

**DOCUMENTARY LINGUISTICS I**  
**Prof. Tomasz Wicherkiewicz**  
**UAM winter semester 2017/2018**

**Seventh lecture**  
21 November 2017

# | Documenting as linguistic fieldwork and community work

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# Homework:

**Make recordings for a small corpus of any spoken language you speak or can work on.**

Speakers: students. Length of each recording: 2-3 min.

*What do you want to record and how will you do it?*

# Linguistic fieldwork, especially language documentation

relies heavily on the working relationship between the professional linguist and the indigenous language workers – a challenging relationship because except for their interest in the community language, both parties do not share much common ground in terms of background and aims

# Research aims and personal motivations

*Table 1. Linguists' and local language workers' perspectives on fieldwork projects*

	Linguists	Local language workers
Aims	academic	educational, cultural
Perspective	focus on otherness	focus on identity
Motivation	intellectual curiosity academic career advancement	intellectual curiosity status, money
Products	PhD thesis, specialized investigation	dictionary, reading materials, translations

Mosel, Ulrike "Fieldwork and community language work". In: *Essentials of Language Documentation*

# Linguists Workers

## ¿ vs. ? Local Language

What about the Local Linguists ? Or Linguists as Engaged Language Workers

The dychotomy questioned eg. by Engaged Humanities



**ENGHUM Field school in Wilamowice, 18-28 September 2016**

the project of the Faculty of "Artes Liberales" at the University of Warsaw; Department of Linguistics at SOAS, University of London; and Leiden University's Centre for Linguistics at the Faculty of Humanities and the Department of Archaeological Heritage within the Faculty of Archaeology, in collaboration with the Association „Wilamowianie”

**18.09.2016**

- 11:00 – 11:30 Travel from Bielany to Wilamowice.
- 11:30 – 14:00 Welcoming guests by local officials. Cultural event.
- 14:00 – 14:30 Tymoteusz Król (UW), Justyna Majerska (UW), Bartłomiej Chronik (UW), Tomasz Wicherkiewicz (UAM), Justyna Oiko (UW)  
The Past, Present and Future of Wymysorys.
- 14:30 – 15:45 Visit in Hecznarowice.
- 15:45 – 17:00 Wilamowice – excursion.
- 17:00 – 17:30 Travel to Bielany.
- 17:30 – 18:30 Genner Llanes Ortiz (Leiden University)  
Indigenous languages and contemporary music in Mexico: an opportunity for revitalization?
- 18:30 – 19:00 Discussion

**19.09.2016**

- 09:00 – 12:30 Work in groups: presentation of issues, creation of groups, developing a questionnaire.
- 14:00 – 16:00 Piotr Strojnowski, Michał Skarżyński  
Workshop in video and audio recording
- 16:15 – 17:15 Tymoteusz Król (UW):  
Overcoming a social trauma through the language revitalization. The case of Wilamowice.
- 17:15 – 17:45 Robert D. Borges (UW)

the assertion that languages and cultures can be a non-political and non-religious common denominator for social and economic transformations with the participation of ethnic/linguistic minorities.

The spectrum of beneficiaries of this approach is very broad as it builds on constructing bridges between academy and society and on widening social participation on local, national and international level.

# PAR & CBPR

An essential dimension of the project, defined as “engaged humanities”, embraces many forms of participatory action research (PAR) – closely related to a more recent notion of community-based participatory research (CBPR) – based on direct participation of language communities/ethnic groups as stakeholders and partners in specific research projects. This is a partnership-based approach in which community members, local researchers/teachers/activists and organizations participate and benefit in all steps and aspects of the research process, sharing their values, networks, tools and viewpoints, making it possible to combine external and internal perspectives. By overcoming the lack of broader impact and elitism of conventional teaching and research, this approach should lead to the democratization of generated knowledge in order to cause social change.

Linn, M.S. 2013. „Living archives: A community-based language archive model”. In: D. Nathan & P.K. Austin (eds.) *Language Documentation and Description* 12: 53-67. London: SOAS.

Community-Based Language Research  
(Czaykowska-Higgins 2009)

+

Participatory Archives  
(Huvila 2008)

## Community-Based Language Archive model (CBLA)

Czaykowska-Higgins, Ewa 2009. „Research models, community engagement, and linguistic fieldwork: Reflections on working within Canadian Indigenous communities”. *Language Documentation and Conservation* 3(1), 15-50.

Huvila, Isto 2008. „Participatory archive: Towards decentralized curation, radical user orientation, and broader contextualization of records management”. *Archival Science* 8: 15-36.

