LING 410: Structure of a Specific Language: Wolof
Winter 2024

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Lecture: MW 1:05-2:25 pm
Office hours: Wed, 3-5 pm, 1085 Dr. Penfield, #318

Course description: This course is an in-depth investigation of the structure of a language other than English. This semester we will examine various aspects of the structure of the West Atlantic Niger-Congo language Wolof, covering a range of topics in phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. While we will look at specific puzzles in Wolof, we will do so with an eye toward their relevance to linguistic theory more generally, bearing the following questions in mind: Do linguistic theories mainly based on English and related languages successfully extend to data from Wolof? How does looking at Wolof contribute to the development of linguistic theories?

Prerequisites: LING330 (Phonetics), LING331 (Phonology1) and LING371 (Syntax1).

Requirements and evaluation: We will investigate the above topics through a combination of readings, class discussion, analyses of data, and assignments. Group work and in-class participation will be essential to successful completion of the course.

Course grades will be determined by the rubric below.

> Assignments: 60% (6 x 10% each)
> Article presentation: 10%
> Final project presentation: 10%
> Final paper: 20%

Readings: There are no books that you are required to purchase for this course; all readings will be posted on the MyCourses website, either as directly-downloadable articles, or as links to the McGill library website. Your responsibility is to **complete the reading before coming to class**; all readings are required unless marked as optional. Due to the nature of the course, it is inevitable that you will encounter unfamiliar terms, concepts, and theories while doing the reading for the course. "Completing" the reading does not mean that you have thoroughly understood everything in a paper, and you may find it useful to skim in certain places. Part of the goal of this course is to develop skills in how to efficiently get through difficult readings. You can expect to read approximately 2 articles per week.

Article presentation: In groups of 4-5, you will prepare and lead the discussion of one article. The presentation and discussion should take 30-40 minutes. In order to facilitate the discussion, you need to prepare a handout or slides. Additionally, you need to submit an informative summary of the article to be distributed to your classmates.

Short assignments: Over the course of the semester, you will have 6 assignments to turn in, roughly one every two weeks. These will be graded as follows: 5 = excellent, exceeds expectations; 4 = meets expectations, with a few details missing; 3 = on the right track, but not quite there; <3 = below expectations; 0 = not turned in. No late work will be accepted unless you

contact me with a legitimate excuse, preferably before the due date, accompanied by a valid written document (e.g., doctor's note). There will be no extra credit work or re-weighting of grades in this course.

Final Paper: In pairs, you will choose a topic of your interest for your final project on any aspect of the structure of Wolof. You will conduct research on the topic and present it to the class during the last week of classes. More details will be provided on this later.

Absences: You are expected to attend all classes. Absences must be substantiated with sick notes or other documentation. It is your responsibility to make up any material that you miss.

Academic integrity: McGill University values academic integrity. Therefore, all students must understand the meaning and consequences of cheating, plagiarism and other academic offences under the code of student conduct and disciplinary procedures (see www.mcgill.ca/integrity for more information).

Right to submit in French In accord with McGill University's Charter of Students' Rights, students in this course have the right to submit in English or in French any written work that is to be graded.

Course materials Instructor-generated course materials (e.g., handouts, notes, summaries, exam questions) are protected by law and may not be copied or distributed in any form or in any medium without explicit permission of the instructor. Note that infringements of copyright can be subject to follow up by the University under the Code of Student Conduct and Disciplinary Procedures.

Territory acknowledgement McGill University is on land which has long served as a site of meeting and exchange amongst Indigenous peoples, including the Haudenosaunee and Anishinabeg nations. We acknowledge and thank the diverse Indigenous people whose footsteps have marked this territory on which peoples of the world now gather.

The following schedule contains the topics we will cover, the due dates of assignments and exams, and readings. Readings in italics are optional. All materials will be posted on MyCourses website. The schedule is subject to change.

Homeworks are due on **Friday, 11:59**, in the week in which they are listed.

WEEK	TOPIC	READINGS (subject to change)	ASSIGNMENTS & PRESENTATIONS
Jan 8	Introduction		
Jan 10	Phoneme inventory	Diouf (2017), Ch 2, *Ka (1987)*	
Jan 15	Vowel harmony	Sy (2005), *Rose (2017)*	
Jan 17	Noun classes	McLaughlin (1997)	**hwk 1**
Jan 22	Consonant mutation	Merrill (2018): Ch 4	
Jan 24	Gemination, degemination	Bell (2003)	Sy (2006)
Jan 29	Adjectives	McLaughlin (2004)	
Jan 31	Clause structure	Robert (2016)	**hwk 2**
Feb 5	Clause structure	Martinović (2023), p.79-93	
Feb 7	Clause structure	Torrence (2013), Ch 2	Kihm (1999)
Feb 12	Tense	Bochnak and Martinović (2019)	
Feb 14	Imperfective aspect	Bochnak and Martinović (2018)	**hwk 3**
Feb 19	The locative and progressive	Martinović and Schwarzer (2018)	
Feb 21	Verbal morphology	Creissels and Voisin (2008)	Buell and Sy (2005)
Feb 26	Verbal morphology	Harris (2015), Ch 3 (3.1-3.2), Ch 4 (4.1-4.3)	
Feb 28	Verbal morphology	Tamba (2010)	**hwk 4**
March 11	Questions & Relatives 1	Torrence (2012)	Rialland and Robert (2001)
March 13	Questions & Relatives 2	Martinović (2017)	**hwk 5**: project proposal
March 18	Sluicing	Martinović (2018)	
March 20	Clitics	Zribi-Hertz and Diagne (2002)	McLaughlin (2001)
March 25	Nominal predication	Martinović (to appear)	
March 27	TBD		**hwk 6**: project progress report
NO CLASS			
April 3	Wrapping up		Bondéelle (2011)
April 8	Project presentations		
April 10	Project presentations		
April 11	Project presentations		

References

Bell, Arthur J. 2003. Gemination, degemination and moraic structure in wolof. In Working papers of the Cornell Phonetics Laboratory, volume 15, 1–68.

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Diouf, Fabienne Ngone. 2017. Urban Wolof loanword phonology. Doctoral Dissertation, Indiana University, Bloomington, IN.

Harris, Christen. 2015. Applicative structure in wolof. Doctoral Dissertation, The University of Western Ontario, London, Ontario.

Ka, Omar. 1987. Wolof phonology and morphology: a non-linear approach. Doctoral Dissertation, University of Illinois at Urbana Champaign, Urbana, IL.

Kihm, Alain. 1999. Focus in Wolof. A study of what morphology may do to syntax. In The grammar of focus, ed. Georges Rebuschi and Laurice Tuller, 245–273. Amsterdam: John Benjamins Publishing Company.

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Tamba, Khady. 2010. The morphosyntax of (anti) causatives in Wolof. Master's thesis, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS.

Torrence, Harold. 2012. The morpho-syntax of silent wh-expressions in Wolof. Natural Language and Linguistic Theory 30:1147–1184.

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