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ENG498

Field Work

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ENG498

Field Work

A Complete Field Work Guide for BS English (Applied Linguistics)
From planning and data collection to analysis, report writing and viva preparation

About this guide

This guide covers the full journey of ENG498 Field Work: understanding what linguistic field work is, preparing your study, choosing and using field methods (observation, interviews, surveys, elicitation), recording and documenting data, analysing your findings, writing the field work report, and preparing for evaluation and viva. Work through it module by module, and use the checklists and templates in the appendices while you are in the field.

Semester 7 • 3 Credit Hours

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How to Use This Guide

ENG498 Field Work is a practical course. Unlike theory courses where you study from books, here **you** go out, collect real language data, analyse it and report it. This guide is organised as eleven modules that follow the natural order of a field work project.

- **Modules 1–2** explain what field work means in applied linguistics and how to prepare: choosing a topic, planning, permissions and ethics.
- **Modules 3–6** teach the four main field methods: observation, interviews, surveys and questionnaires, and elicitation/recording techniques.
- **Modules 7–8** show how to record, document, organise and analyse the data you collect.
- **Module 9** walks you through writing the field work report section by section.
- **Modules 10–11** cover ethics, troubleshooting, evaluation criteria and viva preparation.
- The **Glossary** defines every key term, and the **Appendices** give ready-to-adapt templates: a consent form, an observation checklist, an interview guide, a questionnaire, a field-note format and a semester work plan.

Each module ends with a **Summary** and **Review Questions**. Use them to test yourself before your viva. Boxes marked **Definition** give exact meanings you should be able to reproduce; boxes marked **Very Important** flag ideas examiners ask about most often. 

Very Important — the mindset of field work

- Field work studies **real language in real use**, not textbook sentences. Your data comes from people, so respect, honesty and careful recording matter as much as analysis.
- There are no 'wrong' findings in field work — only carefully or carelessly collected data. A small, honest study beats a large, sloppy one.

Module 1: Understanding Field Work in Applied Linguistics

Learning objectives. After this module you will be able to: define field work; distinguish it from library research and laboratory experiments; explain why field work matters in applied linguistics; list the objectives of ENG498; and name suitable field settings and topic areas.

1.1 What Is Field Work?

Definition

Field work is defined as the systematic collection of primary data in the natural setting where the phenomenon under study occurs, by the researcher in direct contact with participants and their environment.

In applied linguistics, **linguistic fieldwork** refers to going where language is actually used — classrooms, homes, markets, offices, playgrounds, online chatrooms — and gathering first-hand evidence about it: recordings of speech, answers to questionnaires, notes on how people interact. The 'field' is simply the real world outside the library. A researcher who sits in a school staffroom interviewing teachers about code-switching is doing field work; a researcher who only reads journal articles about code-switching is doing library research.

Field work has a long tradition in linguistics. Early dialectologists travelled from village to village recording pronunciations; anthropological linguists lived in communities documenting endangered

languages. In applied linguistics the tradition continues in classroom research, sociolinguistic surveys, needs analyses for language courses, and studies of language in workplaces and media.

1.2 Field Work vs Library Research vs Experiments

Feature	Field work	Library research	Laboratory experiment
Data source	Primary data collected by you in natural settings	Secondary data: books, articles, corpora compiled by others	Primary data under controlled conditions
Setting	Natural (school, home, workplace)	Library / desk	Lab or controlled room
Researcher role	Observer / participant in real life	Reader and synthesizer	Controller of variables
Example	Recording teacher–student talk in a Lahore academy	Reviewing studies on error correction	Testing memory for words with/without pictures
Main strength	Ecological validity: real behaviour	Breadth of knowledge	Control over causes
Main weakness	Less control; time-consuming	No new data	Artificial setting

Table 1.1: Comparing three research approaches.

1.3 Why Field Work Matters in Applied Linguistics

Applied linguistics is defined as the discipline concerned with solving **real-world language problems** — how to teach English better, why learners make certain errors, how language policy affects schools, how doctors and patients misunderstand each other. Such problems cannot be solved from an armchair: they must be investigated where they happen. Field work therefore:

- connects **theory to practice** — you test classroom ideas (e.g. communicative activities) against what learners really do;
- trains **research skills** — designing instruments, collecting and analysing data — which you will reuse in ENG499 Capstone Project and any future MPhil/PhD;
- builds **professional skills** — approaching institutions, interviewing people, managing time, writing formal reports;
- produces **local knowledge** — Pakistani classrooms, multilingual cities and rural schools are under-studied; your small study adds genuine evidence.

Very Important — the applied linguistics link

- Examiners often ask: 'Why is field work necessary in applied linguistics?' Answer: because applied linguistics addresses real language problems in real settings, and only field work can supply the primary, naturalistic data needed to understand and solve them.

1.4 Objectives of ENG498 Field Work

By the end of this course you are expected to:

- 1 identify a small, researchable language-related problem in a real setting;
- 2 formulate clear objectives and research questions for a mini-study;

- 3 select appropriate field methods (observation, interview, survey, elicitation) and design simple instruments (checklists, guides, questionnaires);
- 4 obtain permissions, follow ethical principles (consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation) and collect data professionally;
- 5 record, transcribe, organise and analyse the data using basic qualitative and quantitative techniques;
- 6 write a structured field work report with findings, discussion and references in an academic style;
- 7 present and defend the work in a viva, showing understanding of methods, findings and limitations.

1.5 Where Can You Do Field Work?

Any setting where language is used purposefully is a potential field site:

- **Schools and colleges** — English classrooms, staffrooms, playgrounds (classroom interaction, error correction, L1 use);
- **Language academies and tuition centres** — IELTS/Spoken English classes (teaching methods, learner motivation);
- **Universities** — BS English students (writing problems, presentation anxiety, code-switching);
- **Workplaces** — banks, call centres, hospitals (workplace communication, English needs);
- **Homes and communities** — families, neighbourhoods (child language, multilingual practices, language attitudes);
- **Media and online spaces** — TV talk shows, YouTube, Facebook groups, WhatsApp chats (discourse, netspeak, code-mixing);
- **Public spaces** — markets, transport, signboards (linguistic landscape: which languages appear where).

Note: choose a site you can genuinely access. A study of 'English in Multan banks' is useless if no bank lets you in; a study of your own academy's evening batch is practical and honest.

1.6 Example Field Work Topics

To show the range of acceptable topics, here are real examples students have used:

- 1 Code-switching between Urdu and English among teachers in a private school in Gujranwala.
- 2 Error correction techniques used by English teachers at secondary level in Sialkot.
- 3 Language attitudes of BS English students towards Punjabi, Urdu and English.
- 4 Use of L1 (Urdu) in English-medium primary classrooms: frequency and functions.
- 5 Needs analysis: English communication problems faced by bank front-desk staff.
- 6 Discourse features of Pakistani TV morning shows: turn-taking and interruptions.
- 7 Writing problems of intermediate students: analysis of 30 compositions.
- 8 Learner motivation in IELTS preparation classes in Lahore.
- 9 Teacher talk vs student talk time in communicative vs traditional classrooms.
- 10 Linguistic landscape of a bazaar: languages on shop signboards and what they signal.
- 11 WhatsApp group communication among university students: abbreviations and code-mixing.
- 12 Pronunciation problems of Saraiki-speaking learners of English.

- 13 Parents' attitudes towards English-medium vs Urdu-medium schooling.
- 14 Classroom interaction patterns in a rural government school English class.
- 15 Politeness strategies in customer–shopkeeper bargaining in Anarkali market.

Summary — Module 1

Field work is the systematic collection of primary data in natural settings.

It differs from library research (secondary data) and experiments (controlled data).

In applied linguistics it supplies real-world evidence about language problems.

ENG498 objectives: design a mini-study, collect data ethically, analyse it, report it, defend it.

Good topics are narrow, accessible and genuinely about language in use.

Review questions. 1) Define field work in your own words. 2) Give two differences between field work and library research. 3) Why can applied linguistics problems not be solved without field data? 4) Suggest one field site near you and one topic for it.

Module 2: Preparing for Field Work

Learning objectives. After this module you will be able to: narrow a topic into research questions; choose a site and sampling strategy; draw up a work plan; obtain permissions; apply ethical principles including informed consent; and assemble your field kit.

2.1 From a Broad Interest to a Researchable Topic

Students usually begin with a broad interest ('I want to study classroom teaching') and must narrow it. Use the **funnel technique**: broad area → aspect → specific question → operational plan.

Funnel stage	Example
Broad area	English teaching in schools
Aspect	How teachers correct errors
Specific focus	Error correction in Grade 8 English classes in two private schools of Okara
Research question	"What types of error correction do teachers use most often, and how do learners respond?"
Method	Observe 6 lessons with a checklist; interview 4 teachers

Table 2.1: Narrowing a topic with the funnel technique.

