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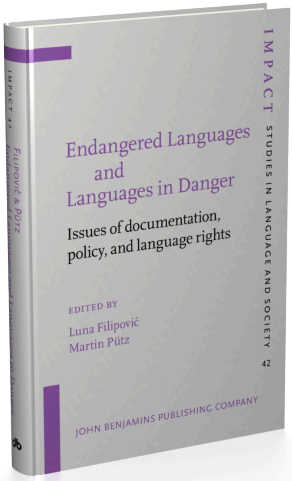

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North-South relations in linguistic science

Collaboration or colonialism?

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In this chapter, we attempt to unmask the ideological bias inherent in influential conceptions of the methods, motivations and practices of Endangered Language Documentation Research (ELDR) by addressing the unequal exchange that frequently characterizes the relationship between the linguistic researcher, on the one hand, and the language community and, in some cases, local researchers, on the other. We highlight the extent to which common answers to the question "Why document endangered languages?" suppress the sociocultural and historical relations within which ELDR practices are situated. We review the historical evolution of the conceptualization of language documentation research, and its relationship to language preservation and revitalization. We ask what it is that makes ELDR scientific, critically analysing the models of "language" and of "science" that are frequently deployed in arguments for its importance, and question the value-neutrality of the notion "scientific community" in this context. We suggest that the conjunction of dominant concepts of "language" and "data", and the relations between "international" and "local" Endangered Language Documentation (ELD) researchers, generates an ideological construction of unequal competence that operates to justify unequal North-South exchange relations. We document this claim of unequal and at times abusive North-South exchange with brief, anonymized case studies. We conclude by noting that, in comparison with other social science disciplines, linguistics seems resistant to reflexive and self-critical analysis of its ideological dimension; and suggesting possible ways of raising awareness and generalizing models of good practice.

Keywords: endangered languages, ideology, language documentation, language preservation, linguistic science, North-South relations, revitalization

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1. Introduction: Why document endangered languages?

To most linguists, and many non-linguists perhaps, the answer to this question is self-evident. Both existing, and documented but extinct, languages are vital resources for scientists to study the nature of, and the constraints on, language variation; and thus, indirectly, the human language faculty and the human mind more generally. The languages and language varieties of interest to Endangered Language Documentation researchers will not be, or may not be, there to study *in vivo* in the future, and if they are not documented now they will not be available for future generations of scholars. This is the argument most frequently advanced by linguists to convince governments, inter- and non-governmental agencies and other funding bodies that this research enterprise matters and requires funding. Sometimes, the argument is also put forward that language diversity is a value in itself, analogously with biodiversity, in that languages are the most important bearers of the cultural heritage of the communities that speak them. These two arguments are not, however, always seen as necessarily complementary, and when the latter is advanced it is frequently couched in terms of immaterial heritage whose value (analogously, in this context, with material heritage artworks and artefacts) is frequently conceptualized in terms of larger groups – nation states and their citizens, humanity as a whole – rather than for the still-existing speech communities.

We do not challenge the force or validity of either of these arguments in themselves. But we do question the bypassing of unarticulated critical questions – "whose heritage?" and "heritage or contemporary life resource?" – that the focus on scientific, national and human heritage tends to push to the background. When endangered languages are viewed primarily through the lens of heritage, and the everyday language practices of the communities that speak (or used to speak) them are neglected, these communities themselves are de-privileged in the discourse of Endangered Language Documentation Research (henceforth ELDR). In this case, we can speak of a "heritage ideology" which is reinforced by influential (and often uncritically accepted) conceptions of linguistic science and scientific method. The conception of language that informs and sustains the heritage ideology is that of "language as an object", viewed from outside by an (ideally disinterested) scientific observer who is equipped, by both training and material resources, to analyse the language and disseminate the results of her/his analysis to other members of the scientific community.

Again, we do not challenge these conceptions *in themselves*. ELD researchers are subject to the same professional imperative to communicate research findings to the scientific community as researchers in other fields – even more so, perhaps, in the recent past, when ELDR faced the task of legitimizing itself as a recognized

field of scientific activity. Furthermore, the mainstream traditions of linguistic science have long viewed language as a synchronic system, taking a 3rd person perspective, and the working assumptions of many subfields of linguistics, including most approaches to typological linguistics, reflect this conceptualization. However, both theoretically and in relation to ELDR practices, the language-as-object view is constricting and incomplete. Although it may represent the historically dominant paradigms of linguistics, it does not represent the whole of language science; in particular it does not represent those research enterprises that are primarily interested in languages as communicative tools, and in speech/language as a social practice.

