may disappear in the next 100 years.
- Fieldwork can be personally satisfying.

Unlike a traditional field methods class, where class participants practice working with a speaker, this is a reading-based class where we discuss: endangered languages; goals of language documentation; ethics and linguists' responsibilities; field materials; elicitation; texts; grammars; dictionaries; archiving. Whenever possible, weekly reading assignments will contrast different points of view on the same topic.

Learning goal

- To prepare students for independent fieldwork on a language of their choosing

Topics covered

1. week 2 (Oct 5)   Overview of class; why field methods this way; endangered languages

2. week 3 (Oct 12)   Goals of fieldwork; what fieldwork is like
Reading to discuss: Himmelmann 1998 [Joey, Brent, Nataliya]; Macaulay 2004 (Macaulay 2012) [Sam, Kelliane]; Vaux and Cooper 1999 ch. 1, 'Introduction' [Molly, Alec]
Other reading on this topic: (goals) Kari 1982, Kari 1991, Newman and Ratliff 2001a, Woodbury 2003, Kari 2003, Himmelmann 2006, Sells 2010; (what fieldwork is like) Bowern 2011

3. week 4 (Oct 19)   Field notes and recordings
Reading to discuss: Vaux and Cooper 1999 ch. 2, 'Transcription', Kerswill and Wright 1990, Margetts and Margetts 2012
Other reading on this topic: Nathan 2004, Austin 2006, Schultze-Berndt 2006, Seifart 2006, Lüpke 2009, Nathan 2010, McGill 2011; (phonetic recording) Maddieson 2001, Ladefoged 2003

4. week 5 (Oct 26)   Elicitation (1)
Reading to discuss: Everett 2001

5. Week 6 (Nov 2)   Elicitation (2)
Reading to discuss: Vaux, Cooper, and Tucker 2007 ch. 9, Matthewson 2004
Other reading on this topic: Vaux and Cooper 1999 chs. 11-12, Harrison 2005, Bradley 2007, Harris and Voegelin 1953, Gil 2001, Schütze 1996

6. week 7 (Nov 9)   Texts
Reading to discuss: Chelliah 2001; Vaux and Cooper 1999 ch. 16
Other reading on this topic: Mithun 2001, Thieberger 2004, Evans and Sasse 2007, Woodbury 2007, Finnegan 2010

7. week 8 (Nov 16)   Grammars
Reading to discuss: Mosel 2006b, Noonan 2007, Weber 2007
Other reading on this topic: Rice 2001, Payne 1997, Kadanya 2007, Mithun 2007, Munro 2007, Rice 2007, contributions to Ameka, Dench, and Evans 2006

8. week 9 (Nov 23)   Dictionaries
Reading to discuss: Frawley, Hill, and Munro 2002; Vaux and Cooper 1999 ch. 3
Other reading on this topic: Nichols and Sprouse 2003, Haviland 2006, Mosel 2004, Munro 2007, De Korne 2009, Mosel 2011

9. week 10 (Nov 30)   Archiving and access; collaboration
Reading to discuss: (archiving) Bird and Simons 2003, Holton 2012; (collaboration) Dwyer 2006
Other reading on this topic: (archiving) Trilsbeck and Wittenburg 2006, Gippert 2006 ENREF_102, Nathan 2006, Nathan 2008, Nathan 2011, Conathan 2011; (collaboration) Hale 1972, Woodbury and England 2004, Evans 2012, Widlock 2005, Crippen and Robinson 2013, Hill 2002, Mosel 2006a, Munro 2005, Kibrik 2006, Thieberger and Musgrave 2007, Thomas 2012, Manitoba First Nations Education Resource Centre Inc. 2014

10. week 11 (Dec 7)   Language revitalization and linguists' responsibilities.
Reading to discuss: Wilkins 1992, Newman 1999
Other reading on this topic: Wolfram 1998, Tsunoda 2005, Hinton 2011, Kadanya 2007, de Graaf and Shiraishi 2004, De Korne 2009, Nathan and Fang 2009, Spolsky 2009b, Spolsky 2009a, Wilson 2011

Finals week (Dec 15)   Final project due

Student assessment

Student grades will be based on:

- weekly participation in class discussion of week's reading
- final project (below)

Final project options

(1) Write a (real or mock) grant proposal for field research. Your proposal should contain the following sections:
- Cover page (funding agency targeted, title of project, amount of money requested)
- Description of proposed research, including work plan (limit: 12 single-spaced pages, including bibliography)
- Budget and budget justification (3 pages maximum)

You may find useful information in Wittenburg 2003 and/or Austin 2010.

