

## Linguistic Fieldwork

A handy beginner's guide, this textbook introduces the various stages of linguistic fieldwork, from the preparation of the work to the presentation of the results. Drawing on over forty years of fieldwork experience between them, in over two dozen languages, the authors pack the book with examples and anecdotes from their experiences, and include practical exercises for students to test what they have learnt. Independent of any particular perspective, the methods can be applied to a wide range of fieldwork settings, for projects with very different theoretical backgrounds, and without the need to travel too far. The book covers 'traditional fieldwork' such as language description and documentation, as well as less typical methods, including language contact and quantitative studies with experiments or questionnaires.

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# Linguistic Fieldwork

## A Student Guide

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## Preface

This guide emerges from a combined forty years of field research in over two dozen languages of the Brazilian and Bolivian Amazon, Greenland and Europe, including immigrant languages in Europe. The authors have been teaching field methods courses and seminars in Brazil, the USA, the UK, Germany and Denmark. They have had the enjoyable experience of taking graduate students and seasoned linguists from Brazil, the USA, Israel, Germany and the Netherlands to the field in order to train them in fieldwork methods. The authors thoroughly enjoy the intense challenge of field research and the presentation of the lessons learned thereby to the international linguistics community. Many of the suggestions included within this guide are ones we wish someone had made to us before we began our field research careers.

This book is intended for upper-division undergraduates, graduate students and above. It can be used in class or for self study. The book presumes basic knowledge of most areas of linguistics. To lighten up the reading and make it more personal, we have added anecdotes from our own and others' experience. Depending on what you are setting out to do (or learn), some sections will be more relevant than others, though generally all chapters should be of interest to the field researcher.

The major theme to be developed in this book is how to do fieldwork, independent of any particular theoretical perspective. Not just 'prototypical fieldwork' is considered, but other ways of working with first-hand language data are explored. The book's major thesis is that *linguistic fieldwork can be successful with proper preparation and execution, bringing deep personal and professional satisfaction for the researchers and their native-speaker teachers*. The book's purpose is to help linguists do, enjoy, and succeed at field research.

This book began with an invitation from Andrew Winnard to Dan Everett to write an introductory book on fieldwork. In 2006, while a visitor at the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig, Everett completed the first draft. Subsequently, Everett began work on another book, *Don't sleep, there are snakes*. In the meantime, it was recognized that the original draft of the book needed to take on a different focus, since Everett had conceived of the book as a manual rather than as a textbook. Sakel joined the project and made numerous and profound changes to the manuscript to bring it more in line with the objectives of a textbook. Her work has been sufficiently extensive to warrant our joint decision to list her as first author.

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Finally, Jeanette Sakel is forever indebted to Maya Thornhill, who shared her mum with this book during the first months of her life.