The "language-as-object" view meshes with the heritage ideology because it views a language as a kind of symbolic package handed down from generation to generation, whose transmission is ideally both whole and accurate, with deviations from these normative ideals (such as those arising from language contact or intergenerational differences in contexts of acquisition and use) being viewed as unfortunate noise in the data. The language-as-object view thus also reinforces the choices of data that are privileged in ELDR, that is, monologic speech genres (such as narratives) produced by older speakers, who are viewed as (and often are) more knowledgeable about both language and cultural heritage (Austin, this volume). Again, we do not dispute the importance of such data, but we do emphasize that this focus is informed by the heritage ideology, in which the data archive is a museum of a past and more "pure" era, rather than a record of contemporary appropriation strategies towards the endangered language employed by speakers with varying degrees of knowledge, occupying diverse positions in the society.

The language-as-object view may serve, then, as an ideological support for the conceptual separation of the endangered language from the community that speaks (or is ceasing to speak) it. Just as Richard Dawkins (1976) argued that organisms are merely vehicles for the replication of genes, so communities may be viewed as merely vehicles for the transmission of a language, language variation and language relationships being viewed from an internalist and autonomous perspective, divorced from both communities and cultures. This is not a caricature, as we can see from the controversy generated by recent defences of the argument (which is itself not new: Sharifian 2015) that grammar is significantly culturally motivated (Everett 2005, 2009; Nevins, Pesetsky & Rodrigues 2009). We acknowledge, of course, that the language-as-object view does not *entail* that language be viewed as autonomous from culture and community. Rather, we are suggesting that it may *reinforce* a background presupposition of such autonomy. The consequence is that not only do ELDR practices privilege certain data choices over others, but also the language itself is viewed as free-floating data, ownership *of* which and access *to* which communities neither have nor should have special

rights over. Endangered language data are, in this view, primarily *scientific heritage* data, in whose use and preservation the main stakeholders are *the scientific community*.

The countries containing "sites of interest" for ELDR are often in the non-Anglophone global "South". The ELD researchers, and the agencies funding the research, are often from the global "North".[1] The relationship between researcher and researched is, therefore, frequently a *North-South relationship*, with all the socio-political complexities that this carries with it. It is also, of course, the case that linguists who are nationals of countries of the "South" also conduct ELDR, sometimes in conjunction with language revitalization programmes, and sometimes in collaboration with researchers from the "North". We address the North-South dimension of researcher-community relations in more detail in Section 3; and North-South ELDR research collaborations in Section 4. Here, we wish to stress that the language-as-object view also operates as an ideological support for unequal power relations (and *unequal exchange*) not only *between* the academe and the communities, but also *within* the academe, because of the way in which it valorizes certain kinds of skills over others. In the academic world of linguistic science, "theory" and "pure research" have traditionally been more highly valued than "applied" research; "data collection" is seen as a purely mechanical, cognitively "light" activity; and local and contextual knowledge gained through personal experience of field work is devalued in comparison with theoretical knowledge. All of this amounts to the devaluation, familiar to many experienced field workers, of *knowledge as practice* and *practice as knowledge*.

Knowledge as practice/practice as knowledge can be thought of as encompassing both the "know-how" that underpins field research, and the reflexive stance that is *theoretically* enjoined upon researchers in all disciplines that employ qualitative research methods. It includes, but is not reducible to, knowledge of how to use technical equipment and software tools. Unfortunately, just such a reduction, that bypasses the difficult and complex questions of the theory and practice of ethnographic research, intercultural communication, field research ethics, indigenous rights and intellectual property, is all too common in the education and training of ELD researchers. We return to these issues in our concluding

1. The terms "North" and "South", like "Western" and "non-Western", are not strictly geographical in this context. They are metonyms for conceptual complexes that differentiate global populations on geo-political and economic grounds, with a component of differential valorization. For example, the so-called "Fourth World" indigenous minorities of North America may be considered to be part of the global "South", while the non-indigenous majority of, say, Australia, may be considered to be part of the global "North". We therefore use scare quote marks for these terms (but not for the phrase North-South relations, which should be understood as denoting relations between the global "North" and the global "South").

reflections. In the next section, we examine in greater depth, on the basis of the previous work of the first author, the development over the past twenty years of changing conceptions of ELDR, of the relationships between documentation, description, archiving and revitalization, and of the differing spheres of ideology within which ELDR exists and which impinge upon its theory and practice.

