

Linguistics 408/508  
Anthropology 408

Spring 2001

Field Techniques  
and the  
Analysis of Natural Language

**Texts:** None.

**Prerequisite:** LING 407/507 or ANTH 407 dealing with Wolof.

**Basis for grading:**

Fifteen page paper.

Final version due the last day of the exam period, but I want you to provide me with versions of it **every** week or ten days so that I can comment on it as it progresses.

A second paper, not constrained by length, also due the last day of the exam period.

**All papers will** follow the style format of “The Simple Sentence in Wolof”.

The papers will be due the last day of the examination period this semester.

**Instructor:**

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**A short description of LING 408/508 and ANTH 408.**

This course is a continuation of LING 407/507 and ANTH 407 in which field study of Wolof, begun in the previous semester, is pursued in more detail. The topics which will be our focus this semester are largely determined

by the configuration of the target language. Formally, I expect you to write a paper that will be appropriate for presentation at some conference. Such papers are allotted varying amounts of time; twenty minutes is a frequent limit, so this paper should be on some topic that can be identified as problematical, discussed with some solution suggested within the space of fifteen (15) pages **absolute maximum**. Efficiency is essential here.

This paper may center upon

- (i) Some morpheme(s), e.g., *-ee-*, *-oo*, etc.,
- (ii) On the nature of the contrast between two related construction types, e.g. the relation between the inflected expressions and non-inflected alternatives,
- (iii) Elements of the tense-aspect-modality of Wolof, e.g. *di* ~ *don*.

The topic may derive from without Wolof. The jargon we have, and the way we use it, suggests that VOICE, ROLE, TOPIC, etc. should exist in Wolof, as in all languages. Issues in the presence and configuration of those semantics in Wolof grammar may provide the subject matter for your paper. Our text may provide a resource for some of this. Other topics are suggested by the linguistic literature:

- (iv) Causation (morphological vs. analytic, formal variety, degrees in, etc.),
- (v) Relative clauses (as a distinct construct, range in the function of the head in the clause, what can be modified by them, etc.),
- (vi) Negation (number of them, predication vs. non-predication, focus on constituents, etc.),
- (vii) Complex sentences ('if'/'when', 'and/but', 'in order to'/'because', etc.).

You may decide that your topic is best done using material that is textual, and if so, we should try to obtain (an) additional text(s), as soon as possible.

Since these papers are intended for public presentation, or publication, you should work out among yourselves topics that are complementary. I think that your selections will cause no problem. You should also now do as much **bibliographic** work on Wolof as you can and you should incorporate the remarks and contributions of others in your work. Your first assignment is to do a bibliography of Wolof. You may find the topic of your paper in this literature. It will also be a goal to set the problems you deal with here in a

broader linguistic context. Are the phenomena you are describing here repeated in some other language(s) in some way?

Because of the practical constraints on time, the second paper will be less polished, and because of that, it may end by being a longer than fifteen pages. It may serve first as a resource for you in further work on Wolof or in your other research; but it, too, should be constructed with the ultimate goal in mind that it will be presented publicly.