

LINGUISTICS 82100 – FIELD METHODS
FALL 2022
THE GRADUATE CENTER, CITY UNIVERSITY OF NEW YORK

“The most important task in linguistics today—indeed the only really important task—is to get out in the field and describe languages, while this can still be done. Self-admiration in the looking glass of formalist theory can wait; that will always be possible. Linguistic description must be undertaken now.”

-R.M.W. Dixon. 1997. *The Rise and Fall of Languages*

INSTRUCTOR	Jason Kandybowicz
EMAIL ADDRESS	jkandybowicz@gc.cuny.edu
OFFICE HOURS	Friday: 12:00-1:00pm virtually via Blackboard Collaborate and by appointment
CLASS LOCATION	Room TBD
CLASS TIME	Wednesday: 11:45am-1:45pm
LANGUAGE CONSULTANT	Emmanuel Bawa
EMAIL ADDRESS	immanuelbbawa@gmail.com
CLASS-EXTERNAL ELICITATION	Virtually via Zoom or Skype, time TBD in consultation with Emmanuel
CLASS WEBSITE	Course materials (readings, recordings, handouts, etc.) will be posted on the course Dropbox site: https://cunyportal.cuny.edu
PREREQUISITES	Ling 72100 (Syntax I); Ling 71300 (Phonology I), or instructor permission

COURSE DESCRIPTION

This course introduces students to linguistic field methods, via hands-on work with a speaker of a minority/underdocumented language unknown to all class participants (instructor included). The language for this course will be **Adara**, a Benue-Congo language of Nigeria. We will work to learn as much as possible about this language using a combination of approaches including structured elicitations, collecting and analyzing texts, and developing techniques for analyzing and presenting complex linguistic data. The goal is to learn, describe, and document the language's grammar: its phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics. As is the practice at most departments that offer rigorous training in field methods, the course will also necessitate additional time commitments in the form of weekly small group elicitation sessions with our speaker.

TEXTBOOK

Bowern, Claire. 2015. *Linguistic Fieldwork: A Practical Guide*. Palgrave Macmillan. (Available on Dropbox) (Read entire textbook for week 3 and reference throughout course when necessary.)

★ **No scholarly materials about or relating to Adara may be consulted during the course.** ★

WORKLOAD

Class participation: Students will actively participate in classroom elicitation sessions by a) recording the data collected in a notebook; b) eliciting data from the speaker; and c) occasionally leading classroom elicitation sessions. Students leading classroom elicitation sessions are strongly encouraged to briefly meet with me in office hours prior to class to plan the session.

Notebook: Students will keep a notebook (either digital or physical), containing the data collected both in class sessions and in small group sessions outside of class. This notebook will also contain students' various thoughts, hypotheses, and other relevant info.

Weekly group work: Beginning week 3, students will meet virtually in small groups outside of class for 30 minutes with our language consultant. The group will then type up its data/findings, along with some brief remarks, observations, conjectures, questions, etc. and post a PDF of the notes to the "Small Group Sessions" sub-folder on our shared Dropbox folder **by 5pm on Tuesday of the following week.**

Students are expected to review all posted notes and draw on the data contained therein throughout the semester as we work toward an analysis of the grammar of the language. All weekly small-group elicitation sessions will be arranged by the group in consultation with our language consultant. Students are responsible for scheduling their group's weekly meeting time.

Papers: There will be two short papers – a Phonetics/Phonology sketch and a Morphology/Syntax sketch of the language. The Phonetics/Phonology sketch is due **by 5pm on Friday November 11.** The Morphology/Syntax sketch is due **by 5pm on Friday December 16.** Both papers will be written either collectively by the members of the weekly workgroups or individually, and will be based exclusively on data/analyses produced by the class. In other words, the papers will be written without consulting any outside or published sources.

GOALS

- Learn techniques for and become proficient in eliciting, recording, and transcribing data from native speaker language consultants
- Organize, present, and analyze elicited data
- Train and refine perception and production skills
- Make scientific discoveries about an unfamiliar language by applying the scientific method

GRADING POLICY

- Attendance and participation: 20%
- Weekly group work: 20%
- Phonetics/Phonology sketch: 30%
- Morphology/Syntax sketch: 30%

CLASS MEETING SCHEDULE

CLASS	MONTH	DAY	CLASS ELICITATION LEADER/NOTES
1	August	31	None
2	September	7	Jason
3	September	14	TBD Read Bower 2015 by this date
4	September	21	TBD
5	September	28	TBD
6	October	12	TBD
7	October	19	TBD
8	October	26	TBD
9	November	2	TBD
10	November	9	TBD
	November	11	Phonetics/Phonology sketch due (by 5pm)
11	November	16	TBD
12	November	23	TBD
13	November	30	TBD
14	December	7	TBD
	December	19	Morphology/Syntax sketch due (by 5pm)