2. ELDR: Evolving paradigms

At this juncture we would like to propose a set of constructs to clarify the evolving paradigms of the still developing field of ELDR, which should be understood as having contributed to the ongoing collective debates and publications of the last decade (such as the collections in Brenzinger 2006 and Austin & Sallabank 2010). This set of constructs, which encapsulate changing ELDR paradigms, will serve as a backdrop for our later discussion of North-South relations in endangered language research.[2]

The formula that we propose in order to capture the evolution of the new subdiscipline of ELDR is 'D–D.A+R', in which the linear order – *Description*, then *Documentation* and *Archiving*, then *Revitalization* – reflects the chronological order of elaboration of these subfields; and the symbols used to link them are meant to match familiar linguistic glossing conventions marking different types of relations between elements. The symbol '–' in 'D–D' is meant to resemble a morphemic segmentation, meaning 'description *and* documentation'; '.' in 'D.A' to show the unit formed by 'archiving *of* documentation'; and '+' in 'D.A+R' to mark the addition over time of revitalization as an activity systematically *incorporated in* the complex of practices constituting ELDR. This last link of 'D–D.A plus revitalization' can also be formulated more explicitly as D–D.A *'FOR'* revitalization.

Within modern linguistics, the activity of *description* was long regarded as something of a poor cousin to "theory", but it has in recent years regained value both for its essential empirical role in work on yet un(der)-described endangered languages, and as a key methodological aspect of new developments in the subfield of linguistic typology. *Documentation* has entered linguistics under guise of a specific subfield of "documentary linguistics" whose development and standardization has largely been driven by the accelerated development of new

2. The constructs to be presented here have been amply discussed in recent years within a network of researchers including the University of Lyon research team LED TDR (Langues En Danger: Terrain Documentation and description, Revitalization); its associates in the 3L Consortium (Lyon, London-ELDP SOAS, Leiden); and participants in the 3L series of international summer schools.

technologies. New technologies have also allowed the development of standards for *archiving* of this documentation. We can note here the essential role played by major funding programmes (notably VW DOBES and ELDP-SOAS) in the last 20 years in setting documentation and archiving norms (Gippert, Himmelmann & Mosel 2006).[3] As for the *revitalization* link which has been added to the chain (see Grenoble & Whaley 2006), its status remains better recognized in sociolinguistics and anthropological linguistics than in purely linguistic academic circles, where it may sometimes not even be acknowledged, or, when it is, may be consigned to a lesser-valued realm of "applied linguistics" or "social service", as we examine in more detail below.[4]

The second element of clarification we will propose considers the relation of linguists to the speakers of the endangered languages with whom they work, and to the linguistic communities to which those speakers belong. This particular topic still finds limited space in discussions of ethics in the field of endangered languages, where discussions are more oriented to legal aspects of intellectual property rights and formal definitions of informed consent, than to the nature of the human interactions in the process of collecting data; reflecting the legalistic approach typical of literate societies. Here again, a formula will be proposed to capture succinctly the evolution, over the second half of the 20th century, of a line of thinking preoccupied with the issue of power relations between *researchers* (from the academic sphere in general) and *researched* in the field.

The proposed formula is the simple schema of 'fieldwork *ON, FOR, WITH* and *BY*' as 'fieldwork ON (a language), FOR (a community), WITH and BY (speakers)'. This formula is actually an adaptation and extension of a proposition originally made by Cameron (1992) from the field of sociolinguistics, imported into the field of endangered languages in Craig (1993). It spells a progression from fieldwork ON a language (the ideological schema of the 1950s, of field research using native 'informants') to fieldwork FOR the linguistic community (the ideological schema of the time of civil rights movements, of the *engaged linguist* in

3. Several programmes were established around the turn of the century to foster work on endangered languages. The *Dokumentation bedrohter Sprachen* (DoBeS) programme, funded by the Volkswagen foundation of Germany, was based at the Max-Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen; the Hans Rausing Endangered Language Project (HRELP) was established at SOAS, University of London, in 2002; and the Documentation of Endangered Languages (DEL) program was funded by a consortium of US foundations (the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities and the Smithsonian Institute). It was on this funding base that a new subfield of linguistics named "documentary linguistics" (Himmelman 1998, 2006) took shape.

