Building on solid foundations established over nine years in research, training, grants, archiving, publications and outreach...
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Endangered languages building on foundations

It is generally agreed that there are about 7,000 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.

Language loss is a worldwide phenomenon diminishing linguistic and cultural diversity. Linguists, anthropologists, language activists and communities and others have set out to stem the tide. Over the last twenty years different initiatives have enabled language documentation and revitalization projects across the globe. Outreach activities have raised awareness. Degree programmes and summer schools promote theoretical and methodological development of documentary linguistics. Archives like ELAR publish and make the documentary collections available to language communities, researchers and the public. However, only the first few steps have been taken and a long way is still ahead.

The Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project has set out to support fieldwork by researchers documenting disappearing and threatened languages and to create an accessible repository for the collected data and analyses. HRELP is now in its tenth year of operation and its activities in teaching, grant making, archiving, publishing and outreach have laid a foundation for the future that we are now beginning to build on. ELDP has provided over 250 language documentation grants across the world. ELAP has trained over 100 MA students and 8 postdoctoral researchers. ELAR has published over 40 collections and has over 70 in curation. Networks of specialists who have been involved with HRELP as students, researchers, visitors, grantees, panelists or depositors are supporting our work all over the world.

The Endangered Languages Academic Programme (ELAP), the Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR) and the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP) have developed a strategic approach to sustainable capacity building that supports the maintenance of linguistic and cultural diversity. Members of ELAP, ELAR and ELDP have participated in on-site training providing access to resources, knowledge and networking that is indispensable for capacity building in countries with weak documentary infrastructure. In addition, the involvement of local linguists who are speakers of an endangered language or who are from the country where the language is spoken was strong focus for HRELP in 2011. ELAP has raised student recruitment from countries with little history in documentary and descriptive research. ELAR has made the documentary materials accessible and ELDP has delivered targeted support for grant applications through mentoring, especially in Africa. Our goal is to make the most of the foundations laid down so far and to build on them for the future.

HRELP

The Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP) was established in 2002 with a commitment of £20 million from the Arcadia Trust 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 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. The Director of ELDP is Dr Mandana Seyfeddinipur. All grant applications are assessed by an independent international panel, chaired by Professor Andrew Spencer (University of Essex). ELDP grantees and ELAP researchers an array of opportunities: an MA in Language Documentation and Description, a PhD in Field Linguistics, and postdoctoral fellowships at SOAS. We also offer a comprehensive programme of public lectures, seminars and training courses. Professor Peter Austin is the Director of ELAP.

Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR)

ELAR archives digital materials collected by ELDP grantees and ELAP staff and students, as well as other depositors. It is a prime resource for study and methodology in the field of digital language archiving. David Nathan is Director of ELAR.

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 postdoctoral fellowships at SOAS. We also offer a comprehensive programme of public lectures, seminars and training courses. Professor Peter Austin is the Director of ELAP.

The mission of HRELP is:

• 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;

• Train new generations of linguists to document and support endangered languages;

• 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 people;

• Welcome all those able to donate time, money or expertise to help build on the solid base HRELP has established.
Activities throughout the year

This annual report covers the period January to December 2011 for the ELAR, ELDP and HRELP programmes.

Students

ELAP had its eighth year of operation and enrolled 19 new MA Language Documentation and Description students in September 2011, an increase of 37% over 2010 and our largest MA intake ever. ELAP also enrolled 4 new PhD students, three of whom completed their MA at SOAS. One of the new students is our second Ghanaian in the PhD in Field Linguistics.

Also, previous ELAP students have been successful in continuing their work. Joseph Perry (MA 2011) has joined the linguistics department of Cambridge university to pursue his PhD. Lameen Souag (PhD 2010) received an AHRC postdoctoral grant and will be working on Kwaranidzayi, a Songhai language spoken in Algeria. Sophie Saffnner (PhD 2010) received an ELDP postdoctoral grant and will be working on the documentation of Ikaan, an endangered language spoken in Nigeria.

Staff

There were also some staff changes in ELAP. Ed Barrett, a researcher at LSF and Simard, who is now at Salford University and left SOAS in September. The number of ELAP staff has now been reduced to three (Prof Austin, Dr Salibabik, Dr Simard).

There were also some staff changes in ELAP. Dr Stuart McGill, who worked on the programme, has now left to join LSF and Simard, who is now at Salford University and left SOAS in September. The number of ELAP staff has now been reduced to three (Prof Austin, Dr Salibabik, Dr Simard).

Visitors

Professor Anvita Abbi, Jahawarlal Nehru University, New Delhi joined ELAP from March to December 2011 as Leverhulme Visiting Professor supported by a Leverhulme Trust grant to Professor Austin. Prof Abbi gave a series of Leverhulme Lectures, including a very well attended Public Lecture, on her research on Great Andamanese. She traveled widely in the UK, giving talks at Cambridge, Manchester, Newcastle, Edinburgh and York.

Professor Tania Kuteva, Dusseldorff University, was again Federico Lynen Visiting Professor supported by the Alexander von Humboldt Foundation from 1st January to 1st April 2011 and from 1st October to 31st December 2011.

Review

After 10 years of operation HRELP is now undergoing a full review. The operations of the three arms of HRELP over the past years will be reviewed with a view towards future strategic decisions. A Panel of four reviewers will assess our operations with input from HRELP staff, grantees, visitors, researchers and students in the field of language documentation. The results of the review will be available in 2012.

Notes from grantees

HRELP is supporting an increasing number of linguists who are from the country where an endangered language is spoken or who are native speakers of endangered languages themselves. Supporting locally is a strong focus of HRELP as sustainable capacity building and awareness raising are important elements in counteracting language loss. Here two ELDP grantees report about their projects in their home country.

Stefanie Pillai is from Malaysia. She is an associate professor at the University of Malaya. She describes her ELDP funded project on Malaccan Portuguese, a creole spoken in Malaysia.

“Teng bong” (All ok?) is a common form of greeting in the Malaccan Portuguese Creole. Yet it remains unfamiliar to many Malayan inhabitants of Portuguese descent (generally referred to as ‘Eurasians’ or ‘Serani’) who do not speak their heritage language. I am one of these people, being half ‘Moro’ (Indian) and half Eurasian. My academic background makes me want to examine the linguistic aspects of the Creole, but being part Eurasian, I am curious to know more about my cultural heritage beyond the snippets of information garnered from my mother and her siblings. Both my academic and personal interests have led me back to the city where it all began 500 years ago when the Portuguese conquered Malacca, and more precisely to the Portuguese Settlement, where the Creole is still spoken.

