CAS LX 391/GRS LX 691
Linguistic Field Methods

Spring 2020

MWF 9:00-9:55, CAS 220

Instructor: Kate Lindsey
Office hours: Wed 2:30-5:30 (in office)
Office: 621 Comm Ave, 113
or by appt (email klindsey@bu.edu)
Contact: Message me on Slack (fastest)

Course website: lingfieldmethods2020.slack.com

1 Course description
This course is designed to prepare you to undertake the thrilling process of describing, analyzing, and documenting a previously undescribed language. You will learn how to plan and conduct elicitations of linguistic data, how to organize that data in electronic and paper form, and how to pursue research based on published literature combined with fieldwork. You will do this by working on a team to investigate a single language throughout the semester, and you will also produce an independent final research project on any aspect of the language you wish.

The chosen language for this year’s class is Indonesian. This language choice serves our class in two major ways. First, it’s a great introduction to the study and description of Austronesian languages, a family that boasts more than 1000 languages. Second, because the language is relatively well-described, we will be able to compare our preliminary analyses from class with those analyses that have been done on more comprehensive data sets and with more speakers. To that end, it would be against the spirit of the class to read any literature that is based on or references Indonesian in any way before submitting your final papers. After Week 6, you are encouraged to familiarize yourself with any non-Indonesian Austronesian literature.

2 Course objectives
Students completing this course will learn:
1. How to work with a native speaker to elicit linguistic data of various sorts
2. To plan elicitation sessions around specific research questions, constructing hypotheses and devising various ways of testing them in elicitation
3. To function as part of a team working towards a common goal, supporting colleagues and promptly performing tasks delegated to them by the group
4. To use a range of useful hardware and software to document and analyze real linguistic data
5. How to produce a research paper based on fieldwork, going from data, to analysis, to writing up.

3 Prerequisites
CAS LX 250 Introduction to Linguistics or equivalent, or instructor approval
4  Course structure
This course will have two distinct phases. In the first phase (Weeks 1-6), we will learn about the basics of carrying out linguistic fieldwork (including how to transcribe an elicitation session, which will be your first assignment), and we will make our first baby steps in understanding how our language for the semester works. This semester, we will be looking at the Austronesian language Indonesian, with the help of our consultant Natasya Sally Kosasih, a native speaker from Indonesia. Our data sessions will focus on figuring out the basics of our language’s phonology. This phase culminates with you all submitting your second assignment—a phonological sketch of the language, based only on the data we have collected for the class. We will discuss our sketches in a meeting at the end of Week 6. In the second phase (Weeks 7-15), our investigatory aims will shift so that you are collecting data related to your final project topics. In this phase, you will be allowed to consult pre-existing resources for Austronesian languages, so long as they do not reference Indonesian. There will also be opportunities for you to collaborate with other Austronesian Field Methods students (TBA). From this point on, you should start thinking about what your final project topics will be if you haven’t already, and must submit a written-up proposal by the Monday of Week 9. This phase culminates with student presentations on their final projects-in-progress in Weeks 14 and 15.

5  Instructional format
This course will consist of a mix of (1) in-class data collection and live elicitation with a native speaker consultant, (2) interactive lectures on methodologies and skills necessary for collecting and analyzing raw language data, (3) in-class discussions on data analysis, and (4) outside-of-class data collection and elicitation opportunities. The course aims to create an active learning environment. This approach means that throughout the semester, you will be expected to engage actively during class, solve problems collaboratively, practice self-assessment, and participate in a team-based learning experience.

6  Requirements
Background readings and reflections, in-class teamwork and collaboration, homework assignments, final research project

7  Required text
There is no required textbook for this course. Instead, I will post scanned excerpts from a range of sources to the Blackboard Learn site. A number of these will come from the following excellent books on linguistic field techniques and will also base our ethical discussions on linguistic fieldwork as an enterprise. If you are interested in pursuing fieldwork in the future, you may want to get a personal copy of one or more of them, but this is not required for this course.

While you will not be “examined” on the readings in any direct way, we will discuss them to some extent in our weekly research group meetings. More importantly, though, the team as a whole will be much more successful this semester if everyone in it is ready to apply the skills derived from the readings in class and on assignments when called upon.

Once we get into Phase 2, I will upload various existing pieces of literature on our language, as and when other members of the team or I find them. I may choose to assign portions of such literature to the whole group as compulsory reading if it turns out to be useful, in which case I will update the syllabus. As we start to think about your final projects, I will recommend readings relevant for specific projects to individual (groups of) students.

Keep an eye on the Class Schedule to see what you should be reading each week. Any updates to the syllabus will be announced to the whole class by Slack.

8 Required equipment
Everyone will need
- A notebook for fieldnotes
- Ball-point pens
- Access to a Windows computer for using FLEx and Saymore

The instructor will provide recording equipment for in-class and outside-of-class elicitation sessions. See Class Equipment document.

9 Course requirements and grading
- Class participation, including fulfilling team-based roles and responsibilities during/after class (25%)
- Assignment average (25%)
- Final project presentation (20%)
- Final project paper (30%)

As you can see, class participation counts for considerably more than it usually does in other classes. This weighting is because our success hinges on how well we work together as a team, and that means everyone turning up, pulling their weight, and participating as much as possible. During the semester, various jobs connected to our elicitation sessions will rotate around the class—see Class Roles and Class Schedule for more information. All of us will be relying on each other to carry out our assigned jobs, so part of your participation grade will come from how dependable you are as a colleague when it comes to these rotating tasks. Another part will come from your level of participation in analytical discussions, and the quality and thoughtfulness of the questions and comments you contribute in the Slack channels.