# Wicherkiewicz vs. Król

aims		
perspective		
motivation		
products		

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# Wicherkiewicz vs. Król

<b>aims</b>	academic	educational cultural
<b>perspective</b>	focus on otherness <i>Minority'ness</i> in all-embracing Polishness	focus on identity <i>Heimat</i> in the world of Heimats
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<b>products</b>	PhD thesis Specialized investigation (etic more than emic)	dictionary, reading materials, translations, literature not to let die.. otherwise, whom shall I speak to in my language ?

# Etic & Emic Perspectives

**etic:** a perspective in ethnography that uses the concepts and categories of the anthropologist's culture to describe another culture.

*An explanation used to understand a culture in scientific terms by comparing the culture to others and addressing the universals of human behavior*

**emic:** a perspective in ethnography that uses the concepts and categories that are relevant and meaningful to the culture under analysis.

*Accounts, descriptions and explanations used to understand a culture in its cultural context. It is an attempt to learn the concepts of a culture and see the world the way they do.*

# The linguists' and the speech community's documentation

	<b>Linguists</b>	<b>Speech community</b>
<b>kind of language</b>	<b>spontaneous language; great variety of genres and registers</b>	<b>planned language; selected important genres</b>
<b>content</b>	<b>greatest possible variety</b>	<b>suitable for educational purposes</b>
<b>format media</b>	<b>audio and video recordings with transcription and translation</b>	<b>written texts &gt;&gt; new genres</b>
<b>orthography</b>	<b>based on linguistic principles (phonological)</b>	<b>Orthography similar to that of the dominant language</b>
<b>lexicon</b>	<b>electronic lexical database</b>	<b>encyclopedic dictionary on paper</b>

# Benefits

- academic prospects

vs

- status within the community

- earning money (as fieldworkers, language givers, culture sellers)



En marzo pasado, el director de Ars Cantate y la Universidad de Varsovia firmaron un convenio para realizar la escuela de náhuatl para extranjeros. / Cortesía Marta Jędraska

## Abrirán escuela de náhuatl para extranjeros en Contla

Nora Rachel RAMÍREZ | Martes 1 de agosto de 2017 | en Cultura | 987



ARS CANTATE Y LA UNIVERSIDAD DE VARSOVIA

# Curiosity

Linguists may become bored with a too typical language (features) they document

Documenting 'big' languages – e.g. language corpora do not pose such 'dangers'

# Two Perspectives... or More

## Speech genres

Linguists	Local language workers
Variety of genres  from ritual language to casual gossip	gossips unsuitable school materials + ritual language –

# Contents of recording

e.g. Franchetto, Bruna *Ethnography in language documentation*

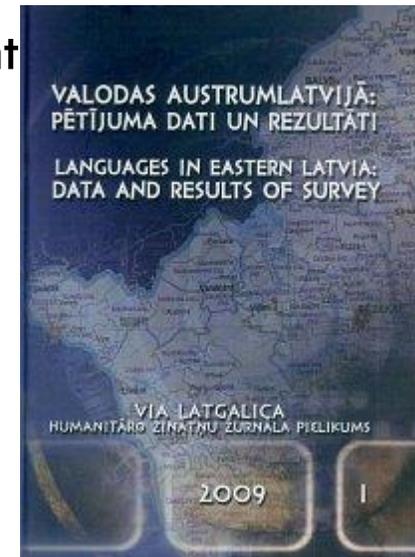
a basic range of topics of interest to the community and anthropologist:

– STANDARD TOPICS for which material can probably be collected in all cultures are body, conception, pregnancy, soul, ghosts, birth, female and male reclusion, first menses and menstruation.

- KINSHIP terminology
- BODY PARTS
- DISEASES

- RITUAL WAILING and other verbal-musical genres (recording events such as ritual wailing, as well as other songs and shamanic cures, may be prohibited)
- GREETINGS as a verbal genre with its specific formulas (this is also what the “naïve reader” usually wants to see/read/learn)
- HONORIFICS <> KINSHIP TERMS and SOCIAL classification
- MALE and FEMALE SPEECH in sessions which deal with topics affected by gender distinctions, such as the division of labor, sexual relations, jealousy, love affairs, marriage, menstruation, conception theories, etc.
- ONOMASTICS, i.e. the system of attributing and transmitting personal names. This needs to be documented through censuses, village maps, and genealogies.
- TOPONYMS: In the best of circumstances, the documentation would include a map of the territory with the toponyms in the indigenous language, where possible translated and analyzed morphologically and semantically, noting their associations with mythical and historical events and interpretations.

