

DOCUMENTARY LINGUISTICS I

prof. Nicole Nau, UAM winter 2016/2017

Eleventh & twelfth lecture
16 and 23 January 2017

DOCUMENTING «THE LEXICON» OF A LANGUAGE

- ❖ Word inventories and word meaning
- ❖ Interdisciplinary cooperation
- ❖ Linguistic and encyclopedic knowledge

Twelfth lecture, 23 January 2017:

- ❖ Dictionaries and language documentation
- ❖ Importance and use of dictionaries

| | | | |
|---------------|-------------|------------|-----------|
| G ot | Deywis | Comobent | Sabatius |
| Engel | Rapa | Hede | Same |
| Hemel | Dangus | Leym | Lavdis |
| Gestirne | Lauxnos | Sant | Sydo |
| Vorgensfen | Deynawis | Let | Lapp |
| Gebengestirne | pancoran | Berg | Grabis |
| Sunne | Saule | Brunt | Dambs |
| Monde | menig | Tal | wandambis |
| Wullen | trupvan | Grabe | Kunps |
| Helle | prauls | Stern | Stabis |
| Teufel | Eawr | Ulier | Panno |
| F or | mettan | Kole | anglis |
| Gomer | Dagis | Functie | Somri |
| Herbist | Eysambs | Brunt | Enaisas |
| Winter | Semo | Aspeke | pelame |
| Woche | Samayte | Stopaspeke | plienis |
| Sontag | nadele | Pouch | Dunnis |
| arontag | ponadele | Bradm | pore |
| Dmstag | nyssafordis | Gigge | Kerne |
| Wienwoche | posissauate | Ducisant | Bom |
| Dmstag | betwarte | Blut | San |
| Freitag | penture | Flamme | Lopis |
| | | Wise | wnis |

Word meaning

What is problematic with such a glossary?

The Elbing Glossary

Contains 802 words in German and Old Prussian

First entries:

Got - Deywis

Engel - Rapa

Hemel - Dangus

Gestirne - Lauxnos

[...],

Sunne - Saule

EXAMPLE FOR DIFFERENT CATEGORIZATIONS: «FISH» (PAWLEY 2011)

Table 5. Definitions of the generic for fish and fish-like animals in some Oceanic dictionaries

Group A. Definitions that give 'fish, or 'fish, sea creature' without further definition

| | |
|--------------|---|
| Arosi: | i'a , a fish. |
| Cheke Holo: | sasa , fish (generic). |
| Marshallese: | ek , fish. |
| Mota: | iga , a fish. |
| Owa: | aiga , fish, sea creature. |
| Rarotongan: | ika , fish. |
| Roviana: | igana , the generic name for fish. |

Group C. Definitions that try to be comprehensive

- Gela: **iga**, a creature of the sea, fish, mollusc, crayfish, whale, squid, sea anemone, etc.
- Paamese: **mesau**, 1. fish. 2 any sea dweller (including also turtles, dolphins, shellfish, etc.).
- Toqabaqita: **iqa**, 1. fish (generic term). 2. Also denotes a superordinate category that includes fish, whales, dolphins, turtles, dugongs.
- Wayan: **ika**, 1. Typical fish, true fish, syn. **ika dū**. This category includes all gill-breathing fish with fins, including sharks, rays and eels. 2. Fish and certain fish-like creatures. A generic which includes all true fish (see sense 1) and dolphins. Most informants also regard turtles (**ikabula**) as **ika**. Some also include octopus (**sulua**) and squid (**suluanū**). Universally excluded are crustaceans (crabs, lobsters, etc.), molluscs with shells, sea cucumbers, sea urchins and jellyfish. (There follows a full list of names of **ika**.)

DIFFERENT SPECIFICATION (10 FISH NAMES OR 300?)

“The vocabulary of a language is an inventory of the items a culture talks about and has categorized in order to make sense of the world and to survive in a local ecosystem.”

(Nettle, Daniel & Suzanne Romaine. 2000. *Vanishing voices. The extinction of the world's languages*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.)

