DOCUMENTARY LINGUISTICS I
prof. Nicole Nau, UAM winter 2018/2019

Fifth lecture
30 October 2018

DATA ACQUISITION: PLAN FOR THE NEXT FOUR LECTURES

❖ 30.10. Recording spontaneous speech: tools and techniques

❖ 06.11. Eliciting words and structures; recording metalinguistic knowledge

❖ 13.11. Technical questions; written records

❖ 20.11. Ethical and legal questions;

WHAT GOES INTO A LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION?

❖ Recordings of «observed linguistic behavior»

❖ Recordings of elicited data, for example, a list of words, translated sentences

❖ Written records

❖ Notes and analyses

❖ …

➢ Each type has its difficulties and solutions!

BEFORE YOU START: REFLECT AND RESPECT

❖ be aware of legal issues and respect the laws

❖ treat participants respectfully

❖ **get participants' consent** (formal/less formal)

❖ think critically of what you want to record, and why

❖ think about the future of the data

❖ reflect and discuss the necessary level of anonymization

example of a simple consent form next slide, source:
http://languagelandscape.org/resources/

LANGUAGE LANDSCAPE

languagelandscape.org

CONSENT FORM

I understand the nature of the project	
I agree to being recorded	
I agree to a photo of me being taken	
I confirm I am over the age of 16	
I agree to my recording being uploaded to the Language Landscape website where it will available to members of the public	
I agree to my photo being uploaded to the Language Landscape website where it will be available to members of the public	
ALL OF THE ABOVE	

NAME IN CAPITAL LETTERS:

SIGNATURE: DATE:

HOW TO RECORD SPONTANEOUS SPOKEN LANGUAGE

➢ What is spontaneous?

➢ How can we make people talk?

➢ What are typical problems and how can they be helped?