A good topic is **SMART**: **S**pecific, **M**easurable (you can count or describe it), **A**chievable in one semester, **R**elevant to applied linguistics, and **T**ime-bound. Test yours: can you finish data collection in 4–6 weeks with the access you actually have?

2.2 Objectives and Research Questions

Definition

Research question is defined as a clear, focused interrogative statement that states exactly what the study aims to find out, and that can be answered with the data the researcher plans to collect.

Write 2–4 research questions. Good ones are **open, neutral and answerable**:

Weak question	Why it is weak	Improved version
Is code-switching bad?	Value judgement; not researchable	In what classroom situations do teachers switch to Urdu, and for what purposes?
Everything about IELTS students?	Far too broad	What motivates students to join IELTS classes in Lahore: jobs, study abroad, or family pressure?
Do teachers teach well?	'Well' is undefined	How much class time is teacher talk vs student talk in Grade 10 English lessons?

Table 2.2: Improving research questions.

Remember: your questions decide your method. A 'how much / how often' question needs counting (observation checklists, questionnaires); a 'why / how' question needs talking to people (interviews, open answers). Match them deliberately — examiners check this alignment.

2.3 Selecting the Site and Participants

Definition

Sampling is defined as the process of selecting a smaller group (the sample) from the larger group you are interested in (the population), because studying everyone is impossible.

For a one-semester field work, **non-probability sampling** is normal and acceptable:

- **Purposive sampling** — you deliberately choose people who can inform the question (e.g. only Grade 8 English teachers). Most common in ENG498.
- **Convenience sampling** — you study whoever is accessible (your own academy batch). Honest and practical; just declare it.
- **Snowball sampling** — one participant introduces the next; useful for hard-to-reach groups.

Sample size: quality over quantity. For interviews, 5–10 participants with rich data is enough; for questionnaires, 30–50 respondents; for observation, 4–6 full lessons. A common viva question is 'Why this sample size?' — answer with time, access and the depth-vs-breadth trade-off, not 'I don't know'.

2.4 Planning: The Semester Work Plan

Field work fails more often from poor planning than from poor ideas. Draft a week-by-week plan for the ~16-week semester:

Weeks	Task
1–2	Finalise topic, objectives, research questions; read 5–8 relevant sources
3–4	Design instruments (checklist / interview guide / questionnaire); pilot them
4–5	Seek permissions; prepare consent forms; arrange equipment
6–10	Field visits: collect data (the core 4–5 weeks); write field notes daily

Weeks	Task
11–12	Transcribe, organise and code data; basic analysis
13–14	Write the report draft (findings, discussion, conclusion)
15	Revise, format, check references; prepare appendices
16	Final proofread, print/bind; prepare viva notes

Table 2.3: A realistic 16-week field work plan. Adapt it in Appendix F.

Very Important — piloting

- **Piloting** means trying your questionnaire, interview guide or checklist on 2–3 people **before** real data collection, then fixing confusing items. Examiners treat a piloted instrument as a mark of a serious researcher; an unpiloted one as amateur work. Always pilot, and report it in your methodology section.

2.5 Permissions and Access

You cannot walk into a school and start recording. Identify the **gatekeeper** — the person whose permission opens the door (principal, academy owner, branch manager, head of department). Approach formally:

- 1 Prepare a short **permission letter** on plain paper: who you are (VU BS English student, ENG498), what you want to do, how much time it takes, that participation is voluntary and confidential, and your contact number.
- 2 Visit in person, dressed neatly; explain in 2 minutes; leave the letter and your student card copy.
- 3 Follow up politely after 3–4 days. Accept conditions (e.g. 'no video, only audio').
- 4 Thank them in writing when finished — it keeps the door open for future VU students.

Note: keep copies of permission letters/emails. Examiners may ask for proof of access, and appendices with these documents strengthen your report.

2.6 Ethics: The Non-Negotiable Foundation

Definition

Informed consent is defined as the freely given agreement of a participant to take part in research, given after being told the study's purpose, what participation involves, that they may withdraw at any time, and how their identity will be protected.

Five ethical principles govern all field work:

- 1 **Voluntary participation** — nobody is forced; anyone may withdraw at any time without giving a reason.
- 2 **Informed consent** — explain purpose, procedure, time needed and use of data in simple language (Urdu if needed); get a signature or recorded verbal consent. A template is in Appendix A.
- 3 **Confidentiality and anonymity** — use codes (Teacher A, School X), never real names, in notes, transcripts and the report.
- 4 **No harm** — do not embarrass, expose or disadvantage participants; stop recording if someone is uncomfortable.

- 5 **Honesty** — report what you actually found, even if it contradicts your expectations; never invent data.

Very Important — ethics in the viva

- Almost every ENG498 viva includes an ethics question: *'How did you take consent?'* or *'How did you protect participants' identity?'* Prepare a 3-sentence answer describing your consent process and anonymisation (codes instead of names). Fabricated data, once suspected, fails the whole course — examiners can spot it.

2.7 Your Field Kit: Tools and Equipment

Assemble before your first visit:

- a smartphone with a **voice-recorder app** (test it in a noisy classroom first) plus a power bank;
- a notebook and pens for field notes — technology fails, paper does not;
- printed instruments: checklists, interview guides, questionnaires, consent forms;
- your VU student card and permission letter copies;
- a watch (for timing observations);
- plastic folder to keep everything dry and organised; optional: a small tripod/stand for audio placement.

Summary — Module 2

Narrow broad interests into SMART topics with 2–4 answerable research questions.

Choose an accessible site; purposive or convenience sampling of a modest size is fine.

Plan 16 weeks: preparation → collection → analysis → writing → viva prep.

Get written permission from gatekeepers; keep copies.

Ethics are non-negotiable: consent, confidentiality, voluntary participation, honesty.

Pilot every instrument; assemble your field kit before visit one.

Review questions. 1) Turn 'I want to study English teaching' into a SMART topic with two research questions. 2) When is purposive sampling better than convenience sampling? 3) List the five ethical principles. 4) Why must instruments be piloted?

Module 3: Observation as a Field Method

Learning objectives. After this module you will be able to: define observation; distinguish participant/non-participant and structured/unstructured observation; design an observation checklist; conduct classroom observation professionally; and state its strengths and limitations.

3.1 What Is Observation?

Definition

Observation is defined as a field method in which the researcher systematically watches, listens to and records behaviour and events as they naturally occur, without manipulating the situation.

Observation is the most natural field method: instead of asking people what they do, you watch what they actually do. In language classrooms this is powerful, because what teachers say they do ('I use

only English') often differs from what they *do* (frequent Urdu explanations). Two key distinctions organise all observation:

Dimension	Type A	Type B
Researcher role	Non-participant: you sit at the back, watch and record; you do not teach or join activities. Safest for ENG498.	Participant: you join the class activity while observing. Richer insight, but hard to record and risks bias.
Degree of structure	Structured: you use a pre-designed checklist and tick/count behaviours every few minutes. Produces countable data.	Unstructured: you write open narrative notes about whatever seems significant. Produces rich description.

Table 3.1: Two dimensions of observation.

Most ENG498 projects combine both: a structured checklist for countable behaviours plus open notes for the unexpected.

3.2 What to Observe in a Language Classroom

Decide **before** entering what counts as data. Typical foci in ELT observation:

- **Teacher talk vs student talk:** who speaks, for how long (time in 5-minute blocks);
- **Language choice:** tally each switch between English and Urdu/Punjabi and note its purpose (explaining grammar, disciplining, joking);
- **Error correction:** type (recast, explicit correction, elicitation, ignoring) and learner response (repair, repetition, silence);
- **Question types:** display questions (teacher knows the answer) vs referential questions (genuine);
- **Interaction patterns:** teacher→whole class, teacher→individual, student→student (pair work), silence;
- **Materials and activities:** textbook, board, handouts, games, drilling;
- **Classroom atmosphere:** participation level, discipline moves, use of praise.

3.3 Designing an Observation Checklist

A checklist turns watching into data. Keep it to one page so you can use it live. A full sample is in Appendix B; its logic is:

Time block	Teacher talk (min)	Student talk (min)	L1 switches (tally)	Corrections (tally by type)	Notes
0–5	4	1		Recast	Explained 'tenses' in Urdu
5–10	3	2		Explicit	Pair drill started
10–15	2	3		—	Students reading aloud

Table 3.2: Extract from a structured classroom-observation sheet (illustrative).

Remember: define each category before you start (what exactly counts as a 'recast?'). Vague categories produce vague data. 

