



# DOCUMENTARY LINGUISTICS I

prof. Nicole Nau, UAM winter 2018/2019

**Sixth lecture**

06 November 2018

# TODAY

- How to elicit words and structures
- How to do and how not to do fieldwork

# WHY AND HOW TO ELICIT WORDS

- ❖ Elicitation at the beginning of fieldwork, to learn the basics of the language
  - Monolingual fieldwork after Kenneth Pike (demonstrated by Daniel Everett)
  - Mosel's (2006) critique of word list translations and her alternative
- ❖ Word lists for phonology
- ❖ Word lists as documents
  - What is going wrong here? (extract of a video clip)
  - Swadesh lists
- ❖ Gathering words for dictionaries
  - «We say» and «FLex» – software developed by SIL

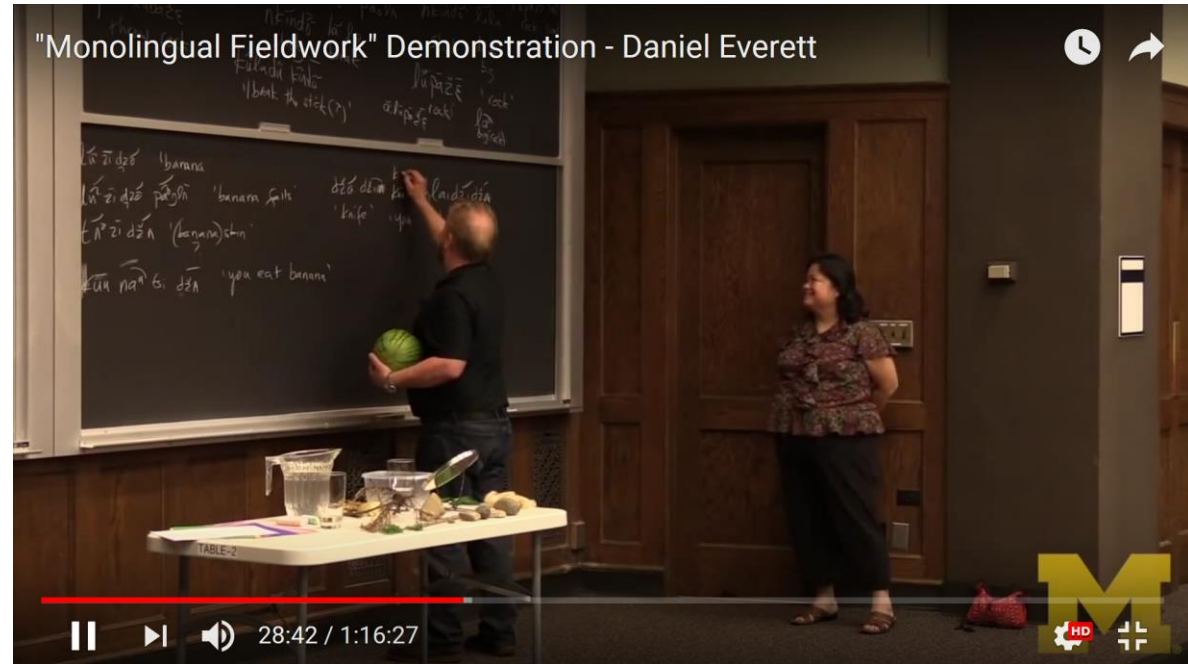
# WORD ELICITATION

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=SYPWP7G7XWU](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=SYPWP7G7XWU)

Introduction: Who is Daniel Everett?

Watch 5-10 minutes of this video.

List all elements that may be problematic with this approach!



## Alternative method / Mosel 2006

- explain what you need the wordlists for – this is not just for studying phonology and orthography; the first wordlist of about 180 words will also serve as the starting point to build short clauses;
- discuss what semantic fields might be suitable to start with, and perhaps suggest food and cooking;
- ask the native speaker to teach you words of this particular semantic field by dividing it into subcategories, e.g.:
- fruit and vegetables, edible animals
- dishes
- activities
- tools.

