

WHO SHAPES THE RECORD: THE SPEAKER AND THE LINGUIST

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With the accelerating loss of linguistic diversity in our world, it is a time for serious thought about how to record as much as possible of the richness still around us. In many cases what we choose to document may be the principal record of an entire linguistic tradition, both for the descendants of the speakers and for others seeking to understand the possibilities of the human mind. It is a time to consider not only how to fill recognizable gaps in current knowledge, but also how to provide the basis for answers to questions we do not yet know enough to ask. In most cases, these goals can best be met by a mix of styles of collaboration between speakers and linguists. The product of fieldwork will ultimately be shaped not only by the nature of the language, but also by the methodologies chosen, by the roles assumed by the speakers, and by the preparation and sensitivity of the linguist.

1. Methodology

The record that results from linguistic fieldwork depends of course on the goal of the particular project, which in turn determines the kinds of methodologies that will be effective. The goal may be quite specific, such as understanding patterns of vowel harmony. It may as ambitious as the documentation of an entire language in as much depth as possible. In the current situation, it is useful to consider not only the match between the project and the language, but also the appropriateness of the project to the community in which the language is used. Obviously certain topics can be investigated only in certain languages: studies of vowel harmony must be carried out with languages that exhibit such patterns. But many topics could be explored in a wide variety of languages. Where language use is widespread and vigorous, it is natural to follow the interests of the speakers and the fieldworker. Where the speech community is fragile, however, time with skilled speakers is a finite resource. A decision to pursue one line of research will necessarily leave other aspects of the language undocumented. Under such circumstances, it is also good to remember that any record made is likely to be used for other purposes later on. This means that the data should be as accurate and explicit as possible on all counts, not just with regard to the point under discussion. Even in a paper on relative clause formation, for example, it is worthwhile to take pains to insure that transcription be reliable, that morphological analysis be explicit and precise, and that illustrative examples represent utterances that are syntactically, semantically, and pragmatically valid.

Research methodologies are usually chosen for their potential for producing the material desired. At the same time, the choice of methodology can also shape the resulting product in ways of which researchers may not always be aware. Finding the optimal mix of methodologies can be facilitated by an awareness of the potential rewards and limitations of the options.

The methodology used in many courses in linguistic fieldwork is direct elicitation. Students are taught to ask speakers for translations of words or sentences from a contact language such as English. They are instructed in the kinds of material to collect, such as

vocabulary ('house', 'my maternal aunt'), number contrasts ('rock', 'rocks'), verbal paradigms ('I ran', 'you ran') tense contrasts ('I run', 'I ran'), samples of word order ('John loves Mary', 'the two large dogs'), conjoined structures ('I ran and John walked', 'I ate spinach and John peas'), relative clauses ('I saw the man you met', 'the man who met you liked you'), sentential complements ('I know that you were not seen by the man'), reference across clauses ('John saw the dog who bit him', 'John kissed Mary and left'), and other specific structures.

A second kind of methodology, the recording of connected speech, has formed the core of much linguistic fieldwork over the past century, particularly in North America. The tradition of text collection arose in part from a desire to document the rich cultures of the speakers, but it was also seen as a tool for understanding languages in their own terms, rather than through European models. The texts served as the bases for grammatical description. In his introduction to the inaugural issue of the *International Journal of American Linguistics*, Franz Boas noted that 'While until about 1880 investigators confined themselves to the collection of vocabularies and brief grammatical notes, it has become more and more evident that large masses of texts are needed in order to elucidate the structure of the languages' (Boas 1917:1). The texts transcribed by these researchers are impressive, though Boas himself was keenly aware of the difficulties of capturing spontaneous speech with pen and ink: 'The slowness of dictation that is necessary for recording texts makes it difficult for the narrator to employ that freedom of diction that belongs to the well-told tale, and consequently an unnatural simplicity of syntax prevails in most of the dictated texts' (Boas 1917:1). He was also conscious of the limitation of dictation for capturing the most prevalent use of speech in daily life, conversation: 'On the whole, however, the available material gives a one-sided presentation of linguistic data, because we have hardly any records of daily occurrences, every-day conversation, descriptions of industries, customs, and the like' (Boas 1917:2). With the modern accessibility of audio and video recording devices, these limitations have been lifted, and speech can now be recorded from a variety of genres, including conversation.

Both direct elicitation and the recording of spontaneous speech are important tools, each with a variety of uses. But neither is sufficient for all purposes, and much can be missed if one of them is overlooked.

1.1 Phonology

Languages vary tremendously in their accessibility at the outset of fieldwork. Some have small inventories of sounds, while others have large ones. In some languages distinctions are generally easy to hear, while in others they may be more subtle. Mohawk for example, an Iroquoian language of Quebec, Ontario, and New York State, distinguishes just oral stops *t* and *k*, while Central Pomo, a Pomoan language of Northern California, distinguishes oral stops *p*, *p̚*, *è*, *b*, *t̚*, *t̚̚*, *t̚̚̚*, *d*, *č*, *č̚*, *č̚̚*, *k*, *k̚*, *q*, *q̚*, and *í*, as well as various affricates. There may be unusual distinctions in tone, voicing, length, or voice quality. The complexity of syllable structure can also present challenges at the outset. While some languages generally show simple (C)V(C) syllables, others exhibit pervasive complex consonant clusters. Thus in Yup'ik, an Eskimoan language of southwestern Alaska, we typically find such words as *qalarteqatartua* 'I am going to speak' (Elizabeth Ali, speaker), while in Spokane, a Salishan

language of Washington State, we find words like *ník'úk'áí'ít*. 'it accidentally fell in the mouth, someone accidentally said something that was long forgotten' (Carlson and Flett 1989:181). Some languages and dialects are customarily spoken more slowly and deliberately than others. Some speakers simply speak more clearly than others.

Becoming attuned to the sounds of an unfamiliar language can take time and concentration, particularly if the language contains subtle phonetic distinctions, a sizable inventory of consonants or vowels, and complex phonological patterns. Direct elicitation of individual words is an obvious way to begin the process. Before one is familiar with the sound patterns and grammatical markers of a new language, it can be difficult to remember even a brief stretch of speech long enough to transcribe it. There is too much to think about all at once. In the early stages of work, elicitation can also help to put speakers at ease. A request for the word for 'tree' can be less daunting than a request for an eloquent speech to a microphone.

Of course certain aspects of phonology cannot be observed in the careful pronunciation of single words, but emerge only in spontaneous connected speech. Even vowel harmony may cross word boundaries in fluent speech in some languages. Probably the most dramatic example of phonological structure that appears only in connected speech is that of intonation or prosody, an area of language structure with important implications well beyond the domain of phonology.