FISHNAMES AND PRESERVATION OF BIODIVERSITY

A hand is pointing to a table of fish names. The table has three columns: the first column contains names in a Pacific island language, the second column contains the common English name of the fish, and the third column contains the scientific name. The video player interface at the bottom shows a play button and a progress bar.

| | | |
|---------------|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| DIYADIYAYANA | White surgeonfish | Acanthurus lineatus |
| WULIOALAOALAU | Striated surgeonfish | Acanthurus lineatus |
| OSAOSA | Orangespine unicornfish | Chirocentrus dougalli |
| OSAALAALAWA | Bullethead parrotfish | Scorpaenopsis diabolus |
| HINEGAYUYU | Yellowbarred parrotfish | Chlorurus lineatus |
| DEBI | Barred rabbitfish | Scorpaenopsis diabolus |
| MAHAI | Silver spinefoot | Siganus delicatus |
| LAUNAPELO | Humphead Maori Wrasse | Siganus argenteus |
| SABUGABUBU | Coral Trout | Chelodactylus undulatus |
| KEITA'ATA'AI | Blackspot snapper | Plectropomus leopus |
| AUAULI | Blackspotted grouper | Lutjanus fulvus |
| UUTAPOTAPOI | Blacktipped grouper | Cephalopholis cyanostictus |
| SALAWA | Bigeye Bream | Epinephelus spilotoceus |
| CUWATAI | Sabre Squirrelfish | Monacanthus grandis |
| | Moray eel | Sargocentron |

Pawley (2011):
languages of the
Pacific islands
may have
hundreds of fish
names

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=AVStbwJoYss>

PRINCIPLES OF LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION (BEGINNING OF 21ST CENTURY) — SLIDE FROM 2ND LECTURE


- ❖ done in **interdisciplinary teams**: linguists + other specialists,
- ❖ outsiders and insiders: speech community is involved not only as „informants”
- ❖ done for **various purposes**
- ❖ published electronically (and on paper)
- ❖ stored in digital archives
- ❖ contains written, audio and video material
- ❖ documents the use of the language in various situations

COLLECTING WORDS IN INTERDISCIPLINARY FIELDWORK: TYPICAL FIELDS

- ❖ ethnobotany; ethnozoology;
«environmental anthropology», «conservation biology»
- ❖ ethnogeography
- ❖ ethnoastronomy
- ❖ ethnography
- ❖ ...

What is documented? Let's find examples!

What is the motivation and the possible benefit?



Ethnobiology is the scientific study of dynamic relationships among peoples, biota, and environments (Salick et al. 2003). This discipline has departed from being descriptive and now attempts to use the full spectrum of scientific methodologies and tools **to understand and explain cultural differences and similarities in the knowledge and use of biota and environments** (Bale'e 1994).

(Macclatchey in Thieberger, ed. 2011)

ETHNOBOTANY: FOLK TAXONOMIES (BERLIN 1992)

unique beginner (*plant*)

life form (*tree*)

intermediate

generic (*oak*)

specific

varietal

ETHNOGRAPHER'S INTERESTS (FRANCHETTO 2006)

Semantic domains (p. 187-188):

- Kinship (example p. 209-210)
- Body parts
- Material culture, artefacts
- Terms relating to subsistence activities
- Shamanism
- ...

Topics in texts interesting for ethnographers: p. 189-190

LEXICAL VS. ENCYCLOPEDIC KNOWLEDGE, OR: HOW TO DESCRIBE THE MEANING OF *SHEEP*?

“In explicating the meaning of a lexical unit, are there principled grounds for drawing a line between linguistic and encyclopaedic knowledge, or between definitions and cultural information? If so, what are the distinguishing criteria? If not, what practical criteria should be invoked?

These questions haunt every writer of descriptive or ethnographic dictionaries” (Pawley 2011)

Handout: compare definitions in a dictionary and an encyclopedia

“The question: ‘What is the meaning of *sheep*?’ is probably wrong-headed. When formulating a dictionary explication of sheep, it makes more sense to ask ‘Of the many characteristics of sheep known to English speakers, which are the most salient?’ and ‘For the various users of the dictionary, what is likely to be the most useful information to include?’”
(Pawley 2011)

Define 1-2 of the fish or tree names you gathered!

HOW (WHERE) TO DOCUMENT THIS KIND OF LEXICAL KNOWLEDGE?

