

Experimental linguistics

Needless to say, empirical studies are based on data. In linguistics, there are quite different types of data and different methods to collect it: We can, for instance, record and transcribe naturally-occurring spoken language or collect texts, or we can use the large collections of texts that have been compiled already, such as the *British National Corpus* or the *Corpus of Contemporary American English*. On the basis of these corpora, we can answer questions such as how frequent certain expressions are, in which contexts they occur, and so on. However, in some cases, a corpus search might not be the best method to answer a particular research question: The search syntax puts restrictions on the possible queries, the phenomenon of interest might be very rare and not easily to be found in the corpora, the research question might be too specific for the corpora that are currently available, etc., and, what is more, corpus data do not easily allow for the detection of causal relations. Another way to collect data is to conduct experiments, where we manipulate certain variables to answer our research questions. This seminar is an introduction to experimental methods in linguistics. The aim is to provide students with the tools to conduct their own experiments in linguistics. In the second part of this seminar, students will have the opportunity to apply the tools when they conduct their own experiment in small groups and present the results to class. This project will serve as a basis for a term paper, for those students who are taking the class for “Prüfungsleistung”.

Please note that this seminar does not take place weekly. We will meet on campus on four days throughout the semester.

Term plan

- DAY 1 (April 20) Introduction to experimental research – Ideas, methods, experimental design
- DAY 2 (May 4) Experimental and corpus data in linguistics, introduction to data analysis, preparing student projects
- DAY 3 (May 11) Work on student projects
- (ZOOM meetings for consultation regarding projects)
- DAY 4 (June 26) Project presentations
- (ZOOM meeting on how to write a term paper)

An email with detailed instructions (how to prepare for the first session, where to find materials, ...) will be sent out in the first week of the semester.

Requirements Studienleistung: Active participation in class and in-group activities, small scale empirical research project & presentation

Requirements Prüfungsleistung: Term paper based on research project (plus participation in Zoom meeting on term papers)