

3.2.2 Information on the languages of a particular field site

p. 75 Rice, who has done extensive fieldwork on North American Indian languages recommends: ‘As a fieldworker, it is necessary to embrace all sources of material ↵ and learn from them, but at the same time to treat them with necessary scepticism’ (Rice 2001: 248). This scepticism is especially warranted when the sources you consult are written with a Eurocentric bias and do not recognize the presence of exotic, unexpected features or the absence of familiar standard-European properties that have been believed to be universal, as Gil (2001) demonstrates.

Preliminary information on about 7,000 particular languages and their distribution in the countries of the world is provided by Ethnologue (<http://www.ethnologue.com>), while information on the grammatical structure of languages can be obtained from the *World Atlas of Language Structures* (<http://wals.info>). This atlas allows you to search for 141 particular language features and 2,650 languages by language name, language family, region, and country. (Haspelmath et al. 2008; reviewed by several authors in the journal *Linguistic Typology* vol. 13, 2009).

Books in which the basic structures of a representative sample of the languages of the world are described are Comrie (1990a–d), Garry and Rubino (2001), and Brown and Ogilvie (2009), surveys are also found in the Cambridge Language Surveys, the Routledge Language Family, and the Curzon Language Family series.

3.2.3 Information on particular morphosyntactic phenomena

Students who plan to write a reference grammar are recommended to consult:

- encyclopedias and handbooks (Booij, Lehmann, and Mugdan 2000 and 2004; Haspelmath et al. 2001; Spencer and Zwicky 2001);
- textbooks on linguistic typology (Comrie 1989; Givón 2001; Shopen 2007; Song 2001; Whaley 1997);
- articles about individual languages in volumes on specific typological topics such as argument structure (Plank 1985), case (Malchukov and Spencer 2008; Plank 1995), complementation (Dixon and Aikhenvald 2006), coordination (Haspelmath 2004), nominal classification (Senft 2000), or valency (Dixon and Aikhenvald 2000);
- the articles in *The World Atlas of Language Structures Online* (Haspelmath et al. 2008).

3.3 Recommendations for Anthropologists and Other Non-Linguistic Fieldworkers

p. 76 Researchers who do not have a background in linguistics can contribute to the study of endangered languages when they learn to understand the language and record, transcribe, and translate samples of spoken language with the help of bilingual native ↵ speakers. Burling's small book *Learning a Field Language* (1984) is especially written for researchers who want to learn the language in the field but are not primarily interested in linguistic analysis. He emphasizes ‘techniques for learning to understand’ and devotes half of his book to this ‘neglected aspect of language pedagogy’ (p. 6). For both comprehension and production, he recommends that the earliest stages of learning focus on vocabulary and word order without worrying too much about grammatical detail. But the book also offers an excellent, concise description of the essentials of grammar and gives some advice on how learners can advance their grammatical competence (Burling 1984: 55–64, 86–91).