Annual Report 2008

Through national and international networks, the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project participates in language documentation, archiving, training and support initiatives of global scope.
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International engagement

It is generally agreed that today there are about 6,500 languages spoken across the world today and at least half of these are under threat of extinction. This is mainly because speakers of smaller languages are switching to other larger languages and not passing on their heritage tongues to their children. They do this for perceived economic, social or political advantages, or because they feel ashamed of their ancestral language. The language can thus be lost in one or two generations, often to the great regret of their descendants.

This is a world-wide phenomenon and language loss is found across all continents and all countries. The level of language endangerment and loss is highest in countries with long-standing colonialist attitudes and approaches to their indigenous languages and communities, such as Australia (where 95% of indigenous languages are moribund or extinct), the United States, Canada and Russia. Increasingly, factors such as globalisation and urbanisation are affecting all regions of the world and many countries are seeing languages becoming endangered.

Since its inception in 2002, the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project has had an international focus. Its granting arm (ELDP) has attracted applications from and funded research on all continents and a wide range of countries, and its grant selection panel contains members from around the world. The post-graduate programme (ELAP) has enrolled students from the UK and Europe as well as a range of international locations, including Senegal, India, Australia, Canada, and the USA. Depositors and users of the digital archive (ELAR) are similarly from a wide range of countries (see map page 23).

This year HRELP engaged in a number of international activities that are highlighted in more detail throughout this report, including participation in a training course at Tokyo University of Foreign Studies in Japan (under a Memorandum of Understanding between SOAS and TUFS), a training course in Winneba, Ghana, a summer school in Lyon (in collaboration with Leiden and Lyon2 staff), a conference on language documentation and linguistic theory held at SOAS, and numerous conferences and academic meetings across the world. Staff and students carried out fieldwork in a wide range of overseas locations (see map page 14).

At the Lyon summer school, HRELP was presented with a gesture of thanks for its work in Guatemala in the form of a jade plaque inscribed with traditional Mayan hieroglyphics in the K’iche language.

HRELP is in touch with related projects on endangered languages, including the DoBeS project of the Volkswagen Foundation (Germany), the DEL project of the National Science Foundation (USA), the Sorosoro project of Fondation Chirac (France), the World Language Centre (Iceland), and Linguamón (Barcelona, Spain). Through national and international networks such as these, including the Digital Endangered Languages and Musics Archives Network, HRELP participates in archiving, training and language documentation and support initiatives of global scope.
The Hans Raising Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) was established with a commitment of £20 million from Arcadia (formerly the Lisbet Raising Charitable Fund) to document as many endangered languages as possible and to encourage the development of relevant skills across the world. It has the following three components:

**Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP)**

ELDP was set up to provide approximately £15 million over an 8-10 year period in competitive research grants to encourage the development of linguistic fieldwork in endangered languages (especially by those at an early stage in their careers) and to support documentation of as many threatened languages as possible. ELDP is managed by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS). The applications are assessed by an international panel that was chaired by Professor Barry Supple until February 2007. It is currently chaired by Professor Graham Furniss.

**Endangered Languages Academic Programme (ELAP)**

Aimed at training the next generation of language documenters, ELAP offers students and early-career researchers an array of opportunities: an MA in Language Documentation and Description, a PhD in Field Linguistics, and post-doctoral fellowships at SOAS. We also offer a comprehensive programme of public lectures, seminars and training courses. Prof Peter K. Austin, Märit Raising Chair in Field Linguistics, is Director of ELAP.

**Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR)**

ELAR is one of the prime resources for study and methodology in the field of digital language archiving. David Nathan is Director of ELAR.

The mission of HRELP is to:

- Train new generations of linguists to research and develop work that opens up new fields of study
- Provide opportunities for fieldworkers, academics, students, collaborative ventures and international organisations to work together with endangered language communities to ensure that everything possible is done to record and encourage linguistic, cultural and human diversity;
- Award approximately £1 million a year in research grants to high quality projects;
- Set up an innovative, comprehensive endangered languages digital archive as a major international resource for scholars, communities and other interested persons;
- Endeavour to raise as much additional funds as possible to build the scale, scope and effectiveness of our work;
- Welcome all those able to donate time, money or expertise to help build on the solid base HRELP has established.

Phillip Cash Cash (University of Arizona) was the plenary speaker at the Conference on Language Documentation and Linguistic Theory, with his presentation Documenting Language, Visualizing Culture: Shooting Digital Video in Two Endangered Language Communities in Western North America (see page 13).
Activities throughout the year

This annual report covers the period September 2007 to August 2008 for the ELAP, ELAR, and ELDP programmes.

ELAP had its fifth year of operation and enrolled fourteen MA Language Documentation and Description students in September. The new students came from a mixture of backgrounds. Some had previously completed BA degrees in linguistics, languages, and translation, while some came from teaching backgrounds and others worked in industry. Two PhD students, Henrik Bergqvist and Serge Sagna, completed their studies in 2008, and Chaithra Puttaswamy submitted her dissertation for examination. Currently there are 14 students enrolled in the Field Linguistics PhD. There were some changes in staff during the year with two new appointments: Dr. Irina Nikolaeva joined as Lecturer in Language Documentation in September 2007, and Dr. Julia Sallabank was appointed Research Fellow in Language Support and Revitalisation in October 2007. Dr. Gerardo Barbera joined ELAP as a postdoctoral researcher funded by ELDP in January 2008 to work on Southern Baškardi and Garu (Hormozgan, Southeast Iran). ELAP ran two series of seminars throughout the year, one for a general audience and a second specialised series of research seminars for PhD students and staff. The fifth in the series of publications entitled Language Documentation and Description was published in January 2008 and a sixth volume is planned for early 2009.

This year ELAR received documentation materials for deposit from thirteen grantees, and four other researchers. ELAR now holds an extensive collection of materials, including audio and video recordings, photographs, and transcriptions, annotations and other text. By December 2008 we anticipate that the collection will approach 50 deposits and nearly 4 terabytes (4,000 gigabytes) of data. In mid-2008 Dr Ed Garrett joined ELAR as its software developer with the primary goal of putting its public access catalogue development on track for launch around the end of 2008.

In 2008, ELDP awarded 38 grants totalling £1,083,366. It funded a two week training course held in Winneba, Ghana, under the direction of panel member Dr. Felix Ameka, and with the assistance of ELAP and ELAR staff. For a report on the course see page 26.

ELAP, ELAR and ELDP jointly ran two six-day training courses for ELDP grantees in September 2007 and June 2008 where fundamental issues and skills in language documentation and support were covered, with a special focus on audio and video recording and editing techniques, use of computer software to support research, data structuring and archiving, metadata, and development of multimedia and practical materials for communities (page 27). The courses were attended by 35 grantees from all over the world and were taught by ELAP and ELAR staff, as well as outside specialists. ELDP staff briefed grantees on managing and reporting of their projects and offered one-to-one sessions for grantees. We have developed a set of teaching materials for this training course, some of which is available through the HRELP web site. Other joint activities are detailed below and included Endangered Languages Week (page 5), the 3L summer school in Lyon, and training courses in Japan and Ghana (page 26).
Endangered Languages Week

From 30th April to 8th May we ran an Endangered Languages Week at SOAS to present issues of endangered languages and language documentation and support to staff, students and the general public. The week was very well attended and included visits from staff and students at SOAS and other institutions, and representatives of Arcadia.

The theme for 2008 was “What can WE do?”, exploring how researchers, students, language community members and members of the public can work together to address the challenges of global language and cultural loss.

