

## **LNGT0101: Introduction to Linguistics**

### **Issues you might want to consider when looking at your LAP language**

#### **Introduction**

- (1) The name of the language and whether the name has any significance, where it is spoken, the number of speakers, if it is endangered or extinct.
- (2) What is the language's genetic classification? What are related languages?
- (3) What is the sociolinguistic situation like? Are there several dialects of the language, sociolinguistically speaking? Is the language used in a multilingual society? What percentage of the people are monolingual? Is it an official language? If it is used in a multilingual society, what contexts are speakers likely to use this language in? Is there regular code-switching, i.e., moving back and forth between the language and another language in discourse or even within the same utterance?
- (4) Are children learning the language as their native language? What pressures are there on young people to learn another language?

#### **Phonology**

- (5) Provide basic facts about the consonant and vowel system of the language. Highlight any interesting aspects in this regard.
- (6) Describe most salient cases of allophony in the language.
- (7) What phonological processes/phenomena is the language best known for?
- (8) Comment on syllable structure. What phonotactic constraints are there?
- (9) Is stress placement predictable?
- (10) Is it a tone language? If so, how many tones are there?

#### **Morphology**

- (11) Is the language dominantly isolating or synthetic? If synthetic, is it dominantly agglutinative or fusional? Make sure you give examples to illustrate the morphological typology of the language.
- (12) What are the more common morphological operations in the language? Prefixation? Suffixation? Infixation? Circumfixation? Provide examples.
- (13) Is the language mainly head-marking or dependent-marking or mixed?
- (14) Does the language have incorporation, or compounding?
- (15) What is the alignment (i.e., case and agreement) system in the language? Exemplify some intransitive and transitive sentences in the language. Notice that some languages have a split case and agreement system, as we mentioned in class. If your LAP language is of that sort, explain the basis of the split in the language (e.g., tense/aspect, semantics of the verb, pronoun vs. NP?).
- (16) Any interesting observations on the tense system? Aspect? Mood? Modality?

#### **Syntax**

- (17) What is the basic word order in the language? Indicate which parameters among those we talked about are relevant, and what their settings are.
- (18) Are other word orders possible? If so, state the conditions under which these other orders occur.

- (19) Is the language uniformly head-initial or head-final or mixed? Consider the position of main verbs with regard to auxiliaries, objects with regard to verbs, adpositions with regard to NPs, determiners with regard to NPs, etc.
- (20) How are yes-no questions formed in the language? How are wh-questions formed? What is the setting for the wh-parameter?
- (21) Are there serial verbs?
- (22) Is it a null subject language? If so, does it have rich morphology on the verb like Italian, or is it of the Chinese-type?

**General comments on content and format**

- (23) Make sure you give examples to illustrate each linguistic fact you cite. Linguistic analysis is fundamentally based on illustrating data. Without data, how could anyone verify what you are saying?
- (24) This is not expected to be a comprehensive report on the language. Please be selective on what facts about your LAP language you want to highlight. You cannot possibly try to cover everything about the language in a 10-page report.
- (25) This is also meant to be a descriptive report, but with clear reliance on linguistic argumentation (drawing generalizations from a set of data and accounting for any apparent exceptions), in the very same way we did in class as well as on homework/exams.
- (26) You may consider dividing your report into sections if you want. This is the norm in linguistics papers.
- (27) For documentation, linguists typically use the APA (American Psychological Association) system. When citing a reference, simply write the last name of the author(s), followed by the publication date of the reference between parentheses. For example:  
In Chomsky (1965), a distinction is made between three levels of adequacy for grammatical theory: observational adequacy, descriptive adequacy, and explanatory adequacy.  
If you are quoting exact words, then add the page number(s) after the publication date, e.g., Chomsky (1970:33).
- (28) Use a font size of 12, with 1.5 spacing. You may use either footnotes or endnotes. The report should be 10-page long, excluding the reference page(s).