- **NATIVE METALINGUISTIC DISCOURSE:** What do speakers have to say about their own language and other languages with which they are in contact?
- **TURN-TAKING RULES** in different kinds of conversation; e.g., those applying to interactions in domestic spaces versus those used in public spaces.
- Data on **LANGUAGE ACQUISITION** as seen in interactions between children of different ages and between children and adults of different ages possessing different relations to the child.
- **LINGUISTIC BIOGRAMS**
- auxiliary questions / topics: cf e.g. - **LANGUAGE ATTITUDES** in →
- **INDIGENOUS PERSPECTIVE ON THE FOREIGN INTERLOCUTOR**, i.e. ourselves, in the form of narratives and other materials on “white people” (or other types of outsiders coming to the community for reasons such as research, trade, or politics). With regard to the interaction with a documentation team, this could include written and spoken materials that allow an understanding of the processes involved in translating between the universe of the foreigners and the indigenous universe.





Of particular interest would be the translation of foreign texts, such as legislative documents and health manuals, into the native language, enabling the analysis of loan words and their use, or the creation of terms to designate new “objects”.

Furthermore, sessions containing verbal interactions between native speakers and foreigners in other languages than the one(s) being documented, especially the dominant language (national or regional), reflecting the full range of knowledge/fluency existing in the indigenous community.

**HISTORY — DOCUMENTED and MYTHOLOGICAL**

**<http://flamandia.pl/wilamowice>**

**<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=ibUn82Odjpo>**

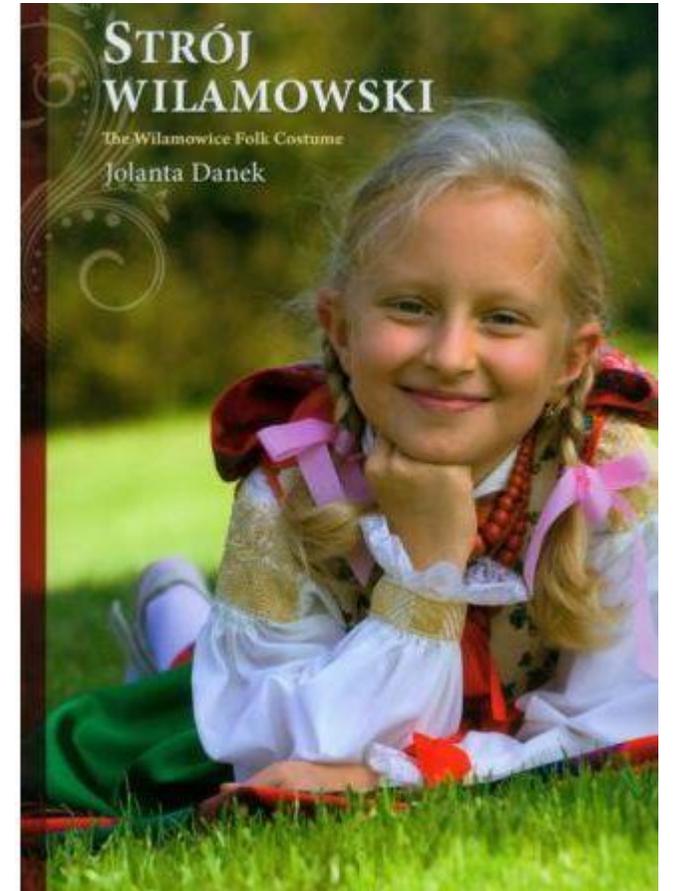
The core of a language documentation consists of a collection of “texts” (i.e. annotated recordings of speech events) and a lexical database

most ethnographers have little interest in information on linguistic structures per se.

That is, ethnographers, with a few exceptions, do not read grammars.

Linguistic structure only becomes interesting when it can be linked directly to culture and history.

Thus, e.g., etymologies are one of the favorite „linguistic” exercises of ethnographers, and it is probably fair to say that, not infrequently, such etymologies are amateurish at best.

