

Course description

In this course, we will explore the research methods used in my doctoral and postdoctoral studies. My doctorate was part of the research project *From Gesture to Language* at Leiden University, where we designed five data collection tasks to gather linguistic data from Adamorobe (Ghana), Bouakako (Ivory Coast), and Bissau (Guinea-Bissau). However, our primary focus was on spontaneous narratives about animal attacks.

The five tasks aimed to collect size and shape signs. The first used three-dimensional objects, the second employed images, and the third elicited narratives through *Tweety and Sylvester* cartoon fragments. The fourth and fifth tasks involved discussions on fruits and vegetables and experiences with dangerous animals, respectively. Participants found the first three tasks somewhat unfamiliar due to their structured methodological nature.

The final task, centered on spontaneous narratives, provided prompts but no elicitation materials. This activity, which formed the basis of my thesis, required participants to share personal encounters with dangerous animals, integrating these testimonies into natural discourse. Such experiences were particularly common among the deaf community in Adamorobe.

During the course, we will examine research methods in detail across pre-fieldwork, fieldwork, and post-fieldwork stages. Narrative analysis was conducted using the ELAN tool.

My current research takes an ethnographic approach to explore the impact of International Sign on Portuguese Sign Language. Over 60 informal interviews were conducted alongside systematic observations, deliberately avoiding elicitation materials. One aspect of the study involved recording spontaneous conversations to assess International Sign usage, while another relied on field notes instead of video recordings.

This course provides an overview of the research methods applied in my studies, highlighting methodological approaches and their contributions to sign language research.

References

- Morgado, Marta. "Personal experience narratives in three West African sign languages." PhD diss., Netherlands Graduate School of Linguistics, 2024.
- Morgado, Marta. "Personal experience narratives in Adamorobe Sign Language." *Revista Espaço* (2021): 103-126.
- Morgado, Marta, and Victoria Nyst. "Mouth movements in the depiction of size and shape: Comparing two village sign languages in West Africa with different time depths." *LÍNGUA GESTUAL PORTUGUESA E OUTRAS LÍNGUAS DE SINAIS* (2022): 145.