Thus you ask:

- tell me the names of fruit and vegetables you grow and eat
- what do you do when you make a dish with potatoes?
- what kind of things do you use?

# WORD ELICITATION IN THE LODHA SHABAR COMMUNITY, INDIA

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=JF5VJTZL6QE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JF5VJTZL6QE)

Watch from 21:15 several minutes of this video.

What are the problems?

How could they be avoided?



- So I would speak in Bangla, and you should give us the Lodha equivalent word for it.

# STANDARD WORDLISTS AND QUESTIONNAIRES

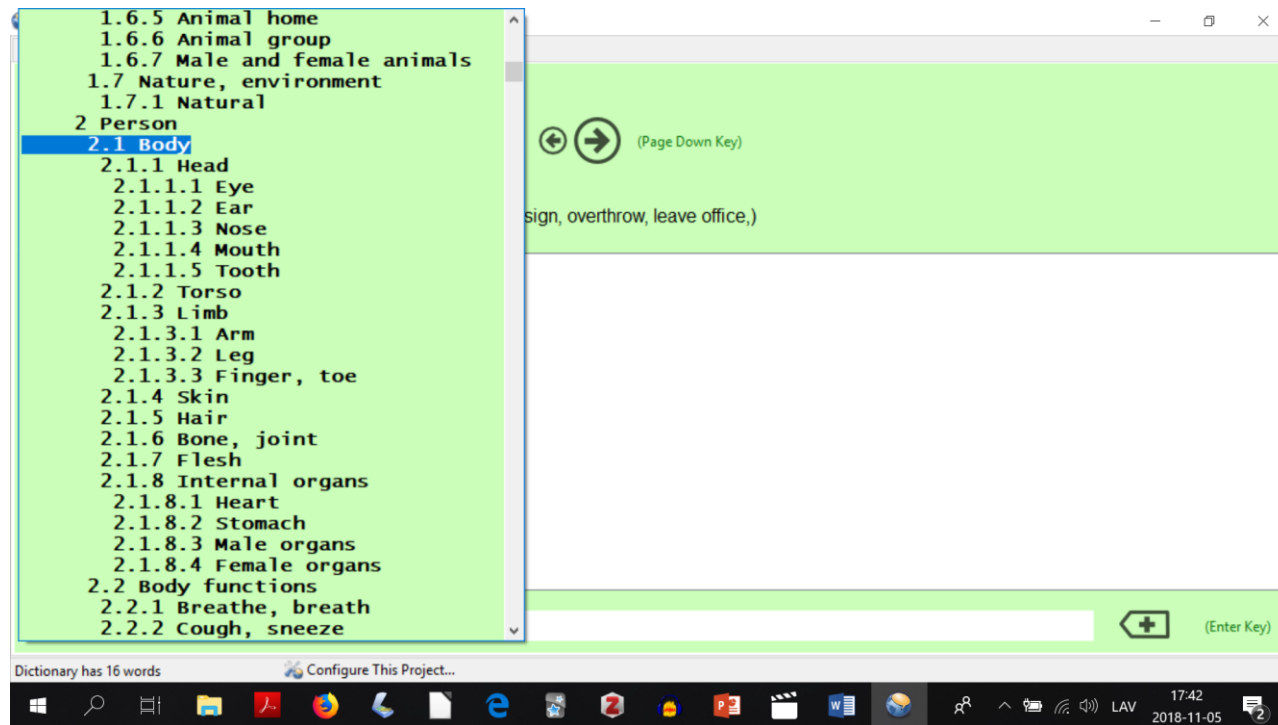
Swadesh lists – see:

- ❖ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swadesh\\_list](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Swadesh_list)
- ❖ [https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leipzig%E2%80%93Jakarta\\_list](https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Leipzig%E2%80%93Jakarta_list)
- ❖ [https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Swadesh\\_lists](https://en.wiktionary.org/wiki/Appendix:Swadesh_lists)
- ❖ example of a recording Indonesian – Galolen (a language of East Timor):  
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=31A69L9RSuU>