Activities included:

- **UK premiere of the acclaimed new film The Linguists** shown at the 2008 Sundance Film Festival.

- **Meet an Endangered Language** - a series of short presentations where attendees came face-to-face with five endangered languages (Talyshi, Jalonke, Guernesias, Huave, and Kolyma Yukaghir) and were able to learn about where they are spoken and why they are threatened. They had a taste of their culture, as well as learning some basic words and phrases.

- **Open Day** when we opened our doors so visitors could meet researchers, see displays of staff and student work, and experience the latest technologies used to record, archive and support endangered languages. ELDP Panel Chair Graham Furniss gave a short talk about grants (see page 10).

- **What is Your Language Footprint?** - A debate on how to encourage personal action in support of language diversity.

- A full day workshop on Engagement and Activism in Endangered Languages Research that included five talks and a round table discussion on “how to be a good linguist?”

- A specialist workshop on using Geographical Information Systems for linguists.

- A day of international films on endangered languages with work from Australia, Denmark, Taiwan and UK.

- Seminars on moral and ethical issues in language fieldwork.

Speakers during the week included SOAS staff together with:
- Dr Lise Dobrin (USA),
- Prof Maurizio Gnerre (Italy),
- Dr David Harrison (USA),
- Dr Cecelia Ode (Netherlands),
- Dr Nicholas Ostler (UK),
- Prof Peter Sutton (Australia) and
- Dr Ljuba Veselinova (Sweden).

In collaboration with SOAS radio station OpenAir we produced a set of podcasts on endangered languages as a feature of Endangered Languages Week.
Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP)

The Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP) is managed by the School of Oriental and African Studies (SOAS) and funded by Arcadia. Grant applications are assessed by an international panel.

The Secretariat
The ELDP office supports both the work of the international panel and that of grant holders by administering the application process and managing awarded grants.

**ELDP Programme Manager**
Kathryn Oatey manages the grant funding programme and oversees the development and administration of ELDP activities. Kathryn previously worked for the British Council in Nepal, Ghana, Mozambique and Russia which included funding scholarship and training programmes in support of development objectives. At the Wellcome Trust Kathryn was a Programme Officer in the International Department and managed collaborative biomedical grants as well as the prestigious International Senior Fellowships programmes for India and South Africa.

**ELDP Grants Co-ordinator**
Anna Greedharee has a background in Sociology and Art. She has had six

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### ELDP grants awarded 2008

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Principal Investigator</th>
<th>Host Institution</th>
<th>Funding</th>
<th>Project Language</th>
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<tr>
<td><strong>AFRICA</strong></td>
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<td>Megan Bieseke</td>
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<td>Monash University</td>
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<td>Sudanese languages</td>
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<td>Tiefo</td>
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<td>Glavda</td>
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<td>Serge Sagna</td>
<td>University of Manchester</td>
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<td>Gújjolaay Eegima</td>
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<td>Adjaratou Sall</td>
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<td>Bedik</td>
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<td>American University in Cairo</td>
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<td>Gharfan</td>
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<td>Saskia van Putten</td>
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<td>Avatime</td>
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<td>Charles Macdonald</td>
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<td>Tam Nguyen</td>
<td>University of Oregon</td>
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<td>Bih</td>
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<td>Sibaji Panda</td>
<td>University of Central Lancashire</td>
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<td>Village sign, India</td>
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<td><strong>AUSTRALIA - PACIFIC</strong></td>
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<td>Felicity Meakins</td>
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<td>Anastasia Riehl</td>
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<td>Eva Schultz-Berndt</td>
<td>University of Manchester</td>
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<td>Gija</td>
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<td>Marie van Egmond</td>
<td>University of Sydney</td>
<td>£8,730</td>
<td>Anindilyakwa</td>
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years’ experience of grants management working for the Big Lottery Fund where she was often involved with projects focusing on small communities.

She implements the reporting procedures. She also supports the ELDP panel members and organises the annual panel meetings.

Karen Remnant deputises for Anna Greedharee when she is away and Dorinne Tin Ming Kaw provides administrative support to the team. Contact details for all the ELDP staff can be found on the website: www.hrelp.org/aboutus/staff/

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<th>Funding</th>
<th>Project Language</th>
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<td>Gabriela Caballero</td>
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<td>Natalia Caceres</td>
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<td>Carmen Jany</td>
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<td>University of Utah</td>
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<td>Nariyo Kono</td>
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<td>Kimary Shahin</td>
<td>Simon Fraser University</td>
<td>£10,000</td>
<td>Lower St’at’imcets</td>
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The ELDP Panel

Grant applications are assessed by an international panel of experts. Full details of the panel members can be found on the website at www.hrelp.org/aboutus/staff/panel/.

Following the retirement of Professor Barry Supple, SOAS has appointed Professor Graham Furniss to be Chair of the ELDP panel. Professor Furniss has been involved in HRELP since it began. He has also been Head of the Language Centre and is currently the Research Assessment Exercise (RAE) Director at SOAS. He is a member of the University of London’s Centre for African Studies and the British Academy’s Africa Panel. He is a former President of the African Studies Association of the UK (ASAUK) and Vice-Chair of the Royal African Society.

ELDP Panel Membership

**Felix K. Ameka, Leiden University**

Felix K. Ameka lectures in the Department of African Languages and Cultures of Leiden University and Leiden University Centre for Linguistics (LUCL), and is also an Associate Researcher of the Language and Cognition Group at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen. He obtained a BA (first class honours) in Linguistics from the University of Ghana, Legon-Accra (1980) and an MA (1986) and PhD (1991) in Linguistics from the Australian National University. He has a wide range of interests and has fieldwork experience in Australia and West Africa. Apart from the description and documentation of languages, he is interested in the cultural, cognitive and human social interactional motivations of grammar and how speakers use grammar. He has conducted field-based research and published extensively on the grammar, semantics, and pragmatics of Ewe, his mother tongue, and on other West African languages like Akan. He is currently involved in and coordinates the documentation of four of the little studied Ghana-Togo-Mountain languages: Likpe, Logba, Nyagbo and Tafi. These languages are massively influenced by surrounding bigger languages like Ewe and Akan.

As a trained linguist who has worked on his native language and on other languages, he has a continuing concern about the role of native knowledge in documentary linguistics and how the different types of expertise can be tapped in a collaborative manner to generate optimal records of languages. He is also interested in the challenges that documentary linguistics poses for linguistic training and academic linguistic practices.

His other research interests lie in typology and comparative grammar; anthropological linguistics, ethnography of communication, cross-cultural semantics and pragmatics. He is also interested in how the structure and semantics of languages are affected and modulated over time and when they come into contact with other languages.

Felix organised the Summer School on Documentary Linguistics in West Africa (see page 26).

**I Wayan Arka, The Australian National University**

I Wayan Arka is a Fellow in Linguistics at the Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies at The Australian National University. He received his PhD from Sydney University in 1999 for research on Balinese morphosyntax and pragmatics. During the course of his PhD, he was a visiting scholar at CSLI, Stanford University (1995). He went back to Udayana University in Bali, Indonesia for three years before he moved again to Australia (April 2001) to take up a fellowship at the RSPAS, ANU.