I am now able to satisfy both my interests thanks to a small ELDP grant. The grant is helping me document Malaccan Portuguese Carole in order to create an annotated corpus that can be used for linguistic research and serve as a digital resource for the community and other interested parties. Three months into the project, I have met older residents and community leaders who are more than willing to share their knowledge of the language and its linguistically colourful history. I have learnt about the efforts taken by the community to preserve and revitalise the language through the dissemination of cultural practices. I have met people dedicated to the teaching of the language, despite the lack of pedagogical resources. I have been shown unpublished descriptions of the Creole meticulously hand written by now deceased residents. Beneath all these efforts, it is likely that these will disappear in the near future due to the lack of transmission of the language and cultural practices. Since formal and ceremonial cultural practices and discourses are still somewhat in use in the communities where I work, I am also more than willing to document them; otherwise they will disappear without leaving a trace. The use of the language in many cultural practices that are reflected in formal and ceremonial language is in danger because it is usually restricted to old people. It is likely that these will disappear in the future due to the lack of transmission of the language and cultural practices. Since formal and ceremonial cultural practices and discourses are still somewhat in use in the communities where I work, and the practitioners are interested in collaborating and documenting them, it is an ideal opportunity for me not only as a linguist but also as a native speaker of the language and a community member to document this speech and produce a corpus of analyzed texts. The main purpose is to document formal and ceremonial discourses in K’ichee’, but I also hope that the material will help to revitalise and maintain the language and cultural practices.

Telma Can Pixabaj is from Guatemala. She is working on her PhD at the University of Texas at Austin. Here she talks about her ELDP funded documentation project on K’ichee’.

I am a native speaker of K’ichee’ from Santa Lucia Utatlán, Sololá, Guatemala. In many K’ichee’ communities, people are shifting to Spanish. At school the use of Spanish is obligatory and K’ichee’ is sometimes an option; however, teachers or the community often refuse to use it. Because of the K’ichee’ is threatened with losing speakers, but even more, with losing some discourse genres. It is urgent to document them; otherwise they will disappear without leaving a trace. The use of the language in many cultural practices that are reflected in formal and ceremonial language is in danger because it is usually restricted to old people. It is likely that these will disappear in the future due to the lack of transmission of the language and cultural practices. Since formal and ceremonial cultural practices and discourses are still somewhat in use in the communities where I work, and the practitioners are interested in collaborating and documenting them, it is an ideal opportunity for me not only as a linguist but also as a native speaker of the language and a community member to document this speech and produce a corpus of analyzed texts. The main purpose is to document formal and ceremonial discourses in K’ichee’, but I also hope that the material will help to revitalise and maintain the language and cultural practices.
Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP)

Administration

In 2011 ELDP made many improvements and revised its procedures, making administrative handling more efficient. ELDP is now actively monitoring grants and supporting grantees throughout and after their grant period. We are in touch with previous and current grantees helping them to complete their documentation and deposit their documentary collections with ELAR.

For the 2011 grant round ELDP developed and implemented an online submission system through which the entire application process is handled. Applications, references, reviews as well as panel assessment are processed through this system, making the granting process more accountable; all information is electronically stored now which is a major improvement as it streamlines processes and allows for easier information collection and analysis.

Grant round 2011

In 2011 the Panel awarded 35 grants amounting to £737,278. This brings the total number of grants awarded since 2003 to more than 250 and a total spend of £9m+ over the past nine years. This year there were 114 eligible applications; 40 applications were recommended for funding and 35 applicants have accepted the award. Five applicants did not accept the grant offer, three received funds from other sources. Two applicants received conditional offers, of which one has since been rejected and the other is still pending. The success rate in applications overall in 2011 was 31% (the rate in 2010 was 33%).

Capacity building

An analysis of funding by ELDP in the past nine years showed that one underrepresented area is Africa, despite the fact that about 2000 languages are spoken there. Therefore ELDP encouraged applications for African languages, especially from African linguists, lacking in previous ELDP grant rounds.

ELDP seeks to train linguists locally in the underrepresented areas by providing access to information and training in documentation techniques as well as in grant writing. ELDP panel member Felix Ameka has pioneered this approach in Africa and has been heavily involved in local capacity building in West and East Africa. HRELP staff participated in teaching and mentoring in Africa.

ELDP is actively engaged in these local training activities in collaboration with Felix Ameka. In summer 2011 Mandana Seyfeddinipur taught at the summer school Language Documentation: Methods and Technology in Addis Ababa (Ethiopia) funded by the Volkswagen Foundation and organised by Hirut W/Mariam, Felix Ameka and Gerrit Dimmendaal. There she met up with current grantees and advised local linguists on project conception and application writing. She also coordinated with other teachers at the school regarding potential mentoring activities. Providing training locally is now proving as an effective tool. In this year’s grant round the majority of applications were for the documentation of African languages with a high number of African linguists involved.

ELDP promotes mentoring by grantees so they can actively help newer grantees and provide access to important information otherwise not easily accessible. ELDP also used the opportunity at conferences and workshops to discuss with established language documenters mentoring possibilities.

ELDP staff attended international conferences like the annual Linguistic Society of America conference in Pittsburgh, the conference on ‘Language Documentation and Description’ in Leiden (Netherlands), meeting applicants and grantees to discuss their needs.

Collaborations and teaching

ELDP is interested in the utilization of the archived documentary corpora. The Volkswagen Foundation funded workshop Potentials of Language Documentation: Methods, Analyses, and Utilization provided a unique opportunity for discussions about utilization of documentation corpora and potentials for further cross linguistic and interdisciplinary research.

An area for improvement ELDP focuses on is video recording in language documentation and the documentation of multimodal language use. Researchers seldom receive training in these topics despite the fact that the visual medium is of crucial relevance for language documentation. Mandana Seyfeddinipur has been teaching classes on the visual mode of language, multimodality, especially manual gestures and language use. She also has been teaching the use of the annotation tool ELAN and theory and practice of video recording for documentary linguists in London within the field linguistics course of ELAP and at the ELDP grantees training. She has also been teaching at her alma mater, the Radboud University and the Max Planck Institute in Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

ELDP also continued to build on the relationships with other funding programmes, especially with DoBeS, funded by the Volkswagen Foundation which has its last grant round in 2012. Mandana Seyfeddinipur is involved in the planning of events and follow up programmes at the end of DoBeS.

Local activities

Jean McGarry participated in local initiatives in London such as the Bloomsbury breakfast, which encourages networking and partnerships between the academic, the cultural and the non-profit sectors in the Bloomsbury area where SOAS is located.

Jean is working in collaboration with the SOAS Alumni office to advertise our events and profile scholars through their networks, increasing our external profile. In collaboration with Candide Simard, Sophie Sallfrner and Daniel Shannon-Hughes she organized a teaching programme to invite schools Year 9 classes to SOAS to introduce linguistics and the topic of endangered languages, which will hopefully be carried out in 2012.

Jean is also developing an alumni network of ELDP grantees to enable exchange and support for junior fieldworkers. In 2012 year the first alumni grantee dinner will take place in London where local grantees and alumni will be invited for an evening event with short presentations and a group discussion. Jean also organizes meetings for grantees at international conferences with members of HRELP.
### ELDP grants awarded 2010

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<th>Principal Investigator</th>
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<th>Funding</th>
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ELDP grants are assessed by an international panel of experts. Andrew Spencer, Professor of Linguistics at the Department of Language and Linguistics of the University of Essex, acted as Independent Chair for the Panel meeting in 2011. Full details of the panel members can be found on the website at www.hrelp.org/aboutus/staff/panel/.