➢ How can we trigger certain discourse types?
- conversations
- narratives
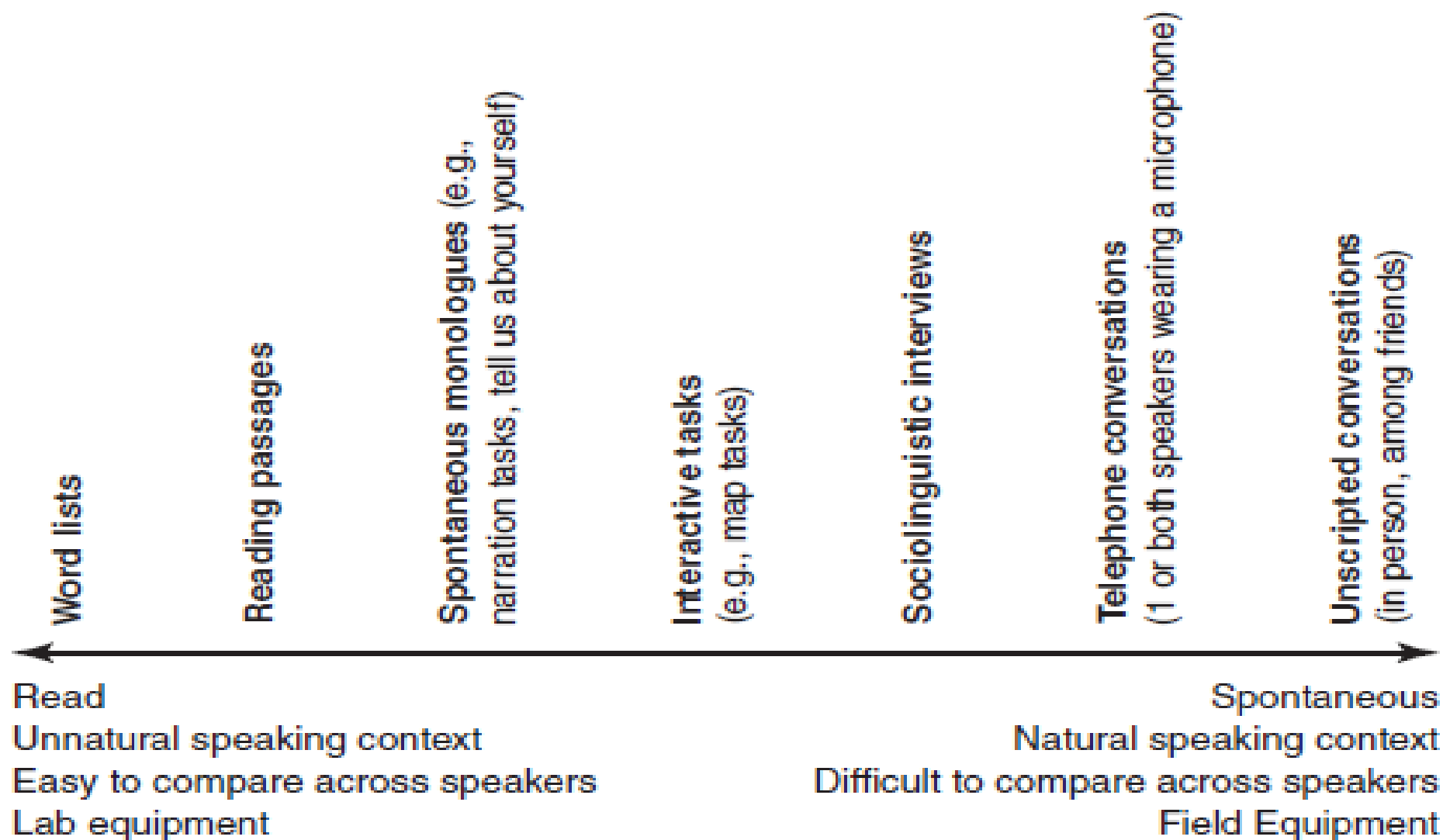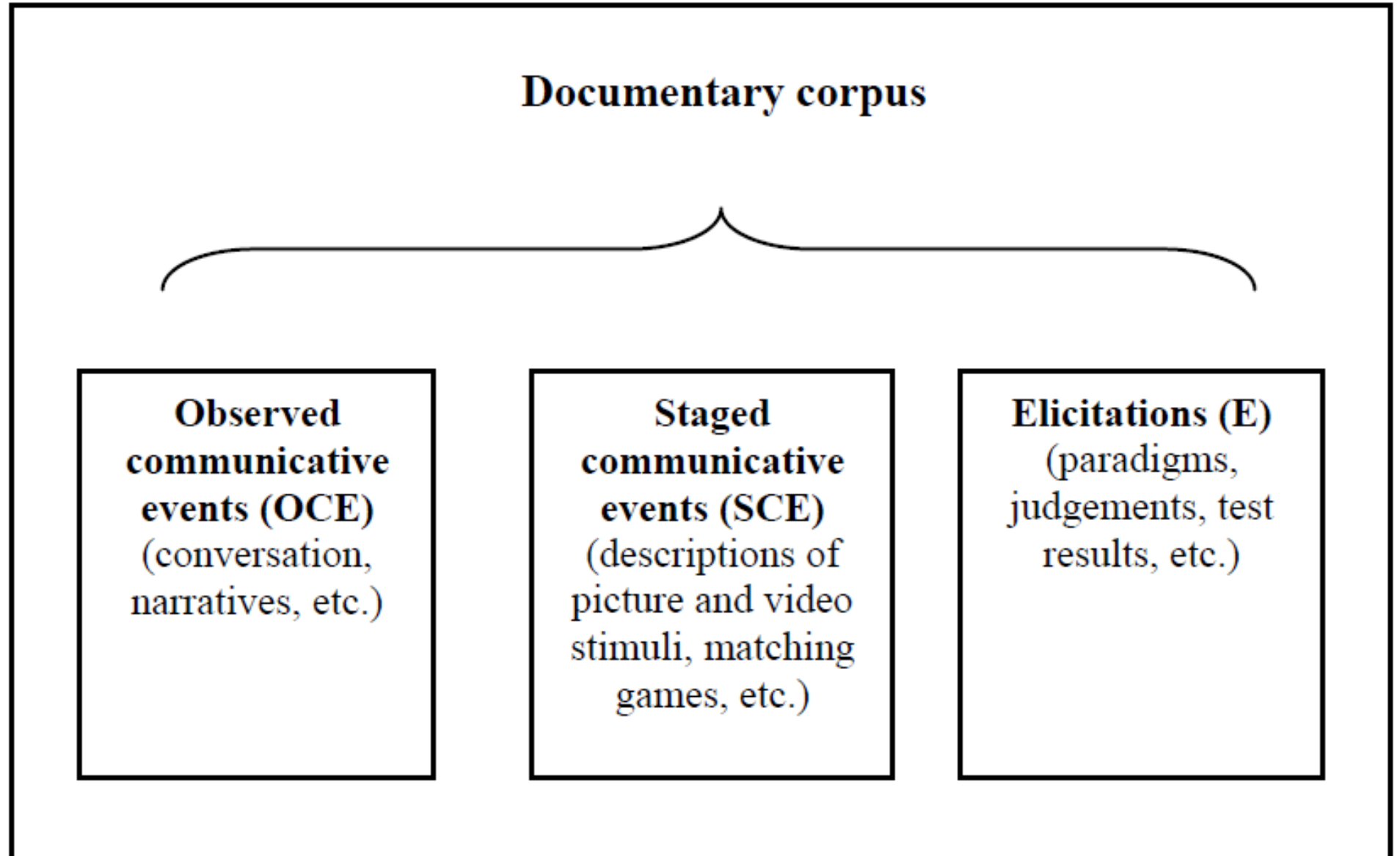- descriptions and instructions