3.4 Conducting Observation: Professional Conduct

- 1 **Enter quietly and early.** Introduce yourself briefly to the teacher, then sit where you are least disruptive — usually the back corner.
- 2 **Be invisible.** Do not teach, correct students, use your phone, or react visibly. You are a 'fly on the wall'.
- 3 **Record continuously.** Fill the checklist live; expand jottings into full notes within 24 hours while memory is fresh.
- 4 **Visit more than once.** One lesson may be atypical (exam revision, a sleepy Monday). Plan 4–6 visits for a stable picture.
- 5 **Debrief the teacher** briefly afterwards: thank them and ask one or two clarification questions ('Why did you switch to Urdu at that point?'). This adds valuable interview data.

Worked example — from checklist to finding

Sana observed six Grade 8 lessons (45 min each) using a talk-time checklist. Totals: teacher talk 187 min, student talk 83 min — roughly 69% teacher talk. L1 switches averaged 11 per lesson, mostly for grammar explanation and discipline. Finding (for her report): *'Despite the school's English-only policy, Urdu was used for a mean of 24% of teacher talk, mainly for grammar explanation.'* Notice how structured observation produces a precise, quotable finding.

3.5 Strengths and Limitations

Strengths	Limitations
Captures actual behaviour, not reported behaviour	Observer presence may change behaviour (the observer's paradox)
Rich contextual detail	Time-consuming; limited to what happens while you are there
No literacy demands on participants	Cannot reveal motives — you see the switch to Urdu, not the reason
Checklists give countable, comparable data	Risk of observer bias: you notice what you expect

Table 3.3: Observation — strengths and limitations.

Very Important — the observer's paradox

- The **observer's paradox** (Labov): we want to observe natural behaviour, but our presence makes it less natural. Reduce it by visiting several times (people habituate), sitting unobtrusively, and never evaluating. Examiners love this term — define it and say how you handled it.

Summary — Module 3

Observation records natural behaviour systematically, without interference.

Choose non-participant vs participant, structured vs unstructured — or combine them.

Design a one-page checklist with clearly defined categories; pilot it.

Observe 4–6 sessions, record live, expand notes within 24 hours.

Counter the observer's paradox with habituation and unobtrusive conduct.

Review questions. 1) Define observation and name its two key dimensions. 2) Design three checklist columns for studying error correction. 3) What is the observer's paradox and how is it reduced? 4) Why are multiple visits better than one?

Module 4: Interviews as a Field Method

Learning objectives. After this module you will be able to: define the interview; distinguish structured, semi-structured and unstructured interviews; design an interview guide with good questions; conduct interviews skilfully; and describe focus groups.

4.1 What Is an Interview?

Definition

Interview is defined as a field method in which the researcher asks prepared questions in a face-to-face (or voice/video) conversation in order to elicit a participant's experiences, opinions, beliefs and explanations in their own words.

Where observation shows you **what** people do, interviews tell you **why** they do it and **what it means** to them. The teacher who switches to Urdu can explain: 'My students panic if I explain tenses only in English.' That motive is invisible to observation alone — which is why combining methods is so powerful.

Type	Character	Best for	Example opening
Structured	Fixed questions, fixed order, like a spoken questionnaire	Comparability across many respondents	"How many years have you taught English? What is your highest qualification?"
Semi-structured	Guide with topics + probes; order flexible; follow interesting answers	Most ENG498 studies: depth with comparability	"Tell me about a recent lesson where you used Urdu. Why did you decide to?"
Unstructured	Free conversation around a theme; few prepared questions	Exploratory topics; life histories	"Just tell me about your experience learning English."

Table 4.1: Three interview types.

Recommendation: use **semi-structured interviews** for ENG498. They give you comparable core data plus the freedom to probe unexpected, valuable answers.

4.2 Designing an Interview Guide

An interview guide is not a questionnaire — it lists topics and starter questions, not a rigid script. A full sample is in Appendix C. Rules for good questions:

- **Open, not closed:** 'How do you decide when to use Urdu?' beats 'Do you use Urdu?' (which gets a one-word answer).
- **One idea per question:** avoid double-barrelled items like 'Do you use group work and does it improve speaking?' — split them.
- **Neutral wording:** 'What do you think of memorisation?' not 'Don't you agree memorisation is harmful?' (leading).

- **Simple language:** match the participant's English level; offer Urdu if they hesitate — record which language was used.
- **Logical flow:** start easy and factual (background), move to experiences, then opinions; end with 'Is there anything I haven't asked that you think matters?'
- **Prepare probes:** 'Can you give me an example?' — 'What happened then?' — 'How did students react?'

Poor question	Problem	Better version
Why don't teachers teach properly?	Insulting + vague	What challenges do you face while teaching English grammar?
Do you use the direct method or grammar-translation?	Jargon; forces a label	Describe how you usually teach a new grammar point, step by step.
Isn't code-switching confusing for students?	Leading	How do students respond when you explain something in Urdu during an English lesson?

Table 4.2: Fixing interview questions.

4.3 Conducting the Interview

- 1 **Arrange properly.** Fix a time and quiet place; 20–40 minutes is ideal. Explain purpose, confidentiality and recording; get consent signed **before** switching the recorder on.
- 2 **Build rapport first.** Two minutes of friendly chat ('How long have you been at this school?') relaxes people and improves data quality enormously.
- 3 **Listen more than you talk.** Aim for the participant to speak 80% of the time. Nod, use minimal encouragers ('mm-hm', 'I see').
- 4 **Probe, don't interrogate.** Follow up interesting points: 'You mentioned parents pressure you — can you say more about that?'
- 5 **Handle silence.** Count to five silently before jumping in; people often add their most honest sentence after a pause.
- 6 **Record and note.** Audio-record (with permission) **and** jot key phrases; note non-verbal cues ('laughed nervously', 'hesitated').
- 7 **Close well.** Summarise one key point to check understanding, ask the final open question, thank them sincerely.

Worked example — probing turns thin data rich

Q: 'Do students like speaking activities?' A: 'Yes.' (thin) → Probe: 'Can you describe the last speaking activity — what did students actually do?' A: 'I gave them a dialogue to memorise and recite in pairs. The weak students just read from the book; only the monitors spoke freely.' (rich — reveals what 'speaking activity' really means here). One good probe can rescue an entire interview.

4.4 Focus Group Discussions

Definition

Focus group is defined as a moderated group discussion (usually 5–8 participants) in which interaction among participants themselves generates data about shared views, disagreements and social norms.

Useful when you want **student perspectives** quickly — e.g. six BS English students discussing presentation anxiety. Ground rules: one person speaks at a time, all views respected, confidentiality. Your job is **moderator**, not participant: pose the question, manage dominant voices ('Let's hear from someone who hasn't spoken'), draw out the quiet ('Ali, you nodded — what's your experience?'). Record audio and note who said what (Seat 1, Seat 2...).

4.5 Strengths, Limitations and Local Tips

Strengths	Limitations
Reveals motives, beliefs, feelings	Time-consuming: 30-min interview → ~3 hours transcription
Flexible: you can follow up on the spot	Participants may say what sounds good (social desirability bias)
High response quality vs questionnaires	Interviewer influence: your reactions shape answers
Works with low-literacy participants	Small samples; hard to generalise

Table 4.3: Interviews — strengths and limitations.

- **Language:** in Pakistan, offer the participant's stronger language. An honest Urdu answer beats a hesitant English one; translate carefully when quoting.
- **Gender norms:** in conservative settings, a female researcher may access female teachers/students more easily and vice versa — plan your sample accordingly and mention it in the report.
- **Hierarchy:** junior teachers may not criticise their principal on record. Guarantee anonymity explicitly and mean it.

Summary — Module 4

Interviews elicit experiences, opinions and motives in participants' own words.

Semi-structured interviews (guide + probes) suit ENG498 best.

Write open, neutral, single-idea questions; pilot the guide.

Listen 80% of the time; probe; tolerate silence; record with consent.

Focus groups generate interactive data from 5–8 participants with a moderator.

Review questions. 1) Define 'interview' and contrast it with observation. 2) When would you choose semi-structured over structured interviews? 3) Rewrite this leading question neutrally: 'Don't you think grammar-translation is outdated?' 4) What is social desirability bias?

Module 5: Surveys and Questionnaires

Learning objectives. After this module you will be able to: define surveys and questionnaires; choose between open and closed questions; construct Likert-scale items; write clear, unbiased items; pilot and administer a questionnaire; and state strengths and limitations.

5.1 What Are Surveys and Questionnaires?

Definition

Questionnaire is defined as a written set of questions administered to a number of respondents to gather standardised, comparable information about their backgrounds, behaviours, attitudes or opinions.

A **survey** is the overall method (including sampling and administration); the **questionnaire** is the instrument. Questionnaires are the workhorse of field work when you need **breadth**: attitudes of 60 students, needs of 40 bank employees — numbers interviews cannot reach in one semester. The price of breadth is depth: you get short answers, no probing.