1.2 The lexicon

Elicitation is obviously a useful tool for collecting vocabulary. If one is working with bilingual speakers of Yup'ik and wants to know the term for 'walrus', the easiest way to find out is to ask "How do you say 'walrus'?". Vocabulary is an essential part of the record, both for the community and for future scholarship. Direct elicitation is especially effective for collecting lists of certain kinds of words, such as numerals and terms for body parts, plants, animals, and relatives. It can be useful for recording culturally significant vocabulary, such as names of foods, medicines, songs, dances, ceremonies, tools, items of clothing, and kinsmen. It can also yield the kinds of words most useful in determining genetic relationships. Terms for numerals, body parts, and elements of nature such as 'sun', 'fire', and 'water' tend to be relatively stable over time and are likely to have been recorded for other languages as well. They are also the kinds of words that tend to come to mind easily for speakers. At the beginning of the collaborative work, as rapport is being established, it can be easier for a speaker to come up with a word for 'three' or 'stone' than for 'idiosyncrasy' or 'parallelism'.

If the goal of the undertaking is to document what is special about the language, direct elicitation alone cannot suffice, even within the realm of vocabulary. The lexicon can provide a powerful resource for understanding how speakers have organized the kaleidoscope of their experience into concepts. The vocabulary of Yup'ik, like that of most languages, bears clear witness to the natural and social contexts in which the language has evolved, as can be seen in such verbs as *pay'u-* 'to have one's legs so cramped by cold that one cannot move', *pukug-* 'to eat bits of meat clinging to a bone after most of the meat has been removed, to pick berries carefully from scattered sites because they are few in number', and *tunrir-* 'to feel embarrassed because one is imposing on someone; to feel beholden because of an inability to reciprocate for things someone has done for one; to feel embarrassed by the actions of

someone (such as a child) for whom one feels responsible’ (Jacobson 1984). Vocabulary can show both special distinctions and surprising generalizations that speakers have found useful.

Elicited vocabulary tends to be heavily weighted toward nouns, especially terms for concrete, tangible objects, and terms with counterparts in the contact language. Words such as ‘man’, ‘woman’, ‘house’, ‘fire’, ‘water’, and ‘sky’ usually predominate in elicited lists. Verbs and other parts of speech are rarer, as are more abstract and culturally-specific terms. There are many words one might simply not think to ask about, such as the Yup’ik *pavani* ‘up there away from the river’, *iryagte-* ‘to be smokey from a distant fire’, *kassug-* ‘to encompass’, *kau-* ‘to reach into a container or hollow place’, *nacete-* ‘to look around or survey one’s surroundings from a high vantage point’, *nalluyur-* ‘to feel uncomfortable with or unwelcomed by someone’, *narurte-* ‘to act against accepted standards of behavior’, *pellertar-* ‘to tend to feel squeamish around wet, messy things’, *qakete-* ‘to resubmerge after coming to the surface (of fish, seal)’, *qaliqar-* ‘to get sick and die from eating foods said to be incompatible, such as aged fish and salmonberries’, and *yit’e-* ‘to have a stranger come upon one, to come upon as a stranger’. A bias toward nouns is particularly unfortunate for languages in which verbs predominate strongly in natural speech.

Ultimately elicitation provides an effective tool for collecting long lists of basic lexical items, but a substantial proportion of the most interesting vocabulary emerges only in spontaneous speech, in what speakers themselves choose to say in context.

1.3 Grammatical structure

Direct elicitation can be a valuable tool for the documentation of grammar as well. At the beginning of work with a bilingual consultant, it can allow us to check for possible grammatical distinctions. We might, for example, elicit forms like those in (1).

(1) Yup’ik: George Charles, speaker

<i>qayaq</i>	‘kayak’	<i>atsaq</i>	‘berry’
<i>qayak</i>	‘two kayaks’	<i>atsak</i>	‘two berries’
<i>qayat</i>	‘three or more kayaks’	<i>atsat</i>	‘three or more berries’

From these words we might hypothesize that Yup’ik distinguishes singular, dual, and plural number on nouns. The exercise can also prepare us to recognize morphological markers and syntactic constructions when they appear another time. If, sometime later, we come across the Yup’ik word *teriak* ‘weasels’, we might hypothesize that it is a dual noun, which it is, and that the final *-k* is not part of the root, which is correct. If we come across the word *kipusvigtellinlria* ‘he went to the store’, and we have learned from previous elicitation that the root *kipute-* is ‘buy’, and the suffix *-vik* a locative, we can untangle this construction more quickly: *kipute-vik-te-llini-lria* ‘buy-place.where-go.to-apparently-3.SG.PARTICIPIAL’ = ‘it seems he went to where one buys’.

Elicitation can be crucial for filling in paradigms, for securing forms we can predict to exist. In Mohawk, all verbs contain pronominal prefixes identifying the core arguments of the clause. Prefixes in intransitive verbs refer to one party, and those in transitive verbs refer to two. The prefixes distinguish first, second, and third persons; inclusive and exclusive first

persons; masculine, feminine, and neuter third persons; singular, dual, and plural numbers; and two cases. A sample intransitive paradigm can be seen in (2). (Examples are given here in the practical orthography, currently in use in all six Mohawk communities. The sequence *en* before a consonant represents the nasalized vowel [ʌ], and the *on* represents the nasalized vowel [ɪ]. The symbol *i* before a vowel represents the glide [y]. An apostrophe ' is used for glottal stop.)