Word lists

Reading passages

Spontaneous monologues (e.g., narration tasks, tell us about yourself)

Interactive tasks (e.g., map tasks)

Sociolinguistic interviews

Telephone conversations (1 or both speakers wearing a microphone)

Unscripted conversations (in person, among friends)

Read
Unnatural speaking context
Easy to compare across speakers
Lab equipment

Spontaneous
Natural speaking context
Difficult to compare across speakers
Field Equipment

Figure 9.4. *Range of data collection scenarios*

Lüpke

(2010)

after

Himmelmann

(1998)

Documentary corpus

Observed communicative events (OCE) (conversation, narratives, etc.)	Staged communicative events (SCE) (descriptions of picture and video stimuli, matching games, etc.)	Elicitations (E) (paradigms, judgements, test results, etc.)

«SCEs [staged communicative events] have no immediate ecological validity: they are communicative events 'staged' for the purpose of the research. In that respect, they are very close to elicitations, which are also brought about through direct influence of researchers and motivated by their research interests only. On the other hand, SCEs do not involve direct linguistic influence, since speakers are free to elaborate at will on a verbal prompt like 'Tell me how you pick mangoes, please' or to describe a visual prompt in their own words.»
(Lüpke 2010)

CONVERSATIONS

❖ Is it possible to record really spontenous conversations?
How is it done?

❖ Examples of recorded conversations:

▪ https://ca.talkbank.org/access/ (English, various languages)

▪ http://spokes.clarin-pl.eu/ (Polish)

❖ Staging conversations

▪ prompts for discussions

▪ tasks for dialogues (example: map task)

PROMPTS FOR GROUP CONVERSATIONS

Examples from the MPI fieldmanuals:

❖ How people talk about kinship: Enfield & Levinson (2003)
http://fieldmanuals.mpi.nl/volumes/2003-1/interview-on-kinship/

❖ How people reason about moral: Gunter Senft (2003)
http://fieldmanuals.mpi.nl/volumes/2003-1/reasoning-in-language/

EXAMPLE STORY FROM SENFT (2003): PROMPT FOR «REASONING» IN A CONVERSATION

Once upon a time there was a rich man, but all the other people did not have any money whatsoever. Once the poor people from the village came to him and wanted to sell fish (or corn, yams, whatever) to him because they needed the money for a feast. The rich man told them that he would buy lobsters and pay five Kina (or whatever) for each lobster. The people went fishing and caught many lobsters, but when they wanted to sell them to the rich man, he said he would pay them only three Kina for one lobster. What will the people do now?