4. We stress that we do not endorse the positioning of applied research as lower in a hierarchy of status and value; rather, we are critically drawing attention to a common (mis-)conception.

defense of linguistic rights of minorities, taking an advocacy role in "speaking for" the speakers and the communities); to fieldwork WITH the speakers (the ideological schema that emerged in the 1990s, of empowerment, collaborative research and action research (as exemplified in Craig 1992); to which was added, more recently, the final step of the ideal of fieldwork BY speakers trained to be the linguists of their own languages for and within their communities.

This final addition to the schema was expressly requested at an international conference on Amazonian linguistics in Brazil attended by Amazonian indigenous leaders (Grinevald 2000), echoing demands of speakers of Mayan languages (Grinevald 2002, 2006; England 2003), at the commencement of training programs for native speakers like the one at the University of Texas described in Woodbury & England (2004). It brings with it a radical rethinking of the role of linguists in the field, with both synergies and contradictions in terms of expectations in and by the academic sphere, and expectations of the concerned communities of endangered language speakers. As suggested by Costa (p.c.) this is rich material for the further exploration of the links between linguistic rights, diversity, grassroots self-organization, language policy and educational policy and practice. This nexus of issues is outside our current scope but is addressed by other contributions to this volume.

Finally, we would like to offer as last element of clarification a visualization of what Grinevald and Bert (2014) have called the *Spheres of Ideologies* (see Figure 1) within which the different aspects of ELDR practices operate, are conceptualized and are evaluated. For the purpose at hand here, the academic sphere is represented as standing "autonomously", next to and outside the "real world", as represented in the common expression "the ivory tower", or presupposed in the injunction often addressed to the present authors to "not mix science/academia and politics".

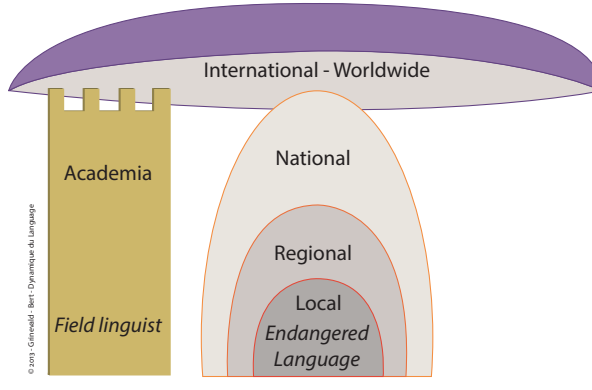

Figure 1. Spheres of ideologies

At the core of the prevailing ideology of the academic sphere is its own sense of its research (and teaching) mission, traditionally articulated as a notion of "pure science" demanding a distancing from what is perceived as the messiness of the "real world." We argue below that this ideological stance is not neutral, as it holds itself to be, but in fact validates relations of unequal exchange, as a consequence of which it is increasingly challenged in many parts of the developing world.

The world "out there" is represented in Figure 1 as a nested arrangement of four stacked spheres of international, national, regional and local scope, from a world-encompassing domain to the very local sphere within which fieldwork takes place on the ground. The local sphere where fieldwork takes place is the sphere where linguists encounter the languages they describe, document, and, in some circumstances, help revitalize. It is the sphere of contact with a linguistic community, and of face-to-face interactions with speakers and all other actors involved in some way with the fate of the endangered languages.

A major issue for ELD researchers is how to deal with the great variety of speakers that one is most likely to encounter in endangered language situations, who not only vary in their levels of pragmatic and grammatical competence as well as lexical knowledge, but also in their attitudes toward the language, as well as their interest in sharing their knowledge. These are some of the basic ingredients that are being considered for the elaboration of a typology of speakers of endangered languages, as proposed in Grinevald and Bert (2010a, b) following up on pioneering work by Dorian (1982). This variety of speakers places on researchers complex demands for interpersonal skills in developing field methods appropriate for local circumstances, a key ingredient of knowledge as practice/practice as knowledge. Finally, one major issue field linguists must reckon with in the field is the level of consciousness and politicization of the community at large surrounding language issues, including loss of vitality of the language and concern about it.