STEDT (The Sino-Tibetan Etymological Dictionary and Thesaurus)  
Questionnaires at <http://stedt.berkeley.edu/questionnaires>

# MORE THAN TRANSLATION: GATHERING WORDS BY CONCEPTS

Software tool «We say» <https://software.sil.org/wesay/about/>





# ELICITING SENTENCES

- ❖ With stimuli: pictures, films
- ❖ Example: «Cut & break clips»

Bohnemeyer, Jürgen, Melissa Bowerman & Penelope Brown. 2001. Cut and break clips. Stephen C. Levinson & N.J. Enfield (eds.), Manual for the field season 2001, 90-96. Nijmegen: Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics.



<http://fieldmanuals.mpi.nl/volumes/2001/cut-and-break-clips/>

# ELICITING SENTENCES WITH THE «CUT AND BREAK» VIDEOS IN INDIA

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/WATCH?V=JF5VJTZL6QE](https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=JF5VJTZL6QE)

Ghorua community, Boatkhali,  
Dhblat-Shipur

Watch from 9:10 several  
minutes of this video.

Do the respondents act as  
expected?



Experience of a young researcher (Brickell 2018):

«I also endeavoured, unsuccessfully, to use some of the most common elicitation materials available online, including the *The Pear Film* (Chafe 1980) and *Cut and Break* video stimuli (Bohnemeyer et.al. 2001). While there is no doubt that these are helpful tools which can be utilised effectively in certain situations, they are extremely Western-centric in the settings and the protagonists portrayed in them. Their lack of relevant cultural context makes their effectiveness debatable in non-Western countries – a problem also related to me by other linguists. In my experience, elderly speakers either struggled to make sense of what activities were supposed to be occurring, particularly in the *Pear Film*, or were more inclined to focus on the Western setting and actors, rather than any of the events taking place. During this period, the only videos which I successfully used for elicitation were two specifically prepared by my supervisor. These demonstrated activities the speakers were familiar with: collecting palm sugar sap, and collecting and cooking sago grubs.»

# VIDEOS MADE BY BRICKELL

[HTTPS://WWW.YOUTUBE.COM/CHANNEL/UC0BQQEDQAM9UBKSEJSKSWZW/VIDEOS](https://www.youtube.com/channel/UC0BQQEDQAM9UBKSEJSKSWZW/videos)

Homework:

Read (parts of) Brickle's article, especially about standards for filming and the workflow and the ideas behind these videos!

Timothy C. Brickell (2018). Linguistic fieldwork: perception, preparation, and practice. In Peter K. Austin & Lauren Gawne (eds) *Language Documentation and Description, vol 15*. London: EL Publishing. pp. 179-207.

Online at: <http://www.elpublishing.org/PID/165>

THE NEXT SLIDES WERE NOT  
SHOWN IN THE LECTURE

# TRANSLATING SENTENCES – IS THIS OF ANY USE?

An old, specialized documentation project: «Wenker sentences» in German dialectology, 1876 - 1887

see <https://regionalsprache.de/en/contents-wenker-questionnaires.aspx>

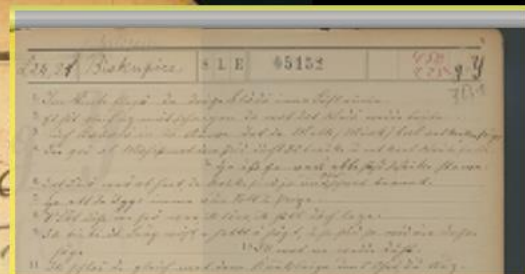
<https://www.regionalsprache.de/wenkerbogen.aspx>