Recall (2nd lecture):

Metalinguistic knowledge,

manifest in the native speakers' ability to provide interpretation and systematizations for linguistic units and events (Himmelman 1998)

Himmelman's «apparatus» (next slide, from Himmelman 2006)

Table 2. Extended format for a language documentation

| Primary data | Apparatus | |
|--|--|--|
| recordings/records of observable linguistic behavior and metalinguistic knowledge | Per session | For documentation as a whole |
| | <p><i>Metadata</i></p> <p><i>Annotations</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – transcription – translation – further linguistic and ethnographic glossing and commentary | <p><i>Metadata</i></p> <p><i>General access resources</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – introduction – orthographical conventions – glossing conventions – indices – links to other resources ... |
| | | <p><i>Descriptive analysis</i></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> – ethnography – descriptive grammar – dictionary |

Bridging «linguistic behavior» and «metalinguistic knowledge»

«[...] for example, if you are making a thesaurus, you don't want to just find the names of different grasses in your corpus, you also want the resultant list to be discussed and gone over by speakers who are authorities on grasses to make sure you have the field properly covered and to generate good definitions. Rather, what a documentation-oriented view says is that **the discussions of grass names** should themselves be videotaped or tape recorded and **should themselves become a part of the whole corpus**; as should any and all grammatical elicitation of the traditional kind. Moreover, years from now, it will be the grass name attestations and grasses discussion tapes, and not the dictionary, that you will consider as the final document on grass names.»

(Woodbury 2003)

BRIDGING PRIMARY DATA, ANNOTATION AND ANALYSIS

Gaby Cablitz. 2011. The making of a multimedia encyclopaedic dictionary for and in endangered speech communities. In: *Documenting endangered languages*, eds. G. Haig et al., 223-261.


Software: LEXUS and ViCoS (MPI Nijmegen, not longer supported)

'a'aka pātāhi

vt

'a'aka i te pō'a, e tahi vahaka e tāhi 'a'aka'ia
tresser la moitié d'une feuille de cocotier
 plait one half of a coconut frond

Usage: UP, autres? - Var. dialect: ke'āna papatāhi (HO)



'A'aka pātāhi'ia te pō'a.
[Link to archive session](#)
On a tressé un côté d'une feuille de cocotier.
 Plaiting one side of the coconut frond.
 [kanea_maa-TM:0233]

ANNEX manual ? embed settings

Text

Grid


Subtitle

Waveform

Timeline

Combined

Video display min



⏮ ⏪ ⏩ ⏭ Full Buffer

Mini Data Frame

po'a 'au e 'a'aka nei mea
 vāhi te'a te'a tapo'o mā a
 Para e kanea a'a e ta'ai
 a'a i te 'akau 'oīnei te po'a
 mea vāhi ia Ta hm e 'a'aka
 nei au pātāhi a'aka
 pātāhi'ia te po'a hm
 [KATA] tenei mea e po'a
 ena e e to'u o Ta hakatu