(2) A set of elicitation questions in some language on some linguistic topic of interest to you in this class. These must be very concrete questions, exactly what you would ask your speaker. Minimum 12 questions. You should also explain a little bit about the language and what your goal is.

(3) Design your own course: prepare an annotated bibliography on some subtopic of linguistic fieldwork (minimum 8 references).

(4) An annotated bibliography on some topic in the phonology, morphology or syntax in some language you would like to do field research on with a native speaker/signer (should contain paragraph length synopses of at least 5 references). In general, the longer your bibliography, the better.

(5) Select one of the older (pre-1980) sources on linguistic fieldwork in the extended bibliography at the end of this syllabus under General or Fieldwork in specific geographical areas. Ignoring technology, write a five-page critique explaining which aspects of the methods seem relevant today and which aspects seem out-dated.

Additional references on linguistic fieldwork

General:
        Books: Nida 1947; Longacre 1964; Hale 1964/65; Samarin 1967 (reviewed by Merrifield 1968); Gudschinsky 1967; Wax 1971; Kibrik 1977, Burling 1984; Bouquiax and Thomas 1992 [first published 1976; 1992 appears to be merely reprinted]; Crowley 2007; Bowern 2008; Chelliah and Reuse 2011; Sakel and Everett 2012
        Anthologies: Newman and Ratliff 2001b; Gippert, Himmelman, and Mosel 2006; Thieberger 2012
        Articles: Newman 1992

Typological questionnaire: Comrie and Smith 1977

Working with monolingual speakers: Loving 1975, Everett 2001

Fieldwork in specific geographical areas:
        Australia: Wurm 1967, Sutton and Walsh 1979; Tsunoda 2005 [focus is worldwide language endangerment issues, but lots of information also provided on fieldwork experiences], Walsh 2007
        Alaska: Kari 1991, Kari 2003, Woodbury 2007
        Pacific Northwest: Watanabe and Sasama 2007
        China: Poa and LaPolla 2007
        India: Abbi 2001
        Latin America (Spanish-speaking): Craig 1987, Lastra 2004, Grinevald 2005, Edwards 2009
        Amazon: Everett 2003
        Africa: Fast 2009, Good 2012
        Indonesia: Florey 2008

'Developing countries and beyond': Fife 2005

Endangered languages: Hale et al. 1992, Grenoble and Whaley 1998, Krauss 2001, Grinevald 2003, Matras 2005, Comrie 2007, Grinevald 2007, Harrison 2007, Krauss 2007, Dobrin, Austin, and Nathan 2009, Evans 2010, O'Shannessy 2011, Austin and Sallabank 2015

Memoirs/biographies of linguistic fieldworkers:
        Bob Dixon: Dixon 1984
        Ken Hale: Hale 2001, Green 2001
        A.G. Morice: Mulhall 1986
        J.P. Harrington: Laird 1975; Walsh 1976
        David Wilkins: Wilkins 1992
        Melville Jacobs: Seaburg and Amoss 2000

All of the contributions to Newman and Ratliff 2001b are autobiographical to a certain extent.

Fieldwork for specific purposes:
        Phonetics: Ladefoged 1997, 2003, Maddieson 2001
        Syntax: Gil 2001, Chelliah 2001, Payne 1997 (sort of)
        Sociolinguistics: Labov 1984, Schilling 2013
        First language acquisition: McDaniel, McKee, and Cairns 1996
        Second language acquisition: Freed 1978
        Semantics: Matthewson 2004

Anthropological perspectives: Mead 1939, Lounsbury 1953, Wax 1979, Wengle 1988, Fife 2005

Speaker perspectives: McLaughlin and Sall 2001 (part II), Kadanya 2007

Outdated computational linguistic perspective: Lawler 1967

Commercial videos with fieldwork scenes:
        Linguistic: Brackett and Wilder 1941 [very small amount on linguistic fieldwork]; Kramer et al. 2009
        Ethnomusicological: Venetis, Miller, and Greenwald 2001

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