PROMPTING DIALOGUES: THE MAP TASK

HTTP://GROUPS.INF.ED.AC.UK/MAPTASK/INDEX.HTML

by: The Human Communication Research Centre Glasgow and Edinburgh

«two consultants are given two maps with – crucially – slightly different landmarks on them. One of the consultants, the instruction giver, has a route passing a number of the landmarks on their map and describes the route to the second consultant, the instruction follower. The follower's task is to successfully recreate the route on their map. Since the two maps differ, the two participants discover that they need to engage in an explicit verbal exchange.»

«The Map Task has been used for a wide range of linguistic research– from phonetics to sociolinguistics. It can be easily adapted to suit individual researchers' needs, e.g. to ensure utterances containing words with certain phonetic properties (featured as landmarks on the maps), etc.» (Lüpke 2010)

Example for the Map Task

Map #1A (Caravans): Maps from Aphasic Dialogue between GM & MB

IG's Map
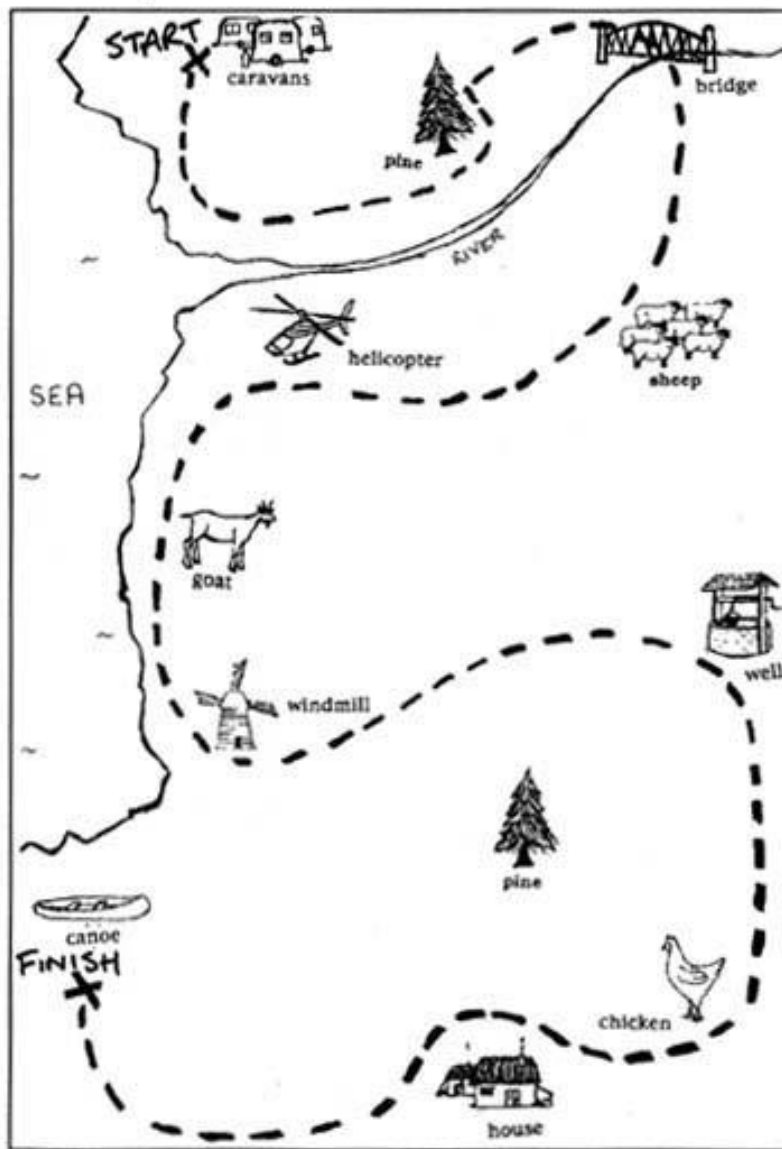
IF's map
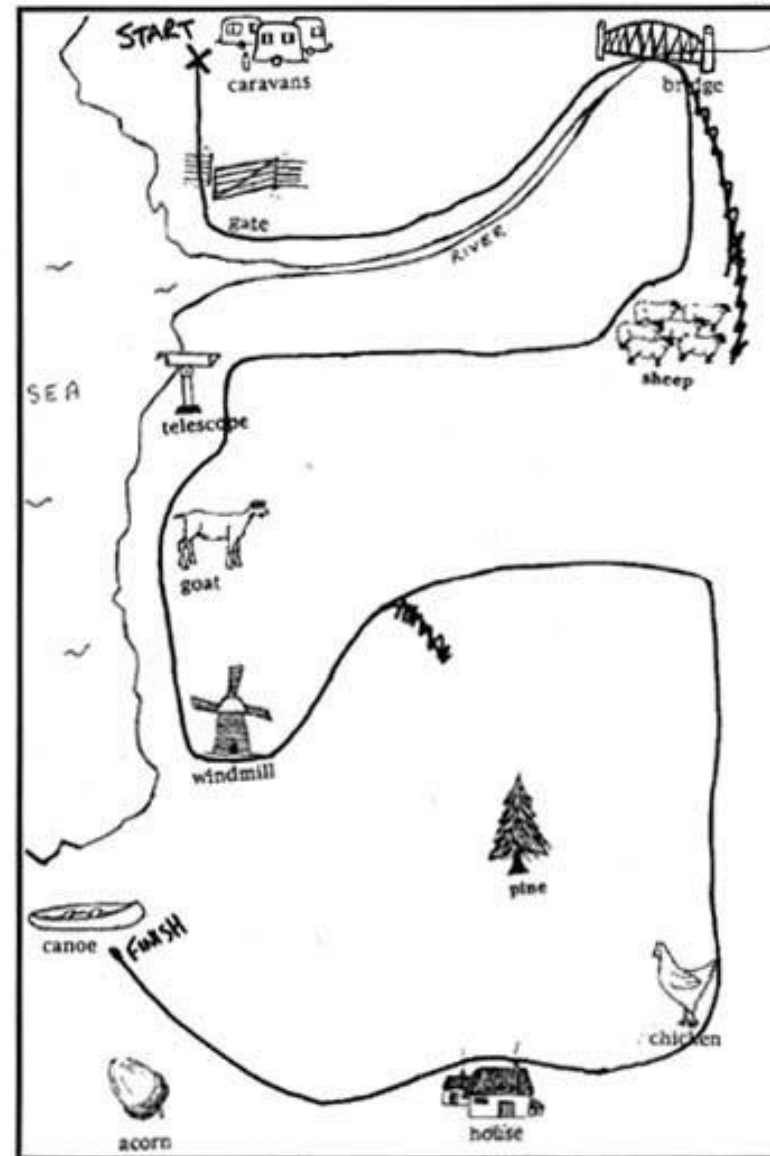
INTERVIEWS

The sociolinguistic interview; the narrative interview

❖ Who is a good interviewer?

❖ What should interviewers avoid?

❖ What are good topics?

❖ How can we make interviewees «forget» about the interview situation? (and why should we?)