(2) Mohawk intransitive agent paradigm: Rokwaho Dan Thompson, speaker

<i>k-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>I</u> 'm digging'	(1.SINGULAR.AGENT)
<i>ten-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>you and I</u> are digging'	(1.INCLUSIVE.DUAL.AGENT)
<i>ki-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>you all and I</u> are digging'	(1.INCLUSIVE.PLURAL.AGENT)
<i>iaken-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>s/he and I</u> are digging'	(1.EXCLUSIVE.DUAL.AGENT)
<i>iaki-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>they and I</u> are digging'	(1.EXCLUSIVE.PLURAL.AGENT)
<i>s-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>you</u> 're digging'	(2.SINGULAR.AGENT)
<i>sen-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>you two</u> are digging'	(2.DUAL.AGENT)
<i>tsi-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>you all</u> are digging'	(2.PLURAL.AGENT)
<i>r-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>he</u> is digging'	(MASCULINE.SINGULAR.AGENT)
<i>n-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>they two (males)</u> are digging'	(MASCULINE.DUAL.AGENT)
<i>ronn-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>they all (males)</u> are digging'	(MASCULINE.PLURAL.AGENT)
<i>iak-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>she</u> is digging'	(FEMININE.SINGULAR.AGENT)
<i>ken-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>they two</u> are digging'	(FEMININE/NEUTER.DUAL.AGENT)
<i>konn-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>they all</u> are digging'	(FEMININE/NEUTER.PL.AGENT)
<i>i-ó'kwats</i>	' <u>it (an animal)</u> is digging'	(NEUTER.SINGULAR.AGENT)

All of the participants represented by the pronominal prefixes in (2) are grammatical agents, individuals who actively instigate and control an action. An entirely different paradigm is used for grammatical patients, those affected but not in control: *wak-i:ta's* 'I'm sleeping', *ionkeni:-ta's* 'we two are sleeping', *ionkwèn:-ta's* 'we all are sleeping', etc.

The transitive paradigms are much larger, because the transitive pronominal prefixes represent a combination of two parties, a grammatical agent and a grammatical patient. Not all features are distinguished in every combination, but there are nearly 60 different pronominal prefixes for most transitive verbs. A small sample of a transitive paradigm is in (3).

(3) Mohawk partial transitive paradigm: Rokwaho Dan Thompson, speaker

<i>kón-hsere'</i>	' <u>I</u> 'm following <u>you</u> '	
<i>kení-hsere'</i>	' <u>I</u> 'm following <u>you two</u> '	
<i>kwá-hsere'</i>	' <u>I</u> 'm following <u>you all</u> '	
<i>ták-hsere'</i>	' <u>you</u> 're following <u>me</u> '	
<i>takení-hsere'</i>	' <u>you</u> 're following <u>us two</u> '	
<i>takwá-hsere'</i>	' <u>you</u> 're following <u>us all</u> '	etc.

The shape of each pronominal prefix is affected by the shapes of surrounding morphemes. The neuter agent, for example, appears variously as *ka-*, *ken-*, *w-*, and *i-* at the beginning of a word: *ka-* before consonants, *ken-* with stems beginning with *i* (*ka-i* > *ken*), *w-* before the

vowels *a*, *e*, and *en*, and *i-* before the vowels *o* and *on*.

(4) Mohawk neuter agent ‘it’: Rokwaho Dan Thompson, speaker

<i>ka-hnekihrha</i> ’	‘ <u>it</u> drinks’
<i>kén-tskote</i> ’	‘ <u>it</u> is sitting, perched, at home’
<i>w-è:iahre</i> ’	‘ <u>it</u> remembers’
<i>i-ó’kwats</i>	‘ <u>it</u> is digging’

Elicitation is obviously an important tool for amassing a comprehensive record of the pronominal prefix system, a central part of the verbal morphology and the grammar as a whole. It is a quick way of determining whether number is distinguished in the prefixes, which it is: *s-ó’kwats* ‘you (one) are digging’, *sen-ó’kwats* ‘you two are digging’, *tsi-ó’kwats* ‘you (three or more) are digging’; whether gender is distinguished, which it is: *r-ó’kwats* ‘he is digging’, *iak-ó’kwats* ‘she is digging’, *i-ó’kwats* ‘it is digging’; and whether inclusive and exclusive are distinguished in first person, which it is: *ten-ó’kwats* ‘you and I are digging’, *iaken-ó’kwats* ‘she and I are digging’. Obviously one could spend a long time recording spontaneous Mohawk speech waiting to hear a specific set of contrasting forms like these, or even a particular form such as ‘we (he and I) remembered them (two women)’.

Yet in the realm of grammar, even more than in vocabulary, elicitation alone can lead to misinterpretation and, perhaps more often, keep us from discovering some of the most exciting features of a language, those we would not know enough to request.

As noted, the elicitation of paradigms like the Yup’ik sets in (1) can alert us to the fact that Yup’ik distinguishes singular, dual, and plural number in nouns. If the stimulus for forms in the target language always originates in the contact language, however, it can be easy to misinterpret the true functions of the elicited forms and the systems of which they are a part. Elicitation of singular and plural nouns from good Mohawk speakers can produce paradigms like those in (5).

(5) Mohawk nominal paradigms

<i>áhta</i>	‘shoe’	<i>otsikhè:ta</i> ’	‘sugar, candy’
<i>ahtahshòn:’a</i>	‘shoes’	<i>otsikhe’ta’shòn:’a</i>	‘candies’
<i>áhsire</i> ’	‘blanket’	<i>ono’ónsera</i>	‘squash’
<i>ahsire’shòn:’a</i>	‘blankets’	<i>ono’onserahshòn:’a</i>	‘squashes’

The analysis seems straightforward: the ending =*shòn:’a* appears to be a plural marker. But spontaneous speech in Mohawk contains surprisingly few occurrences of this ending, even when multiple objects are under discussion. In (6)a neither the term *raotitshé:nen* ‘their domestic animal’ nor the term *è:rhar* ‘dog’ is plural. The plural sense comes only from the pronominal prefix *konti-* ‘they’ in the verb. In (6)b the speaker had several apples, but there is no marker of plurality in the utterance at all.

(6) Mohawk nominals without plurals: Warisose Kaierithon, speaker

a. *Ne raotitshé:nen* *è:rhar* *wa'kontiia'táhton*
ne raoti-tshenen *è:rhar* *wa'-konti-ia't-ahton*
the their-domestic.animal dog FACTUAL-NEUTER.PL-body-disappear
the their animal dog they disappeared bodily
'Their dogs got lost.'

b. *sewahió:wane'* *wátien.* *Kóh,* *ísewak*
se-w-ahi-owan-e' *wak-i-en* *koh* *i-sewa-k*
one-NEUTER-fruit-be.large-ST 1.PATIENT-have-ST here EP-2.PL.AGENT-eat
apple I have here eat, everyone
'I have some apples. Here, eat, everyone.'

A closer look at the use of the enclitic =*shòn: 'a* in spontaneous speech shows that it is not actually a plural, but a distributive. It distributes entities over various situations, particularly over possessors or types. The speaker cited in (7) was describing a good homemaker. No number marking appears on the nouns 'hide' and 'fur': *kanéhon* could mean 'a hide' or 'hides', and *ówhare'* 'fur' or 'furs'. The distributive enclitic =*shòn: 'a* appears on 'belongings' and 'blankets', however, because the homemaker made clothes for **each** member of her family, and individual blankets for **each one**.

