

FIELDWORK SESSION PLANNER

I would like to share with any fieldworker the template I use for my sessions. It is very simple, and I am sure there are more detailed versions available. However, this one is simple enough and systematic to motivate me to fill on it every day, at the beginning and end of each session. Apart from keeping the data organised and easily tracing its origins, it is intended to be a space for reflecting on one's performance as a researcher. Most of the templates disregard the human dimension, yet it sometimes has a greater influence on the development of the session and the data we obtain as a result. It provides some evidence if we have to make decisions between forms in the future (instead of "*I don't like this answer; so, the speaker had a bad day*"). Plus, recording our self-critique can make easier to track our progress.

Some remarks:

This template is designed for linguistic fieldwork (more specifically for my immediate context: Slavic dialectology), but feel free to adjust it to the needs of other particular field.

I have attached a (shortened) sample of one of my sessions. As you will see, there are blanks in many answers (Section 3), and I have not tried to change it, as this tends to be the case very often, frankly speaking.

As a convention in Belarusian Dialectology, I use the village code given in the Atlas of Belarusian Dialects (DABM, 1963), but use a postcode, or any other code (e.g. GPS coordinates) that helps you identify the village (if you are travelling to several).

If you have any suggestions, doubts or corrections, please feel free to email to the following address: k.roncerotoledo@surrey.ac.uk

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FIELDWORK SESSION PLANNER (TEMPLATE)

Session nº:		Village code:	
Location:		Administrative division	
Speaker:		Date:	

1. SESSION PLANNING

Global objective: MORPHOLOGY SYNTAX PHONOLOGY (OTHER)

Main objective of the session (*e.g. X feature in Y contexts*)

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Other (possible) objectives:

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Methodology:

Storytelling Visual stimuli Suggesting situations Direct elicitation

Questions:

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-Estimated distribution of the session:

Estimated working time:

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Meeting place:

How well do I know the speaker?

Anything I should be aware of?

2. DEBRIEFING

•Development of the session:

General questions

-How comfortable did the speaker(s) feel working with me/on the project?

-Any factors that may have altered his/her performance (bad sleep, mistrust, etc.)?

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-Any external factors conditioning (for bad) our comfort and performance? (Too cold, etc.)

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-Any external factors to be considered for the next sessions (i.e. choosing a less noisy place)

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-How comfortable did I feel working with that speaker?

•Do I want to keep working with this speaker? Why?

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Achievements:

-How satisfied am I with the achievement of my main goal?

-Was the goal (or goals) too small?

-What prevented me from achieving fully the main goal? (Too ambitious, lack of time, lack of knowledge, wrong speaker, lack of concentration, other reasons)

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Other interesting features discovered?

FIELDWORK SESSION PLANNER (EXAMPLE)

Session nº:	2	Village code:	[DABM code is used in Belarusian Dialectology; e.g. use postcode instead]
Location:	XXX	Administrative division	[County, sel'sovet, dependency, etc.]
Speaker:	B6 (B9 on the back)	Date:	01/01/2016

1. SESSION PLANNING

Global objective: **MORPHOLOGY**

Main objective of the session (*e.g. X feature in Y contexts*)

·Test for '**duality**' with every possible variant: specf/unspecf; common animals (or nouns)/rare; natural pairs (parts of the body), different genders and different stem classes.

“The basic idea is to keep as many factors constant as possible, and to vary just one. The underlying question is whether the forms are available primarily in set expressions (shoulders, oxen, etc.) or can be created on the fly.” [Corbett, p.c.]

Other (possible) objectives:

·Gather full paradigms of nouns in singular, in 'dual' (if there is) and in plural.

·Animacy and its implications on duality.

·Generating some free-texts from the wordless books.

Methodology:

Storytelling Description of illustrations (visual stimuli) Suggesting situations

Questions:

1-**Common animals vs. uncommon.** Describe the illustrations:

2-**Semantic restrictions (set body parts):** Describing Martians:

3-**Inflectional class distinctions:** Suggesting situations (from “Rosie’s Walk” and her wedding).

Estimated distribution of the session:

Estimated working time:

- Wordless book “Frog story” (describing illustrations) ICE-BREAKER, getting into the dynamic. (7min)

-Describing animal pictures (12 min)

-Describing Martians (end of the session when working with old people) (10 min)

-Wordless book “Rosie’s walk” (5 min)

-Answering to suggested situations (14 min).