Wayan’s interests are in descriptive, theoretical and typological aspects of Austronesian and Papuan languages of Indonesia. He has completed detailed studies on morpho-syntactic aspects of Balinese and Bahasa Indonesia, within the framework of LFG (Lexical-Functional Grammar). He has recently begun to extend his research to other languages in western and eastern Indonesia such as Nias and Mentawai (Sumatra), Manggarai, Rongga...
and Lamaholot (Flores), and Kei (south-east of Maluku) focusing on morpho-syntactic aspects of core arguments, (pronominal) marking and voice/argument alternations.

He has completed extensive fieldwork for his Rongga Documentation Project (funded by the ELDP, 2004-6), and organised capacity building programmes for language documentation, maintenance and revitalisation in Indonesia.

Wayan is currently working on a number of projects. He continues working on his Rongga materials and Core Argument Project. He is also currently doing collaborative research on voice in the Austronesian languages of eastern Indonesia (funded by an NSF grant, 2006-2009), and a large-scale Indonesian Corpus and Grammar Development Project.

as well as other issues in the documentation and study of endangered minority languages.

Her research is focused on the study of indigenous languages of Siberia, where she conducts fieldwork, most specifically on the Tungus languages. Recent work has focused on the study of contact and languages of the North.

Susan D. Penfield, University of Arizona
Susan Penfield has been involved in language documentation and revitalisation as a language consultant with the Colorado River Indian Tribes in Arizona for over thirty years. In 2003, she received funding from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation to support training tribal members in the use of technology to support revitalisation. In 2005, she was the recipient of NSF/NEH funding to support the Mohave and Chemehuevi Language Documentation Project. As faculty for the American Indian Language Development Institute (AILDI) since 2000, Dr Penfield developed a series of courses using technology to support language revitalisation.

Most recently, as co-PI with Ofelia Zepeda (Director of AILDI), she implemented a fellowship program which brought twenty participants from ten of the most endangered Indigenous language communities to AILDI where they received instruction in both grant writing and language documentation. Dr Penfield is an applied linguist who is specifically committed to working in collaboration with community members who are engaged in the

Lenore Grenoble, University of Chicago
Lenore Grenoble is the Carl Darling Buck Professor at the University of Chicago where she holds appointments in the Department of Linguistics and the Department of Slavic Languages and Literatures. She holds a BA from Cornell University and an MA and PhD from the University of California, Berkeley.

Her current research interests include the study of discourse phenomena, contact linguistics, language endangerment, and the relationship between language policy, language use and attrition,
process of bridging language documentation and language revitalisation.

**Anju Saxena, Uppsala University**
Anju Saxena’s training as a researcher and teacher as well as her subsequent professional career in academia have all been in the discipline of General Linguistics. She was born and raised in Delhi, where she also completed her undergraduate education in linguistics.

A never-waning fascination with South Asia as a cornucopia of food for linguistic thought has led to her linguistic research being centred on South Asian languages. She has made linguistic investigations of ancient languages (Sanskrit and Classical Tibetan), but most of her work has been on modern languages (representing three major language families of South Asia), where she has conducted and supervised fieldwork on lesser-known languages in North India (e.g. Kinnauri, Gahri and Tinani).

Besides studying their linguistic structures, she is also interested in using modern technologies to document these languages, digital documentation of Indian minority languages, and using linguistic corpora in teaching linguistics at university level (IT-based collaborative learning).

**Roberto Zavala-Maldonado, Ciesas-Sureste**
Roberto Zavala is Associate Professor at CIESAS-Sureste, a Mexican interdisciplinary research centre for Social Sciences, located in San Cristobal de las Casas, Chiapas. He got his BA in Linguistics at the National School of Anthropology and History in Mexico, and his MA and PhD in Linguistics at the University of Oregon. He has conducted extensive fieldwork on Mayan, Uto-Aztecan and Mixe-Zoquean languages spoken in Middle America and has written two grammars: one on Akatek-Maya and another on Olutec-Mixe-Zoquean.

He has written several papers on Wastek, Akatek and Olutec. He is currently working on language contact in the southern part of Mesoamerica, and language documentation of Zoque, Olutec and Chol.

**Ex-officio members**

**Peter K. Austin, SOAS**
Director, Endangered Languages Academic Programme, School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London. See under ELAP staff (p21).

**David Nathan, SOAS**
Director, Endangered Languages Archive, School of Oriental and African Studies. See under ELAR staff (p28).
Community Involvement in the Documentation of Blablanga, an Oceanic Language of Santa Isabel, Solomon Islands

The island of Santa Isabel can be found in the middle of the Solomon Islands. Despite the rise in the ocean level that global warming is bringing, the island will still be there for many years to come. The same cannot be said about some of its languages, one of which, Blablanga, may become extinct in no more than two generations.

In addition to the creation of a corpus of digital recordings, my PhD project aims at producing various literacy and language maintenance materials. However, none of these goals could be accomplished without the strong collaboration of community members. Their assistance ranged from spending entire evenings discussing orthography standardization and helping with transcription, usually following a long recording session, to technology training and manipulating equipment. Many young men and women participated in a census that determined the number of Blablanga speakers on the northern coast of Isabel. Getting people involved was not only an invaluable help for the linguist but, most of all, it raised the community awareness of the significance of maintaining their linguistic and cultural identity. I was pleased to hear people say: “Now I understand that my language is important!”

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Indigenous language revitalisation in the British Isles

Julia Sallabank

For the last two years I have been acting as an advisor on language revitalisation to the Ministry of Culture and Leisure in Guernsey, Channel Islands. This period has seen rapid developments in the island government’s stance towards the indigenous language, from ‘benign neglect’ to a rhetoric of valuing the language as a unique element of local heritage. For the first time there is official funding and an overall strategy to support and preserve the language.

In July 2008 I was invited by the Language Support Officer appointed in December 2007 to discuss practical ways of implementing the strategy, including language standardisation, orthography development and dictionary making, language documentation, teacher recruitment and training, motivating younger learners, and maintaining the fluency of the increasingly elderly native speakers. These problems are typical of many endangered language contexts, and as language revitalisation is relatively poorly theorised, documenting and disseminating the processes and outcomes will be valuable for the field.

I have also been successful in gaining funding from the Nuffield Foundation for ‘An investigation into the role of a Language Support Officer in endangered language revitalisation’, comparing the activities and effectiveness of the Guernsey officer with counterparts in Jersey and the Isle of Man (with sociolinguistically similar small polities).

Language contact and endangered languages

Lameen Souag

When a small language is spoken in the neighbourhood of a much larger one, it can get influenced in sometimes surprising ways. My research compares the grammatical effects of this contact in two oases in the Sahara. I have spent four months at Tabelbala in southwestern Algeria, where some 3,000 people speak a scarcely documented language, Kwara-n-dzyey, whose nearest Songhai relatives are 1,000 km to the south in Timbuktu. The inhabitants of Tabelbala have stopped speaking this language to their children for fear of mockery and educational difficulties. I spent another two months in Siwa, an isolated oasis in western Egypt where Siwi, a flourishing Berber language, is spoken. Both Kwara-n-dzyey and Siwi show remarkable contact effects; Siwi, for example, has borrowed the Arabic method of forming comparatives by extracting three consonants from an adjective and putting specific short vowels between them (eg aməllal “white” > mləl “whiter”). Studying these contact-induced changes extends our understanding of how languages change in ways that studying larger languages, whose population size typically makes them much more resistant to external influences, could not.