(7) Mohawk distributives on nominals: Warisose Kaierithon, speaker

Tiótkon ionhkwennión:ni *raonawenhshòn:'a*
tiotkon ie-ahkwenni-onni *raon-awen=hshòn:'a*
always FEMININE.AGENT-clothing-make.IMPRF 3.PL.POSSESSIVE-belonging=DISTRIBUTIVE
always she clothing-makes their various belonging(s)

kanéhon *tánon'* *ówhare'* *iéntstha'*,
ka-nehon *tanon'* *o-iwhar-e'* *ie-at-sth-ha'*
NEUTER-hide and NEUTER-fur FEMININE.AGENT-MIDDLE-use-IMPRF
skin(s) and fur(s) she uses

ne òn:i' *iakonnià:tha'* *ne raonahsire'shòn:'a.*
ne ohni' *iak-onni-a't-ha'* *ne raon-ahsire'='shòn:'a*
the also FEMININE.AGENT-make-INST-PRF the 3.PL.POSS-
blanket=DISTRIBUTIVE
the also she makes with (them) the their various blanket(s)

‘She was always making clothes and blankets from the animal skins.’

Though the word *ahtahshòn:’a* was given as a translation of ‘shoes’ in (5), speakers do not use it for a pair of shoes; the simple noun *áhta* is more appropriate. The distributive form *ahtahshòn:’a* is used for a variety of different kinds of shoes, as in a shoestore. The basic noun *otsikhè:ta’* is used for sugar, a piece of candy, or even a whole basketful of candycanes; the distributive *otsihke’ta’shòn:’a* is used for an array of different kinds of candy, perhaps candy canes, lollipops, fudge, etc. The noun *ono’ónsera* is used for a squash, melon, cucumber, or, for example, a bag of butternut squashes, a box of melons, or a basket of cucumbers; the distributive *ono’ónsera’shòn:’a* is used to cover the whole category of squashes, pumpkins, melons, and cucumbers, or to refer to a collection of different kinds of objects from the category. When devising labels for the aisles in a local grocery store, speakers came up with the term *ierakewahtha’shòn:’a* for the section displaying paper products: tissues, paper napkins, paper towels. (The term is based on *ie-rakew-aht-ha’* INDEFINITE.AGENT-wipe-INSTRUMENTAL-IMPERFECTIVE ‘one wipes with it’.) The distributive form would not be appropriate for an aisle displaying only paper towels.

Skilled Mohawk speakers often provide distributive forms ending in =*shòn:’a* as translations of English plural nouns, particularly when a contrast is set up in elicitation sessions, because they are straining to satisfy a request for a distinction that has no exact Mohawk equivalent. They themselves sometimes come up with paradigms like those in (5) when constructing curricula for Mohawk language classes, under pressure to produce materials acceptable to outside educational boards. Yet these same speakers do not use the distributive forms as simple plurals in their own speech, a fact that might not come to light under elicitation alone.

Another grammatical construction that has excited considerable theoretical interest is one termed ‘switch reference’. Haiman and Munro define the construction as follows: ‘Canonical switch-reference is an inflectional category of the verb, which indicates whether or not its subject is identical with the subject of some other verb.’ (1983:ix) Among their examples are those in (8) from the Papuan language Usan.

(8) Usan switch reference: Reesink cited in Haiman and Munro 1983:ix

a. *Ye nam su-ab isomei.*
I tree cut-SAME.SUBJECT I.went.down
‘I cut the tree and went down.’

b. *Ye nam su-ine isorei.*
I tree cut-DIFFERENT.SUBJECT it.went.down
‘I cut the tree and it went down’ = ‘I cut the tree down.’

Switch reference would seem to be an easy construction to elicit. One simply asks a speaker for translations of English conjoined sentences: “How do you say ‘John danced and sang?’”, and “How do you say ‘John danced and Sam sang?’”. If different inflectional markers appear on the verbs in the two sentences, they are identified as markers of switch reference.

Central Pomo, a language of the Pomoan family spoken in northern California, appears to

offer just such a system. The sentences in (9) were elicited as translations of ‘He sang and danced’ and ‘I sang and he danced’.

(9) Central Pomo ‘switch reference’: Frances Jack, speaker

a. $k^h\acute{e}$ $\acute{c}e\text{-}n\acute{o}\eta$ $k^h\acute{e}$ $me\text{-}n\acute{a}w$
 k^he $\acute{c}an\acute{o}\text{-}in$ $k^h\acute{e}$ $ma\text{-}n\acute{a}\text{-}w$
 song sing-SAME song by.kicking-set-PERFECTIVE
 ‘He sang and (he) danced’

b. $\text{ʔ}a\cdot k^h\acute{e}$ $\acute{c}en\acute{o}w\text{=}da$ $mu\text{ʔ}l$ $k^h\acute{e}$ $me\text{-}n\acute{a}w$.
 $\text{ʔ}a\cdot k^h\acute{e}$ $\acute{c}an\acute{o}\text{-}w\text{=}da$ $mu\text{ʔ}l$ $k^h\acute{e}$ $ma\text{-}n\acute{a}\text{-}w$
 I song sing-PERFECTIVE=DIFFERENT he song by.kicking-set-PRF
 ‘I sang and he danced.’

In (9)a, where the subjects are the same, the ending *-(i)n* appears on the first verb. In (9)b, where the subjects are different, the ending *=da* appears on the first verb. Further elicitation seems to confirm the pattern.

Similar patterns also appear in spontaneous speech. In (10), where both clauses share the same subject, the first verb shows the ending *-in*.

(10) Central Pomo spontaneous speech: Frances Jack, speaker

$q^h\acute{a}$ $da\text{-}l\acute{u}\text{-}t\text{-}in$ $\acute{t}a\cdot$ $mu\text{-}l$ $d\acute{o}\acute{c}$
 $q^h\acute{a}$ $da\text{-}lu\text{-}t\text{-}in$ $\acute{t}a\cdot$ $mu\text{-}l$ $d\acute{o}\text{-}\acute{c}\text{-}\text{ʔ}$
 water pushing-add-MULTIPLE.EVENT-SAME guess 3 do-SML-PRF
 ‘After adding water (to the leached acorns), she made it (bread).’

In (11), where the subjects are different, the first verb shows the ending *=da*.