*f. Wlogarte*  
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1. In Minne flugē da dwoje Lārdā in un Luft in un.
2. Et fōt glāuf ūz mit pfuiygn da was dat Blōdā mūdā bairu
3. Iny Bānālā in da Anrōn dat da Mulk (Mink) bair and the
4. In god el Māfip mit dem fōr dōrft Jē bānka n int kerl Blānā
5. In ip fu wuā abbe fōß Bwinkā Hē
6. In Lūā wuā at fūat, in Bōnka jind ja un d'fōmā b'annā.
7. In at da Tōge in un ein Vōld n fūgn.
8. V'fōt dūfa mi fūā wuā, ik lōnā, ik fōbb dōrft lozn.
9. Ik bin bi da fūgn mōft, n fōbb n fūgt, n fu fōr fu wōd vā dō
10. Ik was un mūdā dūfa.
11. Ik fūlā di glāuf mit dem Bānk lāign un d' Ofrā dū Anz.
12. No gāst di fu fūfō mit di mit gūn
13. F'pū fūfōst f'ida
14. Wē...



Schulort: <i>Biskupiec gniŹy</i>	Kreis etc.: <i>Schroda</i>	Reg.-Bez. oder Landdrostei: <i>Posen</i>	Staat: <i>Preussen</i>
Name des Lehrers <i>Julius Kroenke</i>		Geburtsort des Lehrers <i>Sadlogora Bromberg</i>	

**Fragen.** (Als Beantwortung genügt Durchstreichen des Nichtzutreffenden.)

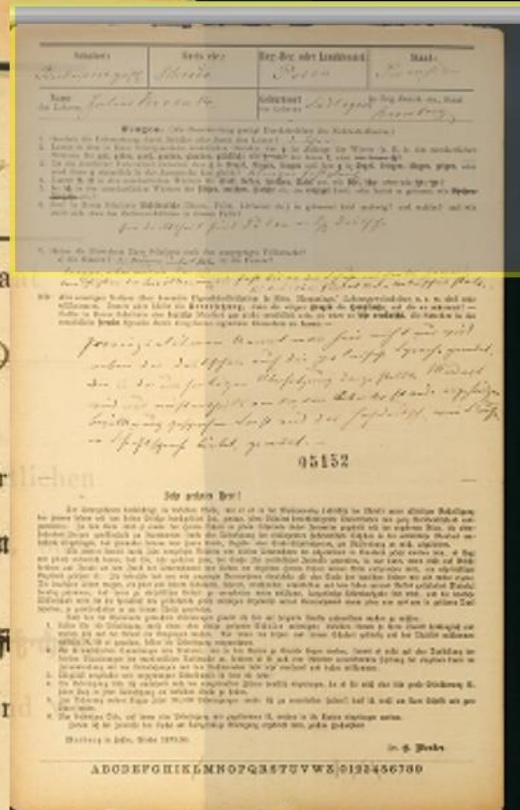
1. Geschah die Uebersetzung durch Schüler oder durch den Lehrer? *J. Lehrer*
2. Lautet in dem in Ihrer Schulgemeinde ortstüblichen Dialekte das g im Anfange der Wörter (z. B. in den mundar Wörtern für gut, geben, groß, graben, glauben, glücklich) wie *g*, oder wie leises *f*, oder wie leises *h*?
3. Ist ein deutlicher Unterschied zwischen dem g in *Kugel, Augen, fragen* und dem g in *Regel, kriegen, biegen, zeigen* sind diese g sämtlich in der Aussprache fast gleich? *Wahrheit fast gleich*
4. Lautet *st, sp* in den mundartlichen Wörtern für *Stall, stellen, sprechen, Spiel* etc. wie *sch, schp* oder wie *ft, fp*?
5. Ist *sch* in den mundartlichen Wörtern für *fischen, waschen, Flasche* etc. ein einziger Laut, oder lautet es getrennt wie *fi, fische* etc.?
6. Sind in Ihrem Schulorte *Nichtdeutsche* (Dänen, Polen, Litthauer etc.) in grösserer Zahl ansässig? und welche? *ur stellt sich etwa das Zahlenverhältniss in diesem Falle?*

*früher da ist fast sind Polen in 1/3 Dänische*

7. Haben die Einwohner Ihres Schulorts noch eine ausgeprägte Volkstracht?

a) die Männer? *Die Männer sind aus Polen* b) die Frauen?

