

Statistics for linguists

LIM023, HT21, 7.5 ECTS
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1 Description of changes since the last course

The problem sets were reviewed and updated.

2 The strengths of the course's according to the students

Based on the numerical answers, the majority of the students who responded to the questionnaire were satisfied or very satisfied with course. Their free-text comments mentioned a logical structure of the course with informative pre-recorded lectures followed by teacher-led Q&A sessions. Linguistic examples were appreciated as was an atmosphere which made students struggling with the material feel comfortable to ask what they considered basic questions.

3 The weaknesses of the course according to the students

Three of the respondents wished for more focus on basic concepts (unfortunately, no examples were given of what concepts they considered basic). One student in particular felt that the pace and complexity of the material made it feel like an advanced rather than introductory course. Another mentioned lack of real-life examples as an obstacle to learning the material. A particularly relevant comment was made regarding linear regression being introduced too late in the course while being central to the examination. The student felt that this did not let him practice the related problems sufficiently. According to yet another student, the remote-teaching format was inappropriate for this course.

4 The teachers' analysis of the course's implementation and results

Based on my own observations and students' responses, the course went well. The flipped classroom approach was appreciated by several students. The Q&A sessions were well-attended with more active participation than last year.

While the distribution of final grades suggests that the pace and difficulty of the course are appropriate, it is troubling that several students felt that basic concepts are not given enough attention. Of course, what counts as basic might differ from person to person so in the absence of concrete examples it is difficult to come up with a clear solution but the material should be certainly reviewed with these comments in mind.

I agree that linear regression could be introduced earlier in the course. I think that understanding linear models is crucial for successful application of statistical methods and possibly the most important thing a student taking an introductory statistics class can learn. Minimally, regression could be introduced before ANOVA with the latter being presented as a special case of a linear model. That said, several answers mentioned the logical structure of the course so apparently the current format (regression as a generalisation of ANOVA) works well too.

5 Conclusions and suggestions for course development

- Review the teaching materials for insufficiently explained key concepts.
- Consider reorganising the course structure with linear models introduced earlier in the course.