Finding a new language

Stuart McGill

Nigeria is the most linguistically-diverse country in Africa. I am doing my PhD at SOAS on Cicipu, one of twenty-five West Kainji languages. At a recent workshop in Nigeria I was surprised to learn of the existence of two more West Kainji languages. Then I had my own discovery. I was returning from the workshop with my colleague Israel Wade when our car broke down in a village just a few miles from home. When Israel asked which tribe the village belonged to, he was given a name we did not recognise – Damakawa. This serendipitous puncture saved us a hundred-mile journey – here was yet another West Kainji language, right on our doorstep! We returned later with a comparative wordlist, audio equipment, and high hopes, soon to be discarded.

We could only get unanalysed phrases, such as ‘the beer has finished’ or ‘bring me light’ – no individual words, not even the names for body parts. After a while we were taken to see Tura Zaure. Although frail, blind, and leprous, his voice was undiminished and he was the best of the speakers we were able to work with. Sadly his language is dying. Israel and I collected eighty words – enough to make a guess at the classification of the language, but little else.

This thousand-strong group is not hiding out in some isolated rainforest or desert location. The Damakawa live on the main road, along which Israel and I had travelled dozens of times over the eight months I spent in northern Nigeria studying Cicipu. Surely there are many more undiscovered languages in Nigeria, some of which will have a better chance of survival.
HRELP hosted its first international conference in December 2007. The two-day conference marked the 5th anniversary of the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project and the 75th anniversary of the Linguistics Department at SOAS. The conference title, Language Documentation and Linguistic Theory, reflected contemporary interest in the interrelationships between language endangerment, documentation, and linguistic theory, and featured about 30 papers presenting innovative work on underdescribed and endangered languages, especially in Asia and Africa.

With over 100 international attendees and 26 international speakers, the conference was judged a great success. Key speakers included: Phillip Cash Cash (University of Arizona), who gave the conference keynote address on video-based language documentation in the Nez Perce and Sahaptin communities in the western USA; Ulrike Zeshan (University of Lancashire), who spoke about documenting unique local sign languages in remote village communities; and Robert Williams (The American University in Cairo) who spoke about the growing imperative to undertake documentation in displaced refugee communities.

The volume of conference proceedings, edited by Peter Austin, Oliver Bond and David Nathan, was published ready for the conference. Tui Prichard designed the cover graphic. The conference could not have been the success it was without the generous assistance from many others including Alison Kelly, Tom Castle, and several student volunteers.

For further information, see http://www.hrelp.org/events/conference2007.
Louise Ashmore
PhD student. Louise is researching the expression of space and motion in the Wik-Ngatharr/Wik-Elken language and looking at variation between the Wik languages spoken at Aurukun, on the Cape York Peninsula, in northern Australia.

Dr Gerardo Barbera
Postdoctoral researcher. Gerardo’s three year Individual Postgraduate Fellowship involves documenting the endangered dialect of Garu (found in Hormozgān, Southeast Iran). This research has involved a comparison of the Garuwi phonemic system with other systems in Southern Iran.

Dr Henrik Bergqvist
PhD graduate. Henrik worked on temporal reference in Lakandon (Lacandón), an endangered and under-documented language belonging to the Yukatekan branch of the Mayan language family.

Peter Budd
PhD student. Peter is submitting his PhD on Bierebo, an undescribed Oceanic language spoken on the island of Epi in Vanuatu. He has made two field trips and is working on a trilingual dictionary (Bierebo-Bislama-English) as well as two primers in the language.

Dr Friederike Lüpke
Lecturer. Friederike spent ten weeks in a Bainouk Gunyaamolo speech community in Senegal during an ELDP-funded pilot project. With about 6,000 speakers in the Upper Casamance region of Senegal and Gambia, Bainouk is a highly endangered language.

Stuart McGill
PhD student. Stuart is documenting and describing Cicipu, a language of northwest Nigeria, with focus on the noun class system and agreement on the verb. He has carried out phonological and morphosyntactic analysis of the language.

Chaithra Puttaswamy
PhD student. Chaithra’s PhD focuses on the documentation and description of Malto, spoken in eastern India. Her interest is the computational applications for modern Indian languages and the use of technology for description and documentation.
Mary R. Raymond
PhD student. AHRC funded, Mary’s work focuses on Kubokota, an Austronesian language of the Solomon Islands. Her interests include participant reference in discourse, spatial and temporal deixis, and the influence of geography and environment on language.

Dr Serge Sagna
PhD graduate. Serge’s research was carried out on his own language and was a phonological and morphological description of Joola, spoken in intra-ethnic communication in Ziguinchor, Senegal. Serge was one of the first PhD graduates of the ELAP programme.

Sophie Salffner
PhD student. Sophie is documenting and describing Ikaan, a dialect of Ukaan, in Southwestern Nigeria. Sophie focuses on tone in Ikann grammar and works with structured questionnaires and descriptive texts (i.e., stories, songs and conversations).

Dr Julia Sallabank
Research fellow in language support and revitalisation. Julia has been working with the endangered Guernesiais language community in Guernsey, Channel Islands. Julia is interested in literacy practices in endangered languages, and their implications for language policy.

Lameen Souag
PhD student. Lameen has been researching the effects of language contact on the morphosyntax of two languages of the Sahara, Kwara-n-dzey (a Songhay language of southwestern Algeria) and Siwi (a Berber language of western Egypt).

Eli Timan
An ELDP grantee and co-researcher with Peter Austin. Eli has a Pilot Project Grant and is working on the preservation of the spoken language of Iraqi Jews, recording, transcribing and translating speech and customs of the now dispersed community.

Radu Voica
PhD student. Funded by ELDP, Radu is documenting and describing Blablanga, an Oceanic language with about 1800 speakers on Santa Isabel, Solomon Islands, focusing on inter-relations between phonology, syntax and information structure.
Endangered Languages Academic Programme (ELAP)

The Endangered Languages Academic Programme had its fifth full year of operation, enrolling 14 MA students along with three new PhD students. The MA students come from a wide variety of backgrounds and experience and come from a range of countries and places within the UK. The three new PhD students all completed the MA in Language Documentation and Description:

- Anja Choon who is working on the documentation of Uwu, also called Ayere, a West Benue-Congo language spoken in the linguistically diverse Nigerian Middle Belt with uncertain but possibly close relations to Yoruba, Akan and/or the Akokoid languages. Uwu is restricted to one village within Kogi State, and, even there, it is threatened by local Yoruba varieties.
- Kay Johnson will focus on spatial referencing in Ske, an Austronesian language spoken on Pentecost Island in Vanuatu. She aims to record documentary materials of linguistic practices develop an orthography for the language and work on community projects such as producing dictionaries or pedagogical materials.
- Sophie Rendina will focus on Numèè, an endangered language of Southernmost New Caledonia, documenting the systems of spatial and deictic reference in particular.

The three students upgraded from MPhil to PhD in June 2008 and all moved on to commence fieldwork for data collection and analysis.

There were some staff changes during the year with the appointment of two new staff. Dr Irina Nikolaeva joined ELAP as Lecturer in Language Documentation. She specialises in Uralic, Altaic and Paleosiberian languages, syntax, morphology, information structure, typology, and lexicalist theories of grammar. This year Irina taught a half unit in Siberian Languages as well as Introduction to the Study of Language. ELAP also welcomed Dr Julia Sallabank as Research Fellow in Language Support and Revitalisation. Julia had previously worked at Oxford University Press, and in 2007-08 taught courses in Language Society and Communication, Language Planning and Policy and Applied Language Documentation. She has also been involved in the organisation of the two workshops: Issues in Language Revitalisation and Maintenance and Engagement and Activism in Endangered Languages Research. Since 2000 Julia has been working with the endangered language community in Guernsey, Channel Islands.

