

# Research Methodologies Lecture

- Patrick Das

# A small introduction to who I am

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- I'm Patrick Das, a second year PhD student in Linguistics at the University of Colorado, Boulder, USA
- Before that, I did my BA in Linguistics at Monash University, Melbourne, Australia
- My focus is on *syntactic typology and areal features*
- Essentially, even though language is common to everyone, why is it so hard to find what's common to every language?

"Languages differ essentially in what they must convey, and not in what they may convey"



**What about you?**

# Overview of today

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- Your research process?
- How to cite/reference?
- Plagiarism
- Data ethics
- Fieldwork ethics

# Citing work

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Sometimes people think citations should be used whenever you use someone else's words (quoting), but it's much more than that.

- If you are quoting someone, ofcourse...
- If you are using an example from someone else's data...
- If you are repeating a claim someone else has made...
- Even if you are using someone else's idea!

A citation should be **accurate** and **traceable**. It depends on the citation style, but in linguistics, we generally include the **Author's last name, year of publication, and page number**.

# What do you NOT need to cite?

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Common knowledge:

- If I said “Kohima is the capital of Nagaland”, I don’t need to cite that
- Or if I said “nouns and verbs are typical parts of speech in languages”, that doesn’t require a citation either.

Common knowledge can either be ‘universal’ or ‘discipline’ specific.

It’s best to not assume what is common knowledge, and to think deeply about **who is your audience**.

# Citing “ideas”

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I think this is the thing that confused me the most. A paper I read would be very inspiring and I’d want to do something similar, and I wasn’t sure how to attribute it.

How would you deal with “citing” an idea?



# Citing “ideas” pt. 2

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Answer: be upfront!

- ❖ Be clear about what you use from the citation and what is your own contribution
- ❖ If you have a methodology section, you can clearly outline the steps you have used and which steps are in common/not.

# Citation styles

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There's many citation styles, look into the one the journal/authority requires of you. Each one of them have their own guides.

Linguistics has its own guide, called the unified style sheet for Linguistics:

[https://www.linguisticsociety.org/sites/default/files/style-sheet\\_0.pdf](https://www.linguisticsociety.org/sites/default/files/style-sheet_0.pdf)

# Some linguistics conventions: glossing

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- Glossing should be in “small caps”. You can do this in word. All your glosses should be provided at the end of your article (or if writing a grammar, at the start).
  - The Leipzig glossing rules provides good guideline on how to gloss:  
<https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/pdf/Glossing-Rules.pdf>
  - Glossing can be really tough especially in languages with complicated morphology (like tone/vowel mutations)! So have a read of the glossing rules and discuss with other scholars on what the best practice is for your language data
  - The main aim is to be **consistent and open** about your use!

# Some linguistics conventions: cont.

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- Words in the ‘target’ language should be in *italics*
- A translation in the ‘metalanguage’ should be in single quotes.
- Prefixes should be followed by a -, suffixes should be preceded by a -. Clitics can be preceded/followed by a =.
- Tone has *many* conventions: look up the ones used for similar languages to yours, and just be upfront and consistent about how you are labelling it.

# An example from a paper i'm editing!

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TdVZ has a VSO word order, and it follows most of the predicted correlations for VO languages (Dryer 1997). The verb takes an obligatory TAM prefix, and it can optionally be followed by a comitative suffix or an affective morpheme. After these, free function word (FFW) adverbials may appear followed by adverbial enclitics. Also, between the TAM marker and the verb, the grammaticalized verb roots *æ* 'go'<sup>1</sup> or *æd* 'come' may appear. These indicate the movement of the subject to perform the action. In addition, if the subject is pronominalized, the clitic form attaches to the verb complex after the adverb enclitic(s) if any. The template in (1) summarizes the structure of the verb, and an illustrative example is given in (2).

# Plagiarism

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First of all, when we hear this word, what comes to mind?

# Plagiarism

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It is the portrayal of another person's intellectual property as one's own.

If you:

- Use someone else's idea without citing it properly,
- Use someone else's data without accurate attribution...

All of these things can be plagiarism!

# How to avoid plagiarism?

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- Have a clear methodology section where you go over your approach and what is your contribution, and what has been derived from others.
- Have someone read over your work to make sure you haven't missed something
- Go over all your “claims” and “arguments”. If something you are saying doesn't have a citation, it should either be common knowledge, or *your own claim*. If so, do you have good evidence for saying so?



# Fabricating/Misrepresenting Data

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- The other major thing to avoid is fabricating data:
- When it comes to ‘qualitative’ linguistic data, such as sentences, words, examples, you have options
  - Is it introspection data? If so, mention in your methodology or footnote at the start
  - Is it collected from other speakers? Say so in the methodology or examples
  - If the example is from recorded data, you can cite where in the recording it is

# Don't 'Data-Dredge'!

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Data-dredge is being selective about the data you use.

For example, if you are doing a typological study for a phenomenon you are interested in, and selecting grammars to research, there are many kinds of biases that can creep in:

- Genetic bias
- Geographic bias
- Bibliographic bias

I recommend *Language Sampling*, a chapter by Jae Jung Song on this.

# Ethics

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Ethics is about preventing harm to your participants.

An important notion here is of *informed consent*:

- Whenever you are working with human participants for a study, you should clearly explain to them what the **benefits and harms** of taking the study is to them.

This consent can be verbal, but it is often better to have written consent. You can use a **project information sheet** which is much more engaging and useful than a difficult to understand contract.

Figure 2.1

An example of a participation statement developed by Caroline Jones for a project on Kriol  
(N.B. identifying information has been deleted)

**You are invited to take part in a research study. Our study is about how children learn to talk, and what helps children.**

You can make a choice. You don't have to agree to take part.



You would join a group conversation, and fun activities like retelling a story. We're interested in normal everyday talk, what you think.

We record you. You get a DVD copy to keep, and \$25.  
You keep ownership of your language and culture.



30-60 mins



You can pull out whenever you want. We won't ask why.  
If you get upset we will help. Remember we have to report serious criminal activity.



Long-term benefits: community, school, XXXXXXXXX we're learning info to help families and teachers. No benefit for your family right now.



You can choose who sees your video and where we store it. We will write about the study, but we will check drafts with you and the community first.



If you're worried or you have questions, tell us or XXXXXXXXX (your advocate). If you want to complain, phone XXXXXXXXX, email XXXXXXXXX or post the card in the stamped envelope.

# Data privacy

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- Essential to data ethics is also the right to privacy in the data someone shares
- ‘Language’ is a precious resource, and you should be upfront about how you plan to manage the recording/storage of that language data.
- Where will you store that data? Offline, on a hard drive? Or online? If the data will be publicized, will the community have a way to take it back down if they want?
- Who owns the data?

# Discussion

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Any questions for me?

What did you learn today that you think was most helpful?

You can reach me via email at [Patrick.Das@colorado.edu](mailto:Patrick.Das@colorado.edu).

Thank you so much!