5.2 Types of Questions

Type	Example	Analysis
Multiple choice	Which skill is hardest for you? (a) Speaking (b) Writing (c) Listening (d) Reading	Count frequencies; draw bar chart
Likert scale	'I feel confident speaking English in class.' Strongly agree – Agree – Neutral – Disagree – Strongly disagree	Mean scores; % agreement
Rank order	Rank these skills 1–4 by importance for your job.	Average ranks
Semantic differential	English classes are: Boring 1–2–3–4–5 Interesting	Mean position on scale
Open-ended	What is your biggest problem in learning English vocabulary?	Code and categorise themes
Demographic	Age: __ Gender: __ Mother tongue: __ __ Years learning English: __	Describe sample; cross-tabulate

Table 5.1: Common questionnaire item types with analysis.

Rule of thumb: mostly closed questions (easy to analyse) + 2–3 open questions (for surprises). Put demographics first, easy factual items next, attitude items in the middle, open questions last.

5.3 The Likert Scale in Detail

Definition

Likert scale is defined as a psychometric response scale, typically with five (or seven) ordered options from strong agreement to strong disagreement, used to measure the intensity of an attitude or opinion.

Constructing good Likert items:

- write **single, clear statements**: 'My teacher explains grammar clearly.' — not 'My teacher explains grammar clearly and gives interesting examples' (double-barrelled);
- avoid negatives: 'I do not dislike group work' confuses everyone — write 'I enjoy group work';
- mix a few **reverse-worded** items to catch careless ticking ('I feel nervous speaking English' among positive items) and reverse their scores in analysis;

- keep one consistent 5-point scale through the whole section; label every point, not just the ends;
- pilot-test: if pilot respondents ask 'what does this mean?', rewrite the item.

Worked example — scoring a Likert item

Item: 'I participate actively in English class discussions.' Responses from 40 students: SA=6, A=14, N=8, D=9, SD=3. Agreement = $(6+14)/40 = 50\%$. Mean score (SA=5 ... SD=1): $(6 \times 5 + 14 \times 4 + 8 \times 3 + 9 \times 2 + 3 \times 1)/40 = 131/40 = 3.28$ — just above neutral (3.0). Report both the percentage and the mean; one number alone hides the story.

5.4 Writing Good Items: Ten Rules

- 1 One idea per item.
- 2 Short, simple words; no jargon ('scaffolding', 'interlanguage') unless your respondents know it.
- 3 No leading: 'How useful are your excellent English classes?' → 'How useful are your English classes?'
- 4 No double negatives.
- 5 Exhaustive, mutually exclusive options: age bands 18–20, 21–23, 24+ (not 18–22, 22–25 — overlap!).
- 6 Always include 'Other: ____' where lists may be incomplete.
- 7 Sensitive items (income, failure) go last and are optional.
- 8 Instructions at the top: purpose, time needed (~10 min), anonymity, how to mark answers.
- 9 Keep it short: 15–25 items. Long questionnaires get careless answers.
- 10 Translate carefully if administering in Urdu: back-translate (Urdu → English by a friend) to check meaning survived.

5.5 Piloting and Administration

Piloting (Module 2) is doubly important for questionnaires because, unlike interviews, you cannot clarify a confusing item during administration. Pilot with 3–5 people from your target group; ask them to think aloud ('what do you understand by question 7?'); revise; note the pilot in your report.

- **Paper administration** (in class): highest response rate; you can explain instructions; needs printing budget and permission.
- **Online (Google Forms)**: free, auto-tabulated, reaches far — but needs respondents' internet access and self-motivation; response rates are lower.
- For ENG498, **in-person paper questionnaires** usually give the best return for the effort.
- Aim for a **response rate above 70%** of those you approached; report the rate honestly ('45 of 60 distributed questionnaires returned = 75%').

5.6 Strengths and Limitations

Strengths	Limitations
Large samples quickly; countable data	No probing — misunderstandings stay hidden
Anonymous → honest on sensitive items	Low response rates, especially online

Strengths	Limitations
Cheap and fast to administer	Respondents may tick carelessly or 'agree' down the column
Easy comparison across groups	Fixed questions may miss what really matters to respondents

Table 5.2: Questionnaires — strengths and limitations.

Summary — Module 5

Questionnaires gather standardised data from many respondents quickly.

Combine closed items (multiple choice, Likert, ranking) with a few open questions.

Write single-idea, neutral, jargon-free items; pilot with 3–5 people.

Administer in person where possible; report your response rate honestly.

Analyse with frequencies, percentages and means; present in tables and charts.

Review questions. 1) Define 'questionnaire' and contrast it with an interview guide. 2) Write one good and one poor Likert item on learner motivation; explain the difference. 3) Why is piloting essential for questionnaires? 4) Calculate the mean for: SA=4, A=10, N=6, D=5, SD=5 (n=30).

Module 6: Elicitation, Recordings and Case Studies

Learning objectives. After this module you will be able to: define elicitation; design elicitation tasks; collect naturalistic recordings; use tests as data sources; define and plan a case study; and explain triangulation.

6.1 Language Elicitation

Definition

Elicitation is defined as a technique in which the researcher designs a task or prompt that encourages participants to produce the specific language forms or structures the study targets, in a controlled but natural-feeling way.

Sometimes the language you need will not occur naturally during your visit. Elicitation creates the conditions for it:

- **Picture description:** show a busy market scene; ask 'What is happening here?' — elicits present continuous, prepositions, vocabulary.
- **Story retelling:** read/tell a short story; the learner retells it — elicits past tenses and narrative connectors.
- **Role play:** 'You are buying a mobile phone; bargain with the shopkeeper' — elicits requests, negotiation, politeness forms.
- **Translation task:** translate 10 Urdu sentences into English — reveals systematic L1 interference errors.
- **Completion / judgement:** 'Complete: If I had money, I ____' or 'Is this sentence correct? Why?' — targets specific grammar.
- **Word list reading:** read 30 words aloud — captures pronunciation patterns quickly.

Note: elicited data is slightly less natural than spontaneous speech, but far richer for the targeted feature. State this trade-off in your report — honesty about method is a strength, not a weakness.

6.2 Naturalistic Recordings

Recording **unscripted** language — a pair-work discussion, a teacher's instructions, a family dinner conversation, a bargaining exchange — gives you discourse data: turn-taking, repair, code-switching, discourse markers ('you know', 'matlab'). Practical rules:

- get **explicit consent** for recording from every voice on the tape;
- test equipment in the actual setting (classroom echo, market noise); place the recorder close to speakers, not to the noise;
- record **more** than you need (30 min for 10 usable minutes); label files immediately (date_site_speakers);
- back up the same day — phones are lost and memory cards corrupt;
- transcribe selectively: fully transcribe key extracts, summarise the rest (see Module 7).

6.3 Tests and Written Products as Data

Existing or researcher-made **tests** (a 20-item grammar quiz, a vocabulary test) and **written products** (30 student compositions, exam scripts with permission) are legitimate field data for error analysis, proficiency profiling and needs analysis. Advantages: easy to administer and score; limitations: they test test-performance as much as language ability. Always anonymise scripts (Student 1...30) and get institutional permission.

6.4 The Case Study

Definition

Case study is defined as an in-depth investigation of a single bounded unit — one learner, one class, one school, one family — using multiple data sources, to understand that case thoroughly in its real-life context.

A case study suits ENG498 when depth matters more than breadth:

Worked example — a case study design

Case: one Grade 10 student, Hira, known for excellent written but weak spoken English. **Question:** why does her speaking lag behind her writing? **Data sources:** (1) two recorded speaking tasks, (2) interview with Hira, (3) interview with her teacher, (4) her last three written test papers, (5) two classroom observations. **Analysis:** compare evidence across sources. **Outcome:** a rich, believable explanation no single method could give. This multi-source design is the hallmark of a good case study.

6.5 Triangulation: The Golden Principle

Definition

Triangulation is defined as the use of two or more methods, data sources or analysts to study the same phenomenon, so that findings can be cross-checked and the weaknesses of one method are compensated by the strengths of another.

Classic ENG498 triangulation: **observe** lessons (what happens) + **interview** teachers (why it happens) + **questionnaire** students (how widespread it is). If all three point the same way, your finding is solid. If they conflict, that contradiction is itself a finding worth discussing.

Very Important — triangulation in the viva

- Examiners frequently ask 'How did you ensure your findings are trustworthy?' The expected answer names **triangulation** (multiple methods/sources), plus piloting of instruments and honest reporting of limitations. Memorise this trio.

Summary — Module 6

Elicitation tasks (picture description, role play, translation) target specific language forms.

Naturalistic recordings capture discourse; always get consent and back up files.