Labov, William. 1972. Some principles of linguistic methodology. *Language in Society* 1: 97-120

ADVANTAGE OF INTERVIEWS

«[…] it really is difficult to devise a better instrument than the sociolinguistic interview in terms of efficiently obtaining large quantities of high-quality recorded speech that closely approximates everyday speech. […] most researchers have found that interviewer control readily falls away, as interviewees warm up to their topics and as interviewers realize that in the field they are no longer the 'experts' they may be in the academy, but rather are 'learners' who must cede power to their research participants, the only ones who hold expert knowledge of the communities of study» (111)

Natalia Schilling: Surveys and interviews. In: R. J. Podesva & D. Sharma, 2013, *Research methods in lingustics*. CUP (recommended reading)

DESCRIPTIONS AND INSTRUCTIONS

How to prompt

❖ in «real life» - explaining what you or others are doing

❖ prompt with artefacts

❖ prompt with photographs

❖ prompt with film

EXAMPLE: BIRCHBARK DISHES IN NEGIDAL (TUNGUSIC, RUSSIA)
HTTPS://ELAR.SOAS.AC.UK/RECORD/MPI1084914

«Daria Nadeina shows four birchbark vessels, explains how they are made and what they are used for. This was recorded in the living room of Daria Nadeina's house. The recording was planned – while photographing drying fish skins one day BP noticed birch bark vessels in a corner and had asked Daria Nadeina to tell about their uses in Negidal.»

«Furthermore, we are depositing 10 photos of the vessels, plus a transcribed audio file recorded during clarification of the transcription and glosses, in which DIN explains how and why they weigh down the collected birchbark.»

And a big one, this size, that is called an onma (box).

NARRATIVES (STORIES)

To record a good story, you need

❖ someone who is good in telling stories

❖ a context and audience as natural as possible for story-telling in the language

«Story telling in a West African context, for instance, requires an audience providing a kind of scripted interaction by uttering an interjection at regular intervals. Without this limited but crucial interactive component, a story would sound sterile and awkward.» (Lüpke 2010)

STAGING NARRATIVES WITH STIMULI

- picture prompts: create stories with pictures, cards, objects…
- retelling a picture book, ex. "Frog, Where are you?" by Mayer (1969)
- retelling films (ex. «Pear story», by Wallace Chafe in the 1970s)
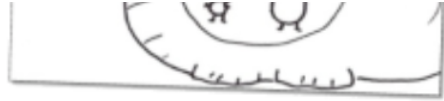
More controlled stories

- Provide a version of a well-known story (such as Cinderella)
- Translate a written story into your language
- Read and paraphrase a written story

General problem: tailor the task to suit the speaker's age, cultural background, etc.