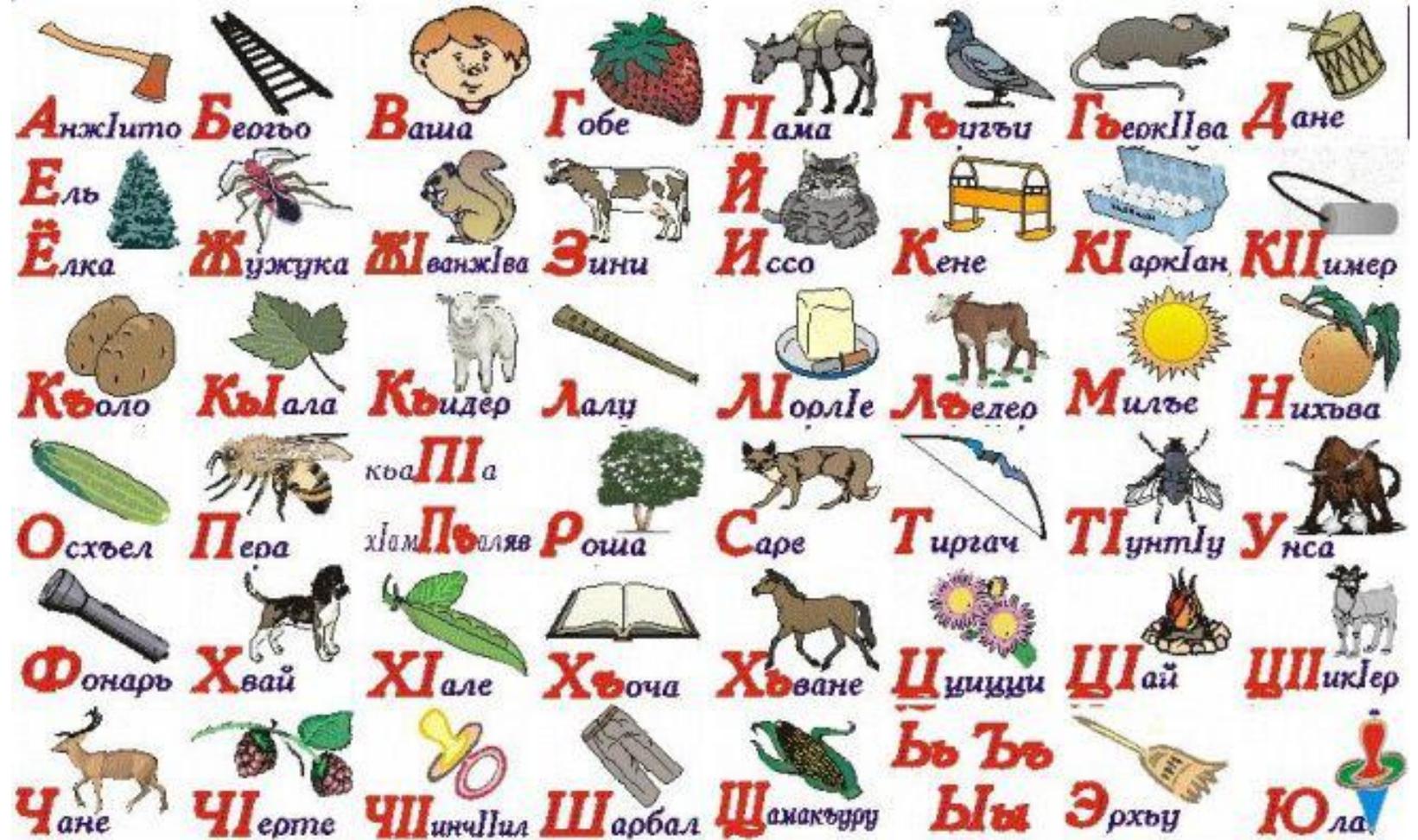


# outcomes

кїкїрди

Orthographies

Dictionaries



# Project Team

**How to select (an) informant(s) ?**

or

**How to select a linguist ?**

- literate, bilingual, interested in language work  
„different informants have different talents” (natural-born linguists / teachers)
- working with biased interpreter

# documenting *savoir-vivre*



**the main tasks that can be distributed among  
different people are (Mosel 2006: 73)**

- helping the linguist to learn the language
- recording, transcribing, and translating
- editorial work
- helping the linguist to understand and translate the recordings
- dictionary work

# ”Fieldwork is a mutual learning and teaching process for all people involved”

in contrast to the researcher, the local language workers face a situation that is completely new to them with respect to:

- the subject matter, namely, the indigenous language that has never been taught before as a second language
- their role as a teacher of an adult second language learner
- the fact that their student comes from a foreign and often dominant culture
- the fact that they do not share the same culture of learning with their student.

■  
a Dokumentacja językowego  
i kulturowego dziedzictwa  
Wilamowic

# training and mentoring the indigenous language workers

- \* to enable them to work on the documentation themselves

- \* to make them consider themselves genuine shareholders in the project

- \* to eventually become independent of researchers from outside

- handling technical tools (recorders); organizing notebooks, folders, files
- understanding the basic theoretical concepts of phonology, grammar, lexicography
- making recordings, transcriptions, and translations and editing the transcriptions
- organizing the work flow





# Task 2

12 December 2017