Remote Fieldwork
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Who are you?

• PhD
• Postdoc
• Senior Scholar
• Established fieldsite?

Endangered Languages Documentation Programme
ELDP and COVID

- 120 ongoing projects
- Cancellation of 2020 grant round
- Small grants (1 year project)
- Salaried projects (doctoral and post doctoral grantees)
- Projects all over the globe: different solutions
- Projects at different stages: different solutions

COVID and urgency

- COVID affecting communities and especially elders
- Financial support through projects for communities
- Supporting wish to document now
- Covid may not pass as fast as we wish
- New ways of working improving our practices

How we will be working?

- Raise an issue posed as question describing the challenge
- Present some solutions
Fieldwork...

- What is the difference between in situ fieldwork and remote fieldwork?
- What are the challenges?
- 10 minutes

Data collection

Data transcription and translation

Data processing (conversion and/or back-up)

Data archiving

Data preservation

Data analysis

Anyways and in the meantime...

- Archival research
- DELAMAN archives [https://www.delaman.org/]
- Materials on the language
- Materials on closely related languages
- Preparatory work
  - Transcription (existing conventions)
  - Translation
  - Semantics/Wordlists
Anyways and in the meantime…

- Find collections (and help with the preservation of them)
- Other scholars, activists, missionaries, retirees
- Process recordings
  - From digitization to archiving

Getting in touch…

- WhatsApp
- Facebook
- Telegramme
- Email

Oral
- Facetime/WhatsApp...
- Skype/Zoom/GoogleHangout/…

Going digital…

Writing
- WhatsApp
- Facebook
- Telegramme
- Email
What gear is needed

• Connectivity: Getting the local team digitally connected
  • phones
  • laptops
  • internet connection (https://www.internetsociety.org/)
  • satellite antenna receiver
  • router for outdoors
  • internet plan (suitable for remote areas)
  • £££ phone credit/internet time (data)/bandwidth

• Recording: Getting the local team equipped with tools
  • audio/video recorders / mics there (e.g., ZoomH1)
  • phone
  • laptop

On gear...

• Record with phone, tablet or laptop

• Sturdy equipment easy to handle and maintain

• Power supply ....

On relationships...

• Building and maintaining
  • Rapport
  • Relationships
  • Trust

• Different models of relationships
  • Same same but different
  • Taro’s
What are the challenges for data collection?

- Recording the session
- Elicitation
- Interviews
- Narratives
- Oral histories
- Play back
- Recording by local team
- Conversations
- Rituals
- Cultural Practices

Data collection: What to collect how by whom?

- Karoline Grzech (ELDP grantee) and her ecuadorian collaborator doing BowPed elicitation
What are the challenges for analysis?

- Transcription & Translation
- Facebook and WhatsApp
- ELAN... (compression audio to mp3, send over)
- BOLD (Basic Oral Language Documentation) - respeaking/careful speech framework
- AIKUMA - segmentation and recording the respeaking

Know your pitfalls...and have solutions

- Contact time is precious, we cannot waste it
- Prepare, prepare, prepare...practice
  - Remote fieldwork with people who will forgive you (family, close friends...)
  - Different relationships
  - Different digital literacy
Data Processing

- Meta data (who is talking about what when and where)
- Conversion (formats for processing)
- Preservation (back up and file naming)
- Consent (who can do what with the recording)
- Transfer (how to get it to you/archive/safe place)

Cyber security

- A video-based solution must enable HIPAA compliance through 256-bit AES encryption for data in transit and at rest, and without accessing protected personal information.
- Recording the session through the record button of the application can mean that rights are shared... record in a different way?
- Zoom’s privacy policies:
  - Use users’ personal data, and its encryption policies, which have been more than a tad misleading.
Ethics

- Consent (who will get consent)
  - Can you record
  - Who you can record for what
  - Who can see/hear recording
  - Who can read transcriptions and translation

- Rights
  - Copyright
  - Intellectual property
  - The person who pushes the record button

Opportunity to get things right ...

- Richer and more diverse recordings and data
- Recording of what the community cares about
- Recording with the viewpoint of the filmmaker
- Whose view is it
- Developing capacity
- Sustainability
- Leaving the extractive practice behind...

Find your solution for your particular project

“Try again. Fail again. Fail better”
Samuel Beckett
Resources

- Abralin Talk Series https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=egnbg4KuX5E
- Linguistics in the Pub: fieldwork at a distance: https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=K89TKXaJNjU
- Emiliana Cruz, CIESAS-CDMX
- Ruth Singer, University of Melbourne
- Stephen Morey, La Trobe University
- Claire Bowern, Yale University
- Digital Ethnography (Routledge)

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