STORYBUILDER.CA
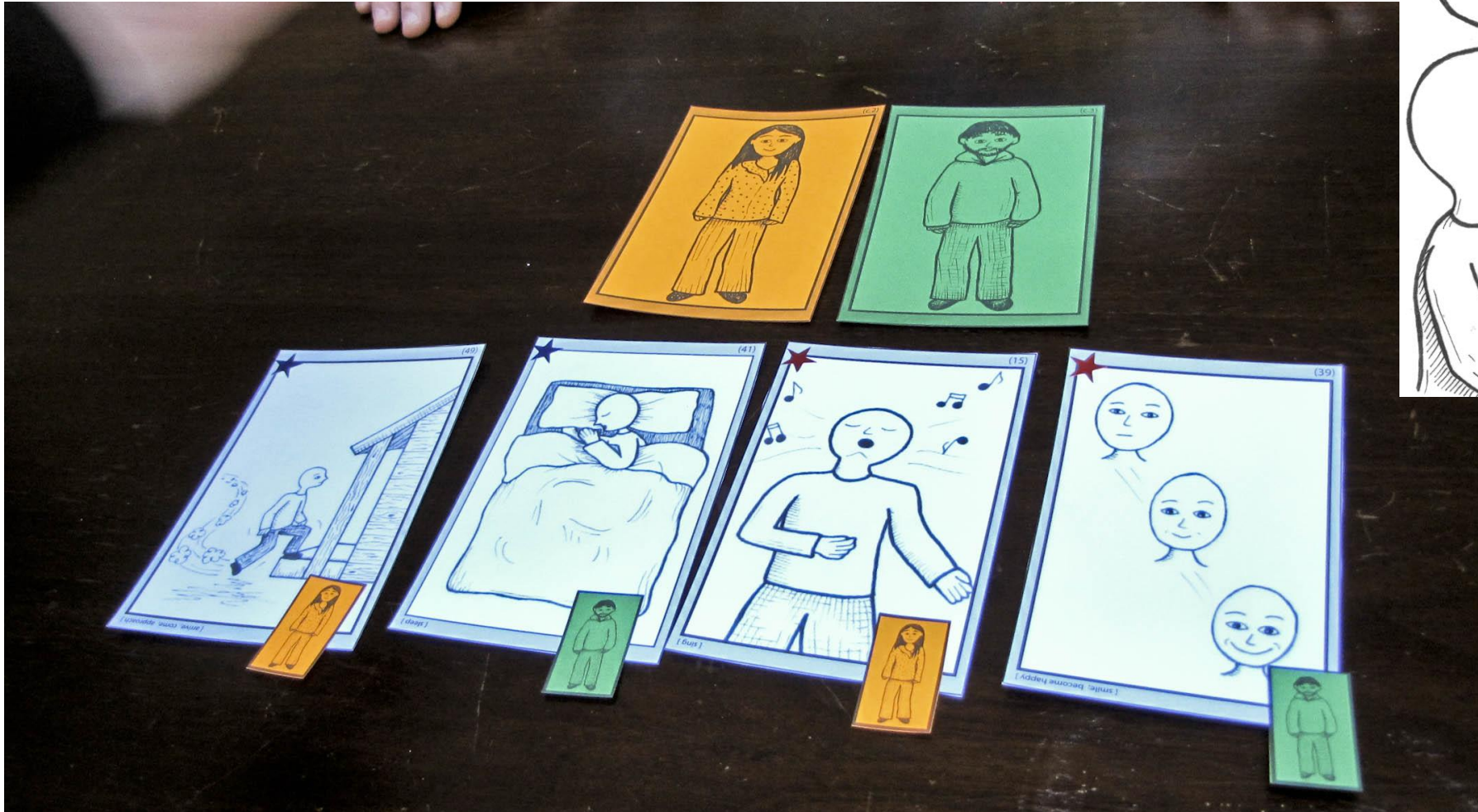
HTTP://TOTEMFIELDSTORYBOARDS.ORG/

What's a storyboard?

The "storyboard" technique is a language data collection technique that tries to gather authentic speech with as little influence from English as possible.

Rather than ask "How do I say..." again and again, we draw out a story and ask our speaker to narrate it for us. This way, we can learn the most natural way to express things in that language, rather than how it'd be expressed if it were translated from English.

Each of these storyboards is designed to bring out a subtle meaning distinction... in many cases, a meaning distinction that English doesn't distinguish! The end goal is to discover what meaning distinctions are possible across human languages.

Getting Started:

Recently updated storyboards:

Hawaii Trip
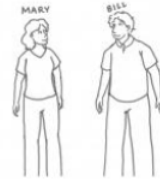
There are many... and more bears!

The Black Bear and the Salmon

Cut Off Fingers

«FROG STORIES»

FROG, WHERE ARE YOU?

Sequel to A BOY, A DOG AND A FROG

by Mercer Mayer

(book available here: https://www.phil-fak.uni-duesseldorf.de/fileadmin/Redaktion/Institute/Allgemeine_Sprachwissenschaft/Frogstory-2_01.pdf

