LINGUIST 274A: Linguistic Field Methods I

Stanford University

Winter 2020

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Language consultant: Tala Faaleava
Contact info and meeting schedule to be distributed separately.

Class schedule: MW 9:30-11:20
Location: 260-004

Description of the Course

This is the first part of a two-quarter sequence aimed at teaching students the practical aspects of data collection in the field. The class has two major goals: (i) providing training in fieldwork methodologies, including elicitation, transcription, data analysis and data management, based on hands-on practice with a language consultant, and (ii) gaining awareness and preparedness for the extralinguistic aspects of fieldwork by focusing on questions of ethics, logistics, and other practical considerations when starting a new project.

This year, we will focus on documenting and analyzing the Samoan language by working with our language consultant, Tala Faaleava.

The first part of the sequence (this quarter) will focus on basic approaches to describing an undocumented language in a closed-book setting. If you want to get the most out of this class, please do not read any available literature on the grammar of Samoan.

The second part of the sequence (274B, spring quarter) will focus on facilitating in-depth individual student projects on a particular topic of Samoan grammar. This part of the class will be open-book: the projects will be expected to be grounded in both current theoretical work and previous literature on Samoan. Students are highly encouraged to commit to both parts of the sequence; completing both parts provides an excellent opportunity for jump-starting your own research project based on novel data.

You will leave this class with the basic tools and knowledge needed to undertake research in the field. Even if independent fieldwork is not in your immediate future, this class will provide you with a valuable set of skills to bring to any project where you are not dealing with your own linguistic intuitions.

Prerequisites

One course in phonetics or phonology and syntax, or permission of the instructor. Open to undergraduates with permission of instructor only.

Course components

Evaluation will be based on the following components:

1. **Class participation (20%)**: attendance of regular class sessions; on a rotating basis: leading class elicitation, board transcriptions; in-class discussion of assigned readings.

2. **Datalogs (20%)**: Due every Sunday. Uploading transcribed audiofiles and datalogs in the form of annotated spreadsheets on time to Box from individual sessions and, on a rotating basis, from the class session.

3. **Field reports (20%)**: due every Monday. Brief (1-2) page handout with summary of findings from previous week's elicitation session and plan for next elicitation.

4. **Final project (40%)**: Consists of two parts: (i) project proposal (1-3 pages), due at the end of Week 5 and (ii) the final project write-up (7-10 pages), due at the end of the quarter. A description of a particular grammatical domain (for details see below).

Class schedule

	Topics & Readings	Due dates
Week 1		
01/06	Planning first elicitation, recording basics	
	Bowern 2008:Ch.1,3; Chelliah and de Reuse 2011:Ch.8.1-8.3	
01/08	Transcribing with ELAN, data management	
	Bowern 2008:Ch.2; Chelliah and de Reuse 2011:Ch.8.4	
Week 2		
01/13	Ethics in the field	
	Bowern 2008:Ch.11; Rice 2011	
01/15	Group analysis: the phonemic inventory	
	Bowern 2008:Ch.6	
Week 3		
~~01/20~~	**Martin Luther King Jr. Day (no class)**	

01/22	Applying for IRB approval	

Week 4

01/27	Extra-linguistic considerations	
	Macaulay 2011; Chelliah and de Reuse 2011:Ch.3-4	
01/29	Group analysis: basic clause structure & glossing conventions	**choose project topic**
	Chelliah and de Reuse 2011:Ch.11.1-11.2	

Week 5

02/03	Elicitation techniques for morphology and syntax	
	Bowern 2008:Ch.7	
02/05	Group analysis: parts of speech	
(02/07)		**project proposal due**

Week 6

02/10	Check-in: discussion of field reports	
02/12	Check-in: discussion of field reports	

Week 7

~~02/17~~	**Presidents' Day (no class)**	
02/19	Applying for grants	
	Bowern 2008:Ch.12	

Week 8

02/24	Check-in: discussion of field reports	
02/26	Check-in: discussion of field reports	

Week 9

03/02	**Presentations on project in progress (I)**	
03/04	**Presentations on project in progress (II)**	

Week 10

03/09	Finding fieldwork opportunities	
03/11	Check-in: lingering questions/discussion	**last class**

Week 11

03/18		**Final project due**

Final project

The final project should be a typologically-informed descriptive sketch of a particular grammatical domain of Samoan. The sketch must be based solely on data obtained from our

consultant, Tala Faaleava. You may use data from your own elicitation sessions, class elicitations, or datalogs archived by your classmates. Every datapoint should be unambiguously tagged with the audio file name and time stamp, as indicated in the datalog, and the name of the eliciting linguist should be clearly indicated, if it is not you. For a list of possible topics refer to Appendix D in Bowern (2008); you may select a topic not listed in the reference with the approval of the instructor. The project consists of the following components, with the due dates listed for each component below:

1. Obtain instructor consent for chosen topic by January 29.

2. Submit 1-3 page project proposal by February 7.

   The project proposal should consist of a typologically informed fieldwork plan for investigating the chosen topic, with a clear indication of which questions have already been answered with data collected prior to proposal submission. The student is responsible for finding the relevant typological literature on the topic (but avoid any literature on Samoan specifically!); see e.g. Chelliah and de Reuse (2011:Ch.11) for references. You may also consult with the instructor prior to the submission deadline regarding suggestions for relevant literature.

   The preferred format for the proposal is an organized list of research questions and a list of references these questions are based on; it does not need to be formatted as a narrative text.

3. Present on the project in progress during Week 9. Allocated time for presentation will depend on the number of students in the class. This presentation serves as an opportunity to get feedback on the project and suggestions for the last few fieldwork sessions of the quarter.

4. The written up final version of the project is due on the last day of the quarter – March 18.

References

Bowern, Claire. 2008. *Linguistic fieldwork: A practical guide.* Palgrave Macmillan.

Chelliah, Shobhana L., and Willem J. de Reuse. 2011. *Handbook of descriptive linguistic fieldwork.* Springer. https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/9115242.

Macaulay, Monica. 2011. Training linguistics students for the realities of fieldwork. In *The Oxford handbook of linguistic fieldwork*, ed. Nicholas Thieberger. OUP. doi:0.1093/oxfordhb/9780199571888.013.0021. https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/9499149.

Rice, Keren. 2011. Ethical issues in linguistic fieldwork. In *The Oxford handbook of linguistic fieldwork*, ed. Nicholas Thieberger. OUP. doi:10.1093/oxfordhb/9780199571888.013.0019. https://searchworks.stanford.edu/view/9499149.