Tests and written products supply analysable data for error/proficiency studies.

A case study investigates one bounded unit in depth with multiple sources.

Triangulation — combining methods — is the key to trustworthy findings.

Review questions. 1) Define elicitation and give two task examples. 2) List four practical rules for field recordings. 3) What makes a study a 'case study'? 4) Explain triangulation with an example from classroom research.

Module 7: Recording and Documenting Findings

Learning objectives. After this module you will be able to: write effective field notes; keep a field journal; manage audio/video recording; transcribe speech with basic conventions; handle photography ethically; and organise data systematically.

7.1 Field Notes: Your Primary Record

Definition

Field notes is defined as the researcher's written account of what was observed, heard and thought during field visits, made as close as possible to the event, forming the raw material of qualitative analysis.

Good field notes have two layers:

- **Descriptive notes** — what happened, as concretely as possible: who, what, where, when, exact words where remembered. 'Teacher wrote 5 sentences on board; asked class to repeat chorally; 3 boys in back row whispered in Punjabi.'
- **Reflective notes** — your interpretations, questions, feelings, marked separately: '[I think the choral repetition was to control the noisy class, not to teach pronunciation — check with teacher.]'

Technique: **jottings** → **full notes**. In the field, scribble short jottings (keywords, quotes, tallies). Within 24 hours, expand them into full dated notes while memory is fresh — after 48 hours, half the detail is gone. A sample format is in Appendix E.

Worked example — jotting vs expanded note

Jotting (in class): '10:15 — T explains past perfect in Urdu 4 min; asks "samajh aaya?"; class nods; 1 girl asks in Eng.'

Expanded (same evening): '10:15–10:19 — Teacher switched to Urdu to explain past perfect, using the timeline drawn on the board. She checked comprehension with "samajh aaya?" ("did you understand?"); the class nodded collectively. One girl (front row) asked in English, "Miss, will this come in the paper?" — the only English utterance by a student in this segment. [Reflection: comprehension check was ritual, not real — no individual was asked to demonstrate.]'

7.2 The Field Journal

Keep a separate **field journal** (a diary) for the human side of the research: how access was negotiated, what went wrong, how your thinking changed, ethical dilemmas. Examiners value a paragraph of honest reflection in the report ('Initially I planned to observe Grade 9, but the principal assigned Grade 8; this limited...'). It shows you did real field work, not armchair invention.

7.3 Audio and Video Recording

- **Audio** is usually enough for language data and is less intrusive than video. Use the phone's voice recorder; test levels with a friend at classroom distance.
- **Video** captures gesture, board work and seating — powerful, but needs stronger consent and makes participants self-conscious. Use only if your question needs it (e.g. gesture in teaching).
- Announce recording openly; never record secretly — secret recording is unethical and can create serious trouble.
- Name files systematically: **2026-10-20_GovtSchool_Obs3_TeacherA.mp3**; back up to a second location the same day.

7.4 Transcription

Definition

Transcription is defined as the process of converting recorded speech into written text according to stated conventions, so that spoken data can be analysed, quoted and checked by others.

You cannot analyse 10 hours of audio by listening alone — transcribe the important parts. Two levels: **verbatim** (every word, false starts, repetitions) for discourse/error analysis; **cleaned** (tidied grammar, no fillers) for content analysis of interviews. State which you used. A simplified convention set (enough for ENG498):

Symbol	Meaning	Example
(.)	Short pause	I went to (.) market
(2)	Pause of ~2 seconds	My hobby is (2) reading
[laughs]	Non-verbal behaviour in brackets	I am shy [laughs] in class
-	Cut-off / false start	I want to- I need to go
?	Rising intonation (question-like)	You are coming?
CAPITALS	Emphatic stress	I TOLD you the answer
(unclear)	Inaudible stretch	He said (unclear) yesterday

Symbol	Meaning	Example
...	Omitted section	First we drilled... then pair work

Table 7.1: Simplified transcription conventions for ENG498.

Budget your time: one hour of interview $\approx$ 4–6 hours of careful transcription. Transcribe key extracts fully and summarise the rest — and say so in the methodology. Anonymise during transcription (Teacher A, not Mrs. Khan).

7.5 Photography, Documents and Artefacts

Photos of **things, not faces** — a blackboard full of corrections, a classroom seating plan, a bazaar signboard — enrich reports enormously. Never photograph identifiable people (especially children) without written guardian consent. Collect **documents** too: worksheets, test papers, lesson plans (with permission) — they are excellent triangulation sources.

7.6 Organising and Storing Data

From day one, keep one folder per project with subfolders:

- **01_Permissions** — letters, consent forms (signed originals);
- **02_Instruments** — blank checklist, guide, questionnaire;
- **03_RawData** — audio files, photos, scanned notes (named by date);
- **04_Transcripts** — typed transcripts;
- **05_Analysis** — coding sheets, tables, charts;
- **06_Report** — drafts and final report.

Keep a **data log** (one page): date, site, method, participants, file names. When the examiner asks 'how many interviews did you conduct?', you answer from the log, not from memory. Back up everything in two places (laptop + USB/Google Drive).

Summary — Module 7

Field notes = descriptive + reflective layers; expand jottings within 24 hours.

A field journal records the research process and honest reflections.

Record openly with consent; name and back up files systematically.

Transcribe key extracts with stated conventions; anonymise as you go.

Organise data in labelled folders and keep a data log from day one.

Review questions. 1) Distinguish descriptive from reflective notes with an example. 2) Why expand jottings within 24 hours? 3) When is verbatim transcription needed? 4) Design a file-naming scheme for your own project.

Module 8: Analysing Field Data

Learning objectives. After this module you will be able to: distinguish qualitative and quantitative analysis; code qualitative data; carry out basic thematic analysis; compute frequencies, percentages and means; present data in tables and charts; and explain validity, reliability and triangulation.

8.1 Two Logics of Analysis

	Qualitative analysis	Quantitative analysis
Data	Words: transcripts, notes, open answers	Numbers: tallies, scale scores
Question type	'Why / how / what does it mean?'	'How much / how often / how many?'
Method	Coding, themes, interpretation	Counting, percentages, means
ENG498 example	Why teachers switch to Urdu (interview themes)	How often they switch per lesson (checklist counts)

Table 8.1: Qualitative vs quantitative analysis.

Most ENG498 projects use **both**: numbers show the pattern, words explain it. Let each research question dictate its analysis — and say so in the report.

8.2 Coding Qualitative Data

Definition

Coding is defined as the process of labelling segments of qualitative data (phrases, sentences) with short descriptive tags, so that patterns can be identified, counted and compared across the dataset.

Open coding in three passes:

- 1 **Read through** all transcripts/notes once without coding — get the whole picture.
- 2 **Code line by line:** attach short labels in the margin: *grammar-explanation*, *discipline*, *student-anxiety*, *time-pressure*.
- 3 **Group codes into categories/themes:** *grammar-explanation* + *vocabulary-translation* → theme '**L1 as a teaching tool**'; *discipline* + *time-pressure* → theme '**L1 as classroom management**'.

Worked example — coding an interview extract

Teacher: 'When I explain tenses in English, half the class looks blank [*code: comprehension-failure*]. So I switch to Urdu for two minutes [*code: L1-grammar-explanation*]; then they nod and we continue [*code: L1-as-bridge*]. But the principal wants English only [*code: policy-pressure*], so I feel guilty [*code: teacher-guilt*].'

Themes emerging: (1) L1 as comprehension bridge; (2) policy–practice gap; (3) teacher guilt. Three interviews showing the same themes = a solid finding.

8.3 Thematic Analysis in Five Steps

- 1 **Familiarisation** — read, re-read, note initial ideas.
- 2 **Generating codes** — label interesting features across the whole dataset.
- 3 **Searching for themes** — cluster codes into candidate themes.
- 4 **Reviewing themes** — check themes against coded extracts and the full dataset; merge or split.
- 5 **Defining and naming themes** — write a one-sentence definition of each theme; pick vivid example quotes.

In the report, present each theme with: a clear name, a 2–3 sentence explanation, and 1–2 short supporting quotes (anonymised). That is the standard format examiners expect.

8.4 Basic Quantitative Analysis

ENG498 needs only descriptive statistics — no advanced tests:

- **Frequency:** how many times something occurred (23 L1 switches in 6 lessons).
- **Percentage:** frequency ÷ total × 100 (teacher talk 187 of 270 min = 69%).
- **Mean (average):** sum ÷ n (mean Likert score 3.28; mean 11 switches per lesson).
- **Range:** lowest–highest (switches per lesson ranged 6–17) — shows variation.

Present numbers in **tables** (exact values) and **bar charts** (visual comparison). Every table/chart needs a number, a title, and a one-paragraph explanation in the text — never leave a table to 'speak for itself'. Spreadsheet apps compute all of this in minutes.