From September 2007 the structure of the MA in Language Documentation and Description changed in order to better support those students joining the course without a linguistics background. Two pathways were created: a pathway in Language Support and Revitalisation, and a pathway in Field Linguistics. If desired, part-time students can transfer between pathways on successful completion of their first year.

In July 2008 ELAP organised a one-day first aid training course in collaboration with the Red Cross. Nine students and three HRELP staff members attended the course which was intended to provide them with basic first aid skills when carrying out fieldwork in remote locations.

ELAP hosted a number of visitors throughout the year, including:

- Professor Toshide Nakayama, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Japan, 18-21 October 2007
- Professor Lise Dobrin, University of Virginia, USA, 2-8 May 2008
- Dr Ljuba Vesselinova, University of Stockholm, Sweden, 12-15 June 2008
- Professor Maurizio Gnerre, Universita Orientale Naples, Italy, 20 April-2 May 2008
- Professor Peter Sutton, University of Adelaide, Australia, 18 August-30 September 2008

ELAP published its fifth volume in the series Language Documentation and Description, dealing with data in language documentation, the role of digital video and archiving in language documentation, and language activism and language documentation:

- ‘Data – but data from what?’ Ruth Finnegan
- ‘Linguists’ multi-layered data and the linguistic community’s polyphony’ Maurizio Gnerre
- ‘On the representativeness of language documentations’ Frank Seifart
- ‘The role of digital video in language documentation’ Louise Ashmore
- ‘Digital archives: essential elements in the workflow for endangered languages documentation’ David Nathan
- ‘Language activism and the “new linguistics”: expanding opportunities for documenting endangered languages in Indonesia’ Margaret Florey
Other Activities

Other activities of ELAP during the year include:

**A weekly seminar series**
co-ordinated by Oliver Bond which included the following presentations on endangered languages topics:

- **11th December 2007**
  ‘The independent personal pronoun system in Lakota’ Bruce Ingham (SOAS)
- **15th April 2008**
  ‘Distributive plurality in Nivkh’ Ekaterina Gruzdeva (University of Helsinki)
- **29th April 2008**
  ‘Spatial, time-aspectual and concomitance relations in Huave’ Maurizio Gnerre (University of Naples)
- **6th May 2008**
  ‘From Linguistic Elicitation to Eliciting the Linguist: Lessons in Community Empowerment from Melanesia’ Lise Dobrin (University of Virginia)
- **13th May 2008**
  ‘Linguistic human rights in the asylum process’ Peter Patrick (University of Essex)

**A fortnightly series of research seminars** for SOAS researchers and PhD students was co-ordinated by Oliver Bond and included the following presentations on endangered languages and language documentation:

- **3rd October 2007**
  ‘Aspect and Argument Structure in SENCOTEN: Resultive and Imperfective in Complementary Distribution’ Claire Turner (University of Surrey)
- **10th October 2007**
  ‘Documenting the endangered Kola Saami languages’ Michael Riessler (Humboldt University, Berlin)
- **17th October 2007**
  ‘A pan-dialectal approach to language documentation: the Wik languages of Cape York Peninsula, Australia’ Louise Ashmore (ELAP)

**With presentations by:**

- **Lenore Grenoble (Chicago)**
  ‘Language revitalisation: local solutions in the context of global challenges’

**Engagement and Activism in Endangered Languages Research**
2 May 2008

**With presentations by:**

- **Lise Dobrin (Virginia)**
  ‘Endangered language linguistics: Whose mission?’
- **Maurizio Gnerre (Orientale Naples)**
  ‘I heard it on the radio: indigenous language radio and political activism’
- **Cecilia Odé (Amsterdam)**
  ‘Endangered languages: an interactive e-learning module on the internet for secondary schools’
- **Peter Sutton (Adelaide and South Australian Museum)**
  ‘Linguistics, land rights and the law’
- **Nicholas Ostler (Foundation for Endangered Languages)**
  ‘Endangered Language Support: to Do or to Be?’

The workshops were attended by approximately 50 people and resulted in lively discussion. Revised versions of some of the presentations will be published in *Language Documentation and Description Volume 6.*

**Conferences and workshops held during the year include:**

- The third Austronesian Languages and Linguistics conference ALL3 was held at SOAS 21-22 September 2007 with 29 papers presented
- Conference on Language Documentation and Linguistic Theory, held at SOAS 7-8 December 2007 (see page 13).
- Documentation training workshop 14-17 February 2008, co-ordinated by Peter Austin, David Nathan and Toshihide Nakayama, held at the Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of
Asia and Africa at the Tokyo University of Foreign Studies

• UK Austronesian Research Group Workshop on space and deixis held at SOAS on 8th March 2008 with presentations by ELAP staff and students

Prof. Austin served on the Linguistic Society of America (LSA) Committee on Endangered Languages and their Preservation, the HEFCE Research Assessment Exercise Panel for Linguistics, the Arts and Humanities Data Service advisory board on languages and linguistics, the Cambridge University Press Linguistics Board, the Board of the journal ‘Indonesia and the Malay World’, the steering committee of the AHRC strategic initiative ‘Beyond Text’, and the Northcote Trust. He was a member of research grants selection panels for the National Science Foundation and National Endowment of Humanities, the Volkswagen Foundation DoBeS project, and the Northcote Trust.

Prof. Austin visited and gave presentations at a number of universities in the UK and overseas and took part in several conferences and symposia during this period:

• 2nd November 2007 World Language Centre conference, Reykjavik Iceland ‘Current issues in language documentation’

• 7th December 2007 Language Documentation and Linguistic Theory conference, SOAS (with Lise M. Dobrin and David Nathan) ‘Dying to be counted: The “audit culture” in documentary linguistics’

• 4th January 2008 Linguistic Society of America annual meeting, Chicago (with Lise M. Dobrin and David Nathan) ‘Dying to be counted: commodification of endangered languages in documentary linguistics’

• 14-18th January 2008 ‘Course on Endangered Languages and Language Documentation’ LOT winter school, Tilburg University

• 28th-29th February 2008 The Center for Advanced Study in Theoretical Linguistics, Universitetet i Tromsø Workshop om dokumentasjon og revitalisering av samiske språk Workshop on documentation and revitalisation of Saami languages.

• 8th March 2008 UK Austronesian Research Group workshop, SOAS ‘Here and there in Sasak, eastern Indonesia’


• 9th June 2008 Chirac Foundation Conference, Musee du quai Branly, Paris, France ‘Comment les linguistes et les communautés autochtones documentent et revitalisent les langues en danger’, (a video of the talk is available www.fondationchirac.eu/videos-discours-peter-austin/)

• 10th June 2008 SCOLMA Conference, British Library ‘Current research on endangered languages and language documentation’

• 23-27th June 2008 3L Summer School, Lyon, France, ‘Language documentation and description’, ‘Data management’, ‘How to apply for a research grant’, ‘Toolbox tutorial’


Other ELAP staff gave invited seminars and conference papers during the year:

Oliver Bond

• 24-28th September 2007 Association for Linguistic Typology 7th Biennial Meeting, Paris ‘Presupposition within a typology of negation’

• 7-8th December 2007 Conference on Language Documentation and Linguistic Theory, SOAS ‘Towards a canon for negation’

Peter Austin presents his talk at the Chirac Foundation conference “Comment les linguistes et les communautés autochtones documentent et revitalisent les langues en danger”. Photo by Marc Peake.
Friederike Lüpke

- February 2007
  Workshop ‘Atlantic languages’, University of Hamburg, Germany, ‘Contact between Mande and Atlantic languages’

- December 2007
  SOAS conference on Language Documentation and Linguistic Theory: ‘Under construction. Theories of argument structure and empirical data from language description and documentation’

- June 2008

- June 2008
  SOAS Faculty Conversations on Orality: ‘Does language documentation and description have a concept of orality, and does it need one?’

