

Teaching with the Wamesa Talking Dictionary

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Over the duration of this grant, the Wamesa Talking Dictionary (<http://talkingdictionary.swarthmore.edu/wamesa/>) has been expanded from just over 300 entries to 1023. In addition, the Cenderawasih Bay Corpus was established (<http://talkingdictionary.swarthmore.edu/cenderawasih.php>), which currently includes talking dictionaries for four additional related languages beyond Wamesa. Four more dictionaries are still in progress. These dictionaries were integral to the design of the Structure of Wamesa course (LING 067) as I taught it in Fall 2017. Descriptions of course assignments making use of them are described below.

- (1) Homework 1 asked students to use the Wamesa dictionary to discover the phoneme inventory of the language. The headwords were removed from the dictionary, so students could see only the (English and Indonesian) glosses, as well as any photographs, and hear the each word's recording. Students listened to the recordings, transcribed them, and used this as evidence to argue for the set of speech sounds used contrastively in Wamesa.
- (2) For HW2, students used the sound clips in the Wamesa talking dictionary to take phonetic measurements, and reported on their findings.
- (3) In HW5, students first used a set of example sentences given in the recording to figure out syntactic and morphological patterns in Wamesa. They were then asked to use the talking dictionary as a source of lexical items to create their own new sentences using the patterns they'd just discovered. They were also asked about discrepancies between the forms of words as they are listed in the dictionary and their spoken forms in the recordings, requiring them to do morphological analysis. (The listed headwords are bare roots; spoken forms of verbs are conjugated.)
- (4) In Week 9, the talking dictionaries figured prominently in a class discussion of the ethical responsibilities linguistic fieldworkers have towards the speech communities they study, and possible ways our research can give back to those communities.
- (5) In Week 10 we discussed lexicography in class. Students were asked to look at the full set of talking dictionaries, as well as a range of print dictionaries, to discuss their intended functions and audiences, strengths, weaknesses, what they include and exclude, and the pros and cons of print vs. digital format in different situations.
- (6) For their final course projects, two of the six students engaged substantively with the Wamesa talking dictionary. One student expanded it by going through an untranscribed field recording and extracting word and sound clips for upload. A second translated the children's book *The Giving Tree* by Shel Silverstein into Wamesa, using the dictionary to look up forms for the translation.