

Issues you might want to consider when looking at your LAP language

Introduction

- (1) The name of the language and whether the name has any significance, where it is spoken, the number of speakers, if it is endangered or extinct.
- (2) What is the language's genetic classification? What are related languages?
- (3) What is the sociolinguistic situation like? Are there several dialects of the language, sociolinguistically speaking? Is the language used in a multilingual society? What percentage of the people are monolingual? Is it an official language? If it is used in a multilingual society, what contexts are speakers likely to use this language in? Is there regular code-switching, i.e., moving back and forth between the language and another language in discourse or even within the same utterance?
- (4) Are children learning the language as their native language? What pressures are there on young people to learn another language?

Morphology

- (5) Is the language dominantly isolating or synthetic? If synthetic, is it dominantly agglutinative or fusional? Make sure you give examples to illustrate the morphological typology of the language.
- (6) What are the more common morphological operations in the language? Prefixation? Suffixation? Infixation? Circumfixation? Provide examples.
- (7) Is the language mainly head-marking or dependent-marking or mixed? Give examples.
- (8) Does the language have incorporation, or compounding? Can you tell if it obeys the verb object constraint?
- (9) What is the alignment (i.e., case and agreement) system in the language? Exemplify some intransitive and transitive sentences in the language. Notice that some languages have a split case and agreement system, as we mentioned in class. If your LAP language is of that sort, explain the basis of the split in the language (e.g., tense/aspect, semantics of the verb, pronoun vs. NP?).
- (10) Any interesting observations on the tense system? Aspect? Mood? Modality?

Syntax

- (11) What is the basic word order in the language? Indicate which parameters among those we talked about are relevant, and what their settings are.
- (12) Are other word orders possible? If so, state the conditions under which these other orders occur.
- (13) Is there variation in word order between main clauses and embedded clauses?
- (14) Is the language uniformly head-initial or head-final or mixed? Consider the position of main verbs with regard to auxiliaries, objects with regard to verbs, adpositions with regard to NPs, determiners with regard to NPs, etc.
- (15) How are yes-no questions formed in the language? How are wh-questions formed? What is the setting for the wh-parameter?
- (16) Are there serial verbs?
- (17) Is it a null subject language? If so, does it have rich morphology on the verb like Italian, or is it of the Chinese-type?