

This workshop offers an introduction to a series of cognitive language deficits, and an investigation of data which illustrates some of the deficits in question. The workshop is intended especially for three target audiences: those wanting an introduction to language deficits and other common problems that affect language performance, especially in the elderly (dementia, aphasia, alcoholic Korsakoff's syndrome, depression,) those interested in how these defects manifest in a language typologically very different from more well-known languages, and those working with endangered or obsolescing languages, where data must often be gathered from elderly speakers and/or less than fully fluent speakers. In such situations, it is extremely important to be aware of the potential problems with such data due to one or the other of the two issues.

Lise Menn will then show further examples of language from speakers with some of these problems in English and some well-known non-IndoEuropean languages, and will discuss some of the known problems in generalizing data from language impairment in English to other languages.

Andrew Cowell will then present data on and from the Arapaho language. Arapaho is an agglutinating, polysynthetic, free-word-order language. Data on the effects of stroke, dementia and related conditions is extremely limited for languages of this type. The data include audio of a speaker recorded around 15 years apart, with the speaker showing dementia in the later recordings. The second set of data is video of a speaker before and after a right-hemisphere stroke. This part of the discussion will compare phonological, morphological, syntactic and pragmatic features in the speech of both individuals before and after dementia and stroke. Cowell will also present some comparative data on features exhibited by younger Arapaho speakers, who may lack full command of the language, and compare these to the effects of stroke and dementia.

The session will conclude with a panel and general discussion on practical aspects of fieldwork with elderly speakers who may have communication disorders, including allowing for deafness and dental problems.