### The ELDP Panel and Administration

**Felix K. Ameka**,
**Leiden University**
Felix K. Ameka teaches 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.

**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.

**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.

**Susan D. Penfield**,
**University of Arizona**
Susan Penfield is Professor at the University of Arizona and was seconded to the National Science Foundation as Programme Officer for the Documenting Endangered Languages Programme. She has now returned to the University of Arizona where she is now the Research Coordinator for Confluence: Center for Creative Inquiry for interdisciplinary research, and for the Center for Educational Resources in Culture, Language and Literacy (CERCLL), and she is also a faculty affiliate for the Second Language Acquisition and Teaching Ph.D. Program

**Bruna Franchetto**,
**Federal University of Rio de Janeiro**
Bruna Franchetto is Professor at the Department of Anthropology and head of the Graduate Program in Social Anthropology of the National Museum, Federal University of Rio de Janeiro.

**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.

**Randy LaPolla**,
**La Trobe University**
Randy LaPolla is Professor of Linguistics and the Director of the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology at the Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences at LaTrobe University, Melbourne.

**Ex-officio members**

- **Peter Austin**, SOAS
- **Director, Endangered Language Academic Programme and Marit Rausing Chair in Field Linguistics at the School of Oriental and African Studies. See under ELAP staff.
- **David Nathan**, SOAS
- **Director, Endangered Languages Archive, School of Oriental and African Studies. See under ELAP staff.

**ELDP Staff**

- **Mandana Seyfeddinipur**, SOAS
  Director, Endangered Languages Documentation Programme and Senior Research Associate, Department of Linguistics at the School of Oriental and African Studies.
- **Jean McGarry**, SOAS
  Research Grants Officer, Endangered Languages Documentation Programme, School of Oriental and African Studies.

**Panel Membership**

- **Felix K. Ameka**, **Leiden University**
- **I Wayan Arka**, **The Australian National University**
- **Lenore Grenoble**, **University of Chicago**
- **Susan D. Penfield**, **University of Arizona**
- **Bruna Franchetto**, **Federal University of Rio de Janeiro**
- **Roberto Zavala-Maldonado**, **CIESAS-Sureste**
- **Randy LaPolla**, **La Trobe University**

**Panel meeting in 2011. Full details of the panel members can be found on the website at www.hrelp.org/aboutus/staff/panel/.**
Studying Sekpele is not only fascinating in itself but it also allows me to learn about the roots of my thesis and compile a documentary corpus of Sekpele accessible to the community, researchers and language documenters. Currently I am enrolled at SOAS funded by ELDP, holding an Individual Graduate Scholarship. I am working more on language documentation and description and on Ghana-Togo Mountain languages as a whole. My focus is on Sekpele because my parents are Likpes: a Sekpele speaking community with about 25000 community members can then be actively involved in the project by recording their own data. As a linguist, I look into variation between speakers in an endangered minority language. As a language documenter, I work together with community members and an anthropologist to find out how people farm for yams (a local staple), how people talk about yams and what yams mean for them as food and livelihood. I also collaborate with local colleagues in Nigeria. For example, Tunde Arogbola teaches students at Badan University to build speech synthesizers or machine translation for local languages. For my PhD, I would like to train Likpe speakers in audio recording, using a local language as the language of instruction. Once trained in a language they understand very well, community members can then be actively involved in the project by recording their own data. Because I will leave recording and computing equipment in the village, this can continue even after I have left.

Last year, I teamed up with Nigerian colleagues from Adebikes in Aksum University Akum and the University of Yaoundé I in a joint grant from the Endangered Languages Documentation and Description Project and the SOAS. We are now planning to introduce new courses and train staff to build local capacity in Language Documentation and Description and in Anthropological Linguistics.

Sophie Salffner is a doctoral researcher at SOAS. She talks about the different aspects of her linguistic and her documentary work in Nigeria:

After graduating from the ELAP MA and PhD and receiving ELDP funding for fieldwork, I am now an ELDP-funded postdoctoral researcher working on Ikan, spoken in Nigeria. As a linguist, I took into variable between speakers in an endangered minority language. As a language documenter, I work together with community members and an anthropologist to find out how people farm for yams (a local staple), how people talk about yams and what yams mean for them as food and livelihood. I also collaborate with local colleagues in Nigeria. For example, Tunde Arogbola teaches students at Badan University to build speech synthesizers or machine translation for local languages. For my PhD, I would like to train Likpe speakers in audio recording, using a local language as the language of instruction. Once trained in a language they understand very well, community members can then be actively involved in the project by recording their own data. Because I will leave recording and computing equipment in the village, this can continue even after I have left.

Last year, I teamed up with Nigerian colleagues from Adebikes in Aksum University Akum and the University of Yaoundé I in a joint grant from the Endangered Languages Documentation and Description Project and the SOAS. We are now planning to introduce new courses and train staff to build local capacity in Language Documentation and Description and in Anthropological Linguistics.

Cephas Delalorm is a first-year PhD student from Ghana now based at SOAS, talks about studying Sekpele, his mother-language:

I grew up speaking Ewe, Akan, Ga and Sekpele in Accra, the city capital of Ghana. I learned Sekpele because my parents are Likpes: a Sekpele-speaking community with about 25,000 members. Sekpele is a Ghana-Togo mountain language (GTM). A branch of Kwa, spoken along the Akwapim Range close to the Ghana-Togo border, north-east of Ghana.

I was always fascinated by the language and focused my studies on Sekpele. I studied linguistics and music for my bachelor degree in Ghana and completed a master’s degree in linguistics in Norway on the morphological and allomorph issues in Sekpele. Over the years, my interest focused more and more on language documentation and description and on Ghana-Togo Mountain languages as a whole. I am now enrolled at SOAS funded by ELDP holding an Individual Graduate Scholarship. I am working on the Nsuaem system of Sekpele and I hope to write a descriptive grammar of Sekpele as my PhD thesis and compile a documentary corpus of Sekpele accessible to the community, researchers and the public in general.

Studying Sekpele is not only fascinating in itself but it also allows me to learn about the roots of the language and culture. It allows me to travel to the Likpe communities to record and document Sekpele. There are two main roads from Ho稠 (the district capital) that lead to the villages where Sekpele is spoken. However some of the communities are not connected directly via roads but through trekking paths through the jungle. When I began my field work in the Likpe villages I met many of my relatives for the first time in my life. My new project is received with a lot of enthusiasm by the communities especially since I could show them the results of my thesis in a book.
Endangered Languages Week 2011

This year’s Endangered Languages Week took place from 9-14 May 2011. Our aim was to highlight the issues of endangered languages and language documentation, through a variety of talks, displays, discussions, films, lectures and workshops.

One focus of our annual outreach event was language endangerment and documentation in Africa. In the past years the developments in documentary linguistics have shown remarkable differences in the endangerment situations in different regions in the world. As HRELP’s activities in teaching, capacity building, documentation, and research bore fruit it was timely to make Africa this year’s topic with a dedicated annual public lecture and a one day workshop.

