

**Linguistics Program
College of Arts and Sciences
Boston University**

Semester: Fall 2017
Course: CAS LX 368 / GRS LX 668: **Structure of African Languages**
Instructor: Zoliswa O. Mali, Ph.D.
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Meeting time: TR 2:00PM-3:15 PM (Arranged)
Office hours: MON. 4:15-5:15 PM, TUES. 10-11AM & by appointment

Course Description & Objectives: This course is an introduction to the linguistic analysis of African languages: general typology of African languages; phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics/pragmatics & aspects of language in society with specific focus on South African Nguni languages, with isiXhosa as a case study.

It seeks also to expose students to African language structure and status from the perspectives of theoretical and comparative linguistics (within the generative grammar framework), typology, and sociolinguistics, with focus on South African Nguni languages, especially IsiXhosa, and comparisons to its sister languages in that language group. It highlights peculiarities and issues that illustrate that these African languages have resemblances with other languages in various ways as will be demonstrated within the parameters of the topics and subtopics of linguistics mentioned above. Linguistic sounds and their systems, words, sentence structure and meaning of the aforementioned language group, as exemplified by isiXhosa will be examined. A close scrutiny of structural properties of Bantu (Nguni) languages, such as the noun class system, the structure of verbs, and topics in phonology and syntax will be done. The main approach of the course is comparative-typological, and we will also look at some selected aspects of language acquisition. Students will be required to collect their own data from published sources and share their findings with the class. There will be problem solving exercises to work through.

Learning Outcomes:

1. Students will be conversant with linguistic vocabulary as applied to African languages.
2. Students will learn how to articulate, (de)construct and analyze data from African languages so as to understand the structure of these in relation to other world languages including theirs.
3. Students will be able to draw their own conclusions regarding some typological theories as related to some aspects of African languages relating to their sound, word and sentence structure.
4. Students will learn some African cultural nuances as portrayed in socio-linguistic data.
5. Students will know some aspects of L1/L2 acquisition as exemplified through Nguni languages.

Course & Grading Requirements:

The final grade will be based on background reading, in-class exercises and participation, homework, assignment, midterm examination, final project and final examination. Students will be graded on their attendance and participation. For every unjustified absence, 2% will be deducted from the 10% devoted to attendance and class-participation.

Assigned readings (10%): Each student will submit one point of reflection or one question on each assigned weekly reading before the class meets. Late questions will cost 2 points/day.

Graduate Students vs Undergraduate students:

(1) Graduate students who are prepared to write a 12-20-page research paper/ final project (double spaced), and who have developed a topic and had it approved by the instructor by the seventh week of class may substitute a paper/ final project for the end of the semester exam.

NOTE: Topics must be new, i.e. not previously researched by the student for this class. This will be presented in class on the last day of classes and a written copy be submitted by the exam date by email and a hard copy.

(2) For the assignment, graduate students will be expected to submit evidence of reading no less than 10 sources to support their arguments and findings. The length of their assignment will be 8-15pages. For **undergraduate students** the assignment pages required will be 5-10 double spaced.

Grading:

10% Attendance & participation
10% Assigned readings (Submitted Reflections & Questions)
20% Homework assignments [Drop 2 lowest]
20% Midterm examination
20 % Assignment
20% Final examination (Project/Paper for Graduate Students)
TOTAL : 100

Grading Scale

93-100	A		78-79.99	C+
90-92.99	A-		73-77.99	C
88-89.99	B+		70-72.99	C
83-87.99	B		60-69.99	D
80-82.99	B-		>60	F

Academic Conduct: All Boston University students are expected to maintain high standards of academic honesty and integrity. It is the responsibility of every student to be aware of the Academic Conduct Code's content and to abide by its provisions. The University's code of conduct is available at

<http://www.bu.edu/academics/resources/academic-conduct-code/>.

NOTE: Each student is responsible for knowing the definitions of academic misconduct and plagiarism, and each student is responsible for avoiding these; penalties may include a failing grade for an assignment or for the entire course.

Graduate students should refer to the GRS Academic Conduct Code, which can be found here:

<http://www.bu.edu/cas/students/graduate/grs-forms-policies-procedures/academic-discipline-procedures/>

Accommodation for disability: NB: Boston University is committed to equal access for students with disabilities. If you have a specific disability and require accommodations in this class, please let me know early in the semester so that appropriate accommodations can be made. You must provide me with a letter of needed accommodations prepared by the Office of Disability Services. If you have questions about requesting academic accommodations, please contact the Office of Disability Services. Contact information for that office is as follows: (617) 353-3658 V/TTY or access@bu.edu. OR (www.bu.edu/disability).

