Editor's Preface and List of Contributors (LDD 3)

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Editor's preface

Peter K. Austin

This volume arises from two one-day workshops held at the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS), University of London: one on 4th December 2004 entitled "Multi-disciplinary approaches to language documentation" and one on 12th February 2005 entitled "Language contact and variation in language documentation".

The chapters for this volume are written up versions of the workshop presentations, plus two invited papers (by Dobrin and Harrison, both presented at the LSA Conference on Language Documentation held at Harvard University, July 2005). I am extremely grateful to the authors for preparing their contributions in a timely manner for publication. All the papers have been reviewed by an editorial committee associated with the SOAS Endangered Languages Academic Programme and the Endangered Languages Archive; I am grateful to the committee members for their detailed and helpful comments on all the papers that have resulted in improvements in both content and presentation. Mary Raymond and Pete Budd provided sub-editing and formatting assistance that made the editorial task so much easier. A special thank you to Zara Pybus who undertook sub-editing and formatting of the whole volume and production of the final camera-ready manuscript while at the same time providing her usual highly efficient administrative and organisational support.

Language documentation is a relatively new research area and these papers make significant new contributions to the theory and practice of this emerging field, especially in the areas of inter-disciplinary approaches to documentation and ways of approaching variation and language contact in endangered language contexts. The papers are organised thematically according to these two topics.

The collection begins with Thomas Widlok's reflections on inter-disciplinary and cross-disciplinary research involving linguists and anthropologists (who historically had a close working relationship but whose communities have tended to follow rather different interests in the past 50 years). Widlok argues that language documentation provides an ideal environment for collaborative research between practitioners of the two fields and outlines the productive potentials as well as some of the potential problems that can arise in creating ongoing and dynamic relationships between linguists and anthropologists. David Harrison's paper is a strong argument in favour of just this kind of research where ethnographically informed language documentation not only helps with contextualisation of language and culture but also contributes to analysis of the linguistic system itself. Drawing upon examples from his field research in Siberia, Harrison shows how the phonology, verb semantics, colour terminology and noun phrase structure of a language can be better understood by collecting data in an ethnographically informed way in the field. Lisa Dobrin's contribution is also in the realm of anthropology and ethnography in language documentation, this time dealing with differences in perception and understanding of the roles of researchers in the value systems of the academic and the speaker community. She presents an analysis of her work with the Arapesh in Papua New

Guinea (which has wider applicability throughout Melanesia and Oceania) and shows how a potential conflict in values can arise unless the researcher properly explores the expectations and meanings that the documentation project has for the people with whom the work is being undertaken. Her paper brings to the fore a discussion about the moral obligations documenters take on in carrying out fieldwork on endangered languages, and outlines some conclusions about what the 'good' linguist can expect to be able to do, arguing for seeing the importance that on-going human relationships and the opportunity for their voices to be heard have to the communities with whom documenters work.

Linda Barwick draws upon several years of research experience as a musicologist in inter-disciplinary projects involving linguists to formulate a wishlist of issues that she would like language documenters to keep in mind when they record music in the field. This includes both practical advice about good recording techniques (like best use of microphones etc) as well as guidelines about some of the things that musicologists would like to know about musical performance, and that linguists might not have thought to ask (like terms for musical styles and taxonomies, explanations of the meanings of songs, and their social contextualization). Work on music can be rewarding both for language documenters and the community (who will especially value the record of their sung traditions) but consideration of Barwick's advice and suggestions to collaborate with a musicologist will make the results even more valuable for all those concerned.

Gail Coelho argues that collaborative research between language documenters and ecologists can be particularly productive because both groups have interests that meet in the area of preservation of the biological environment of small language communities. Just as linguists realize that languages are threatened by the loss of functions and cultural domains in which they are used, so do ecologists recognize the threat to a group's way of life when their natural environment is degraded. Coelho argues for a language-culture-environment link as highly significant for both fields. She shows that linguists can contribute in a variety of ways, from documenting terms for flora and fauna, to reconstructing historical vocabulary and taxonomies, to preparing educational materials for conservation, arguing that in the process much can be learnt about structure and function of the language itself. Clearly this is another area where inter-disciplinary endeavours can be fruitful for both researchers and the community members.

Friederike Lüpke's paper looks at the importance of corpus-based research in language documentation and the value that can arise from compiling a small but varied and representative corpus with richly encoded metadata associated with it. Drawing on her work with the Jalonke language spoken in Guinea in West Africa, she shows how corpora can contribute to theoretical research (in this case verb classification), genre and register research, and sociolinguistics and contact linguistics (through looking at speaker variation in language choice within the corpus, for example). She also argues for the value of corpus work in language maintenance and revitalization. Lüpke's contribution ends with a discussion of some of the methodological, theoretical, and

practical difficulties that arise in work with corpora, including issues of size, representativeness and cross-linguistic comparability.

Sonja Eisenbeiss' paper deals with the potential for interaction between language documenters and psycholinguists concerned with the study of child language acquisition. She argues for the integration of child language data into language documentation projects and shows the benefits that the documentation of child language can have for acquisition researchers, descriptive, theoretical and historical linguists, and those involved in language maintenance or revitalisation projects. She also discusses the implications of different user requirements for data collection and provides pointers to resources, tools and stimuli for acquisition research on endangered languages. The paper includes a wealth of detail and examples that will be interest and benefit to both fields.