Annual public lecture
Jeff Good (University at Buffalo, USA) “What are we trying to preserve: Diversity, change, and ideology at the edge of Cameroonian Grassfields”

Jeff Good gave the public annual lecture with the provocative title “What are we trying to preserve?” In his lecture he questioned the notion that language death is associated with the loss of knowledge entailed in a specific language. He argued that entire language ecologies might be at risk rather than one particular language within them. He exemplified how in the linguistically highly diverse Lower Fungom region of Northwest Cameroon languages are rather markers of political identities than of deeply embedded personal identities. Questioning the essentialising discourse of language preservation he discussed the implications of his analysis for research projects in a region where frequent language loss and emergence is a normal part of changes to political structures.

Workshop on applied language documentation in sub-Saharan Africa

A one day workshop on ‘Applied language documentation in sub-Saharan Africa’ was organised by Stuart McGill and Oliver Bond with support from the British Academy. The workshop discussed how the central themes of language documentation relate to improving site-specific applied language documentation. Issues discussed included:

• how corpus design might help/hinder local dissemination of language documentation outcomes;
• how new technology and media can be employed in applied language documentation to overcome prevailing problems with dissemination in community settings;
• ways in which site-specific community participation in language documentation can lead to more effective application of language documentation goals;
• how multi-disciplinary approaches to language documentation might provide lasting impact in African language support and maintenance.

The six presentations at the workshop

Jeff Good, University at Buffalo
“Community” collaboration in Africa: experiences from Northwest Cameroon

Megan Biesele, Kalahari Peoples Group
The Village Schools Project and the Ju’hoan Transcription Group: overcoming obstacles to community-based language documentation in Namibia

Michael Thomas, University of Colorado, Boulder
Building community participation into the documentation design: lessons learned in Sakun (Sukur)

Amadou Kane Bèye, Alexander Cobbinah, Friederike Lüpke & Jean-Baptiste Sagna, School of Oriental and African Studies
Through the looking glass: emic and etic representations of material culture and related language use in a museum; first experiences from the Bainounk Gabriel language area

Stuart McGill, School of Oriental and African Studies
Documentation, ideology, and development in the Kainji languages of northern Nigeria

Guy De Pauw, University of Antwerp and African Language Technology (AILAI)
Deploying the data: a state-of-affairs in African language technology

Open Day
11am – 6pm
Free entry
Brunei Suite, SOAS, London
www.hrelp.org

Endangered Languages Week 2011

Poster for Endangered Languages Week by Tom Castle, using a photograph by Nana Ama Agyeman.

Jeff Good’s poster, for Jeff Good’s Endangered Languages Week Annual Public Lecture, using a photograph from Jeff Good.

London’s Language Landscape

Open Day
12.05.2011
11am – 6pm
Free entry
Brunei Suite, SOAS, London
www.hrelp.org

Poster by Nick Ritchie for the Endangered Languages Week Open Day, as part of the London Languages Landscape project show-cased at the event, see page 17.
Open Day

The Open Day took place in the Brunei Gallery at SOAS. SOAS staff and students, visitors from other universities and the public visited the Gallery to learn about our work, and projects and activities of other parties engaged in documentation of linguistic and cultural diversity. We invited a wide variety of presenters to come to SOAS to participate in this event, including: The Smithsonian Recovering Voices Programme; The British Library (Endangered Archives Programme), the Foundation for Endangered Languages, the Subject Centre for Languages, Linguistics and Area Studies, the World Oral Literature Project, International Institute for Sign Languages and Deaf Studies and several academic publishers. Visitors could explore various projects on endangered languages through displays, demonstrations, software, posters and books. In addition to the stalls presenters also gave talks about their work on endangered languages. We also launched the newly published book "Birds of the Great Andamanese" by Satish Pande and Anvita Abbi.

A highlight at the Open Day was London Language Landscape, a project by students in Linguistics at SOAS, including the ELAP MA programme, MA in Linguistics, and Linguistics undergraduates together with Tom Caple (ELAR) and Candide Simard (ELAP). See page 17.

Justin Watkins talking to SOAS Director Paul Webley who visited the Open Day. (photo: Glenn Ratcliffe).

Cambridge University Press stall at the Open Day (photo: Glenn Ratcliffe).


Mick Paynter reading from his newly published book “A Worm’s Folly” (photo: Glenn Ratcliffe).

Exhibitors presenting their work at the ELW Open Day (photo: Glenn Ratcliffe).

Visitors welcomed by ELAP student Nana Ama Agyeman at the ELW Open Day (photo: Glenn Ratcliffe).

A Worm’s Folly. Poems in Cornish by Mick Paynter, launched at the ELW Open Day.
Meet an endangered language

Throughout the week a series of brief introductions to the language, culture and people of a number of endangered language groups took place. In 2011 the following languages were featured:

Bainounk by Friederike Lüpke
Bainounk is spoken in southern Senegal and this talk introduced plant and pottery vocabulary.

Jaminjing by Candide Simard
A presentation about Candide’s experiences working with Jaminjing speakers in Western Australia, particularly in documenting their knowledge about the plants and animals of the area.

Cicipu by Stuart McGill
Cicipu is one of several hundred living Celtic languages which are found in two linguistic groups. Cicipu together with Welsh and Breton forms the Brythonic group and Manx Gaelic, Irish and Scots Gaelic are the Goidelic languages. There has been an upsurge of support for and interest in the language in recent years with a Language Office within Cornwall Council which works to promote the language in schools and in public life. Cornish is already taught in some schools, there is an existing kindergarten using the language and a movement to expand this work. A growing modern literature competes with traditional texts for the reader’s attention.

Endangered Sign Languages by Ulrike Zeshan
This presentation focussed research on two small village sign languages: (1) Alipur Village Sign Language used in the village of Alipur in South India, where there are 140 deaf people among a population of over 10,000; (2) Chicano on the Yucatan peninsula in Mexico with 17 deaf people of all ages out of over 500 population.

Cornish by Mick Paynter
Cornish (Kernwek) is one of six living Celtic languages which are found in two linguistic groups. Cornish together with Welsh and Breton forms the Brythonic group and Manx Gaelic, Irish and Scots Gaelic are the Goidelic languages. There has been an upsurge of support for and interest in the language in recent years with a Language Office within Cornwall Council which works to promote the language in schools and in public life. Cornish is already taught in some schools, there is an existing kindergarten using the language and a movement to expand this work. A growing modern literature competes with traditional texts for the reader’s attention.

Great Andamanese by Anvita Abbi
Introduction to the unique languages of the Great Andaman Islands.

Basque by Joseba Itxail Lopez de Lasaunaga
An introduction to the Basque language and the Basque Society of London.

Cac by Aurélie Cauchard
Cac is spoken in New Caledonia by about 1,000 people. This presentation introduced the Cac community, their environment and culture, and some observations (resulting from a preliminary fieldwork in Pobulu) on the speaker’s attitudes towards their language and the factors that may endanger the transmission process.

Bainounk Gubëeher by Alex Cobbinal
This session introduced Bainounk Gubëeher from southern Senegal and issues of multilingualism and language contact to find out how people deal with this situation and how they manage to maintain their language.