The national and regional spheres are delimited by constitutions, laws and decrees, and their linked ideologies as expressed in language planning and educational policies, with possible contradictions or even conflicts between national and regional levels. The international and global spheres are the spheres both of forces of globalization that contribute to the loss of language diversity, and of well-established organizations – NGOs or other bodies with diverse philosophies that support or run specific development programs – engaging in the promotion of local endangered languages, as part of larger concerns, such as human rights, indigenous rights, or protection of the environment. This is the case for various branches of the United Nations, such as UNESCO (Minasyan 2014) and its efforts in the past decade on behalf of the protection of intangible world heritages of the world, including languages. What is striking, seen from the field, at least in many

places in Latin America, is the rapidly increasing awareness on the ground, in the local sphere, of the declarations of such international entities.

Our attempt to visually represent spheres and loci of different ideologies regarding endangered languages makes for a rather flat two dimensional schema. The reality in the field, however, is that endangered languages and their communities can either become focal points of attention or lose that attention, accounting for great variations in the ease or difficulty encountered while carrying out a project, eventuating in changes of circumstances very difficult to read and interpret on the spot, even if they can be elucidated later, with hindsight. This instability of "the field" constitutes one of the major elements of risk in such projects for academics who must plan their field trips well in advance and generally from a distance, in order to satisfy the demands of funding agencies and to meet other work commitments. The requirements of funding agencies and universities for rigorous and exhaustive planning, and efficiency demonstrated by quantified results and scientific outputs, often clash dramatically with the realities of the field, creating a gap of divergent interests and ideological views. This gap, which is a source of constant tension for any project of (sustainable) development, is another issue to be cast below in the North-South perspective already mentioned. Doing fieldwork, in our view, in essence consists in a constant back-and-forth between the academic sphere and the local sphere with its diverse links to the other spheres. It is this dialogic and dynamic relational activity, mixing collaboration, contradiction and, sometimes, conflict that we call *knowledge as practice/practice as knowledge*.

We have emphasized in our presentation of the issues so far the multiple scientific and non-scientific contexts that inform the practice and the theory of ELDR. We have also stressed changing conceptions of the roles of ELDR researcher *and* researched. In the following section, we extend the conceptual map of ELDR to encompass its situatedness in global inequalities of wealth and power, both between academe and community, and between different sub-groups of the academe.

3. North-South relations: Unequal exchange between academics and communities

In this section we focus on relationships between researchers and language communities, framing this in terms of an assumption that the former are from the "North", and the latter from the "South". An important effect of the ideology in which languages are viewed as databanks floating free of the communities that speak them is to validate the notion that language documentation and language

revitalization can and should be regarded as entirely separate enterprises, the former being a dispassionate and value-free scientific activity, and the latter a form of non-scientific "linguistic social work" (Newman 2003: 8). Indeed, major funding programmes for ELDR have explicitly excluded language revitalization from documentation research support. In this view, the relationship between the vitality *vs.* mortality of (respectively) languages, communities and individuals is a monocausal one-way street, in which (once again) communities and individual speakers are merely vehicles for language survival or language death. A language is usually considered dead when the last individual speaker from the original language community passes away. At this point, from the 3rd person perspective of language-as-object, the individual and the community cease to be matters of interest.

In the complex real world, in which there is a dynamic interplay of social, cultural and linguistic processes and practices, this simplistic assumption is contradicted by evidence that language survival can be critical to the life chances of individual members of minority communities, and hence to the viability of the community over time. As Michael Chandler and his colleagues have demonstrated, there is a non-figurative life and death quality to language preservation and revitalization, in relation to individual and community health and wellbeing. Chandler and his colleagues investigated adolescent suicide rates in Canadian First Nations communities, finding that the variable with the single strongest predictive value of *low* rates of suicide, when comparing different bands, was language vitality (Chandler et al. 2003; Hallett, Chandler & Lalonde 2007). These authors' use of the trope of individual, cultural and community *death by language* is a useful corrective to the reifying metaphor of *language death,* the latter being cast as an event that can be conceptually corralled as being of concern principally to the scientific community.

The closely inter-related language-as-object and language-as-databank conceptualizations are constructed from the specific perspective of the scientific community. These conceptualizations not only reify language and divorce language *practices* from the community, they also alienate the language from the community as a form of *symbolic and cultural capital* (Bourdieu 2010). For the communities and their members, the loss of this symbolic cultural capital usually has mainly negative material consequences, such as those documented by Chandler and his colleagues. For the scientist, however, language-as-databank is a form of capital that, once "put to work", can yield symbolic and material benefits in terms of continuing success in grant applications, citations and promotions. Analyzed in this fashion, while the combination of language documentation with language maintenance and revitalization can result in a "win-win" situation, in which there is mutual benefit to both researcher and community, language documentation in

the absence of language maintenance and revitalization is an *unequal exchange* (Emmanuel 1972) in which the benefit to the researcher is not accompanied by an equivalent benefit to the community, and may in fact result in disbenefits.