8.5 From Analysis to Findings

A **finding** is an analysis result stated as an answer to a research question — not raw data. Compare:

Raw data / weak statement	Analysed finding
Many teachers use Urdu.	In 6 observed lessons, teachers switched to Urdu a mean of 11 times per lesson (range 6–17), mainly for grammar explanation (58% of switches).
Students are afraid of speaking.	32 of 40 students (80%) agreed/strongly agreed with 'I feel nervous speaking English in class' (mean 4.1/5); interviews identified fear of peer laughter as the main reason.

Table 8.2: Turning data into findings.

Remember: report **negative and unexpected** results too ('contrary to my expectation, senior teachers code-switched more than juniors'). Honest surprises impress examiners; suspiciously perfect results invite doubt.

8.6 Trustworthiness: Validity and Reliability

Definition

Validity is defined as the extent to which the findings genuinely reflect what the study set out to investigate — whether you measured/observed what you claim to have measured or observed.

Definition

Reliability is defined as the consistency of the research process: whether another researcher, repeating your procedures, would obtain similar results.

Strengthen both in small-scale field work by:

- **Triangulation** (Module 6) — the single most important strategy;
- **Piloting** instruments so questions truly capture what you intend (validity);
- **Clear procedures** — defined checklist categories, stated transcription conventions — so the study is repeatable (reliability);
- **Thick description** — enough context (site, participants, dates) that readers can judge whether findings transfer to their setting;
- **Honest limitations** — stating what the study *cannot* claim increases, not decreases, credibility.

Summary — Module 8

Match analysis to research questions: qualitative for why/how, quantitative for how much/how often.

Code qualitative data in passes; build themes; support each theme with quotes.

Use frequencies, percentages, means and ranges; present in labelled tables and charts.

State findings as answers to research questions, with numbers and evidence.

Ensure trustworthiness through triangulation, piloting, clear procedures and honest limitations.

Review questions. 1) Define coding and describe the three passes. 2) Compute: 27 of 45 students agree — what percentage? 3) Distinguish validity from reliability. 4) Name four ways to strengthen trustworthiness in a small study.

Module 9: Writing the Field Work Report

Learning objectives. After this module you will be able to: name every section of the field work report; write each section with appropriate content and tense; use an academic style with hedging; reference sources in APA style; and apply a formatting checklist before submission.

9.1 Purpose and Audience

The report is the **permanent, assessable record** of your field work. Its readers — your supervisor and the viva examiner — were not in the field with you; the report must let them see what you did, what you found and why it matters, clearly enough to evaluate. Write for an educated non-specialist: define terms, explain procedures, show evidence.

9.2 The Standard Structure

Section	Purpose	Typical length*
Title page	Title, your name/ID, course, supervisor, university, date	1 page
Abstract	Whole study in ~200 words: aim, method, key findings	1 page
Table of contents	Sections with page numbers; list of tables/figures	1–2 pages
1. Introduction	Background, problem, objectives, research questions, scope	2–3 pages
2. Literature review	What is already known; key concepts; gap your study fills	3–5 pages
3. Methodology	Site, participants, sampling, instruments, procedure, ethics, analysis	3–4 pages
4. Findings	Results organised by research question, with tables/quotes	4–6 pages
5. Discussion	What findings mean; link to literature; limitations	2–3 pages
6. Conclusion	Summary answers, implications, recommendations, future research	1–2 pages

Section	Purpose	Typical length*
References	Every source cited, in APA style	1–2 pages
Appendices	Instruments, consent form, permission letter, sample transcript	as needed

Table 9.1: Field work report structure. *For a 25–40 page ENG498 report.

9.3 Writing Each Section

Abstract (write it last)

Four sentences: (1) aim — 'This study investigated...'; (2) method — 'Data were collected through...'; (3) key findings — 'Results showed...'; (4) implication — 'The study suggests...'. No citations, no new information, past tense.

Introduction

Funnel again: general background (English teaching in Pakistan) → specific problem (gap between English-only policy and classroom practice) → your study's objectives and research questions → scope and significance ('findings may help teachers use L1 more purposefully'). End with a roadmap sentence: 'This report is organised as follows...'

Literature review

Not a list of summaries — a **guided tour** of what is known, organised by theme (e.g. 'functions of code-switching', 'teacher beliefs about L1 use'), ending each theme with what is still unknown — the **gap** your study addresses. For ENG498, 8–15 sources (books, journal articles, credible websites) are enough. Every claim needs a citation; every citation must appear in the reference list.

Methodology — the most important section

Examiners judge your competence here. Cover, in order: research design (qualitative/quantitative/mixed); site and access (where, how permission obtained); participants and sampling (who, how many, how chosen); instruments (checklist/guide/questionnaire — describe and append them; report piloting); procedure (what you did, step by step, with dates); ethics (consent, anonymity, voluntary participation); data analysis (how transcripts were coded; which statistics computed). Write in **past tense**: 'Six lessons were observed...'

Very Important — methodology checklist

- An examiner should be able to **replicate** your study from this section alone. If they cannot tell who, where, how many, with what instrument, and how it was analysed — the section fails, whatever the findings.

Findings

Organise by **research question**, not by method ('Findings for RQ1...'). Present each finding with evidence: tables/charts for numbers, short quotes for themes. Describe, don't interpret yet ('Teachers switched to Urdu 11 times per lesson on average' — save the 'why it matters' for the discussion).

Discussion

Now interpret: What do the findings mean? Do they agree with the literature you reviewed (cite it)? Where they differ, suggest why (different context, small sample). Acknowledge **limitations** honestly: small sample, one school, short duration, possible observer effect. Limitations stated by you sound like competence; limitations discovered by the examiner sound like failure.

Conclusion

Answer each research question in one sentence; state 2–3 practical implications ('teacher-training workshops could...'); suggest one follow-up study. No new data here.

9.4 Academic Style

- **Formal vocabulary:** 'investigate' not 'check out'; 'participants' not 'guys'.
- **Past tense** for what you did/found; **present tense** for general truths and the literature ('Cook (2016) argues...').
- **Hedging:** soften claims — 'The findings *suggest*...' rather than 'This *proves*...'. Small studies suggest; they never prove.
- **Objective tone:** avoid 'I feel'; prefer 'The data indicate'. First person ('I observed') is acceptable in methodology but use sparingly.
- **Linking:** 'Furthermore', 'In contrast', 'Consequently' — guide the reader between ideas.
- **No contractions** (don't → do not), no texting abbreviations, no rhetorical questions.

9.5 APA Referencing Essentials

VU reports normally use **APA style** (7th edition). Two parts that must match exactly:

Situation	In-text citation	Reference list entry
Book	(Lightbown & Spada, 2021)	Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2021). <i>How languages are learned</i> (5th ed.). Oxford University Press.
Journal article	(Gul & Ahmed, 2020)	Gul, S., & Ahmed, R. (2020). Code-switching in Pakistani ESL classrooms. <i>Journal of Language Teaching</i> , 12(3), 45–60.
Website	(British Council, 2023)	British Council. (2023). <i>Teaching English: Classroom observation</i> . https://www.teachingenglish.org.uk
Two authors in sentence	As Cook (2016) argues, ...	Cook, V. (2016). <i>Second language learning and language teaching</i> (5th ed.). Routledge.

Table 9.2: APA essentials (simplified for ENG498).

- List references **alphabetically** by first author's surname; **hanging indent** (first line left, rest indented).
- Every in-text citation must have a matching reference entry and vice versa — examiners spot-check this.
- **Never copy text without quotation marks and a citation** — that is plagiarism, a failing offence. Paraphrase + cite.

9.6 Formatting and Submission Checklist

- Title page with all required details; page numbers from the introduction onwards;
- Consistent headings, 1.5 line spacing, 12-pt readable font, 1-inch margins;
- Every table/figure numbered, titled and explained in the text;
- Appendices labelled (Appendix A, B...) and mentioned in the methodology;
- Spell-check + read aloud once (catches missing words); ask a friend to proofread;
- Print/bind as your department requires; keep a PDF backup and one spare printed copy.

Summary — Module 9

Follow the standard structure: abstract → introduction → literature review → methodology → findings → discussion → conclusion → references → appendices.

Methodology must be replicable: who, where, how many, which instruments, what analysis.

Findings present evidence; discussion interprets it; conclusion answers the questions.

Write formally, hedge claims, use past tense for your actions.

Reference in APA; every citation matches a reference-list entry; never plagiarise.

Review questions. 1) List the report sections in order with one-line purposes. 2) What belongs in methodology but not in findings? 3) Write an APA reference for a book with two authors. 4) Why are stated limitations a strength?

