

## A Stationary Field Trip: Class Language Survey (staple your report to the back page)

Your name (print legibly): \_\_\_\_\_

- Language name(s): \_\_\_\_\_ Spoken in: \_\_\_\_\_
- Approximate number of speakers: \_\_\_\_\_
- Informant(s) name(s): \_\_\_\_\_

### 1 Phonetics

- A. Using the IPA, write phonemically the translations in the informant's native language of **at least 5** of the words in the "**Swadesh List**" (= a list of basic words which are unlikely to have been borrowed from other languages):

two water ear die I liver eye hand hear tree fish name stone tooth breasts you  
path bone tongue skin night leaf rain kill blood horn person knee one nose full  
come star mountain fire we drink see bark new dog sun fly grease moon give heart  
feather white yellow bird head earth foot black mouth green sleep what root claw  
bite ash red eat egg who dry hair smoke not this seed woman round long stand  
good man cold flesh neck say burn tail sand that walk sit many all know cloud  
swim belly big hot lie small

- B. How does **accent** work? Is there one more prominent syllable in the words of this language—one which can be said to bear *stress accent*? (ask the informant to exaggerate the stress, so as to hear better where it falls).

If this is the case, does this prominent syllable appear mostly in a certain position (e.g. it is the last syllable, 1 to the last, 2 to the last, etc.)?

- C. Is main stress a distinctive feature? I.e. are there words which are *exclusively* distinguished by the stress position? (cf. Italian *ancora* 'anchor' *ancòra* 'still')

- D. Does this language have contrastive **vowel length**? (i.e. are there minimal pairs differing only in alternations between V/V: [a/a:], [a/a:], [e/e:] [i/i:] ...)

Try to find minimal pairs, record them with PRAAT, and insert in your report the spectrogram of the two words, marking the vowels.

- E. Does this language have contrastive **consonant length**? (i.e. a contrast in 'geminate': cf. Italian *mola*/*molla*). Test is the difference between long/short consonants also triggers a change in the surrounding vowels (cf. Italian [tɒno] vs. [ton:o]). You can also try to use PRAAT to see if the vowel becomes longer before a geminate consonant (cf. Italian [pa:la] vs. [pal:a]).

- F. Does the language have *complex syllable onsets*? (as in English "**crisp**"). If so, given an example, then list 2 cases of complex onsets which are **not possible** in the language under investigation, but which are possible onsets in *your* language. Write the consonants in IPA.

- G. In some languages (e.g. English) the distinction between voiced and voiceless consonants is distinctive in every position; in others (e.g. Hawaiian) it is never distinctive. In yet others, it is distinctive only when the consonant is placed in the *onset* of a syllable (in the coda, voice is in allophonic variation). Try to find out in which category your language falls. (Hint: look at how word final consonants are pronounced; they are always codas)

- H. Do you note anything strange or special in the phonology of this language? Which aspects strike you as similar to your own language (if any).

## 2 Morphology

- A. Does this language have a **gender** distinction? How many genders are there?
- B. How are **plurals** formed in this language? List all the forms. Can you find phonetic factors behind the choice of plural forms? Are some forms used only with certain genders?
- C. Are there **inflectional prefixes** in this language? Are there circumfixes?
- D. Are there **N-N compounds**? If so, where is the head, left or right? Give examples.
- E. Can you find a word with 2 inflectional affixes one after the other? (e.g. gender+number, tense+person).
- F. Can you find an example of a **derivational** suffix which turns an adjective into a noun?
- G. Can you find an example of a **derivational** suffix which turns a noun into a verb?
- H. Can you find cases of **apophony** (aka **ablaut**). I.e. case where a difference in grammatical features (number, tense) is visible in changes internal to the word (cf. *foot/feet*).
- I. How do **truncations** work in this language? How do you form nicknames, and in general how do you shorten proper names? Are there particular points at which a noun can be cut? (Hint, look at stress position, number of syllables). Can the final syllable of the truncated form be *open*?

- English examples:

Elisabeth ⇒ Lìz / Lizzy ; Tom ⇒ Tommy ; Patrìcia ⇒ Pat / Trìcia, ...

- Italian examples:

Francésca ⇒ Frànc-i / Césca; Giusèppe ⇒ Pèppe ⇒ Pepp-ìno; Giuseppe ⇒ Giuseppe-tto ⇒ Geppetto

Are there any particular **affixes** which are added to truncated forms (to make the noun sound cute, to express closeness, etc.)

- J. Are *adverbs* different from *adjectives*? Explain briefly how you tested this.
- K. Do you note anything strange or special in the morphology of this language? Which aspects strike you as similar to your own language (if any).

## 3 Syntax

- A. Is the subject obligatory in this language? If it is, is it possible to omit it at least with *weather verbs*? (cf. *it rains*).
- B. What is the most normal order of the various elements within the DP? I.e. in what order are *articles* (if they exist), *demonstratives* (cf. *this, those*), *cardinal numerals* (*three, fifty*), *possessors* (*his, my, John's*), *adjectives* (*nice, English*), *prepositional modifiers* (*with an umbrella*), *relative clauses* (*that was here*) and *nouns* found?

Example: in English you have:

- a. The<sub>det</sub> three<sub>num</sub> old<sub>adj</sub> dogs<sub>noun</sub> [in the cage]<sub>PP</sub>
- b. Those<sub>demonstr.</sub> people<sub>noun</sub>
- c. [The boy]<sub>'s</sub><sub>possessor</sub> three<sub>numeral</sub> best<sub>adj</sub> friends<sub>noun</sub>
- d. A boy [that I know]<sub>relative clause</sub> / a girl [with a red scarf]<sub>prepositional modifier</sub>

- C. Can you say *Numeral Noun* (e.g. *three dogs*) in this language, or do you need an extra element between the numeral and the noun?
- D. Can you have Wh-elements *in situ*? (i.e. can the interrogative element stay in the position in which its non-interrogative counterpart would be? I.e. can languages have the structure in [b] as the normal, correct way to form a question?).
- a. [Which boy] did Mary see ? *English: Wh move left*
- b. \*Did Mary see [which boy]?
- E. Do adjectives agree with nouns in this language (see [a] in Italian)? If so, do they also agree when in predicative position (i.e. [b])?
- a. Le morbide<sub>fem.plur</sub> rose<sub>fem.plur</sub> ‘the soft roses’
- b. Le rose<sub>fem.plur</sub> sono morbide<sub>fem.plur</sub> ‘the roses are soft’
- F. In natural language heads can take their complements either left or right. But not all languages are consistent in this choice. In this language, do verbs, prepositions, complementizers (= the elements that introduce sentences or relative clause, e.g. *that* in *I say [that she is here]* or *the woman [that came]*) and determiners take their complement *in the same direction*? If not, illustrate case where they do not.
- G. Is there Case (nominative/accusative/dative/...) in this language? Test by asking to put a noun X in various relations with respect to the verb and see if it changes (e.g. “N sleeps”. “N eats an apple”, “I see N”, “I give N a book”). Test with pronouns and full nouns separately, they could differ. Check whether the subject of intransitive verbs has the same case as the subject of transitive ones.
- H. If this language uses cases, how many distinct cases does it have? (e.g. for English it is 2: *he/him*; in Italian, 3: *io/me/mi*).
- I. Do you note anything strange or special in the syntax of this language? Which aspects strike you as similar to your own language (if any).