4. North-South relations: Unequal exchange inside the academe

Unequal exchange is not confined to the symbolic economic relations between endangered language communities and researchers; it can also be seen in the relations between different groups in the scientific community. Like its geo-political twin the "international community", the term "scientific community" serves to mask dramatic inequalities of power and resource between different members of this *imagined community* (Anderson 2006), and to confer an aura of beneficent disinterest on relations between them. "Northern" linguists receive disproportionately greater funding than "Southern" linguists; they generally enjoy better research infrastructures; have networks that help them update their theoretical, methodological and technical knowledge and skills; and are more likely to have publications in international (Anglophone) journals. These facts generate an ideological construction of *unequal competence*, to the further disbenefit of researchers from the "South". The beneficiaries, linguists from the "North", too frequently seek to maximize their material advantage by laying claim to the intellectual territory of ELDR and its technical wherewithal; by acting as gatekeepers to funding; and by asserting the principle that "data are for everyone", which sometimes boils down to "let me have your data".

We recognize that many linguists feel deeply affronted by suggestions that their discipline is complicit in the reproduction of unequal relations of power and resources. We suggest that that this is because the objectivist view of science, one manifestation of which is the conceptualization of language-as-object, encourages the elevation of "value neutrality" into a value itself. In our view, on the contrary, the ideology of detached and objective science is best viewed as a cultural model widely adhered to by linguists (amongst others) as a professional body. It underpins the notion of a disinterested scientific community, whose only goal is the pursuit of knowledge, and elides real differences in power, influence and resources between different sub-groups of the imagined scientific community. From such a perspective, even to discuss the politics of linguistic research amounts to a violation of professional norms. We consider, on the contrary, that airing of these issues will both increase awareness of issues of ethics and social responsibility, and contribute to transparency in research practice. Lest it be thought that our critical remarks are fantasies spun out of the web of our own ideological perspective, we

buttress them by providing three brief, anonymized case studies, based on events attested by the authors and personally known colleagues.

Case study 1: Does "data collection" count as research?

A faculty member in linguistics at a well-known and reputable North European university, with no personal ELDR experience, sought data on an Amazonian language. He agreed to fund from his research grant a field trip by two Latin American researchers, one based at the same university, and one based in Latin America, on a topic of mutual interest. The Latin American researchers were an anthropologist and a full professor in linguistics, who between them had more than 25 years field work experience with the community. The Latin American researchers were also familiar with, and experienced in using, the kinds of elicitation tools that the Northern researcher asked them to employ.

After the return of the Europe-based Latin American researcher, during a discussion of publication, the European researcher claimed that the Latin American researchers were working for him, as "assistant" and "facilitator", even though neither was paid a salary by him. He asserted that they had no authorship rights because they had merely "collected data" to which he (because he was funding the field travel costs) had exclusive rights. When challenged, he also claimed that the Latin American researchers lacked adequate linguistic knowledge to plan the research (although they had published internationally on the topic). The Latin American researchers refused to hand over the data, and rejected payment of their field travel costs.

We submit that this case study exemplifies a number of the points we have made above. In particular, the notion that "data collection" is not research, but a merely mechanical activity that requires no particular knowledge or experience, betrays a failure to comprehend the complex activity that we have dubbed "knowledge as practice/practice as knowledge". This failure can be (and in this case, was, institutional) as well as individual: the university, although made aware of the dispute, declined to take any position. We note, further, that the attempted appropriation of the right unilaterally to determine rights of authorship is contrary to internationally accepted ethical norms, as laid down in for example International Committee of Medical Journal Editors (2014).

Case study 2: Are field sites "open territory"?

A faculty member in linguistics at a well-known and reputable North American university, with significant field ELDR experience, planned and initiated a large-

scale typological project, for which graduate students were to be dispatched to various communities in a Latin American country to collect data. One of the graduate students was sent to a community with no prior contact with a linguist who is a national of the Latin American country (known to the "Northern" faculty member), who had been working in and with that community for many years. The Latin American linguist had already collected data on the particular topic under research, but this fact was not made known to the graduate student. When the Latin American linguist next made a field work visit to the community, community members expressed their unhappiness and displeasure at the North American graduate student's visit, demanding to know what the Latin American linguist's role was in that field trip. The reason for the community members' negative reaction was that the graduate student had received, from their home institution, insufficient background information and had not been adequately briefed in issues of sensitivity and ethics.