Module 10: Ethics, Challenges and Troubleshooting

Learning objectives. After this module you will be able to: apply the five ethical principles in field situations; anticipate common field problems; solve them professionally; and reflect on your development as a researcher.

10.1 Ethics in Practice

Module 2 stated the principles; here is how they play out in real field situations:

Situation	Ethical response
A teacher asks to see what you wrote about her lesson	Show your notes; offer to remove any quote she is unhappy with. Trust > data.
Students whisper answers they don't want recorded	Switch the recorder off immediately; use only what they permit.
The principal wants participants' names from your questionnaire	Refuse politely: you promised confidentiality. Offer aggregated results instead.
A child in the class is being photographed by your camera angle	Reposition; never publish identifiable images of minors without guardian consent.
Your findings criticise the school's methods	Report honestly but diplomatically; criticise practices, never persons. Share a summary with the school as thanks.

Table 10.1: Ethical dilemmas and professional responses.

10.2 Common Field Problems and Solutions

Problem	Prevention / solution
Permission delayed or refused	Start seeking access in week 3; always have a backup site (your second-choice school).
Low questionnaire return	Administer in person; keep it under 15 minutes; follow up once politely.
Participants give short, guarded answers	Build rapport; guarantee anonymity; rephrase as experience questions ('tell me about a time when...').
Recorder fails / file corrupt	Test before every visit; carry power bank; take backup handwritten notes.
Observer effect: class behaves artificially	Visit 4–6 times; sit quietly; explain you are not evaluating anyone.
Too much data, no time to analyse	Transcribe/analyse selectively; narrow the research questions early.
Participant withdraws mid-study	Accept gracefully; you planned a slightly larger sample as buffer.
You fall behind schedule	Protect data-collection weeks at all costs; writing can be compressed, field visits cannot be repeated.

Table 10.2: Troubleshooting guide for field work.

Very Important — protect the data-collection window

- Weeks 6–10 are sacred: a missed field visit cannot be 'made up' by extra writing. If anything slips, steal time from reading or formatting — never from being in the field. Examiners can tell thin data at a glance.

10.3 Safety and Professionalism

- Tell a family member where you are going and when you expect to return; prefer daytime visits.
- Dress modestly and neatly — you represent VU; first impressions open or close doors.
- Never accept or offer money/gifts for participation; a verbal thank-you and a results summary are the right currency.
- Keep signed consent forms and permission letters secure; they contain personal data.
- If a situation feels unsafe or inappropriate, leave politely. No data is worth personal risk.

10.4 Reflective Practice

Definition

Reflective practice is defined as the habit of systematically thinking back over one's research actions — what worked, what failed, what surprised you, and what you would change — in order to learn and improve.

Write a one-page reflection for your journal at the end: the hardest moment, the most surprising finding, one skill you gained, one thing you would do differently. This reflection often becomes the most genuine paragraph of your report — and a strong viva answer to 'What did you learn from this course?'

Summary — Module 10

Apply ethics situationally: consent is ongoing, confidentiality is absolute, honesty is total.

Anticipate problems (access, equipment, guarded answers) with backup plans.

Protect data-collection weeks above all else.

Stay safe, dress professionally, represent VU well.

Reflect systematically — it turns experience into learning.

Review questions. 1) What do you do if a participant withdraws consent after an interview? 2) Name three backup strategies for field problems. 3) Define reflective practice and give one example from a hypothetical project.

Module 11: Evaluation and Viva Preparation

Learning objectives. After this module you will be able to: describe typical assessment criteria; prepare for each viva question area; answer methodology and ethics questions confidently; and run a final pre-submission check.

11.1 How Field Work Is Assessed

Exact weightings vary by instructor, but ENG498 assessment typically combines three components:

Component	Typical weight	What earns marks
Field work report	~60%	Clear structure; replicable methodology; evidence-based findings; honest discussion; correct referencing; professional presentation
Viva voce (oral defence)	~20%	Understanding of own methods; justification of choices; knowledge of findings; awareness of limitations; confident, honest answers
Field work evidence / conduct	~20%	Permission letters, consent forms, dated field notes, instruments, data log — proof the work was genuinely done

Table 11.1: Typical ENG498 assessment breakdown (confirm with your supervisor).

Note: the report alone is not enough. Students with excellent reports have lost marks for empty appendices (no proof of field visits) or for failing to explain their own methodology in the viva. All three components matter. 

11.2 The Viva: What Examiners Ask

A viva is a **conversation**, not an interrogation — usually 10–20 minutes. Examiners probe understanding, not memory. Prepare 2–3 sentence answers for each area:

A. Topic and rationale

- 'Why did you choose this topic?' → personal access + genuine gap + relevance (not 'it was easy').
- 'What were your research questions?' → state them exactly as in the report.
- 'What is the scope/limitation of your study?' → one school, small sample, short duration — stated confidently.

B. Methodology (the heaviest area)

- 'Why did you choose interviews/observation/questionnaires?' → link method to research question (Module 2 logic).
- 'How did you select participants?' → name the sampling type and justify the size.
- 'Did you pilot your instrument? What changed?' → describe one concrete change.
- 'How did you analyse the data?' → coding steps or statistics used, in order.
- 'What is triangulation and did you use it?' → define it; name your combined methods.

C. Ethics

- 'How did you obtain consent?' → describe the form/process and language used.
- 'How did you protect participants' identity?' → codes, anonymised transcripts, secure storage.

D. Findings and discussion

- 'What was your most important finding?' → one finding with its evidence (a number or quote). 
- 'Did anything surprise you?' → honest unexpected result + possible reason.
- 'How do your findings compare with previous research?' → one agreement, one difference from your literature review.
- 'What are the implications for teachers/learners?' → 2 practical suggestions.

E. Reflection

- 'What problems did you face and how did you solve them?' → one real problem + solution (shows resilience).
- 'If you repeated the study, what would you change?' → larger sample, longer observation, add a method.
- 'What did you personally learn?' → a research skill + a human insight.

11.3 Answering Strategies

- 1 **Structure:** point → evidence → link. 'I used semi-structured interviews (point) because my questions were exploratory and I needed to probe unexpected answers (evidence); this matched my 'why' research questions (link).'
- 2 **Be honest about weaknesses** before the examiner finds them: 'The sample was small, so I don't generalise beyond this school.'
- 3 **Never invent.** 'I don't have data on that, but my guess would be...' beats a fabricated answer — examiners detect fabrication.
- 4 **Bring your report** and tab key pages (methodology, findings tables) so you can cite page numbers.
- 5 **Stay calm and brief:** 3–4 sentences per answer; stop when answered. Rambling signals uncertainty.

Worked example — a strong viva answer

Q: 'Why only six lessons of observation?'

A: 'My research question asked about typical correction patterns, and the literature suggests patterns stabilise after 4–6 observations. Six lessons across three weeks gave me 270 minutes of data, and by lesson five no new correction types were appearing — what methodologists call saturation. More lessons would have added transcription time without new insight.' (Names the logic, cites a concept, shows judgement.)

11.4 Final Pre-Submission Checklist

- Research questions appear identically in proposal, introduction, findings and conclusion;
- Methodology names site, dates, sample, sampling type, instruments (appended), piloting, ethics and analysis;
- Every table/figure is numbered, titled and discussed in the text;
- Every in-text citation has a reference-list entry and vice versa (spot-check five);
- Participants anonymised everywhere, including file names in appendices;
- Abstract is ~200 words, written last, with no citations;
- Appendices contain: instruments, consent form, permission letter, sample transcript/notes, data log;
- Proofread on paper once; page numbers correct; PDF backup saved.

Summary — Module 11

Assessment = report (~60%) + viva (~20%) + field evidence (~20%).

Prepare answers for five viva areas: rationale, methodology, ethics, findings, reflection.

Answer in point → evidence → link; be honest about limitations; never invent.

Run the pre-submission checklist; bring a tabbed report to the viva.

Review questions. 1) Name the three assessment components and what each rewards. 2) Draft your answer to 'Why did you choose this method?' 3) What does 'saturation' mean? 4) List five items from the pre-submission checklist.

Glossary of Key Terms

Core vocabulary for ENG498. Learn the **bold** terms precisely — they appear in vivas and review questions.

Anonymity — protecting participants' identity so that no one, including the reader, can link data to a real person; achieved with codes and pseudonyms.

Applied linguistics — the discipline that uses linguistic knowledge to solve real-world language problems in teaching, policy, workplaces and communities.

Case study — an in-depth investigation of a single bounded unit (one learner, class or school) using multiple data sources.

Checklist (observation) — a structured instrument listing behaviours to tick or count during observation.

Closed question — a questionnaire/interview item with fixed response options (multiple choice, Likert).

Code (coding) — a short descriptive label attached to a segment of qualitative data during analysis.

