**Natalie Gleeson** - Hello and welcome to the VCE English Language Study Design Implementation webinar covering linguistic fieldwork. My name is Natalie Gleeson. And in this webinar, I'll explain this exciting addition to the VCE English Language Study Design and outline how the key knowledge and key skills for linguistic fieldwork can be planned for. The addition of linguistic fieldwork to the English language Study Design provides an exciting opportunity for students.

Included as part of the Unit 1 Area of Study Language Acquisition Outcome, linguistic fieldwork is designed for students to understand the different types of linguistic fieldwork, the importance of acquiring consent, as well as interpreting data collection. The aim of linguistic fieldwork is for students to further develop their understanding relating to the key knowledge and key skills for this outcome. In summary, students apply their knowledge and understanding to real life contexts. In this way, linguistic fieldwork provides students with the opportunity to interact with people that make up a language community.

Let's take a look at the relevant key knowledge as per the study design. Students will develop an understanding of linguistic fieldwork, including acquiring consent and for the key skills, experience, and interpret linguistic fieldwork including data collection. There are four types of research methods that make up linguistic fieldwork and teachers will need to decide which is the most appropriate considering student needs, access to resources, and student access to potential participants.

Of our first methods is qualitative methods. Qualitative methods focuses on naturalistic language use and a small number of speakers. This method involves gathering data by focusing on the behaviour of individuals as they interact and are influenced by context. Qualitative methods are most likely the more suitable type of linguistic fieldwork for students to undertake as it involves participant observations involving recording conversations, using video or audio recordings to document language use, or carrying out interviews with participants.

The second of our methods is quantitative methods. With a focus on studying one or several variables in a range of speakers, this method involves identifying patterns in language use. It allows for generalisations to be made about language use and can involve manipulating the treatment of one group over another to compare results in a control group that has not been treated.

Next is mixed-methods. This combines both qualitative and quantitative methods whereas cross-sectional longitudinal methods involve any or all the previously mentioned research methods over a time period. While mixed-methods and cross-sectional and longitudinal methods seem unsuitable for students to undertake in this course of study, they can experience and learn about what these studies involve and the results that are produced by accessing published academic research in the field of language acquisition. Underpinning any linguistic fieldwork is the development of appropriate research questions. For the purposes of this study, fieldwork will allow students to confirm some of the key knowledge for this outcome as gathered from real life contexts.

Please note students do not need to demonstrate understanding of all key knowledge dot points for this part of the outcome. Over the next few slides are some examples of suitable research questions that have been developed from the key knowledge for this outcome. Students may like to further investigate the characteristics in developmental stages for first and additional language learners. And consequently, they may pose research questions such as the ones listed here.

Perhaps they want to seek out evidence of child development stage by observing their language use with a parent or caregiver or perhaps they'd like to seek out evidence of the development of the English language subsystems in a child's language use. If students would like to further their understanding of universal grammar and usage-based accounts theories of language acquisition, they could seek out evidence of a child's language use that supports one of those theories.

Perhaps they'd like to find evidence of the critical period of language acquisition or perhaps they'd like to investigate the role and impact that infant and child directed speech has on a child during an interaction with a parent and caregiver. For students that are interested in investigating further the commonalities and differences between learning a language as a young child and as an adult, they may like to seek out evidence the way children and adults learn additional languages, or perhaps find evidence of a parent promoting multilingualism during interactions with their child.

Or finally, students may like to find evidence of the different types of code switching in adult speakers learning additional languages. Such research questions lead students to decide and select appropriate participants for their study. This will also lead them to decide on the most suitable means for collecting data. Some ideas include: recording the speech of a child in their family, using an old recording, using a recording supplied by their teacher, asking a member of the school community for permission to record their child talking or using an old recording, locate an online video of a child talking via YouTube, interview a parent/caregiver, interview an adult learning a second language, record conversational speech between students learning an additional language, or perhaps use a transcript from the Child Language Data Exchange System, CHILDES.

This is a public accessible database and can be accessed at the following URL. Perhaps students would like to study the documentary "Genie: Secrets of the Wild Child." The next important consideration to linguistic fieldwork relates to ethics. Students will need to ensure their fieldwork is conducted in a respectful, responsible, and culturally sensitive manner.

Consequently, acquiring consent is an important consideration for students selecting participants they intend to record and interview. This includes written and signed consent from the participants, something that can be developed as a class with careful guidance from teachers. For underage participants, parental permission is needed.

All participants shall be fully informed about the purposes of the fieldwork. They must be informed how data will be stored and used including any archiving on completion of the fieldwork. Students should offer to share findings with their participants, perhaps a copy of a research paper or a presentation. And participants should be offered the right to withdraw from the fieldwork at any time without risk or jeopardy to relationships with the student and/or the school. The Australian Linguistic Society Statement of Ethics when conducting linguistic research provides important information regarding ethical considerations and is certainly worth reading with students when they specifically consider any impact on participants taking part in linguistic fieldwork.

In some instances, whereby students collect data from creative common sources or materials that have been publicly shared, for example, on the CHILDES database, written consent is not required. Irrespective of the source, ethical consideration remains an important aspect to this area of study. As one of the key skills for this outcome requires students to experience and interpret linguistic fieldwork including data collection, the next stage is for students to interpret the data. As an example, students that record participants can be directed to transcribe the recording or transcribe sections of the recording. This will then provide students with a transcript of speech that then allows for the analysis of evidence to answer their research questions.

As a specific example, if students have recorded and transcribed the speech of a child and parent conversing for a set period of time, they can analyse the transcript for evidence of a child's language use that supports one or both of the theories of language acquisition. Ultimately, an analysis of a transcript of speech will allow students to validate their research questions. There is scope for teachers to design assessment around the way students present their research. This could be in the form of a research paper or a formal oral presentation, a multimodal presentation that includes examples of a data, interpretation and analysis of data, and a summary of findings, perhaps even an embedded video of the students discussing the results of their fieldwork. Such presentation forms would meet the assessment requirement that teachers must provide opportunity for at least one assessment in an oral or multi-modal form.

For the purposes of this study, linguistic fieldwork allows students to experience a taste of the fieldwork that occurs in tertiary environments and by other professional researchers. Linguistic fieldwork encourages students to investigate areas they find interesting and seek out answers to questions they develop through the course of the language acquisition outcome.

Thank you for viewing this webinar on the linguistic fieldwork addition to the English Language Study Design. All the very best in your planning for this exciting addition.

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