

Ling 431, Spring 2005

Linguistics 431: Investigations in an unfamiliar language*

Jose Camacho, Rutgers University

Location/Time:

Room 001, Department of Linguistics (on CAC), 18 Seminary Place, MTh 11:30-12:50

Contact info

Instructor: Jose Camacho

Office hours:

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Time: M-Th: 10:00-11:00 Time: by appointment

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Course overview

This course will provide opportunities to develop and test linguistic hypotheses dynamically with a native speaker. It builds on the results of other linguistics classes (syntax, phonology, etc.), in that the theories developed in those classes provide the background for studying a particular language, which in this course is Polish. The basic coverage of the first half of the class will be the phonemic system and foundations in morphosyntax, attempting to describe the basic sound structures of Polish, identify how subjects and objects are marked, and the basic word order of simple sentences. The second half of the class will be on focused research topics that arise out of the first half.

Testing linguistic hypotheses dynamically means that much of the class time will involve stating the predictions of some initial hypothesis, or set of hypotheses, and then going on to try to collect data that can confirm or disconfirm these hypotheses and perhaps lead to new ones. The principal difference between this class and other linguistics classes is therefore that the focus is on a particular language and that much of the data relevant for the analyses given for Polish will be collected first hand.

Class procedures

The 2 linguistic consultants for the class will be working with us on Thursdays (marked with an * on the syllabus). They will be available from 11-1, working in the necessary breaks. Our general procedure will therefore be to prepare for data collection sessions on Mondays, identifying the chief questions we are interested in and what methods we intend to use to answer them.

The class will be divided into 6 working groups, each of which will have weekly 25 minute sessions with one of the consultants.

Each student will be responsible for responsible for at least one elicitation session, and one of the requirements of the course is to write an elicitation summary., which has both a statement of the goals of the data collection session and a follow-up summary of data collected.

Materials

Articles will be available online through the library.

*** Workload***

* The essential work for the class will involve coming to class and participating actively in class discussions and completing a set of assignments in a timely fashion. There are four types of assignments: three short homeworks designed to hone your analytical skills in particular areas of linguistics, two small projects/ (one on phonemics and another on basic clause structure), a research paper on a topic defined by the student, and an elicitation report that documents the research questions and results of a student-direct elicitation session. Assignments should be turned in on time. Only one assignment will be accepted beyond its deadline. All other late assignments will not receive credit.

Basis for grading

Grades will be calculated as a simple average of the grades of individual assignments, according to the following weighting:

- the homeworks receive a basic grade (on a 1-100 point value system),
- the two projects are each worth two homeworks,
- the research paper is worth three homeworks,
- and each of the 3 elicitation reports is worth one homework.

So, the basic formula is as follows: $(3 \text{ homeworks} * 1) + (2 \text{ projects} * 2) + (1 \text{ paper} * 3) + (3 \text{ elicitation reports} * 1) = \text{grade}$.

Schedule of topics and assignments

Part I. Foundations in sound structures

***Jan. 27*:** Introduction to class goals and methods

Reading: Munro article

***Jan. 31*:** Elicitation techniques, working with human subjects

Reading: Samarin chapter

* Feb. 3***: Begin word list, phonemes of Polish Link

<http://hctv.humnet.ucla.edu/departments/linguistics/VowelsandConsonants/course/chapter1/chapter1.html> to Lagefoded's A Course in Phonetics

Reading: Rothstein article (pp. 686-696)

*Feb. 7, 10***: Refine transcriptions, elicitation techniques

Assignment 1 [../431/assignment1.htm](http://431/assignment1.htm): phonemic analysis homework (due Feb. 14) Session 2 recordings <http://rufla.rutgers.edu/session2.mp3> (mp3, large file!), and another file [../431/session2-1.wav](http://431/session2-1.wav), and another one <http://rufla.rutgers.edu/20050210.zip>

*Feb. 14, 17***: Focus on syllable structure. Finalize and analyze word list, compare with published materials (see, for example Schmidt and Marek <http://diotavelli.net/files/polishsyllables.pdf>)

Assignment 2 [../431/assignment2.htm](http://431/assignment2.htm): phonemics of Polish project (*due Feb. 24*), * first elicitation report due Feb. 21* Session file 1 <http://rufla.rutgers.edu/session3-1.wma>, 2 <http://rufla.rutgers.edu/session3-2.wma> and 3 <http://rufla.rutgers.edu/session3-3.wma>, and another one <http://rufla.rutgers.edu/g5-20050217.mp3> (2/17)

Mid-semester course evaluation

<http://cat.rutgers.edu:8080/midcourse/Camacho615431.html> (anonymous)

Part II. Foundations in morpho-syntax/

* Feb. 21, 24***: Introduction to morpho-syntax. Morpheme inventory
Session file 1 <http://rufla.rutgers.edu/Polish/session4-1.wma>, 2 <http://rufla.rutgers.edu/Polish/session4-2.wma> and 3 <http://rufla.rutgers.edu/Polish/session4-3.wma> and another one <http://rufla.rutgers.edu/Polish/g5-20050224.mp3>

Reading: Payne chapter 2 (pp. 20-31)

*Feb. 28, March 3***: word classes and distributional properties Session file 1 <http://rufla.rutgers.edu/Polish/session5-1.wma>, 2 <http://rufla.rutgers.edu/Polish/session5-2.wma> and 3 <http://rufla.rutgers.edu/Polish/session5-3.wma> and another one <http://rufla.rutgers.edu/Polish/g5-20050303.mp3>

Reading: Payne chapter 3-4 (pp. 32-90)

Assignment 3 [../431/assignment3.htm](http://431/assignment3.htm): Word classes (due Mar.10)

*Mar. 7, 10** : subjects and objects, constituent order part I. Session file 1
<<http://rufla.rutgers.edu/Polish/session6-1.wma>, 2 <<http://rufla.rutgers.edu/Polish/session6-2.wma> and 3 <<http://rufla.rutgers.edu/Polish/session6-3.wma> Word order guidelines
<../431/wordorder.htm

*Mar. 21, 24** : constituent order part II, clarifying further research problems

Reading: instructions for research paper. Think of a topic

Assignment: basic clause structure assignment (due Mar. 28), *second elicitation report due March 24*

N.b.: Mar. 14th-17th is spring break

Part III. Focused research

*Mar. 28, 31** : identifying research projects and the scope of the final paper

Assignment: statement of intent for final project (due Mar. 31)

*Apr. 4, 7** : analytical elicitation I

Reading: Rice article

*Apr. 11, 14** : analytical elicitation II

Assignment: elicitation reports due

*Apr. 18, 21** : analytical elicitation III

*Apr. 25, 28** : analytical elicitation IV, *3rd. elicitation report due April 28*

May 2 : analytical elicitation V

Assignment: final project due May 9th

*Thanks to prof. John Alderete for access to his 2003 syllabus and other materials.