10 Assignments
Assignment 1
Due: February 7
Add all new words from one elicitation session to the class FLEx lexicon
Assignment 2
Due: February 14
Transcribe one of the short texts in Saymore or ELAN using the IPA

Assignment 3
Due: February 21
Interlinearize the short text using FLEx

Assignment 4
Due: February 28
Length: 4 pages + 1 page summary of contribution (undergraduates)
Produce a sketch of one aspect of the phonology of the language (perhaps focused on phoneme inventory, segmental and suprasegmental processes, and syllable types—a full list to choose from will be posted later). This will be based only on the data we have collected in class. I’m not looking for you to get the “right” answers here (remember that I don’t know what those are either!), but for you to make the best use of the data we have access to.
***Undergraduate students will write this sketch collectively and also submit a 1 page summary of their contribution to the sketch. Graduate students will write their sketches independently.***

Assignment 5
Due: March 20
Length: 5 pages (single-spaced)
Write up a final project topic proposal and hypothesis

Assignment 6
Due: April 3
Length: 10 pages (single-spaced)
Graduate students: submit a literature review of your final project topic

Assignment 7
Due: April 21
Present a 10-minute summary of your final project in class

Assignment 8
Due: May 6
You will produce a 20-page paper (single-spaced) studying some aspect of the language (the topic may be created by the student or chosen from a list provided by me). A comparative analysis of your chosen topic with another Austronesian language is a mandatory component of the final project.

Collaboration on Final Projects
As this class will operate in a team-based format, I am open to people working on a final project in a small group rather than individually. However, the chosen topic must be broad enough to warrant a need for more than one person. If you wish to do this, please make an appointment to meet with me as a group before Spring Break with a plan for how the labor will be divided
amongst collaborators profitably and fairly. As well as producing a single joint final project, such groups will also produce a single joint final project proposal for Assignment 5. However, each grad student in the group will be expected to research and write up their own literature review for Assignment 6.

Graduate students: Starting from week 8, graduate students will begin to meet with me once a week to discuss their final projects with me. Also, all graduate students must submit separate from their final project an LSA-style 500-word conference abstract based on it. In the case of group final projects, each grad student should write up their own version of this abstract.

11 Class procedures
During elicitation sessions, there are several jobs that need to be done. These jobs will rotate amongst all of us throughout the semester, following a job rota that we will agree upon. Once we establish the rota, it is your responsibility to do your job on your assigned days. If you are ill or discover you can’t attend class when you have a job, it is your responsibility to find someone else to cover your shift by emailing a colleague ahead of time and covering their shift in return. Don’t let your fellow teammates down!

The class roles are listed here.

Weekly Brainstorming Forums
To a large extent, what we investigate this semester will depend on where our interests take us. How successful we are depends on how effectively the team works together to solve problems. To help us make the most of our Research Group Meetings, we will maintain a forum each week on Slack. Posting here is optional, but if you want your post to be discussed at a meeting, you must post by 7am on the morning of the meeting. Examples of possible ways of using the forum include: (i) post a question or problem you would like to discuss at the meeting and possibly investigate in elicitation sessions that week; (ii) post a comment or question on the readings from that week, or (iii) post a response to someone else’s question/comment (for example, if you think we already have data which bears on it, or you can think of some useful tests which could be used to investigate it). There will be time set aside at each meeting to discuss what came up in the forum.

12 Classroom etiquette
Cell phones should be put away in silent mode as soon as class starts, and not used during the session. The only people allowed to use laptops in class are the data inputter for that day and the instructor—everyone else must use notebooks.

There will be no extra credit in this course.

13 Academic integrity
All undergraduate students are responsible for understanding and complying with the BU Academic Conduct Code, available at: https://www.bu.edu/cas/current-students/undergraduate/academic-conductcode-2/
Graduate students should instead consult the GRS Academic and Professional Conduct Code: https://www.bu.edu/cas/files/2017/02/GRS-Academic-Conduct-Code-Final.pdf

**Collaboration**
If you decide to form a study group to work together on assignments, your collaboration should not go beyond discussing ideas together. In other words, you must write up your own assignment separately from the group, using only your own words (except when quoting other work directly, in which case use citations as standard). The only exception to this is if you have been pre-approved to work as a group. [Remember: for groups including grad students, I will expect each grad student to complete Assignment 6 individually—you can then pool the insights from your literature reviews with the rest of the group.]

The following are all banned forms of collaboration (except for pre-approved group final projects):
- Having one or more members of the group produce a “group draft”, or “group essay plan”, which individual members of the group then customize.
- Writing up on separate computers while conferring with each other in real time (whether in person or via skype, chat services, or any other medium).
- Using another student’s complete assignment as a reference when completing your own.

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### Grading standards

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### Resources and Support
Please feel free to visit me during my office hours; I would be delighted to chat with you informally about course content and any questions or comments you may have. If you cannot make my regularly scheduled office hours, please feel free to contact me to make an appointment.

If you are experiencing difficulties in keeping up with the academic demands of this course, please do communicate that to me. Also consider contacting your academic advisor (or CAS’s Office of Academic Advising: 100 Bay State Rd., Room 401, casadv@bu.edu, 617-353-2400) and/or make use of the peer tutoring resources at the Educational Resource Center (http://www.bu.edu/erc/peer-tutoring/).

If you require course material in an alternative format or need special accommodations due to a disability, please contact me and the Office of Disability Services as soon as possible (http://www.bu.edu/disability/).