Gamlaray by Peter Austin
Gamlaray is an Australian Aboriginal language spoken by the Kamilaroi people over a large area in the north-west of New South Wales. After a tragic history of language loss, Gamlaray (together with the related Yuwalaaray language) is now being revived and is being taught in schools and used for a growing range of functions.

The Ju’hoan Transcription Group by Megan Bieseke
This group from the N. Nya Conservancy, a Ju’hoan community organization transcribes and translates materials in their language for political letter-writing, land rights history, and documentation.

Corpora in Afro-Asiatic Languages by Amina Mettochi, Christian Chandra and Graziano Savá
A presentation on data, collection and annotation methods, and computer software (based on ELAN) developed within a project collecting materials on Berber, Tsa’namko and Ughinga.

The London Language Landscape project celebrates linguistic diversity by building a picture of the language varieties spoken throughout London, using SOAS as a starting point. The project originated during a seminar in Applied Language Documentation and Description where the students discussed how best to communicate about their work as linguists and documenters during the upcoming Endangered Languages Week. The students and tutor decided to continue exploring these ideas as an extra-curricular activity. Together with Candide Simard and Tom Castle the ELAP and Linguistics students developed the idea to record the languages of people at SOAS and to place a mark on a world map where the language was spoken, visualizing linguistic diversity at SOAS.

For two weeks the students set up a stand in the SOAS foyer, inviting fellow students, staff and visitors to provide information and recordings about the languages they speak. Many people recorded a few phrases, songs, their favourite words or some more detailed discussions, providing insights into their languages. They then marked the location where the language was spoken on a world map. The sessions were a great success and people enjoyed contributing information and seeing their languages displayed. The process enabled the students to use some of the skills they have acquired as part of their courses, including transcription and recording, while also exercising editorial and ethical judgment. They also gained experience in designing and planning a project as well as some specific technical skills like linking sound recording to locations on Google maps.

During the Open Day the students exhibited the project’s results. They created an interactive exhibition featuring maps, photos and audio recordings. Visitors could click on locations on a map and listen to the language recording. They also could record their own languages at the open day and place it on the map immediately. The exhibit was very well received by fellow students and visitors. Many people asked about the future of the project. This motivated the students to apply for funding to create a website in order to give Language Landscape a permanent home on the internet. The application to the Alumni Fund was successful and the students and staff have continued working on the project, with the objective of making the website available in 2012.
Endangered Languages Documentation Programme
Documentation Projects Awarded 2011
In September 2011 ELDP ran a one week training course on language documentation theory and methodology for fourteen ELDP grantees working on languages spoken in Mexico (Justin McIntosh, Stephanie Villard), Guatemala (Telma Can Pixabaj), Canada (Olivia Sammons), Egypt (Valentina Schiattarella) Nigeria (Eno Urua, Linda Nkamigbo), Cameroon (Neba Ayunwi), Gabon (Odette Ambouroue), Ethiopia (Yvonne Treis), Namibia (Lee Prattchet), Papua New Guinea (Jessica Cleary Kemp), Myanmar (Ma Ni Ni Aung), and Malaysia (Stefanie Pillai). Stuart McGill and Peter Austin (ELAP), David Nathan and Tom Castle (ELAR) and Mandana Seyfeddinipur (ELDP) together with Birgit Hellwig (La Trobe University, Australia) an ELAP alumna, ELDP grantee and ELAR depositor, taught at the training.

Trainees had different levels of experience. While some were very experienced others were just about to embark on a documentation project. The combination of trainees provided the opportunity to meet peers and discuss questions and to share experiences among each other and with the teaching staff, establishing networking opportunities and professional relationships.

A highlight of this training was that over half of the participants were either native speakers of the languages they were documenting or came from the country where the language was spoken: Mai Ni Ni Aung (Myanmar), Eno Urua and Linda Nkamigbo (Nigeria), Telma Can Pixabaj (Guatemala).

Participants were trained in audio and video recording techniques and methodology as well as in the use of linguistic annotation and analysis tools. A further focus was archiving and metadata and data management. Theoretical issues in language documentation like multimodality and language use and ethics in language documentation and mobilisation provided the basis for fruitful ongoing discussions among participants. In addition, we offered one-on-one sessions during which trainees could discuss different issues with a staff member in person.

For ELAR the training is of central importance, as relationships with future depositers are established, their skills are developed, thus improving the quality of the documentary material they eventually deposit with ELAR. This type of training is also of central relevance for ELDP’s work since it does not only provide training and information but also creates a platform for exchange and networking. The group of participants have now set up a Facebook group keeping in touch to be able to continue discussions and support.

Training in methods and theory of language documentation is in high demand as it is still not a regular part of curricula at universities. The need for training arises from rapid development of documentary linguistics over the past ten years during which theory, methods and standards were being developed. The process is still ongoing and with it the importance of training world-wide. Members of HRELP are involved in training of language documenters around the globe. Peter Austin and David Nathan taught in Japan at the Research Institute for Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies. David Nathan also taught a workshop on audio theory and practice for Language Documentation at the Australian Linguistic Society Annual Conference. Mandana Seyfeddinipur teaches about multi-modality and the use of video in language documentation as well as grant writing. She taught sessions on these issues at the East African Summer School in Language Documentation in Ethiopia funded by the Volkswagen Foundation. Teaching at different events not only supports the establishment of standards but also results in capacity building and the recruitment of applicants and students who normally do not have easy access to this type of resource.
Visiting Leverhulme Professor Anvita Abbi

Anvita Abbi is originally based in India as Professor of Linguistics, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She is a world-recognized distinguished linguist on minority languages of the Indian sub-continent and has carried out first-hand field research on all six language families of India. In 2011 Anvita Abbi spent her Leverhulme Visiting Professorship at ELAP/ SOAS. This was a landmark year for her research and documentary work of the past decade on Great Andamanese, a highly endangered language spoken on the Andaman Islands in the Bay of Bengal. During the year her documentary collection, and two books were published and launched at SOAS.

Back in 2001 Anvita Abbi conducted the first language survey on the languages spoken on the Islands. At that time there were about 36 members of the community with nine or ten members speaking Great Andamanese at varying competency-levels. In 2011 there are only five speakers left. In 2005 Anvita Abbi began her ELDP major documentation project: Vanishing Voices of the Great Andamanese. In her extensive fieldwork she worked closely with the few remaining speakers some of which are now deceased. Andamanese languages have been claimed to be the last surviving languages that can be traced back to pre-Neolithic times in Southeast Asia and possibly the first settlement of the region by modern humans. Anvita Abbi has created a unique record of Great Andamanese. It is an assembly of audio and video recordings, texts, books, articles and images which together make up a linguistic and social ethnography of the Great Andamanese people. With the assistance of ELAR members the collection is made available at ELAR.

But Anvita Abbi did not stop here. Together with Satish Pandे a reknowned ornithologist she documented Andamanese knowledge of the local birds. Their interdisciplinary work can be seen in the book ‘Birds of the Great Andamanese’. The book presents the avian families, genera and species as well as the current conservation status, threats and distribution of avian species endemic to the region. Local names of a variety of birds in the Great Andamanese language have been mapped with the scientific names for the first time. The book was launched at the Open Day of Endangered Languages Week in the Brunei Gallery.