We submit that this case study exemplifies a framing of the relationship between researchers and community in which "the field" is viewed exclusively as a "data source", rather than a site of engagement between researchers from different teams and members of the community. It is common, to the point of being almost unavoidable, that long-term engagement with a community not only enables the development of a relationship of trust, but also brings with it vulnerabilities in which perceived violations of trust can have enduring negative consequences for the researcher who is in it for the long haul. The immediate cause for the problems in this case was a failure of communication, but the background to this failure was a lack of recognition by the "Northern" researcher both of the vulnerabilities of the "Southern" researcher and of the importance of establishing exactly what the Southern researcher already knew about the topic under investigation; the latter perhaps symptomatic of a widespread attitude that linguistic data are independent of social relationships. Our argument is that communities as "field sites", while not being the "property" of any individual or team, cannot be separated from communities as societies in relationship to researchers, in which some relationships are more enduring and vulnerable than others.

Case study 3: To what extent, and when, should data be in the public domain?

A faculty member in linguistics at a well-known and reputable North European university, with no personal ELDR experience, initiated a large-scale, collaborative typological project on a theme overlapping with that of a previous project based in a different country of the North. The funding for the new project, which

was conceived together with a linguist in the second country of the North, was acquired on the assumption that data collected for the previous project on indigenous languages of South America, mostly by PhD students and postdoctoral researchers, would be made freely available for the new project, with a view to the leaders of the new project publishing the analyses. The North European linguist, who had not discussed this assumption with the data collection team of the first project, asked at an initial project meeting (for the new project) for the already existing data from the previous project to be put at his disposal for him to analyze and publish. He was surprised and annoyed when the researchers who had carried out and supervised the prior field work (who, unlike the North European linguist, specialized in the regional languages under investigation) were not willing to agree to this.

This case study does not, perhaps, so directly implicate North-South relations as the previous two, although some of the field researchers were "Southern". It does, however, exemplify the major and contentious issue of open access to, and open archiving of, data. The "piggy-backing" of new projects on previous projects, with cumulative re-analyses of data, is a frequent and often productive research strategy. Open archiving is also increasingly mandated by research funding agencies. It would seem at first sight that this can bring only benefits to the scientific community, and we do not wish to downplay these benefits. However, there are also potential disbenefits to researchers, particularly those from the "South" who have less experience of international (Anglophone) publication than "Northern" researchers and who are less likely to be the leaders of international consortia. We would also draw attention to the potential disbenefits for communities of "absolutist" interpretations of open data archiving and open data access. There are genuine reasons why communities, as well as primary field researchers, may wish to restrict access to certain genres of linguistic data, including those that are restricted within the community itself. This issue becomes even more salient in the case where the primary field researcher is also a native speaker. Researchers from the "North" should be aware of these issues from the start when planning new projects, and be sensitive and flexible enough to negotiate mutually beneficial agreements with communities and with "Southern" colleagues.

General discussion

The three case studies that we have briefly presented here are attested by our own experience, together with that of trusted colleagues. They are representative of a number of other cases that have come to our attention, and that are also reliably attested. They should therefore not be dismissed as exceptional outliers. Rather,

such cases are best understood as manifestations of a systemic problem that is tightly bound up with particular notions of what is, and is not, science; of who is to be considered a qualified scientist; and of who has intellectual property rights over data. This systemic problem is deeply rooted in the objectivist view of science as an activity that is not only value-free, but essentially context-free.

We referred to and analyzed the devalorization of local knowledge in Section 1. Here we emphasize that this devalorization is all too often mapped onto North-South relations, in cases where the work of researchers from the "South" may be dismissed as old-fashioned or lacking in technical sophistication, without a complementary and reflexive understanding of the lack of local knowledge on the part of the researcher from the "North". Capacity building is all too often viewed as a one-way North-to-South transfer of knowledge, with data and intellectual capital accruing unequally to the "North." The presupposition of unequal distribution of knowledge and expertise, conceptualized in terms of a hierarchy of skills and knowledge, forms a seamless ideological join with real world inequalities of power and resources, in which those with access to large scale funding and experience of international publication take it as their right to determine the conditions of "collaboration." It is appropriate to characterize such attitudes and assumptions as neo-colonialist (we do not claim these to be universal, but simply assert that they exist, as we have documented in the first two case studies).

