

Stimulus-based data collection in LDD

3L Summerschool 2008
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Focus of the classes

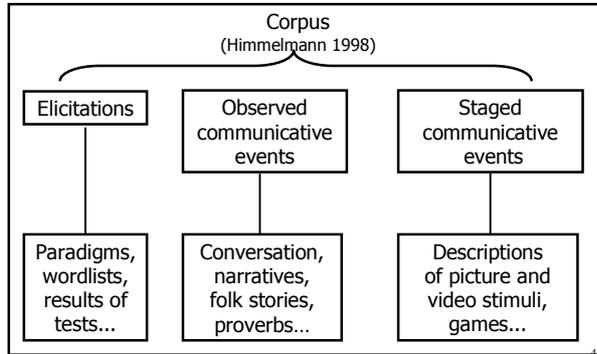
The big picture on data collection issues in LDD in the plenary tomorrow morning!

- Today:
 - Overview of Himmelmann's types of communicative events
 - Focus on staged communicative events
 - Typology of stimuli used to collect staged communicative events
- Tomorrow afternoon:
 - Examples for the use of different types of stimuli
 - Widely held criticisms of stimuli and some arguments against them

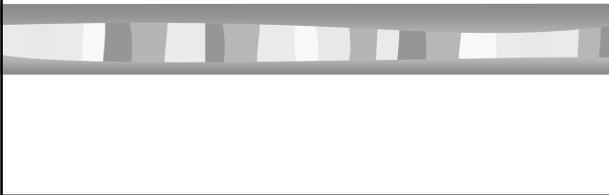
Your turn

- What types of data have you already collected or intend to collect in the field?
- Did you use or do you plan to use any props?
- Are you aware of stimuli aiding fieldworkers in data collection? If yes, which stimuli are you aware of?
- Please take five minutes to think about these questions – we will discuss your findings as a group.

Documentation = a large, annotated corpus



Data resulting from staged communicative events



Types of staged communicative events

- SCVs with verbal prompts:
 - ‘Tell me how you cultivate rice, please!’
 - ‘Can you explain how you use a VéloV?’
 - ‘What happens during a typical naming ceremony in your village?’
- SCVs with ‘aural’ stimuli:
 - The researcher tries to evoke an atmosphere that is typical for certain communicative situations by taking the consultant to a specific location, playing music, exposing them to smells, etc.
- SCV’s with nonverbal stimuli
 - The researchers uses pictures, games, and video clips in order to obtain linguistic data.

SCVs based on aural stimuli



Evoking situations

- Especially in contexts of severe language endangerment, the context of use for a number of communicative events may not exist any longer.
- Semi-speakers and rememberers may feel inhibited to simulate these communicative events.
- Evoking a speech situation may help them to recover memory and feel less shy about reproducing speech events from the past.

There are no prefabricated stimuli for this event type – it will depend on the creativity of the researcher!

Your turn

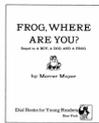
- Think about your field situation. Take five minutes to think about speech events that are not produced any more in the speech community, and how you might evoke a situation similar to the one in which they were used.
- Is this situation linked to a particular place, season, setting?
- Is it associated with particular music, rituals, food, smells?
- ...
- We will share our findings in the group.

Staged communicative events based on nonverbal stimuli



Types of stimuli

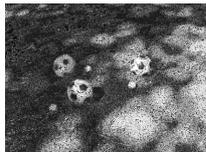
- Static stimuli:
 - Comics
 - Picture books
 - Photos
- Dynamic stimuli:
 - Acted videos
 - Animated videos
 - Staged life events
- Interactive stimuli:
 - Puzzle tasks
 - Map tasks
 - Matching games



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Static stimuli

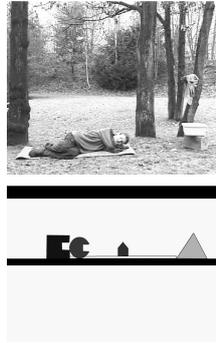
- Picture books
 - Topological relations picture book
 - Frog story
- Photos
 - Positional verbs picture book
- Comics
 - Calvin & Hobbes
 - Tintin
 - Asterix & Obelix



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Dynamic stimuli

- Acted videos:
 - Staged events
 - Cut & Break
 - Pear film
- Animated videos:
 - Fish film
 - Event triads
 - ECOM clips



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Interactive stimuli

- Matching/sorting games games:
 - Basic colour terms
 - Munsell chips
 - Men and tree
 - Cluedo
- Puzzles:
 - Eisenbeiss/Matsuo puzzle
- Map tasks/route descriptions:
 - HCRC map task
 - Table top route description task



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Advantages and limits of data based on stimuli



Your turn

- Can you imagine what the advantages of stimuli are compared to data collected with other methods?
- And can you imagine possible disadvantages and limits of use of stimuli?
- Please discuss with your neighbour for five minutes; we will compare your opinions in the group.

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General advantages and disadvantages

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Advantages of stimuli:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Are highly controlled, quantifiable and comparable.– Yield phonologically, semantically and syntactically accurate data.– Are free from linguistic interference of the metalanguage and from misunderstandings of context. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Disadvantages:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Cross-cultural applicability can be limited.– Use is limited to visually depictable scenes.– Do not allow a semasiological approach (investigation the different uses of a form), but only an onomasiological approach (studying the formal expression of a given function) |
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Static stimuli: advantages and limits

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| <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Advantages:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– Can be used for nonlinguistic categorisation tasks.– Are easy, cheap and low-tech to produce and use. | <ul style="list-style-type: none">■ Disadvantages:<ul style="list-style-type: none">– A familiarity with culture-specific narrative and picture-reading conventions is required. |
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Dynamic stimuli: advantages and limits



■ Advantages:

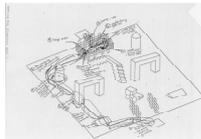
- Allow the recreation of real-world events as they unfold over time.
- Can be replicated infinitely without any change in detail.

■ Disadvantages:

- Require the use of high-tech which is often complicated if not impossible in the field.
- Depending on the abstractness of the stimulus, misunderstandings can occur.

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Interactive stimuli: advantages and limits



■ Advantages:

- Allow controlled interaction of two or more speakers.
- Allow the masking of the linguistic purpose of the interaction.

■ Disadvantages:

- May create culturally inappropriate or strange situations.
- Since the true purpose of the interaction is normally not known to the consultants, misunderstandings occur easily.

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Your turn

- Please form three groups.
- In each group, please pick one of the following linguistic domains for which you will design a stimulus:
 - An investigation of direct and indirect causation.
 - An investigation of colour terms.
 - An investigation of alienable and inalienable possession.
- Take 10 minutes to think about the linguistic parameters your stimulus needs to cover and come up with a description of a possible stimulus.
- We will present your results in the group.

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