(11) Central Pomo spontaneous speech: Florence Paoli, speaker

$Me\text{-}nda$ ya $hl\acute{a}\cdot\text{ʔ}wa\acute{c}\acute{d}a$,
 $me\text{-}nda$ ya $hla\text{-}\cdot\text{ʔ}w\text{-}a\acute{c}\text{=}da$
 while we go.PL-around-IMPERFECTIVE.PL=DIFFERENT
 ‘While we were walking around,

$\acute{c}\acute{a}\cdot\text{ʔ}yem$ $\text{ʔ}el$ yal $p^h\text{w}\acute{i}w$.
 $\acute{c}\acute{a}\text{-}\acute{c}\text{-}yem\text{=}ʔel$ yal $p^h\text{-}wi\text{-}w$
 man-old=the us visually-perceive-PERFECTIVE
this old man was looking at us.’

But a closer look at natural speech reveals seeming exceptions to the pattern. The two clauses in (12) share the same subject ‘he’ (a particular man), but the marker *=da* DIFFERENT appears on the verb ‘live’.

(12) Central Pomo spontaneous speech: Frances Jack, speaker

$Q^h\acute{t}\acute{a}\acute{c}awda$ yal $\acute{c}a\text{-}l$ $\text{ʔ}\acute{c}^h\acute{a}w\text{=}da$

q^hʔáčaw=da yal ča:l ʔč^há-w=da,
 winter=at us with sit.SG-PERFECTIVE=DIFFERENT
 ‘In the wintertime when he was living with us,

ʔma mú:tu síkčiw ʔe.
*ʔ=ma mú:tu sick-č*í*-w ʔe*
 COPULA=FACTUAL him sick-INCHOATIVE-PERFECTIVE COPULA
he got sick.’

The clauses in (13) have different subjects, but the marker *-in* SAME appears.

(13) Central Pomo spontaneous speech: Eileen Oropeza, speaker

ʔá·kiy k^he kúči· ʔel tayal
ʔá=kiy k^he kúči=ʔel=tayal
 I=too my children=the=PLURAL.PATIENT
 ‘Me too, my grandchildren,

béda yáʔk^he híntil k^hé ʔel ba-néhdun,
bé=da yáʔk^he híntil k^hé=ʔel ba-né-h-du-n
 this=at 1.PL=OBLIQUE Indian song=the stepping-set-PRF-IMPRF-SAME
 when I dance an Indian dance,

ʔúda-w šwáyli q^hlúta-čáč.
ʔúda-w šwáy=li q^halú-t-áč-ač.
 really laughter=with die.PLURAL-MULTIPLE.EVENT-IMPRF.PL-IMPRF.PL
they just die laughing.’

Probably most fieldworkers would agree that the longer one works with a language, the clearer it becomes that speakers rarely make mistakes. When their speech fails to conform to the analysis, it is usually the analysis that is faulty. This construction is no exception. The markers *-in* and *=da* are not actually indicators of switch reference, but rather part of a paradigm of clause linkers, used to join related ideas into single sentences. There are three pair of such markers. One pair is used in irrealis constructions such as conditionals, imperatives, and most futures, and is translated variously ‘if’, ‘when’, and ‘and’. The other two pair are used in realis constructions. One of these links consecutive events and is typically translated ‘and then’. The other links simultaneous events or states and is translated ‘while’, ‘when’, ‘whenever’, or occasionally ‘and’.

(14) Central Pomo clause linkers: Mithun 1993

	SAME	DIFFERENT	
Irrealis	<i>-hi</i>	<i>=hla</i>	‘if, when, and’
Realis			
Consecutive	<i>-ba</i>	<i>=li</i>	‘and then’
Simultaneous	<i>-in</i>	<i>=da</i>	‘while, when, whenever, and’

The SAME and DIFFERENT markers indicate whether speakers are packaging the events described together as elements of a single main event (SAME) or separately as distinct events (DIFFERENT). Actions packaged together are typically performed by the same agent, within the same time frame, at the same location, etc. It is thus not surprising that the SAME linkers *-hi*, *-ba*, and *-in* appear most often to link clauses sharing the same subject in their English translations. Actions performed by different people are most often packaged as distinct events, so the DIFFERENT linkers *=hla*, *=li*, and *=da* most often link clauses with different subjects. But the actual function of the linkers is not to mark reference. In (12) ‘When he was living with us he got sick’, living with the speaker’s family and getting sick were packaged as distinct situations even though the same man was involved in both. In (13), the dancing and laughing were packaged together as parts of a single event, though the first was done by the speaker and the second by her grandchildren.

The functional distinction between the markers is neatly mirrored in their forms. The morphemes linking components of the SAME event are verbal suffixes, tightly attached to the verb. Those linking DIFFERENT events are clausal enclitics: loosely attached to the clause as a whole (which is usually verb-final). The system provides speakers with choices for packaging information. If the analysis of the markers were based entirely on sentences elicited as translations from English, their true functions might never be apparent; the way they fit structurally into the rest of the grammar would remain obscure; and the powerful ways in which they are exploited by speakers might never be appreciated.

An obvious value of the documentation of natural connected speech is that it permits us to notice distinctions and patterns that we might not know enough to elicit, and that might not even be sufficiently accessible to the consciousness of speakers to be volunteered or retrievable under direct questioning. This material is in many ways the most important and exciting of all. Linguistic theory will never be moved ahead as far by answers to questions we already know enough to ask, as by discoveries that are completely unexpected on the basis of our current knowledge about language. It is this very material that makes the loss of linguistic diversity such a tragedy. For the communities in which these unusual contrasts and structures have evolved, it is one of the things that makes them special. For the rest of us, it is what allows us to begin to understand the possibilities of the human mind.

A simple example can be seen in Central Pomo. In response to a request for a sentence meaning ‘I almost fell down’, Frances Jack, a highly skilled speaker, gave the Central Pomo translation in (15).

(15) Central Pomo elicited translation: Frances Jack, speaker

<i>t̥o·</i>	<i>č^hná·wsiw</i>
<i>t̥o·</i>	<i>č^hná·-w=si-w</i>
1.SG.PATIENT	fall-PERFECTIVE-almost-PERFECTIVE
‘I almost fell.’	

In spontaneous conversation, however, a slightly different form appears.

(16) Central Pomo spontaneous phrasing: Frances Jack, speaker

č^hná·wsiwiya

č^hná-w=si=wiya
 fall-PERFECTIVE=almost=PERSONAL.AFFECT
 ‘I almost fell’

The ending =*wiya* on the verb is part of an evidential system used by speakers to specify the source and reliability of information they are communicating. Another evidential marker can be seen in the passage in (17), again from spontaneous conversation. The enclitic =*ka* indicates that the source of the information is inference on the part of the speaker.