- July 2008
  Summer school on language description and documentation, Université Lyon 2, France ‘Data collection methods in the field’

Irina Nikolaeva

- 25-28th September 2007

- 13-15th September 2007
  International Conference on Adjectives, University Lille 3 (with A. Spencer) ‘Adjectives, nouns and in-between’

- 23-26th January 2008
  SFB 471 International Colloquium, University of Konstanz ‘Towards a typology of finiteness: a Canonical approach’

- May 2008
  Conference on Cognitive and Functional Perspectives on Dynamic Tendencies in Languages, University of Tartu ‘Exclamatives in Eastern Uralic and beyond’

Julia Sallabank

- 7th December 2007
  Language Documentation and Linguistic Theory conference, SOAS ‘Endangered language maintenance and social networks’

- 3-5th April 2008
  Sociolinguistics Symposium, Amsterdam ‘Endangered language maintenance and social networks’

- 16th May 2008
  Lancaster University ‘Documenting motivation in language revitalisation’

- 18-19th June 2008
  Performance, Orality and Cultural Memory conference, SOAS ‘Orality, performance and “correctness”’

Staff Awards

Friederike Lüpke was awarded £21,600 for a period of research leave funded by the AHRC to create a first corpus of the Gunyaamolo variety of the endangered Atlantic language Bainouk of Senegal.

Oliver Bond received a travel grant of £700 from the British Academy to present a paper on “Confirmative aspect-modality in Eleme” at the World Congress of African Linguistics WOCAL 6, at Universidade de São Paulo in Brazil.

Irina Nikolaeva (co-applicant, Primary Investigator Larisa Leisio, University of Tampere) received a grant from the Academy of Finland, for a project to write a comparative grammar of Samoyedic languages. The amount awarded is 542,620 euros.

Julia Sallabank was awarded a grant of £5,900 by the Nuffield Foundation to carry out an investigation into the role of a Language Support Officer in endangered language revitalisation, comparing language policies and outcomes in Guernsey with Jersey and the Isle of Man.

Irina Nikolaeva won the Wings World Quest 2008 Women of Discovery award. The award is in recognition for the many years she has spent documenting endangered languages including syntax, morphology, typology, and information structure, and the traditional knowledge the languages embody. She has focused most notably on the Kolyma Yukaghir dialect, spoken by about forty people in North-East Siberia as well as Uralic, Altaic, and Paleosiberian languages. Dr Nikolaeva’s award included a trip to New York City for the award ceremony and an honorarium to support further fieldwork in Siberia.
Staff Publications

Austin, Peter K. (ed.) 2008 1,000 Languages London: Thames and Hudson; and Berkeley: University of California Press.


Nikolaeva, Irina and Andrew Spencer (eds.) 2008 Morphosyntactic mismatches in lexical categories. Lingua. Special section. 18, Issue 7. Introduction: Morphosyntactic mismatches in lexical categories, 945-946

PhD graduates 2008

Dr Henrik Bergqvist

On 1st February 2008 Henrik Bergqvist completed all the requirements for the PhD when he submitted the final version of his dissertation ‘Temporal reference in Lakandon Maya’ to the University of London. Henrik is the first ELAP PhD student to complete his studies at SOAS. Henrik’s thesis is a detailed study of how Lakandon Maya, an endangered language spoken in Chiapas, Mexico, encodes reference to time, showing that certain adverbs, previously thought to be time words, indicate the speakers’ ‘stance’ in relation to the events they are describing.

Dr Serge Sagna

Serge Sagna took his PhD oral examination in early March 2008, and the examiners judged that his dissertation on ‘Formal and semantic properties of the Güjjolaay Eegimaa (aka Banjal) nominal classification system’ fulfilled all the necessary criteria for award of the degree (subject to minor amendments). Serge is the second ELAP PhD to complete his studies and the first in the programme to do research on his own language, which is endangered. Serge has now taken up an ELDP-funded post-doctoral fellowship at the University of Manchester to continue his documentation of Güjjolaay Eegimaa.
ELAP staff

Academic staff

Professor Peter K. Austin
Peter Austin joined SOAS in October 2002 after having held a Humboldt Prize at Johann Wolfgang Goethe University, Frankfurt. He was previously Foundation Professor of Linguistics at the University of Melbourne (1996-2002) and has held visiting appointments at Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics Nijmegen, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, University of Hong Kong, and Stanford University. He studied at the Australian National University, completing a BA with first class Honours in Asian Studies (Japanese and Linguistics) in 1974, and a PhD in 1978 on the Diyar language spoken in the far north of South Australia. He taught at the University of Western Australia (1978), held a Harkness Fellowship for post-doctoral research at UCLA and MIT (1979-80), and in 1981 set up the Department of Linguistics at La Trobe University.

Peter’s research interests cover descriptive, theoretical and applied linguistics. He has extensive fieldwork experience on Australian Aboriginal languages (northern New South Wales, northern South Australia, and north-western Western Australia) and has co-authored with David Nathan the first fully page-formatted hypertext dictionary on the World Wide Web, a bilingual dictionary of Gamilaraay (Kamilaroi), northern New South Wales, as well as publishing seven bilingual dictionaries of Aboriginal languages. Since 1995 he has been carrying out research on Sasak and Samawa (or Sumbawan), Austronesian languages spoken on Lombok and Sumbawa islands, eastern Indonesia. His theoretical research is mainly on syntax and focuses on Lexical Functional Grammar, morpho-syntactic typology, computer-aided lexicography and multi-media for endangered languages. He has also published on historical and comparative linguistics, typology, and Aboriginal history and biography.

Peter currently has a small research grant from the British Academy to work with native-speaker scholar Eli Timan on the Jewish Iraqi Arabic language, including recording the oldest generation of speakers talking about traditional practices and their memories of life in Iraq before they were expelled. This work is being done with the diaspora community in London, Canada and Israel.

Dr Friederike Lüpke
Friederike Lüpke studied African Linguistics, General Linguistics and Phonetics at the University of Köln (Germany) and Manding (Bambara) at the Institut National des Langues et Civilisations Orientales in Paris (France). In 1999, she received her MA in African Linguistics with first class honours from the University of Köln. She was then offered a PhD scholarship at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics in Nijmegen (The Netherlands). Her PhD thesis on verbal argument structure in Jalonde, a previously undocumented Mande language of Guinea, received a cum laude (distinction for special achievements) from the Radboud University Nijmegen.

In September 2003, Friederike became a Research Fellow in the Endangered Languages Academic Programme. Currently, she is working as a Lecturer in Language Documentation and Description in ELAP.

Friederike’s research interests lie in the domain of argument structure and the syntax-semantics interface. Within Mande linguistics, she has worked on the Central Mande languages Bambara (Manding) and Jalonde and has started work on contact phenomena between Mande and Atlantic languages. She is concerned with the role of theory in description and documentation and has a strong interest in multidiisciplinary aspects of language documentation and description. Recently, she became fascinated with the role of Arabic-based scripts for writing African languages.