Robert Munro concludes this section of the volume with a paper on the digital information and communication skills required for language documentation, and the kinds of advice that documenters can seek from ICT professionals. He argues that there are three types of ICT skills that are particularly important for language documentation: consultation and elicitation, media management, and data management. Linguists should be familiar with the first of these from their own practices, and need to be masters of the second two in order to achieve high quality recordings and well-structured data and analysis, especially when materials are expected to be properly archived. Munro presents a qualitative scale of language documentation materials setting out a measure for the quality of research outcomes along several dimensions, including use of metadata standards and data management standards. The long term benefits in terms of preservation, portability and accessibility that can arise from adopting his suggestions should be persuasive.

The second section of the volume deals with language contact and variation in language documentation, issues that have only begun to be addressed in the theoretical and practical literature on documentation. William Foley begins by exploring issues of language ideology, personhood, purism and variation, pointing out the fallacy of the 1 language = 1 culture equation that entered Western thinking with Herder and the Romantics in the 18th century and has now spread as a global ideology of elites throughout the world. Drawing upon work in the American South West and his own field research in Papua New Guinea's Sepik region he shows how different communities live out their ideologies about language. The linguistically complex Sepik region shows speakers highly valuing foreign elements (just as Dobrin found high values placed on her 'foreignness') and choosing to use them in both ritual language and trade languages (a series of indigenous pidgins are used between different ethnic groups). This 'anti-Herderian' viewpoint contrasts sharply with the 'our language = our culture' ideology of both the Arizona Tewa and dominant European models. Foley's paper is thus a call to explore the interactions between language ideology, purism and borrowing by language documenters.

Anju Saxena continues the theme of linguistic ideology, purism and borrowing by looking at two locales in India: the Kinnauri and Harijan boli groups of Sangla

valley villages in Himachal Pradesh, and Hindi–Urdu speakers in Old Delhi. In Himachal Pradesh we have two linguistically distinct groups (Kinnauri is a Tibeto-Burman language while Harijan boli is Indo-Aryan) that share many cultural traits in common and show a high degree of language contact and borrowing. For Hindi-Urdu however, what is essentially a single language is spoken by culturally distinct Hindu and Moslem communities. After discussing the details of each case study, Saxena raises the question of how to capture this kind of difference in ideological take on language and culture within an archiveable language documentation. Operationalisation of the different viewpoints will be a challenge to be addressed in future work.

Colette Grinevald's paper is also concerned with ideology and politics, but this time among the Rama of Rama Cay in Nicaragua. She discusses a project to document the Rama language which began in the 1980's that focussed on the moribund indigenous language (with all its consequences for community political divisions) ignoring the much more vibrant, but socially devalued, English-based creole unique to the region. Her analysis is that understanding the political exigencies of the time, and the changes that 20 years have brought, gives a necessary background for making sense of the language choices made by the community in their documentation and revitalisation efforts. The long-term commitment of Grinevald and her colleagues can teach us much about the importance of ideological and political context in language documentation research.

Yaron Matras' paper also deals with political and ideological issues, and especially the question of conservatism, community, and the revitalisation of languages. After an introduction that addresses some of the rhetoric and ideology in the literature about endangered languages and the morality of language documentation and support, Matras goes on to discuss some examples for the potential research yields of work on endangered languages. He presents two case studies, Domari (an Indo-Aryan language spoken by traditionally migratory communities in the Middle East), and so-called Angloromani (the mixed speech varieties used by Romanies in England and Wales). He pays special attention to the role of language contact, which could be argued to be one of the main common denominators of endangered languages. He ends his contribution by returning to the issue of activism and the role of the linguist, arguing that the Domari and Angloromani situations are quite different and that one cannot generalise about the relations between communities and linguists nor about the need for activist intervention across the board. Matras' contribution is thus a more measured approach in contrast to some of the inflammatory rhetoric that has been published about 'linguistic genocide' and so on.

Rhetoric and ideology is also the theme of Anthony Woodbury's paper which concludes the volume. Woodbury notes that it is sometimes argued that the language of some indigenous communities in North America and Australia is no longer their ancestral tongue, but 'Indian English' or 'Eskimo English' or 'Aboriginal English.' He questions whether these are indeed stable, on-going badges of community identity, or just transient phenomena, lacking in linguistic and sociolinguistic 'focus' and hence not languages in the accepted sense. His paper addresses whether 'Indian English' etc. should be the focus of language documentation and support, or rather the ancestral

languages they are replacing (a question that Grinevald also considers at some length). He argues that against apparent 'continuity' in these local varieties of English should be weighed the loss of linguistic and cultural features carried by the ancestral languages. Woodbury presents a typology of language documentation that gives a place to both ancestral language structures and uses, along with the emergent forms and functions of the replacing language, stressing the need to be aware of and respect the agendas of the different stakeholders in the language documentation process, and to understand the (often tacit) ideologies that lie behind them.

We welcome comments and feedback on the papers collected here, directed to the address in the inside front cover.

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