

DOCUMENTARY LINGUISTICS I
Nicole Nau & Tomasz Wicherkiewicz
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First lecture
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TOPICS OF THE DAY

- ❖ Who are your teachers? Who are our students?
- ❖ What is Documentary Linguistics?
What is language documentation?
- ❖ How was language documentation done in earlier times?
- ❖ What will we learn this semester?
- ❖ What do you have to do for the credits?
- ❖ Bonus track

YOUR TEACHERS (OFFICE: 205)

Prof. UAM dr hab. **Tomasz Wicherkiewicz**

E-mail: wicher @

Prof. dr hab. **Nicole Nau** office hour: (1) **Tuesday, 16:45-17:45**

E-mail: naunicol @

my homepage: <http://naunicol-e.home.amu.edu.pl/>

Empirical Linguistics and Language Documentation
(ELLDo): <http://elldo.amu.edu.pl>

Educational platform Languages in Danger:
<http://languagesindanger.eu/>

Database Poland's Linguistic Heritage:
<http://inne-jezyki.amu.edu.pl>

DOCUMENTARY LINGUISTICS

- ❖ a new field of linguistics (since the 1990s)
- ❖ concerned with **language documentation** (sometimes synonym)
- ❖ interdisciplinary


Why in the 1990s?

Why interdisciplinary? Which disciplines?

DOCUMENTARY LINGUISTICS IS RELATED TO:

- concern about language endangerment
- corpus linguistics
- speech technology
- ethnography
- ...

«Documentary linguistics takes up a vision of the **integration** of the study of language **structure**, language **use**, and the **culture** of languages.» (Hill 2006)



«Documentary Linguistics [..] is concerned with the making and keeping of **records** of the world's **languages** and their **patterns of use.**»
(Woodbury 2003)

QUESTIONS

What **records** are there of the English language?

Imagine nobody speaks English anymore. What could someone **learn** about English from the existing records?

How is the situation for the other ~ 7000 languages of the world?

LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION

(MORE DETAILS NEXT WEEK)

«Language documentation is concerned with the methods, tools, and theoretical underpinnings for compiling a **representative** and **lasting multipurpose** record of a natural language or one of its variants.»
(Himmelman 2006)

«Language documentation acquires language data from **many contexts** in the best, most **transferable**, and most **durable** formats.» (Furbee 2010)

«language documentation is the **creation, annotation, preservation** and **dissemination** of transparent records of a language» (Woodbury 2011)

THEORY AND PRACTICE — DO WE NEED THEORY?

«without theoretical grounding language documentation is in the danger of producing “data graveyards”, i.e. large heaps of data with little or no use to anyone» (Himmelmann 2006)

«evidence from archival deposits shows that video tends to be poorly used by documentary linguists, with video recordings being made without reference to hypotheses, goals, or methodology, simply because the technology is available, portable and relatively inexpensive.» (Austin 2014)

CURRENT IDEAS ABOUT LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION

«our field of enquiring is limited by our understanding: who would have imagined the importance of documenting mundane conversational speech a century ago?»

(Berge 2010)

«a language documentation should strive to include as many and as varied records as practically feasible [...] Ideally, then, a language documentation would cover all registers and varieties» (Himmelman 2006)

«PREHISTORY» (LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION BEFORE DOCUMENTARY LINGUISTICS)

16th – 18th/19th century, for example

- ❖ European travelers and scholars collect the Lord's Prayer in various languages
- ❖ Spanish missionaries in Latin America write grammars and dictionaries of indigenous languages
- ❖ German and Russian scholars describe languages of Russia / Siberia

Why?

THE LORD'S PRAYER IN LATVIAN IN SEBASTIAN MÜNSTER'S *COSMOGRAPHIA* 1588

Von dem Teutschen Landt.

Reue

Ein andere Statt in Lyfflandt mit nammen Derpst/hat ire Rauffmanschafft mit den Die Statt Derpst. Reuel. Reussen. Reuel aber ist weiter gegen Mitnacht zu dem Ostsee gelegen/gebraucht sich nicht weniger der Rauffmanschafft als Riga/ist auch schier derselb brauch da. Sie haben Lübeckische Recht/welcher sich die andern Stettlein auch gebrauchen. Es sind viel Sprach in Lyfflandt/deren sich keine mit der andern vergleicht. Zu Reuel vnd zu Derpst reden sie ein Sprach/heißt Estensch/vñ vmb Riga braucht man Lnuisch/da ist die rechte Lyffländische Sprach/vnd betten daselbst die Bawren/so Gottes Wort bericht haben/auff folgende weiß ihr Vatter vnser:

Vatter vnser der du bist in Himmeln/ geheiliget werd dein Name/ zutomm vns dein
Lābes mus kas tu es eckshan debbessis/ Schwetis tows waark/ enack mums tows
Reich dein will geschehe wie in Himmeln also auff Erden. Vnser täglich
walsstibe/ tows praats bus ka eckshan Debbes/ta wursan semmes. Musse denische
Brot gib vns heut vergib vns vnser schuld als wir vergeben vnsern
Māyse düth mums schodeen/ pammate mums musse grāke. kames pammat musse
Schuldigern/ nicht eynfähr vns bösen versuchung sonder behüt vns vor allem bösen.
parradueken/ Ne wedde mums louna badeckle/ pett passarga mums ni wüsse loune.

Dis alles oder zum größern theil/hab ich von dem erfarnen Johann Hasentödter/ so manich jar in Lyfflandt an den Herren Höfen vñ Cansleyen gewesen/vñ viel erfahre hat.

LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION IN THE LATER 19TH AND THE 20TH CENTURY

A remarkable scholar and person:

Franz Boas (1858-1942)

education in physics and geography

pioneer of modern anthropology

founded a standard for documenting languages: text collection + dictionary + grammar

? why is this (not) enough ?



SUMMARY: THE TRADITIONAL LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION (19TH-20TH CENTURY)

- ❖ done by linguists (often only 1 person)
- ❖ done by outsiders (not part of the community)
- ❖ published on paper (usually in small editions)
- ❖ result inaccessible to the speech community
- ❖ includes a dictionary, a grammar, and a collection of texts
- ❖ text collection: most often narrative texts (traditional stories)
- ❖ grammar: contains isolated sentences, 20th c often elicited/constructed

COURSE PROGRAM FOR THIS SEMESTER

Language documentation: principles and goals; language archives
(October, 3 lectures, N. Nau)

Data acquisition: fieldwork, recording, elicitation techniques, basic data management; (October/November, 3 lectures T. Wicherkiewicz, 1 lecture N. Nau)

Transcription and annotation (December, 3 lectures, N. Nau)

Complex case studies and more (January, 3 lectures, T. Wicherkiewicz)

Summary (30.01.2018)

ORGANIZATIONAL MATTERS AND HOMEWORK

Find the **homepage** of this class at the site elldo.amu.edu.pl

- Bibliography
- Tasks & Text => password: **DocuLing1**
contains homework – reading

For course credits: three **assessment tasks, due:**

- 07.11. on language documentation and archives
- xx.12. on data acquisition
- 09.01. on annotation (or related topic)

HOMework

Read one of the texts given on the homepage, note what you find important and try to answer the given questions.

Note also what you don't understand.

BONUS TRACK

Watch the trailer of the film «The linguists» and discuss what could it be that

- (a) someone (e.g. prof. Nau) likes about it
- (b) someone (e.g. prof. Nau) doesn't like about it

Can you relate your discussion to what was said in this lecture?

find the trailer here: <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=HInOD7VrCdY>