Anvita Abbi also published this year a trilingual (English-Andamanese-Hindi) and triscriptal dictionary. The dictionary contains pictures and definitions but also unique detailed ethnographic information and ecological knowledge of the Andamanese. The dictionary is accompanied by a CD with the interactive electronic version of the dictionary for publication. They edited hundreds of audio files, prepared a help section, and ironed out problems with multi-font display. Her lexicon was launched as part of her Leverhulme Lecture in November 2011 in SOAS’ Brunei Gallery. At the moment Anvita Abbi is finalizing a grammar of Great Andamanese and she will be continuing to work on this fascinating language.
ELAR Workshop on Language Documentation and Archiving

On 18th November 2011, ELAR held a workshop on Language Documentation and Archiving, the first event dedicated to bringing together practitioners from both fields and synthesising new directions. The one-day workshop attracted 70 attendees and speakers from the USA, Germany, the Netherlands, and UK. Topics ranged from the latest software and workflow, to knowledge representation for archived grammars, to accessible presentation interfaces for archived resources, and prospects and models for community participation. The plenary, by Professor Anthony Woodbury, brought several of these strands together and presented several innovative proposals for archives to provide dynamics for the improvement and evolution of language documentation, such as soliciting critical feedback from users and establishing new genres for reviews of language documents in journals. Overall, two main trends were signalled; firstly, the restoration and recognition of archivists’ roles in curation and presentation, and, secondly, the integration of community members as participants in archiving and presentation of resources. These two trends, if realised, imply new partnerships between communities, documenters, and archives, and they challenge current boundaries between the roles played by these groups in addressing language endangerment. The workshop proceedings were published and made available at the workshop, and will be available online in April 2012. For further information, see http://www.hrelp.org/events/LDLT3/workshop.html.

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Language Documentation and Linguistic Theory 3 Conference

HRELP held its third biennial Language Documentation and Linguistic Theory conference on 19th and 20th November 2011 with a focus on Asia. The conference was attended by 80 delegates from a wide range of countries, and 28 papers were presented in two parallel sessions over the two days. There were also two invited presentations:

- Balthasar Bickel, Zurich University “Multivariate typology and field linguistics”
- Anju Saxena, Uppsala University “Towards empirical classification of Kinhauni varieties”

There were sessions on:

- Research Design & Outcomes
- Pronouns
- Information Structure
- Language Documentation
- Evidentiality
- Phonetics
- Phonology & Metre
- Systems of Classification
- Documentation Design
- Grammar & Discourse
- Nominals
- Possession and Syntax

A volume of proceedings edited by Peter K. Austin, Oliver Bond, Lutz Marten and David Nathan was published at the time of the conference.
Endangered Languages
Academic Programme (ELAP)

ELAP is in its eighth year of operation and enrolled 19 MA Language Documentation and Description students in September 2011, the largest intake of students to date. 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 had worked in industry.

Four new students joined the PhD in Field Linguistics programme in September 2011:

- Cephas Delalorm is from Ghana and received an ELAP scholarship. He will be working on description and documentation of Sekpele a minority language of eastern Ghana.
- Karolina Grzech completed her MA in Global Problems at the University of Wroclaw, Poland and the MA in Language Documentation and Description at SOAS. She is working on issues of language endangerment in Ecuador.
- Teresa Peota did the MA in Linguistics at SOAS and will be working on applicative constructions in a minority Bantu language of Mozambique.
- Thomas A. Ritchie completed the MA in Language Documentation and Description at SOAS and will be working on the documentation of Chimane (Bolivia) and description of topic expressions in the language

Volume 9 of Language Documentation and Description (LDD) edited by Julia Sallabank was published in June 2011, and contains papers on endangered languages, endangered knowledge and sustainability (arising from the 2010 ELAP Workshop) along with general papers on language documentation and description.

Volume 10 of LDD edited by Nicolas Burenhult, Arthur Holmer, Anastasia Karlsson, Håkan Lundstrom and Jan-Olof Svantesson was published in December 2011. It contains selected papers originally presented at the conference Humanities of the lesser-known: new directions in the description, documentation and typology of endangered languages and musics, 10th-11th September 2010 at the Centre for Languages and Literature at Lund University, Sweden. The papers cover issues in language and music, prosody, and grammar and meaning.

Other Activities
The Department of Linguistics and ELAP ran a series of seminars throughout the period covered by this report, which were coordinated by Julia Sallabank. They included the following presentations dealing with issues related to endangered languages:

18th January 2011 “A waking language (Kaurna) in the public domain (including placenames)” Rob Amery (University of Adelaide, Australia)

25th January 2011 “An oblique look at morphological alignment in Iranian: case marking shift in Southern Taleshi” Gerardo De Caro (SOAS)

1st February 2011 “Siwi Indirect Object Agreement: Synchronic Description and Diachronic Perspectives” Lameen Souag (SOAS)

8th March 2011 “Ditransitives in the Aor-Pantar languages” Sebastian Fedden (University of Surrey)

10th May 2011 “In the hands of babies: the future of sign languages” Gary Morgan (City University)

7th June 2011 “What are the aims of language revitalisation?” Julia Sallabank (SOAS)

29th November 2011 “New technologies in Maori language revitalisation: the creation of a digital repository for the preservation of Maori songs” Dean Mahuta & Rachael Kalai-Mahuta (Auckland University of Technology, New Zealand)

4th October 2011 “Through the Looking Glass of Inalienability and Inheritance: Pervasive Body Part Semantics in Present Great Andamanese” Anvita Abbi (Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi and SOAS)

13th December 2011 “Xun, a special language type?” Christa Koenig (University of Cologne, Germany)

Workshop: Applied Language Documentation in sub-Saharan Africa
A one day workshop organised by ELAP on 14th May 2011. The keynote speakers were Prof Jeff Good (University of Buffalo) and Dr Guy De Pauw (University of Antwerp & African Language Technology).

Publications

Anvita Abbi


Peter K. Austin


Oliver Bond

Tania Kuteva


Stuart McGill


Julia Sallabank
Australian author and researcher in the field of endangered languages. Her contributions include work on the documentation and description of endangered languages, with a particular focus on the languages of the Andaman Islands. She has contributed to the Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages, among other works. Her research explores the role of documentary linguistics in understanding and preserving endangered languages.

Candide Simard
Canadian author and researcher in the field of documentary linguistics. His work involves documenting and describing endangered languages, particularly in the context of the Andaman Islands. Simard has contributed to a number of academic publications and has given presentations at various conferences, focusing on the documentation of endangered languages and their cultural context.

Conference presentations

Anvita Abbi

20 April 2011 “Tense, aspect, mood and evidentiality in Sasak, eastern Indonesia” invited speaker at Chronos 10 Conference, Aston University, Birmingham, UK.

Oliver Bond
28 April 2011 (with Gregory D.S. Anderson) “Cognate nominal constructions and focus manipulation”. Workshop on Information Structure and Subordination: South America and Beyond, Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, The Netherlands.