(17) Central Pomo inferential evidential: Florence Paoli, speaker

<i>Shirleywe</i>	<i>našóyya</i>	<i>ʔdúčka . . .</i>
<i>Shirley=we</i>	<i>našóy=ya</i>	<i>ʔdúč-ʔ=ka</i>
Shirley=POSSESSIVE	young.lady=NEW.TOPIC	marry-SEMELFACTIVE-PRF=INFERENTIAL

‘He must have married Shirley’s daughter. [That’s why I didn’t understand at first.]’

<i>Mu-lʔkaman</i>	<i>Shirleyweč</i>	<i>našóy</i>	<i>ʔdúč</i>
<i>Mu-l=ʔ=ka=man</i>	<i>Shirley=weč</i>	<i>našóy</i>	<i>ʔdú-č-ʔ</i>
that=COPULA=INFERENTIAL=that	Shirley=POSS	young.lady	marry-SML-PRF

It must have been Shirley’s daughter he married.’

The evidential enclitic =*ma* in (18) below is a factual, indicating that the information expressed is established general knowledge.

(18) Central Pomo factual evidential: Florence Paoli, speaker

<i>mi·</i>	<i>qđí</i>	<i>čó-čkaw</i>	<i>mu-lʔma</i>
<i>mi·</i>	<i>qđí</i>	<i>čó-č-ka-w</i>	<i>mu-l=ʔ=ma</i>
there	good	become-SEMELFACTIVE-CAUSATIVE-PRF	that=COPULA=FACTUAL

‘It turned out to be a pretty good thing.’

Two more evidential enclitics can be seen in (19). Three Central Pomo speakers had been sitting around a table conversing for hours, enjoying the company and intent on creating a record of natural speech. The use of evidentials specifying the source of information can be seen in Mrs. Paoli’s suggestion that they take a breather. The clitic =*ya* in the first line indicates that she personally witnessed the event she is relaying (‘my tape wore out’), and the clitic =*la* in the clitic second line that she actively performed and controlled the action herself (‘I said ...’).

(19) Central Pomo experiential evidentials: Florence Paoli, Frances Jack, speakers

FP	<i>K^he</i>	<i>tapeʔel</i>	<i>č^hóčya</i>
	<i>K^he</i>	<i>tape=ʔel</i>	<i>č^hó-č=ya</i>
	my	tape=the	not.exist-INCHOATIVE-EXPERIENTIAL.EVIDENTIAL

‘My tape wore out.’

[FJ to MM: ‘Did we run out of tape (on the tape recorder)?’]

FP	<u>t</u> o·	ʔe	č ^h óčay
	t̂o·	ʔe	č ^h ó-č-ay
	1.SG.PATIENT	COPULA	not.exist-INCHOATIVE-DISTRIBUTIVE

hihduwla

hi-h-du-w=la

say-SEMELFACTIVE-IMPERFECTIVE-PERFECTIVE=PERFORMATIVE.EVIDENTIAL

‘I said I’m the one who ran out.’

FJ	<i>čanú</i>	č ^h óčay.
	<i>čanú</i>	č ^h ó-č-ay
	word	not.exist-INCHOATIVE-DISTRIBUTIVE
	‘No more words.’	[laughter]

The evidential markers are so well integrated into the grammar that their use is largely unconscious. If one tries to elicit them with English prompts such as ‘I heard that ...’ or ‘It is a known fact that ...’ or ‘Apparently ...’, speakers provide translations with full verbs, adverbials, or clauses.

The Central Pomo evidential markers often do more than specify the source and reliability of information. As in many languages, they can also function to structure discourse. If the only function of hearsay evidentials in narrative, for example, were to specify the fact that the narrator had heard the story from someone else rather than witnessing it firsthand, a hearsay evidential should appear just once at the beginning of a story. But these evidentials typically appear throughout narratives, at specific points. The hearsay evidential *ɟdoτ* is underlined in the passage in (20). Each line represents an intonation unit. Indentation represents a continuation in the fall of pitch. Periods represent a final pitch fall. Lines flush left begin with a pitch reset.

(20) CENTRAL POMO HEARSAY EVIDENTIALS: Frances Jack, speaker

<i>Bal maʔú· ʔel ʔdoma,</i>	This story, <u>they say</u>
<i>áǰúči· yačó-k^he maʔú·maʔú·maw,</i>	has been told for children
<i>ʔiʔwíya=<u>kay</u>,</i>	about Coyote and
<i>šá·qawo·lo.</i>	the Waterdogs.
<i>ʔiʔwí čá-č^h ʔel ʔdoma, . . .</i>	Coyote Man, <u>they say</u> ,
<i>wáymin ...</i>	is always
<i>ma· ba ʔnáwan hé· ma·</i>	fooling people or
<i>dú·du· ma· yhé·n.</i>	playing pranks on people.
<i>Bal ʔdoma,</i>	Now, <u>they say</u> , a certain
<i>mačí há·n.</i>	day was coming.
<i>Mu·l ʔdoma . . .</i>	And here <u>they say</u> . . .
<i>bal nap^hóʔli ʔdoma,</i>	at this village, <u>they say</u>
<i>štú· šbúma·tse ʔn;</i>	there will be basketweaving;

<i>ʔel ʔelya</i>	whichever one
<i>báʔanhaw ǵdí šbúw ʔel</i>	weaves the best
<i>mú-tu ʔdoma ʔúdaʔw loǵ maná·ʔyawθk^he.</i>	will be paid a lot of things.
<i>Bal ʔdoma ʔul... ʔiʔyúʔčawʔk^he.</i>	Now, <u>they say</u> they're going to start.'

The quotative evidential serves to structure the text, appearing with new scenes and topics of discussion, and often in summary or evaluative statements at the ends of passages. Such a discourse function would of course not be seen in elicitation.

A third type of methodology is sometimes used in linguistic work with speakers: the elicitation of judgments. The researcher constructs a sentence and asks speakers whether the sentence is grammatical or not, or whether one referring expression is coreferent with another. The method can provide quick answers to specific queries, but, particularly in the documentation of endangered languages, it should be used with caution. Speakers typically find it easy to voice judgments about such matters as appropriate allomorphy (*indecided* versus *undecided*), and, in languages with relatively rigid constituent orders, alternative orders (*under the table* versus *table the under*, or *John apples likes* versus *John likes apples*). But particularly at higher levels of structure, intuitions are not always as accessible or as easily articulated. Sentences invented by a non-speaker may be incorrect for a wide variety of reasons, from inappropriate lexical choice to the pragmatic incompatibility of cooccurring syntactic structures. Grammaticality judgments often do not actually pertain to the issue at hand, and the introduction of invented data into the literature can distort the record of the language.