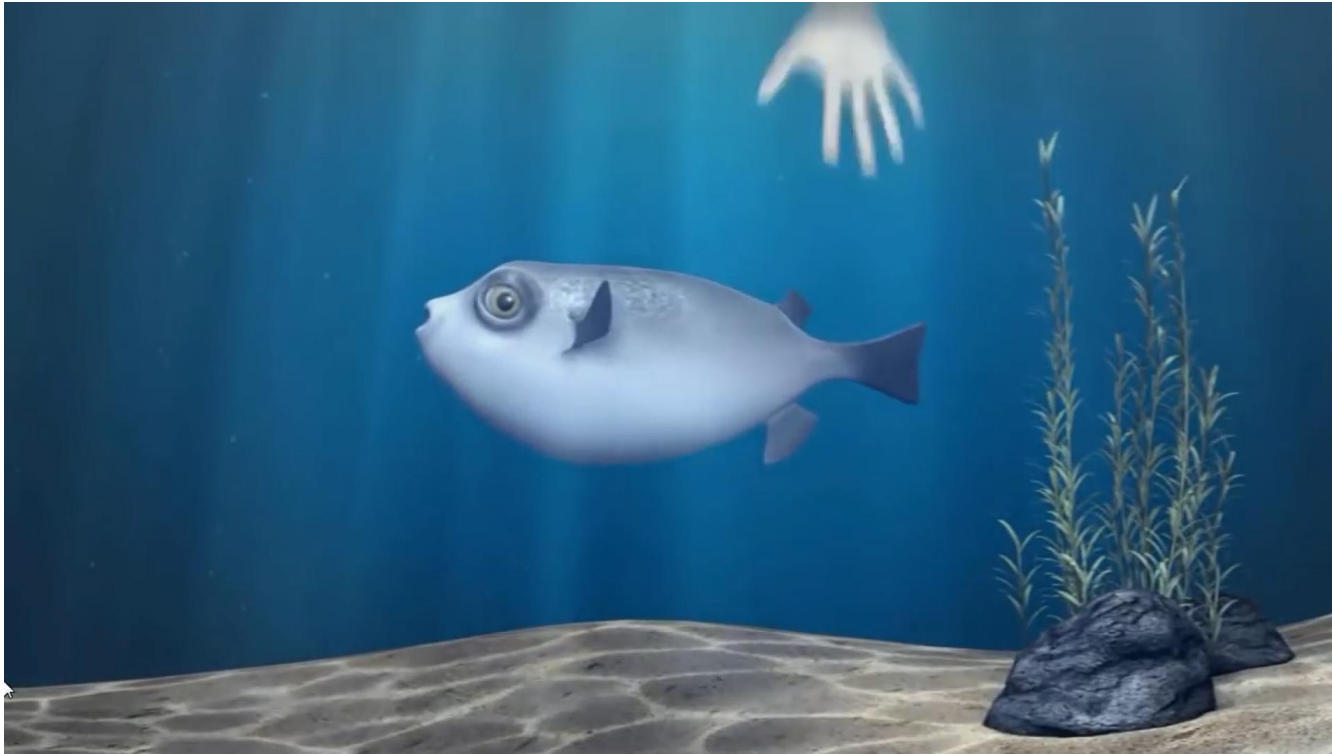# «PEAR STORIES»
(WWW.PEARSTORIES.ORG)

https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=bRNSTxTpG7U

these sound files are here (material for Chapter 10): http://titus.uni-frankfurt.de/ld/

SHORT ANIMATIONS TO BE FOUND ON YOUTUBE, VIMEO ETC.

Example: A fish's life https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=zJ5GTPtp5Es

REFERENCES (RECOMMENDED READING)

Lüpke, Friederike. 2010. "Research Methods in Language Documentation." In *Language Documentation and Description 7*, 55-104.

Friederike Lüpke's slides at: http://www.powershow.com/view/51472-ZmZlM/Fieldwork_consultation_and_elicitation_methods_powerpoint_ppt_presentation

Nathalie Schilling: Surveys and interviews. In: R. J. Podesva & D. Sharma, eds. 2013, *Research Methods in Linguistics*, 96-115.

Useful websites:

http://fieldmanuals.mpi.nl/

https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/tools-at-lingboard/stimulus_kits.php

https://experimentalfieldlinguistics.wordpress.com/experimental-materials/stimuli-for-elicited-production/