Peter K. Austin
7 January 2011 “What is metadata and what is it good for?”, Tutorial on Language Archiving, Linguistic Society of America Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh, USA.


Stuart McGill
April 2011 “Vowel harmony, transparency, and opacity in Cipciu”, West African Phonology Day, SOAS.

14 May 2011 “Documentation, development, and ideology in the Kanji languages of northern Nigeria” Workshop on Applied Language Documentation in sub-Saharan Africa, SOAS.


November 2011 “Determiners and third-person agreement in Cipciu: remnant or innovation?” Workshop on Loss and Gain in Grammar, with a focus on Jukunoid and its close relatives, Cologne University, Germany.


Julia Sallabank


3 September 2011 (with Clare Fergus) ‘ideologies of ‘authenticity’ in an endangered language: Change and ‘correctness’ in Guernsey French’, British Association for Applied Linguistics, Bristol, UK.

3 November 2011 ‘From language documentation to language planning: not necessarily a direct route’ Invited presentation at Workshop on Potentials of Language Documentation: Methods, Analyses, Utilization, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology, Leipzig, Germany.

Candide Simard

Seminars

Anvita Abbi
13 March 2011 “Hindi as the language of India”, Nehru Centre, London, UK.

17 May 2011 “Vanishing voices of the Andaman Islands”, Endangered Languages Week, SOAS.

31 May 2011 “Pervasive body part semantics in present Great Andamanese”, Department of Linguistics, Essex University, UK.

13th June 2011 “Possession in present Great Andamanese”, Department of Linguistics, Essex University, UK.

4 October 2011. “Looking through the glass of inalienability and inerency: Pervasive body part semantics in present Great Andamanese”, Linguistics Department, SOAS.

16 October 2011 “Domains of inalienability and inerency: Pervasive body part semantics in present Great Andamanese”, Linguistics Department, University of York, UK.

18 October 2011 “Challenges for a fieldworker”, Linguistics Department, SOAS.

1 November 2011 “Understanding the possible variability of human language: A case of rare linguistic structures in Great Andamanese”, Linguistics Department, Manchester University, UK.

3rd November 2011 “Understanding the possible variability of human language: A case of rare linguistic structures in Great Andamanese”, Linguistics Department, Edinburgh University, UK.

17 November 2011 “Breathing life into a dying language: Documenting Great Andamanese”, Leverhulme Public Lecture, SOAS.

1 December 2011 “The last words: Documenting endangered languages of the world”, Leverhulme Public Lecture, University of Cambridge, UK.
8 April 2011, invited participant to AHRC Beyond Text initiative workshop “Beyond Copyright”, Intellectual Property Institute, Queen Mary University, London, UK.

8 December 2011, meeting of Scientific Advisory Board, Sorosoro Project, Foundation Chirac, Paris, France.

Staff awards

Peter Austin was awarded £57,000 from the Leverhulme Trust to invite Anvita Abbi to be Leverhulme Visiting Professor at SOAS for March–December 2011.

Stuart McGill (with Elena Perekhvalskaya, St Petersburg State University, and Kirill Babaev, Russian State University for the Humanities) was awarded $3,800 from the Foundation of Fundamental Linguistic Research for reconstruction of the Kainji languages, northern Nigeria.

Candide Simard was awarded a 50% post-doctoral fellowship from the Volkswagen Foundation to work on a project led by Professor Eva Schultz-Berndt and Dr Claudia Wegener on documentation of languages of the Kimberley Region, Western Australia.

ELAP staff

Academic staff

For full staff profiles please visit the website www.hrelp.org/aboutus/staff

Professor Anvita Abbi

Anvita Abbi is originally based in India as a Professor of Linguistics, Centre for Linguistics, School of Language, Literature and Culture Studies, Jawaharlal Nehru University, New Delhi. She is a world-recognized distinguished linguist on minority languages of the Indian sub-continent and has carried out first-hand field research on all six language families of India.

Professor Peter K. Austin

Peter Austin is Marit Rausing Professor of Linguistics, Centre for Linguistic Research for Endangered Languages, northern Nigeria. His research project, ‘NegTyp’, works on grammaticalization, typology, and language evolution. He is particularly interested in the documentation and description of the Kainji languages spoken in north-west Nigeria, and the interaction between discourse and grammar, typology, technology and language documentation, and phonology. Stuart moved into a career in IT consultancy in August 2011

Dr. Julie Salibank

Julia Salibank is Lecturer in Language Support and Revitalisation. Her research interests are primarily sociolinguistic, focussing on language revitalisation, motivating young generations, Guernésiais, literacy practices in endangered languages, and their implications for language policy, materials and other literature.

Candide Simard

Candide is Senior Teaching Fellow in Language Documentation and Description. Her research interests are prosody of Jaminjing, an Australian Aboriginal language, and the role of prosody in language documentation.

Support staff

Alison Kelly

Alison is the Administrator for the Endangered Languages Academic Programme. Her main responsibilities include: dealing with enquiries from students and the general public, producing course handbooks and other materials, editing the HRELP website, minuting meetings, assisting with the ELAP budget and providing administrative support to the Director. Alison left ELAP in August 2011

Other Activities

Peter K. Austin

8 January 2011, meeting of Committee on Endangered Languages and their Preservation, Linguistic Society of America Annual Meeting, Pittsburgh, USA.

Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR)

The Endangered Languages Archive provides digital archiving and associated services for ELDP grantees, ELAP staff and students, 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 2011

This year saw further development and population of our new online archiving system under the development team of David Nathan, Ed Garrett and Tom Castle. Various improvements to the interface, log-in, and access control functions were made, many in response to user feedback. Depositors are now able to edit the content of their own deposit home pages, and make other settings such as control of user access. ELAR is the first archive to provide such social networking functions, and it is appropriate that this year has seen social networking come of age across much of the world with rapidly expanding internet access and the stabilisation of conventions about privacy and sharing, many of which are already established as core features of ELAR.

Highlight: community engagement

This year we would like to highlight the growing trend for archives to support a greater variety of users, especially speakers from endangered languages communities. In November, ELAR ran an international workshop on language documentation and archiving. This was the first ever such workshop to bring together practitioners and theorists in language archiving language documentation to discuss current and future trends in their increasingly overlapping activities. Speakers at the workshop articulated a vision for our archives to become increasingly participatory, involving language speakers in every aspect of language work from recording to resource curation to greater archive usage in revitalisation activities. ELAR has consistently been at the forefront in promoting such community-oriented services. Members of endangered languages communities are increasingly represented among ELAR’s growing membership of over 500 registered users. This is especially gratifying given ELAR’s emphasis on respecting community access protocols.

The proportion of language community registrations is currently running at around 10%, with people from communities including: Aleut (Canada), Arauho (USA), Australian Sign Language, Bano (China), Burushaski (Pakistan), Han (China), Inupiaq (Alaska), Irish (Ireland), Sámi (Finland), Serrano and Cahuilla (USA), Tai-Ahom (India), Torwali (Pakistan), Wolof (Senegal), and Yampiu (Nepal). The majority of ELAR users are language scholars, but we also have a significant number of interdisciplinary scholars such as anthropologists, archivists, and from the general public.

