

Linguistic Fieldwork and Language Description (LASC10050/11061)

Semester 2, 2021/22

- Course organiser: **Laura Arnold** (laura.arnold@ed.ac.uk)
- Office hour: Tuesdays 14.00 (DSB 1.13, or online)
- Classes: Tuesdays 9-9.50 (19GS, G.02)
Thursdays 9-9.50 (40GS, Lecture Theatre C)
Fridays 9-9.50 (19GS, G.02)
- Course secretary Honours: **Liam Hedley** (lelinfo@ed.ac.uk)
MSc: **PG Office** (pplspgoffice@ed.ac.uk)

Welcome to Linguistic Fieldwork and Language Description! In this course, you will experience first-hand the satisfactions and challenges in collecting empirical data from an unfamiliar language. The goals of this course are three-fold:

1. To become familiar with two data collection techniques commonly used in linguistic fieldwork – controlled elicitation and text analysis;
2. To get comfortable independently planning your data collection, and processing and analysing linguistic data;
3. To learn how to develop a descriptive analysis, through the dialectic between data collection and reflection on the data.

In addition, this course is packed with transferable skills. In particular, you will learn how to collect, process, and analyse original data; to solve problems through critical analysis; to collaborate with your classmates; and to build a strong and authentic relationship with a native speaker consultant.

Course plan

Week	w/c	Tuesday	Thursday	Friday
1	17/1	Introductory lecture	Introductory lecture	Data collection
2	24/1	Data collection	Discussion	Data collection
3	31/1	Data collection	Discussion	Data collection
4	7/2	Data collection	Discussion	Data collection
5	14/2	Data collection	Discussion	Data collection
6	21/2	NO CLASS – Flexible Learning Week		
7	28/2	Data collection	Discussion	Data collection
8	7/3	Data collection	Discussion	Data collection
9	14/3	Data collection	Discussion	Data collection
10	21/3	Data collection	Discussion	Data collection

Course elements

- The first two classes of the course will be introductory lectures, outlining some basic principles and giving you some ideas for your first data collection sessions
- Data collection sessions with a native speaker consultant (Tuesdays and Fridays):
 - These are the backbone of the course
 - Initially, you will take turns eliciting data from the native speaker consultant
 - It will be up to you to plan your data collection and analyse the data
 - We will record these sessions, and you will take it in turns to process the data
 - All recordings will be available on Learn
 - Towards the end of the course, we will begin to analyse a naturalistic text in the target language – this will complement the elicited data
- Discussion sessions (Thursdays):
 - In these sessions, we will meet without the native speaker consultant
 - The format of these sessions will vary, depending on what challenges the data present
 - Sometimes, we will discuss possible analyses of the data, formulate hypotheses, and plan what data we could collect to choose between competing hypotheses
 - At other times, I may offer mini-lectures on a particular phenomenon that we have come across in the language

Discord server

- We have a dedicated Discord server for this course: <https://discord.gg/qtJMfpvY>
- Any advice for your classmates, or requests for elicitation? Are you struggling to analyse a particular set of data? Have you found something you think is really cool? If so, please post to the #elicitation and #analysis channels!
- There will be separate channels for general enquiries, questions relating to the assessments, and other interesting things

Readings

- The readings for each week are available online via the Resource List, which can be accessed through Learn ('Library Resources' in the sidebar)
- These readings are very important for you to develop your skills in data collection and analysis – you'll be lost if you don't complete them!
- Many essential readings come from the following texts – these are available online via the Resource List, but you may want to buy your own copy:

Payne, Thomas, 1997. *Describing morphosyntax: A guide for field linguists*. New York: Palgrave Macmillan

Bowern, Claire, 2015. *Linguistic fieldwork: A practical guide*. Second edition. New York: Palgrave Macmillan.

Assessment

- Coursework 1: **20%** of the final mark
 - Due date: 12 noon, Thursday 24 February
 - A short paper outlining the sound system of the target language
 - Word limit: 1500-2000 words
 - You will receive further guidance on this assignment in Week 3
- Coursework 2: **60%** of the final mark
 - Due date: 12 noon, Wednesday 27 April
 - A longer project paper: an in-depth descriptive analysis of a topic in the sound system, morphology, or syntax of the target language, based on original data collected during the course
 - Word limit: 3000-3500 words (Hons), 3500-4000 words (MSc)
 - You will receive further guidance on this assignment in Week 7
- Class participation: **20%** of the final mark
 - Throughout the course, you will be assessed on your engagement with the speaker and the data
 - This includes your participation in the data collection and discussion sessions, and your involvement in processing the data, and your collaboration with your classmates
 - Your involvement on the Discord server will also be counted towards your mark