Required Textbook:

Bock Z, and Mheta, G. (Eds) *Language, society and communication - an introduction*. (2014). Van Schaik Publishers, Pretoria. [ISBN: 9780627030963 .eISBN: 9780627030505] (Listed in the schedule as BM)

Other readings:

1. Links to articles for additional reading are already pasted within the syllabus.
2. Links to additional reading materials such as articles and handouts from selected book chapters will be posted on Blackboard.
2. Some materials used in LX 250 will be referenced as relates to general linguistics topics that apply to African languages as well.
3. A list of recommended books will be supplied before classes start. This will be to support the textbook in specific topics of African linguistics (Phonetics/ Phonology, Morphology, Syntax).

COURSE SCHEDULE

[NOTE: This schedule is subject to modification as deemed necessary.]

WEEK	DATE	TOPIC & READING	WORK DUE (by 7pm on DD)
1-2	09/05-09/14	PART 1: LANGUAGE AS COMMUNICATION Chapter 1 Communication in context Chapter 2 Approaches to communication Article: Hyman, Larry (2003) Why describe and African language? http://www.linguistics.berkeley.edu/~hyman/Rutgers_Paper_Why_Desc_ribe3.pdf (Retrieved on 01/22/2016)	Homework 1
			Due Date : 09/15
3-4	09/19-28	PART 2: FORMAL ASPECTS OF LANGUAGE Chapter 4 Phonetics: the study of human speech sounds Reading: Ladefoged, Peter (2008) <i>A course in Phonetics</i> (5 th Edition) – [Excerpt from Chapter 6] http://www.phonetics.ucla.edu/course/chapter6/xhosa/xhosa.html http://www.phonetics.ucla.edu/course/chapter6/6aiarstream.html Chapter 5 Phonology: sound patterns in languages Article: Steven Bird & Larry M. Hyman(co-editors) (2014) "How to study a tone language". <i>Language Documentation & Conservation</i> 8.525-562. (Special series "How to Study a Tone Language"	Homework 2 DD:09/29
5-6	10/03-12	Chapter 6 Morphology: how words are formed Article: Hyman, Larry. (2013) " "Issues in the phonology-morphology interface in African languages." <i>Proceedings of 43rd Annual Conference of African Linguistics</i> , Tulane University, New Orleans, 16-25. Cascadilla Proceedings Project. Article: Demuth, K. 2000. Bantu noun class systems: loanword and acquisition evidence for semantic productivity. In G. Senft, ed. <i>Systems of Nominal Classification</i> . Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 270-292.	Homework 3 DD:10/13
7-8	10/17-26	Chapter 7 Syntax: from words to sentences	Homework4

		<p>Article: The Syntax of African Languages Jochen Zeller (University of KwaZulu-Natal) http://www.jzeller.de/pdf/Afri%20Syn.pdf</p> <p>Article: Smouse, Mantoa Rose. Uninterpretable features in comprehension: Subject-verb agreement in isiXhosa. South African Journal of African Languages 2013:33 (1). - See more at: http://www.sll.uct.ac.za/sll/sections/african_languages/publications#sthash.CIy6Erol.dpuf</p>	DD:10/20
			Midterm Exam 10/26
9-10	10/31-11/09	<p>PART 3: LANGUAGE LEARNING Chapter 8 First language acquisition Chapter 9 Second language acquisition</p>	Homework 5 DD: 11/09
11-12	11/14-30	<p>PART 4: FROM LANGUAGES TO LANGUAGING Chapter 11 Language, society, diversity Article: “Amaphi ama-subjects eniwa-enjoy-ayo esikolweni?”: Code-switching and language practices among bilingual learners in the Eastern Cape Silvester Ron Simango</p> <p>Article: Dowling, T. 2011. ‘Stressed and sexy’: Lexical borrowing in Cape Town Xhosa. International Journal of Multilingualism 8(4):345-366. - See more at: http://www.sll.uct.ac.za/sll/sections/african_languages/publications#sthash.CIy6Erol.dpuf</p>	Assignment
	11/23 No Class	THANKSGIVING RECESS	DD: 11/28
13-14	11/28-12/05	<p>Chapter 12 Language families and typologies</p> <p>Article: Good, Jeff (2009) African languages and linguistic typology. University at Buffalo. (Draft) http://www.acsu.buffalo.edu/~jcgood/jcgood-AfricaTypology.pdf</p> <p>PART 5: LANGUAGE, IDENTITY AND PLACE Chapter 16 Language and identity</p> <p>Article: Dowling, T. 2010. ‘Akuchanywa apha please’ No peeing here please: The language of signage in Cape Town. South African Journal of African Languages 30(2):192-208. - See more at: http://www.sll.uct.ac.za/sll/sections/african_languages/publications#sthash.CIy6Erol.dpuf</p>	
15-16	12/07-12/12	<p>PART 6: FINALE Chapter 19 Language study and the professions & Final Review (We will have Xhosa Cuisine for closing.)</p>	
16	12/12	Final Project PowerPoint Presentation	PPT Presentations DD: 12/12
Exam Wk	12/16	Written Paper Submission	Exam Date TBD