Dr Oliver Bond
Oliver Bond’s principal research interests lie in typology, historical linguistics and language documentation, including fieldwork on Eleme (Ogonoid, Benue-Congo), an under-described language spoken in southeast Nigeria. Oliver’s research project, entitled ‘NegTyp’, aims to contribute to a broader understanding of the properties of negation in language. The main objective of the project is to capture information relevant to negative constructions in terms of their morphosyntactic/prosodic realisation and the formal/semantic-pragmatic distinctions encoded by negative morphemes. Oliver was awarded his PhD, MA and BA from the University of Manchester. His PhD thesis, entitled ‘Aspects of Eleme verbal morphosyntax’, discusses Eleme fieldwork data from a functional-
typological perspective, with a focus on participant reference (including logophoric reference and applicative morphology) and tense-aspect morphology.

**Dr Gerardo Barbera**
Gerardo Barbera is a postdoctoral fellow. His principal interests lie in dialectology, historical linguistics, lexicography, and language documentation. He has been doing fieldwork in southern Iran and in the Persian Gulf region since 2002. Gerardo’s project ‘Linguistic documentation of Garuwi’ aims to document Southern Bashkardi (Hormozgan, Southern Iran), focusing on the endangered dialect of Garu. This area has never before been the subject of relevant linguistic analysis. The main goal of the research is to produce a descriptive vocabulary of 4,000 to 5,000 entries.

Gerardo was awarded his PhD in Iranian Studies from L’Orientale University, Naples, Italy, the oldest institution for the study of Oriental and African studies in Europe, where he also obtained his first class degree in classics. His PhD thesis ‘Language and culture at Minâb, Southern Iran. Grammatical sketch, texts and vocabulary’ (in Italian), currently under revision and translation into English for the ‘Handbook of Oriental Studies’ series, was the first scientific description of any Iranian language of the Persian Gulf region, containing the first fables and folktales of the area ever published.

**Dr Irina Nikolaeva**
Irina Nikolaeva studied Finno-Ugric languages at Moscow State University and the Institute of Linguistics of the Russian Academy of Sciences, where she was awarded the Candidate degree in 1988. Her dissertation explored the genetic relationship between the Uralic and Yukaghir languages. After graduation she worked as a research fellow at the Institute for Linguistics and as a part-time lecturer in several universities in Russia and Hungary. She received further postgraduate training at the Department of Linguistics at the University of California, San Diego. Her PhD dissertation on the grammar of Udihe was defended at the University of Leiden in 1999. She then worked as a research associate at the Linguistics Departments of the University of Konstanz (2000–2004), the University of Oxford (2004–2006) and the University of Essex (2006–2007).

Irina’s interests lie in syntax, morphology, typology, lexicalist theories of grammar, and the documentation of endangered languages. She has published several books on Uralic, Altaic and Palaeosiberian languages based on extensive fieldwork conducted in Siberia and the northern part of European Russia (1986–present). They include dictionaries, descriptive grammars and text collections. Her research has mainly focused on the syntax-information structure interface, the structure of the noun phrase, relative clauses, mixed categories, the typology of agreement, and finiteness. She has also published on phonology and historical-comparative linguistics.

**Dr Julia Sallabank**
Julia Sallabank is Research Fellow in Language Support and Revitalisation. She has been conducting a sociolinguistic study of Guernsey Norman French since 2000, and gained her doctorate at Lancaster University in 2007. For the previous 16 years she was commissioning editor for applied linguistics and language teaching methodology at Oxford University Press.

Since 2000 Julia has been working with the endangered language community in Guernsey, Channel Islands, and sees full documentation for Guernesiais as a priority. She feels that documentation should focus on the development of corpus-based teaching and learning materials aimed at the community, not solely on preservation by and for linguists. Julia’s research interests are primarily sociolinguistic. She has become increasingly interested in literacy practices in endangered languages, and their implications for language policy. This is particularly important where the elderly native-speaker base is shrinking and revitalisation depends on motivating the younger generation.

**Support staff**

**Alison Kelly**
Alison obtained her BA in French Studies from Southampton University in 2000. The programme included a year abroad studying at the University of Nice during 1998. Alison worked as an administrator for Mourant ECS (HBOS) before taking an administrator position in the Language Centre at SOAS in 2004. She joined HRELP as the Academic Programme Administrator in 2006. Alison is currently studying psychology at the Open University.
Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR)

The Endangered Languages Archive provides digital archiving and associated services for ELDP grantees and others working with endangered languages.

We aim to provide:

- Security - keep electronic endangered language materials safe
- Preservation - store electronic endangered language materials for the long term
- Discovery - help the wider world to find out about materials
- Protocol - respect and implement sensitivities and restrictions
- Sharing - provide access to materials, where appropriate
- Acknowledgement - create citable acknowledgment of research
- Mobilisation - help to create usable language materials for communities
- Quality and standards - give advice for creating materials of high quality and robust standards

We also offer auxiliary services including:

- Training
- Facilities for digitising media and documents
- Practical resource development (on a project by project basis)

ELAR in 2007-8

In April, a new staff member, Dr Ed Garrett, joined us as software developer. He will put our public access catalogue development on track and due for launch around the end of 2008, by which time the collection will approach 50 deposits and nearly 4 TB (4,000 GB) of data.

This year ELAR received documentation materials for deposit from the following grantees:

- Anvita Abbi (language: Great Andamanese, MDP081)
- Yeshes Vodgal Acuo (language: Wutunhua, IPF071, 2nd deposit)
- I Wayan Arka (language: Rongga, IPF011, additional materials)
- Peter Budd (language: Bierebo, IGS032)
- Lisa Conathan (language: Arapaho, IPF066)
- Matthew Dryer (language: Walman & Poko-Rawo MDP038)
- Ryoko Hattori (language: Pingilapese, FTG110)
- Ulrich Kleinwillinghamhöfer (language: Bogon, IPF074)
- Aimée Lahaussois (language: Kohi Rai, PF065)
- Charles Macdonald (language: Palawan-Tagalog, FTG103)
- Erich Round (language: Kayardild, IGS039 Goldstein)
- Sophie Saffner (language: Ukaan, PPG027)
- Myfany Turpin (language: Arandic IPF100)

Materials were also received from:

- Jay Huweiler (language: Bajjika)
- Eva Kershaw (language: Brunei-Dusun)
- Eli Timan (language: Jewish Iraqi Arabic)
- Ida Toivonen (language: Inari Saami)
ELAR was considerably involved in training activities this year. We hosted two ELDP grantee training workshops, where our staff ran sessions ranging from recording techniques and archiving to database technologies. We also participated in running training workshops in Tokyo (Japan), Lyon (France), and Winneba (Ghana). Further details about these training events can be found from www.hrelp.org/events/workshops.

Throughout the year, David, Tom, Bernard and Ed advised many ELDP grantees and others about language documentation equipment and preparing data for archiving, and advised on the selection, purchase and allocation of equipment for ELAP PhD students undertaking fieldwork. David Nathan served ex-officio on the ELDP grant panel, assessing grant applications, and advising on matters related to equipment and documentation methodology.

ELAR contributed to HRELPS publishing activities through the design skills of Tom Castle, who prepared materials and posters for the Endangered Languages Week and Open Day Exhibition, made posters for a range of events, designed and laid out the HRELPS Annual report, and prepared and laid out two issues of Language Documentation and Description in a new format. ELAR continues to co-ordinate the HRELPS website www.hrelp.org, through the web team which consists of David Nathan, Alison Kelly and Anna Greedharee. The website contains over 1,300 documents, ranks highly in search engines, and regularly receives over 100,000 ‘hits’ per month. We were centrally involved in other HRELP activities including Endangered Languages Week (see page 5) and organising the Conference on Language Documentation and Linguistic Theory (see page 17).