Concluding reflections on theory, methodology, goals and values

ELDR is not, and should not be seen as, a world unto itself. It takes place within a complex array of contexts, including relations of global socio-economic inequality, North-South relations within the academe, and the existential predicaments of indigenous minority communities. These communities face multiple threats to their traditional ways of life, including loss of environment, depletion of resources and the hostility of neighboring communities, as well as the increasing penetration of the dominant language and culture. Rather than viewing them solely as "vanishing cultures" to be archived and memorialized, it is more useful and more ethical to view them as communities challenged by complex cultural dynamics, and to assist them in the formation of strategies that will secure their future as equal co-participants in national development. ELDR should be situated in the realities of dynamic cultural change, the adaptation of tradition to new circumstances and the renewal of culture as a mode of participation in a changing world. It is, on this view, an integral part of an overall strategy encompassing community wellbeing in health, education, economy and environment. Implementing such a strategy requires the participation of scientists and professional practitioners

from many different disciplines, and the search for effective ways of complementing scientifically useful knowledge with practically useful, community guided interventions.

Unlike many social sciences (including anthropology and cultural psychology), linguistics does not traditionally value reflexivity as an inherent part of the research process.[5] Indeed, many linguists would deny that linguistics is a social science, preferring to emulate the supposedly objective (and objectifying), disengaged stance of the natural sciences. In relation to ELDR, this leads to a view in which socio-political questions relating to revitalization, community engagement and empowerment are compartmentalized as questions of "mere application", or of individual opinion and responsibility. We maintain, on the contrary, that *linguistics is a social science*, and its practice in ELDR is not of one neutral inquiry by a disinterested observer, but a social practice with social consequences.

We have criticized the view that languages are primarily "science heritage" resources, and only secondarily vital to the survival of indigenous communities. We have also argued that the cultural model of objectivist and "value-free" science encourages the self-distancing of linguistic ELD researchers both from issues of the distribution of knowledge and power, and from engagement in practices of language revitalization. It also, at least in part, underpins unequal exchange relations between linguistics researchers from the global "North" and the global "South". We would advocate a different model in which research is a collaborative learning enterprise, involving mutual knowledge transfer to mutual benefit, analogously with the WITH and BY paradigms we discussed above in relation to researchers' relations with endangered language communities. Collaborative relations can and should involve two-way capacity building and scientific empowerment (including empowerment OF, WITH and BY native speakers: Cabral, Sampaio & Silva Sinha, this volume; Woodbury & England 2004).

Although we do consider the dissemination throughout the research community (including indigenous researchers) of knowledge and skill in using up-to-date technology for recording, annotation, description and archiving of data to be of great importance, we would also argue that this should be complemented by the dissemination of an understanding of the relevant methodological and

5. Disciplinary self-reflection in anthropology (e.g. Clifford & Marcus 1986) and cultural psychology (e.g. Gergen et al. 1996) has long included discussions of power inequalities in both researcher-researched and North-South collaboration relations, in a global context; and has been contextualized too by reflexive debate on the cross-cultural appropriateness of methods and theories (Cole et al. 1971). Such reflection was for a long time virtually absent in linguistics, although it is now becoming part of ELDR debates (Austin & Sallabank 2014). We can hope that this attention to reflexivity will take hold in the wider discipline of linguistics.

ethical principles of qualitative research and of research in indigenous cultures. We would therefore advocate that just as much attention is paid, in ELDR education and training, to the socio-cultural context and dimensions of ELDR as to its linguistic-theoretical and technical aspects. ELDR is, or should be, an interdisciplinary activity, and its theory, education and practice should reflect this. The theory, methodology and practice of ELDR needs to be informed as much by the reflexive and qualitative stance of disciplines such as anthropology, as by the experimentalist and quantitative stance of disciplines such as cognitive psychology or corpus linguistics. ELDR education and training should reflect the dynamics and complexities of knowledge as practice/practice as knowledge, only part of which is knowledge of how to use technical equipment and software tools.

We would advocate, too, that university ethics courses and ethics committees should adopt and enforce principles and criteria relating to community rights, community engagement, community intellectual property and principles of collaborative research, in addition to the usual focus on individual informed consent. Novice ELDR researchers should be presented with examples of best practice in combining documentation and archiving with language preservation and revitalization. Above all, our message is that the critical discussion of the issues we have raised should not be seen as a distraction from "business as usual", but as an integral part of the endangered languages research landscape.

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