2. The role of the speaker

An important ingredient in productive fieldwork is an appreciation of the central role and unique contributions of speakers. The point might seem so obvious as to not merit mention, but a consciousness of it can have a substantial effect on the quality of both the experience and the record produced.

Communities and speakers can differ considerably in their awareness of and attitudes to their language. For some, language provides a strong, conscious symbol of identity, a cultural resource to be cultivated and enjoyed; for others, it is simply a utilitarian tool, given little attention. Sometimes skilled speakers fear that they know nothing about their mother tongue, because they did not learn it formally in school and their knowledge is largely unconscious. It is important during the early stages of collaboration that the speaker come to realize that he or she is the expert, that the way a skilled speaker speaks IS the essence of the language. This realization can be facilitated in several ways. One is by beginning with questions that require little concentration under stress and that the speaker is certain to know, such as counting from one to ten. It is important at this point and beyond to be aware of what speakers can be expected to be conscious of. It would be a mistake to initiate fieldwork by asking how many consonants there are in the language, whether tone is distinctive, whether the language is ergative, or whether there is switch-reference. Responses to such questions come from linguistic analysis, not from native-speaker intuition. Demanding answers to such questions, even with less technical terminology, can make speakers highly uncomfortable. It can result in

responses that lead the researcher down the wrong track. It can also create an unfortunate social situation in which the researcher openly rejects opinions that have been offered, on demand, by the speaker.

Particularly in the early stages of collaboration, the contribution of the speaker can be shaped in powerful ways by small actions on the part of the linguist. Speakers are often working hard to understand just what is desired, since the responsibilities of a linguistic consultant are not everyday knowledge in most societies. If I ask for names of trees, my goal is fairly clear. But when the speaker volunteers further information, such as other words that sound like ‘oak’, the literal meaning of the term for ‘black oak’, where black oak trees grow, what the wood is used for, how acorn mush is made, or what happened the year there were no acorns, I can react in various ways. I can steer the speaker back onto my track, either by interrupting gently or by waiting politely until he or she comes to a stopping place. I can listen attentively. I can write down what is said. My response can convey more forcefully than words the value I place on each kind of information offered, and, in turn, determine what will be volunteered in future work. (Like all people, of course, speakers differ in their sensitivity to the attitudes of those around them.) In my own experience I have found it worthwhile to write down almost everything offered by speaker-consultants. I may not be sufficiently knowledgeable at the time to appreciate the implications of what is being said, but, over and over, comments volunteered by speakers have later provided the key to analyses, confirmed budding hypotheses, or unveiled aspects of the language I might never have discovered on my own. Speakers also have background knowledge of context that an outsider may lack, particularly in small communities where much common knowledge is assumed. Speakers know about local history, geography, customary and expected behavior, and relationships among people living and dead. For the fieldworker, a command of basic vocabulary and grammar may not be enough to make sense out of what people are saying as they talk, a necessary prerequisite to insightful grammatical analysis.

One subtle attitude on the part of the researcher can have a particularly important effect in shaping the record. It has been my experience that good speakers have a sense of the difference between not only what is grammatical and what is ungrammatical, but also of what is said and what could be but is not. Such intuition is easy to stifle if the wrong signals are given. Central Pomo, like many languages of western North America, contains verbal prefixes indicating the means or manner of action. Thus in addition to the verb *yáq̣* ‘know’, there are derived verbs *ba-yáq̣* ‘obey’ (recognize by sound), *da-yáq̣* ‘recognize by feeling with the hands’, *ʔ-yáq̣* ‘recognize by touch (with fingers)’, *p^h-yáq̣* ‘recognize by sight’, *qa-yáq̣* ‘recognize food by tasting’, and *s-yáq̣* ‘recognize drink by tasting’. These prefixes occur in large numbers of verbs. Built on the verb *táw* ‘feel, sense’, there are derived verbs *ba-táw* ‘hear’ (‘sense by sound’), *da-táw* ‘feel with the hand’, *ʔ-táw* ‘touch with the fingers’, *p^h-táw* ‘see, appear’, *qa-táw* ‘taste food’, *s-táw* ‘taste a drink’. There are other prefixes in the set as well, as in *ča-táw* ‘feel by sitting or lying, as a hard chair or lumpy bed’, *h-táw* ‘feel with a stick, as testing the depth of water’, *m-táw* ‘feel warmth, be cooked’, *š-táw* ‘heft, lift an object to see how heavy it is’, and *č^h-táw* ‘feel, as the hard shell of walnuts when cracking them’. But not all possible combinations of prefixes and roots occur. There are, for example, no verbs **ča-yáq̣* ‘recognize by sitting’ or *s-yáq̣* ‘recognize by dangling’. When asked about such possibilities Mrs. Jack would answer something like ‘That would mean to recognize by sitting,

but it's not a word in our language'. All aspects of her answer are interesting. The first part shows that on some level the structure of the system is accessible to her. She did not read or write the language or do technical linguistic analysis, so this was part of her knowledge as a speaker. The second part demonstrates the distinction between possible and actual words. It is not surprising that speakers have felt little need to coin words meaning 'recognize by sitting' and 'recognize by dangling'. The prefixes are used to create labels for nameworthy concepts, lexical items that are created for the purpose at hand. The meanings of the formations are not necessarily equivalent to the sum of their parts. A combination of the prefix *h-* 'by poking, jabbing' with the root *yól* 'mix' yields *h-yól* 'add salt or pepper' (from the motion used with a salt shaker); the combination *s-* 'by sucking' with *yól* 'mix' yields *s-yól* 'eat bread, cookies, doughnuts etc. and wash them down with tea or coffee'. Good consultants can become quickly attuned to the interests of researchers with whom they collaborate. It is all too easy to get caught up in the systematicity of structural patterns and squelch fine intuitions about the actual status of constructions. Often structures formed by analogy in the heat of passionate elicitation do not actually exist in the language, for important reasons.