ELAR maintains the Rausing Room, an area adjacent to ELAR which we have allocated for use by ELAR clients, ELAP staff and students, and other visitors and trainees. It has been equipped with five workstations with specialised hardware and software for various linguistics, documentation and archiving tasks. Media devices such as audio digitising units and scanners are also available. There is a small but growing library of books on topics such as audio, video, designing web pages, XML etc. A number of grantees have deposited outputs from their projects, such as school books, dictionaries, text collections and CD-ROMs in this library. Many scholars used the facilities of our Visitor’s Room, including Peter Sutton (University of Adelaide), Eli Timan (ELAP, SOAS), Nakayama Toshihide (Tokyo University of Foreign Studies), Trevor Johnston (Macquarie University), Christy Henshaw (Wellcome Trust), Mark Harvey (University of Winchester), Eva Kershaw, Maurizio Gnerre (University of Naples), and Ljuba Veselinova (Stockholm University). The Rausing Room is managed by Tom Castle and has been a considerable benefit to HRELPS training activities and ELAP’s teaching programme.

ELAR continues active participation in the academic community. As part of the international DELAMAN group of archives, we are working towards proposing standards for citing archive deposits and corpora. We published papers and gave lectures and presentations at national and international events as follows:

Staff publications


International conferences


David Nathan. The role of video in language documentation and archiving: is the pixel mightier than the word? Presentation at DELAMAN V, Instituto Nacional de Lenguas Indígenas (INALI), Mexico City, 8-9 November 2007


David Nathan (with Lise Dobrin and Peter Austin). Dying to be counted: commodification of endangered languages in documentary linguistics. Poster session at the 2008 annual meeting of the Linguistic Society of America, Chicago, January 2008

David Nathan (with Peter Austin). Documentary Linguistics Workshop, AA-Ken, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, Feb 14-17


International lectures and training

David Nathan. Guest lectures on Digital Archives and XML, National Taiwan University, Graduate Institute of Linguistics, May 2008

David Nathan. Plenary Lecture on Archiving and course on audio recording, 3L Summer School, Lyon, France, July 2008


Grants awarded

Ed Garrett received a grant of US$5,680 for the project Epistemology and Indexicality in Navajo, Tibetan, and English (via EMU from University of Massachusetts Amherst).
The Summer School on Documentary Linguistics in West Africa was hosted by the University of Education, Winneba, Ghana from 16-26 July 2008, held prior to the 26th West African Languages Congress at the same venue. HRELP was centrally involved in the event; it was organised by panel member Professor Felix Ameka (Department of African Languages and Cultures, Leiden University, The Netherlands), funded by ELDP, and David Nathan from ELAR and Sophie Salffner from ELAP contributed to the teaching and also organised the large amount of documentation equipment that was used for the workshop and then donated at the end of the workshop to participants from each west African country represented at the school.

There were about 35 participants coming from nine countries right across the region: Cameroon, Nigeria, Benin, Togo, Ghana, Burkina Faso, Ivory Coast, Sierra Leone, and Senegal. Each participant was either already involved in language documentation or planning to do so.

This Summer School was unique and remarkable in several respects. It was the first such workshop on documentary linguistics to be held on the African continent. Impeccably organised, it featured a rich curriculum ranging from the ethnography of communication to the use of software for annotation and dictionary making. But it was by no means a “chalk and talk” event - all participants were involved in group practical project work, with each group working face to face with a speaker of Effutu (a local group at Winneba whose language is in serious danger) to do research, recording, and learning materials development. The enthusiasm, collaboration, and good spirits in the groups were outstanding. This work culminated with the groups presenting their project work on the final day, including a presentation of one of the groups’ work - a multimedia language learning resource - to a representative of the local primary schools.

The School was also unique in that it brought together a wide international network of people. The participants came from countries across West Africa, and the teachers were eminent people in their respective fields from Australia, Canada, Germany, The Netherlands, Cote d’Ivoire, Ghana, Nigeria and the UK.
Grantee training 2008

Sabah Aldihisi, Serge Sagna and Jade Comfort practise encoding data using XML, June 2008.

Julien Meyer and Chenglong Huang at practical session in the Rausing Room, June 2008.

Ed Garrett illustrating some of the finer points of preparing materials for archiving, June 2008.

James Cowell, Jade Comfort, and Pam Cardenas practise their audio and video skills, guided by filmmaker Simon Atkins, June 2008.

Grantees Adjaratou Sall and Bob Williams, August 2008.

Cathy Edwards (ELAP MA student) and Simon Atkins (filmmaker and trainer) demonstrate techniques, August 2008.
ELAR had a major staff change this year in the appointment of Dr Ed Garrett, formerly of Eastern Michigan University, as software developer. Ed brings with him skills not only in software development but a vigorous involvement in providing endangered languages materials online, areal linguistic research (in the Tibetan Himalaya), and other technical knowledge and skills, including document encoding and video. Tom Castle’s position was converted to permanent within SOAS. Several ELAP students, including Louise Ashmore, Lameen Souag, Cathy Edwards, and Mike Franjieh worked on an occasional basis in the archive during the year.

David Nathan, Director
David Nathan has worked with computing applications for endangered (especially Australian Aboriginal) languages for 12 years. He ran the ASEDA archive in Canberra, Australia, and taught courses in computing, linguistics, cognitive science, multimedia development and English at Universities in Australia, Japan and the UK. Publications include the textbook ‘Australia’s Indigenous Languages’; papers on lexicography, multimedia, and indigenous people and the Internet; and several multimedia CD-ROMs. He was co-author (with Peter Austin) of the web’s first hypertext bilingual dictionary (for Gamilaraay/Kamilaroi), and has established several major web sites. Along with developing the ELAR archive, he is actively involved with other archives and in other technical and academic areas; he is currently working on web, digitisation and CD-ROM projects, and is interested in multimedia interfaces for authoring and presenting language materials and in the methodology of language documentation.

Dr Ed Garrett, Software Developer
Ed Garrett is developing software enabling linguists, community members, and others to query, access, deposit to, and administer the collection of the Endangered Languages Archive. Before arriving at SOAS in May 2008, Ed spent several years working on technical and linguistic aspects of the Tibetan and Himalayan Digital Library’s language initiatives based at the University of Virginia. Ed has long been interested in Tibetan language. In 2001, he completed his PhD thesis entitled *Evidentiality and Assertion in Tibetan* at the University of California, Los Angeles. Ed co-maintains the Altiplano (Eastern Michigan University Linguistics Lab) website, and has contributed to various open source software projects in linguistics, including Tools for Field Linguistics (a website devoted to the collaborative creation of tools, protocols and procedures for field linguistics and language analysis, focusing on tools for annotating or manipulating text, audio and video-based language archives) and THDL Tools (language software, mainly for the use of those working with Tibetan language materials).

Bernard Howard, Technical Officer
Bernard Howard started work at SOAS as the Phonetics Lab Technician. He manages the Linguistic Resources Room and provides technical support to assist staff and students with recording and digitising. He also helps with equipment support for ELAP fieldwork students and ELAR and ELDP training events.
Annual Report 2008

Through national and international networks, the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project participates in language documentation, archiving, training and support initiatives of global scope.