Meeting place: Her house.

How well do I know the speaker? Just 1 session.

Anything I should be aware of? Loves talking, avoid very 'evocative' tasks at the beginning.

2. DEBRIEFING

·Development of the session:

General questions

-How comfortable did the speaker(s) feel working with me/on the project?

Very comfortable, but a bit confused at some points. Her son helped 'translating' my tasks to her.

-Any factors that may have altered his/her performance (bad sleep, mistrust, etc)? ·NO.

-Any external factors conditioning (for bad) our comfort and performance? (too cold, etc.) ·NO

-Any external factors to be considered for the next sessions (i.e. choosing a less noisy place) ·NO

-How comfortable did I feel working with that speaker?

· I love her, she is very patient and a great speaker. I feel very comfortable working with her, but everybody felt uncomfortable in the end, because she did not want to accept the economic compensation.

·Do I want to keep working with this speaker? Why?

Not on duality, because she hardly has cases of it, but definitely on numerals, in general (as some interesting issues have arisen).

Achievements:

-How satisfied am I with the achievement of my main goal?

Quite satisfied, as I didn't expect to have time to work with body parts. I hardly found any dual forms (which looked very productive on the first exploratory session).

-Was/were the goal too small? NO.

-What prevented me from achieving fully the main goal?

·Mainly, too many tasks for a reduced period of time. For some things, she didn't react as I expected (maybe lack of concentration), but she did surprise me at other points and she even volunteered extra forms.

Other interesting features discovered?

GEN PL forms differing with the numerals 5, and 10/20.

Stress differentiating a 2 from 3 (very subtly, so I have to listen carefully to the whole list as there might be more cases like this one).

3. ANSWERS

1-Common animals vs. uncommon. Describe the illustrations:

RESULT: Probably no dual distinction.

	One	Two	Three	Five	Many	NOM PL
Cow (f)	<i>koro'va</i>	<i>ko'rovi</i>	<i>ko'rovi</i>	<i>5 ko'riv; BUT 10, 20 koro'vej</i>	<i>Koro'vej. [According to B6 & B9] -iv= -ej</i>	<i>koro'vi</i>
Bee (f)	<i>ptfo'la</i>	<i>ptfo'li</i>	<i>ptfo'li</i>	<i>5 'ptʃil ?? 10 'ptfolej</i>	<i>'ptfolej</i>	<i>'ptfoʎi</i>
Monkey (f)	<i>mar'tɪʃka</i>	<i>mar'tɪʃki</i>	<i>mar'tɪʃki</i>	<i>6 mar'tɪʃkej (beginning mar'tɪʃki)</i>	<i>mar'tɪʃki</i>	

(etc.)

2-Semantic properties: (describing illustrations of Martians).

RESULT: Probably no dual distinction.

Model: "(S) he has three ears so that he can hear what people in the other room are saying".

	One	Two	Oblique	Three	<5+
Nose (m)			<i>no'sima</i>	<i>no'si</i>	
Ear (f)		<i>dva/dvi hu'xi</i>	<i>hu'ʃima</i>	<i>'tʃetvero hu'fej (she first said 4 hu'fej), 4 hu'ʃi, then B9 'corrected' her and said 4 hu'xi</i>	
Finger (n)	<i>'paljets</i>	<i>'paltsi</i>		<i>'paltsi</i>	

(etc.)

-Stem classes:

RESULT: Probably no dual distinction.

I-class	Y/N	II-class	Y/N	III-class	Y/N
M (soft) - <i>konj</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>F- butilka</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>F-kostj</i>	<i>?</i>
<i>N- ba'rilo</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>F- divotjka</i>	<i>N</i>	<i>M- hostj</i>	<i>?</i>
<i>N-jajtsto</i>	<i>?</i>			<i>F- kura?</i>	<i>N</i>
M(HUMAN) - <i>brat</i>	<i>?</i>			<i>F- xata?</i>	<i>N</i>
M(HUMAN) - <u><i>xlopiets</i></u>	<i>N</i>			<i>M?- mij</i>	<i>N</i>