Code-switching — alternating between two or more languages within a conversation or utterance, common in multilingual Pakistan.

Confidentiality — the researcher's obligation not to disclose participants' private information to others.

Convenience sampling — selecting participants because they are easily accessible to the researcher.

Data log — a running record of what data was collected, when, where and from whom.

Descriptive statistics — simple numerical summaries — frequencies, percentages, means, ranges — used to describe a dataset.

Discourse analysis — the study of language beyond the sentence: how turns, topics and interactions are organised.

Elicitation — a task designed to prompt participants to produce targeted language forms.

Ethnography — long-term immersive field research aiming to understand a community's practices from the inside.

Field journal — a diary recording the research process: access, problems, decisions and reflections.

Field notes — written records of observations, made during or immediately after field visits.

Field work — the systematic collection of primary data in the natural setting where the phenomenon occurs.

Focus group — a moderated discussion of 5–8 participants generating interactive data on shared views.

Gatekeeper — a person whose permission or cooperation gives the researcher access to a field site.

Hedging — softening academic claims with words like *suggest*, *tend*, *may* to match the strength of evidence.

Informed consent — a participant's freely given agreement to take part, after being told the study's purpose, procedures and their rights.

Instrument — any tool used to collect data: checklist, interview guide, questionnaire, test.

Interview guide — a list of topics and starter questions (plus probes) steering a semi-structured interview.

Jottings — brief on-the-spot scribbles expanded into full field notes within 24 hours.

Likert scale — an ordered agreement scale (typically 5 points) measuring attitude intensity.

Linguistic landscape — the visibility of languages on public signs, revealing language status and use in a place.

Mean — the arithmetic average: sum of values divided by their number.

Needs analysis — systematic investigation of what language skills a group requires, used to design courses.

Observer's paradox — the problem that observing behaviour changes it; the observer wants natural data but their presence makes it less natural.

Open-ended question — an item inviting free-text answers in the respondent's own words.

Participant observation — observing while taking part in the activity being studied.

Piloting — trial-running instruments on a few people before real data collection, then revising them.

Plagiarism — presenting others' words or ideas as one's own; a serious academic offence.

Population — the entire group a study is interested in; the sample is drawn from it.

Probe — a follow-up prompt ('Can you give an example?') that deepens an interview answer.

Purposive sampling — deliberately selecting participants who can best inform the research questions.

Qualitative data — non-numerical data: words, images, descriptions.

Quantitative data — numerical data that can be counted and statistically summarised.

Rapport — a relationship of trust and ease between researcher and participant, improving data quality.

Recast — an error-correction move in which the teacher reformulates the learner's utterance correctly without explicit comment.

Reflexivity — the researcher's awareness of how their own background and presence shape the research.

Reliability — the consistency of research procedures; repeatability of the study.

Research question — a clear, focused, answerable question stating what the study aims to find out.

Respondent — a person who answers a questionnaire (cf. *participant*, *informant*).

Sample — the subset of a population actually studied.

Sampling — the process of selecting a sample from a population.

Saturation — the point in qualitative data collection where new data stops yielding new themes.

Semi-structured interview — an interview guided by topics and starter questions, with freedom to probe and reorder.

Social desirability bias — participants answering in ways that look good rather than truthfully.

Structured observation — observation using a pre-designed checklist of behaviours to count or tick.

Theme — a patterned meaning identified across qualitative data, built from grouped codes.

Thematic analysis — a method for identifying, analysing and reporting themes within qualitative data.

Transcription — converting recorded speech into written text using stated conventions.

Triangulation — using multiple methods, sources or analysts to cross-check findings.

Unstructured interview — a free-flowing conversation around a theme with minimal prepared questions.

Validity — the extent to which findings genuinely reflect what the study set out to investigate.

Verbatim transcription — word-for-word transcription including false starts, repetitions and fillers.

Appendix A: Sample Informed Consent Form

Adapt the wording; translate into Urdu if participants need it. Keep signed copies.

Informed consent — template

Title of study: [your title]

Researcher: [your name], BS English (Applied Linguistics), Virtual University of Pakistan, ENG498 Field Work

Purpose: This study aims to [one sentence, plain language].

What participation involves: [e.g. 'a 30-minute interview, audio-recorded with your permission' / 'filling a 10-minute questionnaire'].

Voluntary participation: Your participation is entirely voluntary. You may decline to answer any question and may withdraw at any time without giving a reason.

Confidentiality: Your name will not appear in any notes, transcripts or the report. A code (e.g. Teacher A) will be used instead. Recordings will be stored securely and used only for this study.

Contact: [your phone/email] Supervisor: [name]

I have read and understood the above. I agree to take part in this study.

Name (optional): _____

Signature: _____

Date: _____

Appendix B: Sample Observation Checklist

One page; define each category before the visit. Tally in 5-minute blocks.

Time	Teacher talk (min)	Student talk (min)	L1 switches (tally + purpose)	Correction type (tally)	Activity / notes
0–5					
5–10					
10–15					
15–20					
20–25					
25–30					
30–35					
35–40					
40–45					

Table B.1: Blank classroom-observation sheet (photocopy one per lesson).

Category definitions (write yours here): Recast = ...; Explicit correction = ...; Elicitation = ...; L1 switch purpose codes: G = grammar explanation, V = vocabulary, D = discipline, M = management/instructions.

Appendix C: Sample Interview Guide

Interview guide — 'L1 use by English teachers' (semi-structured, ~30 min)

Opening & background (5 min): 1. How long have you taught English, and which classes? 2. What is your own experience of learning English?

Core — practices (15 min): 3. In a typical lesson, when do you find yourself using Urdu? Can you walk me through yesterday's lesson? 4. Are there moments you deliberately *avoid* Urdu? Which? 5. How do students react when you explain in Urdu vs English?

Core — beliefs (7 min): 6. What is your view of the school's English-only policy? 7. Do you think using Urdu helps or harms learning in the long run? Why?

Closing (3 min): 8. Is there anything important about this topic I haven't asked?

Probes to keep ready: 'Can you give me a recent example?' — 'What happened then?' — 'How did the students respond?'

Appendix D: Sample Questionnaire

Questionnaire — 'Speaking anxiety among BS English students' (extract)

This questionnaire is part of ENG498 field work at VU. It takes ~8 minutes. Your answers are anonymous. Tick (✓) one box per statement.

Section 1 — About you: 1. Semester: ____ 2. Gender: M / F 3. Mother tongue: ____ 4. Years of learning English: ____

Section 2 — Your views (SA = Strongly agree ... SD = Strongly disagree):

5. I feel confident speaking English in class. SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD ☐

6. I worry classmates will laugh at my mistakes. SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD ☐

7. My teacher encourages everyone to speak. SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD ☐

8. I prefer writing to speaking in English. SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD ☐

9. Pair work helps me speak more freely. SA ☐ A ☐ N ☐ D ☐ SD ☐

Section 3 — In your own words: 10. Describe one classroom moment when you felt nervous speaking English. What happened? _____

11. What could teachers do to make speaking easier for you? _____

Appendix E: Sample Field Note Format

Field note — template

Date: ____ Time: ____ Site: ____ Visit no.: ____

Method: observation / interview / questionnaire Participants: [codes]

Purpose of visit: ____

Descriptive notes (what happened, in order):

[write here — concrete, timed, quotable]

Reflective notes (my interpretations, questions, surprises):

[mark clearly as interpretation, e.g. in brackets]

Follow-up needed: ____ Files created: ____

Appendix F: 16-Week Work Plan (Blank)

Copy into your journal and fill in actual dates. Tick off each week.

Week	Dates	Planned task	Done?
1			
2			
3			
4			
5			
6			
7			
8			
9			
10			
11			
12			
13			
14			
15			
16			

Table F.1: Blank semester work plan.

Further Reading

A short shelf for ENG498 students who want to go deeper. Cite any you actually use.

- Brown, J. D. (2014). *Mixing methodologies in applied linguistics*. Oxford University Press — clear on combining qualitative and quantitative methods.
- Creswell, J. W. (2014). *Research design: Qualitative, quantitative, and mixed methods approaches* (4th ed.). Sage — the standard research-design text.
- Dörnyei, Z. (2007). *Research methods in applied linguistics*. Oxford University Press — practical chapters on questionnaires and interviews.
- Lightbown, P. M., & Spada, N. (2021). *How languages are learned* (5th ed.). Oxford University Press — background for classroom-focused topics.
- McKay, S. L. (2006). *Researching second language classrooms*. Lawrence Erlbaum — short, classroom-research oriented.
- Richards, K. (2003). *Qualitative inquiry in TESOL*. Palgrave Macmillan — interviews, observation and transcription in language teaching.

End of guide. Good luck in the field — observe carefully, listen generously, record honestly, and write clearly.