Tier: t@Mr

Font size: 14

Play selection

Clear selection

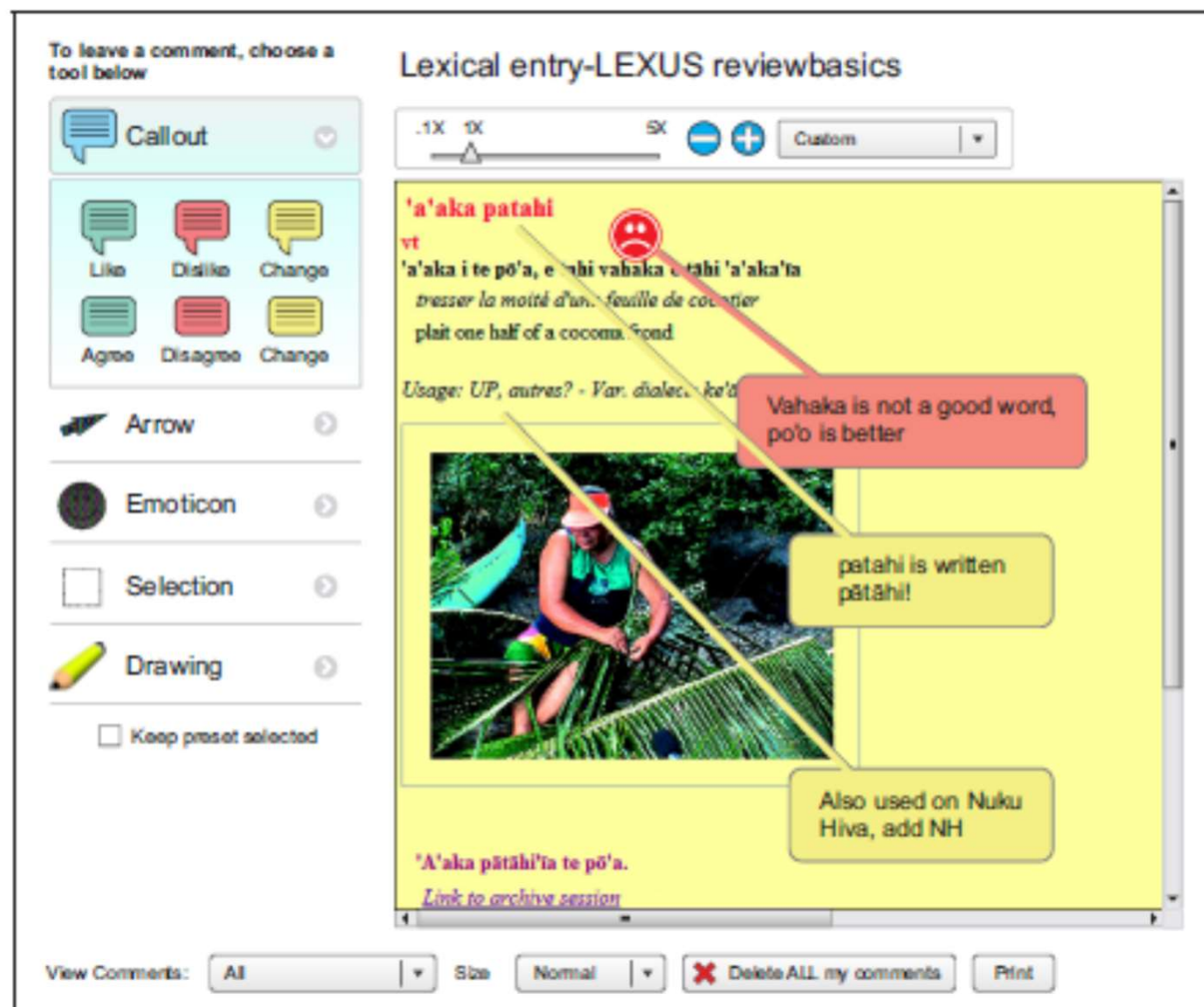
|< >|
<< >>
< >
+ -

☒ Play screen by screen

Waveform and Timeline

| | |
|--------|--|
| ite@Mr | |
| com@Pr | |
| ref@Mr | 0233 |
| t@Mr | 'a'aka pātāhi'ia |
| f@Mr | tresser en faisant un côté d'une feuille de cocotier (d'abord) |
| fte@Mr | plaiting by doing one side of the coconut frond (first) |

Figure 1. Archive-linking: from lexical entry in LEXUS to archive session (viewed in ANNEX)



Cablitz 2011

Community involvement
in dictionary making

Figure 4. Example of a whiteboarding tool: a dictionary entry with comments

IMPORTANCE AND USE OF DICTIONARIES

Since dictionaries are more visible or salient to the public than are grammars or text collections, community members are more likely to have strong opinions about dictionaries. Speakers may object to dictionaries for religious, puristic, or political reasons. Other speakers will consider the dictionary (particularly a handsome paper copy to be displayed on a bookshelf) to be an emblematic part of their linguistic heritage (Tonya Stebbins, p.c.). Extra care and diplomacy in securing community support and collaboration is crucial.

(Chelliah & Reuse 2011)

EXAMPLES

Example: a fictitious dictionary of a dead language

<http://www.suduva.com/virdainas/>

Example: «Talking dictionaries» for endangered languages

<http://travel.nationalgeographic.com/travel/enduring-voices/talking-dictionaries/>

cf. Harrison in <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GxZAbA3NuEM>

OTHER QUESTIONS FOR DISCUSSION

What words may be more difficult to describe («define») than others?

What other information about words (related to their meaning) may be useful in a dictionary?

REFERENCES

- Cablitz, Gaby. 2011. The making of a multimedia encyclopaedic dictionary for and in endangered speech communities. In: *Documenting endangered languages*, eds. G. Haig et al., 223-261.
- Chelliah, Shobhana L. & Reuse, Willem J. 2011. *Handbook of descriptive linguistic fieldwork*. Chapter 9: Lexicography in Fieldwork.
- Franchetto, Bruna. 2006. Ethnography in language documentation. In: *Essentials of language documentation*
- Pawley, Andrew. 2011. What does it take to make an ethnographic dictionary? On the treatment of fish and tree names in dictionaries of Oceanic languages. In: *Documenting endangered languages*, eds. G. Haig et al.
- Thieberger, Nicholas, ed. 2011. *The Oxford handbook of linguistic fieldwork*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. Part III Collaborating with other disciplines.