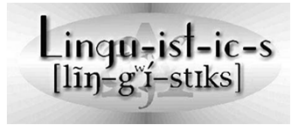


LNGT0101

Introduction to Linguistics



Lecture #1
Sept 10th, 2012

So, what's linguistics about?

- Linguistics is defined as **the scientific study of human language**.
- But how do we study language scientifically?

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Forming plural in Samoan

Singular Verb

nofo 'he sits'
moe 'he sleeps'
alofa 'he loves'
savali 'he walks'
malieu 'he dies'

Plural verb

nonofo 'they sit'
momoe 'they sleep'
alolofa 'they love'
savavali 'they walk'
maliliu 'they die'

- Now, predict:
atamaʔi 'he is intelligent' ???? 'they are intelligent'

3

Forming definite nouns in Lyele

In Lyele (Niger-Congo: Burkina Faso), vowels can bear one of three tones, e.g., [a] is mid tone; [á] is high tone; and [à] is low tone.

Indefinite noun	English translation	Definite noun	English translation
kúmí	'bird'	kúmíí	'the bird'
yálá	'millet'	yáláá	'the millet'
kùlí	'dog'	kùlíí	'the dog'

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Forming definite nouns in Lyele

In Lyele, vowels can bear one of three tones, e.g., [a] is mid tone; [á] is high tone; and [à] is low tone.

indefinite noun	English translation	definite noun	English translation
nà	'foot'	nàá	'the foot'
yijí	'church'	yijíí	'the church'
ya	'market'	yaá	'the market'

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What English do you speak?

- What do you call the thing from which you might drink water in a school?
- What is your generic term for a sweetened carbonated beverage?
- How do you pronounce the 'c' in *grocery*?
- Fill in the blank with the past verb form of 'drag':
I _____ her lifeless body from the pool.
- Can you say "*I used to could do that*" to mean "*I used to be able to do that*"?
- Let's compare with results from Bert Vaux's maps:
<http://www4.uwm.edu/FLL/linguistics/dialect/maps.html>

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OK, but what's "language"?

- Language is a communication system.
- But what does a communication system consist of?

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Signs

- A sign is a pairing of a form and a meaning.
- Signs can be iconic or symbolic.
- But is the sign system of human language different from other communication systems?
- We discuss this on Wednesday.

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Next class agenda

- More about language and linguistics. Read Chapter 1, pp. 3-27.
- Do the **questionnaire** (link is in the final cell for today's class on the syllabus table) and send it to me by e-mail, ideally before Wednesday's class.

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