*Tragen, aber nicht in dem Sinne  
dazu gehören die bei der Tracht, die fast bis an die Spitze von fast der ganzen  
in d. Dänen sind es in - und die sind nicht*

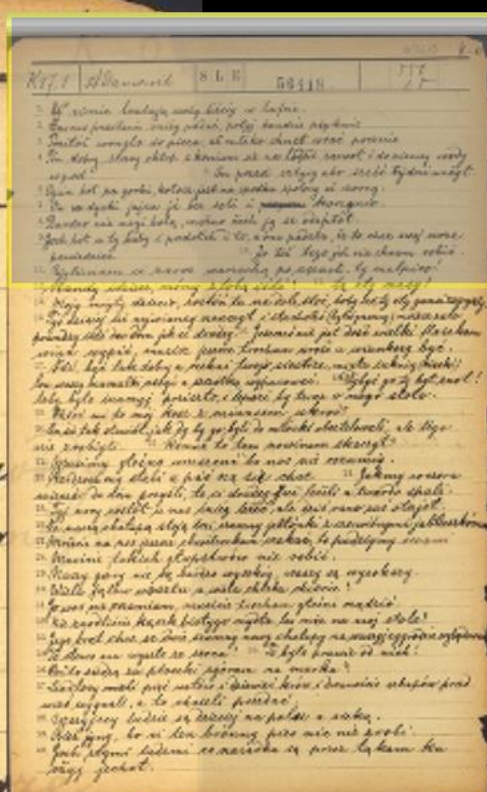




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1. W ximie loataja suchy lišciy w lufcie.
2. Karous přestanie snieg padać, potyj bandrie piykenie
3. Tritoř wonglo do pieca, ař mlěko chnet wrać poernie
4. Ten dobry, stary chtoř z koniam sie na lodie xaroot i do ximny a w pod.
5. On przed sřtyry abo sřeřc tyjdowu
6. Oziē bōt na gorki, kotoer jēst na spodku spolony ař ororny.
7. On ~~z~~ dycki jajca jē bez soli i ~~pięperu~~ korzgnio.
8. Bardro mie nagi bolař, mořno řech jy se odeptot.
9. Jooh bōt u ty baby i padot'ch i to, a ona padata, ře to chce swoj cen powiedrieć.
10. Jo tēř řego juř nie chcam robic'.
11. Wylirnam xi xaroz warrecha po uspach, ty malpico!
12. Kandy idriess, mōmy z toba is'da'?
13. Sa rly crasy!
14. Moiu miutu drecio, roston' tu na dole stoć, boby cē ty rly ganso xagryrt.





# SOME THOUGHTS ON FIELDWORK

Brickell 2018

«The practice of conducting fieldwork has been such an integral part of linguistic research that there has been minimal effort made to properly define it (Hyman 2001:15).»

«In discussions of „prototypical“ fieldwork, the features of „distance, exoticism, and duration“ [...] are often presented as fundamental [...].»

«The most common fieldwork trope has been „nine months spent in a mud hut in a remote location, ideally without power and running water, accompanied by pain and suffering“ (Austin 2007a). As for the fieldworker, enduring myths are the rugged „Indiana Jones“ type<sup>3</sup> or the heroic white saviour (Bower 2008:13). Fortunately, these myths are not as pervasive as they once were and are unlikely to be found in formal discourse.»

# DAVID EVERETT IN A SOCIAL MEDIA COMMENT IN 2016

«I am a fan of quant[itative] research. And it needs to replace a lot of data collection and analytical methods bequeathed by some theories. Still descriptive methodology and analytical techniques have never been surpassed and everyone should learn them. **Ultimately a linguist is someone who can walk into a jungle, find a [language] – no language in common! – and figure it all out with a spiral notebook and a Bic pen.»**

cited in Brickel (2018)