Speakers vary in their interests and talents, and a sensitivity to this variation can be helpful in making the best use of their contributions. Some speakers have astounding vocabularies and are highly articulate in discussing lexical differences, skillful at describing fine shades of meaning and pinpointing the contexts in which particular lexical items are used. Some speakers are intrigued by grammatical structure and are thrilled to discover the vast systematicity underlying their skills. As speaker-linguists, they can bring relevant material to discussions that a linguist alone might never unearth, they can mull over questions that would hold little interest for non-linguists, and they can contribute valuable judgments about the meanings and functions of particular constructions. Some speakers are especially sensitive to nuances of style and register, able to point out the effects of lexical and grammatical choices. Some are talented storytellers. For many speakers, the collaborative endeavor opens up an exciting world of intellectual discovery; for others, its value lies more in the social relationship that evolves between collaborators. In all cases, being attuned to the special skills and tastes of speaker-collaborators can make a substantial difference in the success of the enterprise.

In many ways, the more the speaker is invited to shape the record, the richer the documentation of the language and the more we will learn about the extent to which languages can vary. In communities with large numbers of speakers, in which the language is used in a variety of contexts, certain kinds of documentation are feasible that are impossible elsewhere, such as comparisons of language use across different ages, genders, social groups, geographical areas, and contexts. But even where speakers are few, the more we can document speech in its natural function, in spontaneous interaction among speakers, with the give and take of true communication, the more we can learn about the language in its own terms. Speakers often shape the record most effectively when they are given the opportunity to choose what to say and how to say it.

3. The role of the linguist

Of course linguists do more than hold the microphone. They shape the record in obvious ways, such as selecting certain lines of research and methodology. They can also shape it in

more subtle ways. Some ways come from individual styles of interaction. Others are rooted in preparation before the work begins, both practical and intellectual. It is certainly useful to learn as much as possible beforehand about the history, culture, and physical environment of the community in which the language is spoken, and what equipment should be taken along for living and working in the community. It is also crucial, particularly now as numbers of speakers are shrinking and time is of the essence, that the fieldworker bring as much technical skill and theoretical awareness to the project as possible.

Especially in work with an endangered language, experience in phonetic transcription and basic linguistic analysis are a must. The time and patience of speakers are too precious to waste. Distinctions missed the first time around will certainly slow down the work and may never be caught at all.

Good training should also result in an ability to identify gaps in the record, forms and constructions that can be predicted to exist but which are unattested. If early in work with Mohawk speakers I discover that there is a verb *ró'kwats* 'he is digging' (as in example (2)), I can predict that there should be a verb 'they are digging'. The answer is likely to be reliable: *ronn-ó'kwats* 'they are digging'. I can then check the shape of this prefix with other verb stems, as in *rati-hnekihrha* 'they drink'. I could have predicted that a masculine plural form of the verb 'drink' should exist, but I could not have predicted that its shape would be *rati-*.

At the same time, it is important to develop a sensitivity to the difference between filling gaps and creating structure. Particularly for disappearing languages, the record should provide a true representation of the language. Otherwise some of the inherent logic of the grammar may be obscured, and future theoreticians may forever be trying to integrate non-occurring structures into their models of language. One day an excellent speaker of an interesting language came to see me nearly in tears. He had been hired by another scholar to help out in a field methods class, and had been enjoying the early work. He had no trouble coming up with words in his language as they were requested, and he repeated every word over and over with infinite patience and brilliant clarity. At this point, however, he confessed that he realized he was not a good speaker at all and should not be the one entrusted with the work. He was being asked for translations of sentences like 'The ball was hit by the man', and 'The cat was chased by the dog'. Try as he might, he simply did not know the answers. In fact his language does not contain a passive construction. Other grammatical devices are used for foregrounding and backgrounding participants, and for focusing on resultant states. He had tried producing word-for-word equivalents of the English passives, but was sensitive enough to recognize that they were not part of the language. His sensitivity was actually one of the reasons he was such a fine consultant. Another speaker might have capitulated, allowing the word-for-word calques to remain in the record. The forms would have been the product of competence in English, not the resources of the language under study.

Another important ingredient in preparation for fieldwork is of course a solid background in linguistic theory. The interplay between theory and data is especially dynamic in the context of field research. The more one knows about the grammatical categories and patterns that have already been recognized in languages, and about how they are predicted to interact, the more effective he or she will be at identifying them in the language under study and at noticing exceptions to expected patterns. Someone expecting all languages to follow the nominative/accusative pattern of English, for example, could experience considerable anguish

when confronted with a language exhibiting ergative/absolutive case marking. If ergative systems were already familiar, however, the pattern could be recognized early on the basis of relatively little data, and the researcher could move on to investigate special properties of the system at hand. This might involve, for example, watching for the distribution of the pattern, noting whether it appears in all tenses, aspects, and moods; with all persons; with both nouns and pronouns; and whether it governs clause-combining constructions. At the same time, insights gained through sensitive fieldwork come back to shape theory, enriching the theoretical tools that future researchers can bring to their own fieldwork. A number of features of linguistic structure without counterparts in English were originally discovered through the close examination of usage in extensive stretches of spontaneous connected speech. Once their existence was recognized, however, it became possible for subsequent researchers to identify them easily in new languages by direct requests for diagnostic data.

4. Conclusion

The impending disappearance of so many languages calls for special attention to the goals of current fieldwork and the best methods for achieving them. It may not be appropriate to limit the record to data pertinent to issues of current theoretical interest. What we choose to document now may be all the information available to future descendants of speakers curious about their linguistic heritage. It may also be the only material available to future researchers seeking answers to questions we do not yet know enough to ask. We cannot hope to anticipate all future needs, but we can consider the kinds of decisions that will shape the record produced. Among such decisions are choice of methodologies, the roles assumed by speaker-collaborators, and the training and preparation of researchers. Much current fieldwork consists of direct elicitation of individual words and sentences in the target language. This procedure can be effective when one is first becoming acquainted with the phonology and morphology of an unfamiliar language, and for compiling substantial lists of basic vocabulary. But if the research is limited to eliciting translations of English vocabulary and syntactic constructions, collecting grammaticality judgments, and checking off known typological diagnostics, we may miss what is unexpected about the language under study. In so doing we risk depriving descendants of the speakers of what is special about their heritage and lose opportunities to expand our own theoretical horizons. If speakers are also allowed to speak for themselves, creating a record of spontaneous speech in natural communicative settings, we have a better chance of providing the kind of record that will be useful to future generations. The search for what is special in a language does not necessarily entail a rejection of the quest for language universals. It can provide the opportunity to arrive at finer and deeper generalizations that are grounded in real language rather than conjecture.

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WHO SHAPES THE RECORD: THE SPEAKER AND THE LINGUIST

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To appear in:

Linguistic Fieldwork: Essays on the Practice of Empirical Linguistic Research.

Paul Newman and Martha Ratliff, eds.

Cambridge: Cambridge University Press