Services

Throughout the year, David, Ed, and Tom advised ELDP grantees, ELAP staff and students, and others, about preparing data for archiving, documentation methods, and the selection and usage of field equipment. We provide advice in response to email as well as face to face, which is often best when dealing with the complex problems encountered by documenters trying to organise massive amounts of data. David sat on the ELDP Selection Panel, advising on matters related to documentation methodology and equipment. Tom taught classes on audio recording to ELAP students. Tom manages and maintains the Rausing Room, an area we have allocated for use by ELAP staff and students, ELAP clients, and other visitors and trainees. It is equipped with practice recording facilities, an array of field equipment, computer workstations, and a range of databases.

Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR) Annual Report

Materials received by ELAR 2011

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Depositor</th>
<th>ELDP grants</th>
<th>Project Language(s)</th>
</tr>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Jonathan Amith</td>
<td>PPG0048</td>
<td>Yolouchit</td>
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<tr>
<td>Ayla Applebaum</td>
<td>IGSO071</td>
<td>Kabardian</td>
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<tr>
<td>Emmen Bach</td>
<td>MDP0102</td>
<td>Haisla</td>
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<tr>
<td>Megan Biesele</td>
<td>FTGO149</td>
<td>Juhuan</td>
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<tr>
<td>Anna Bugavea</td>
<td>IPTO128</td>
<td>Ainu</td>
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<td>Ben Burt</td>
<td>Independent</td>
<td>Solomon Islands Languages</td>
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<td>Gabriela Caballero</td>
<td>IPTO138</td>
<td>Raramuri</td>
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<td>Natalia Caceres</td>
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<td>Yekwana</td>
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<td>Tucker Childs</td>
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<td>Krim &amp; Bom</td>
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<td>MDP0193</td>
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<td>Kristine Hildebrandt</td>
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<td>Nur &amp; Phu</td>
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<td>Clair Hill</td>
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<tr>
<td>Gwendolyn Hyslop</td>
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<td>Kuirlopp</td>
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<td>Frances Kefod</td>
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<td>SG0002</td>
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<td>Irina Nikolaeva</td>
<td>MDP0051</td>
<td>Nenets</td>
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<td>Carmel O’Hanmessy</td>
<td>FTGO137</td>
<td>Warlpiri</td>
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<td>Jonathan Owens</td>
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<td>Anthony Woodbury</td>
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<td>Chatino</td>
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</table>

[Image of word cloud illustrating metadata categories of Endangered Languages Archive users]
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. The Rausing Room has proved to be of considerable benefit to ELAP’s teaching programme, with postgraduate students affirming that its facilities greatly enhance the quality and outcomes of their education experience. Many scholars used our Visitor’s Office, including Frances Kofod, Stuart McGill, Nana Ama Agyeman, Graziano Sava, Mei Li Fang, Nick Reid, Prof Enosi Abasi Urue, Imelda Udom, Prof Francis Oyebade, and Taiwo Ayogu.

Archive contents, usage and technical news
ELAP continued to add at least 4 deposits a month to our online catalogue until April when we lost key staff and the total number of deposits received is 120. Currently ELAP has over 40 of the types of collections available online. These online collections consist of 7400 data ‘bundles’, of which 4200 have unrestricted access to all registered users. Of these collections available of deposits received is 120.

Publications


ELAP’s IT infrastructure was upgraded and made more resilient in 2011. Our mass data storage unit was upgraded to 48 TB capacity, and moved, together with our Fever, to a dedicated data centre adjacent to SOAS. The recurrent costs, about £10,000 per year, are being met by SOAS. For greater disaster protection, our tape library is now geographically located. We created a new website, http://elar-archive.org, to serve as a portal for providing our data access catalogue with the various services and advice we provide on the HRELP website and ELARP.

ELARP’s website (elar.soas.ac.uk) attracts over 200,000 views and over 1,000 downloads annually.

We expect these numbers to increase significantly following the re-staffing of ELAR in 2012. David visited our ‘sister’ archive, DoBeS (Max Planck Institute) in Nijmegen, the Netherlands, to discuss future collaboration, including potential co-archiving. ELAR, together with the AILLA (University of Texas) and DoBeS archives, is proposing a new initiative for the DELAMAN archive group to raise our members’ profiles and accessibility of materials by developing archive ‘shopfronts’ and public exhibition activities, including multi-archive events.

Training events
ELAR staff participated in the following training events:

Documentary Linguistics Workshop, KA-ken, Tokyo University of Foreign Studies, 18-24 February (Run by David and Peter Austin)

ELDLP training, SOAS, 7-14 September.

Presso Centre digital archiving conference in Hilversum, the Netherlands, ‘Screening the Future’, 14-15 March (attended by David and Tom)

Audio for language documentation. Workshop at the annual conference of the Australian Linguistic Society, Australian National University, Canberra, 4 December (run by David).

ELAR Staff
For full details of ELAR staff members interests see www.hrelp.org/aboutus/staff

David Nathan, Director

With over 20 years experience in educational and community support for endangered languages, especially Australian Aboriginal languages. David has taught computing, linguistics, cognitive science, multimedia, and language documentation and archiving. His publications include the textbook Australia’s Indigenous Languages, and papers on archiving, language documentation, audio, multimedia, lexicography, and the internet. He has produced multimedia CDs for a number of languages, established and runs several web sites, and was co-author (with Peter Austin) of the first hypertext dictionary. Currently he is interested in new horizons for archiving-as-publishing using advancing social networking environments, and in the connections between language documentation and language support, and how these connections can be supported through archives and innovative media technologies.

Thomas Castle, Digital Technician

Tom studied Three Dimensional Design at Kingston in Surrey, completing a BA (Hons) in 1977. He worked in the theatre, as a designer/maker, sound and lighting technician and as a performer with many experimental, experimental or community groups. Tom developed skills working with video, photography and sound for live performance and multimedia events. In 1982 he moved to Hoxton Hall in the East End of London, designing, teaching, performing and providing technical support for community projects. In 1990, he became a volunteer counselor and obtained a Postgraduate Diploma in Psychodynamic Counselling from Birchfield, University of London. In 1992 he became a freelance technician, designer and production manager, touring with contemporary dance groups, performing with Kathak dancers, rock bands and experimental puppeteers. In 2004, he completed an MA in Sonic Arts from Middlesex, having turned his attentions back to experimenting with sound, technology and art. Tom is a member of ELAR’s online system development team, he manages data transfer, back-up systems and the Raising Room, and he contributes to data curation, teaching and training activities.

Edward Garrett, Software Developer

Ed Garrett has developed innovative 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. In 2001, he completed his PhD thesis entitled Evidentiality and Assertion in Tibetan. Ed co-owns the Alpino (Eastern Michigan University Linguistics Lab) website, and has experience running open source software projects in linguistics, including Tools for a Singing World website devoted to the collaborative creation of tools, protocols and procedures for field linguistics and language documentation. Tom Castle’s fraction has also been extended from half to three-quarters. ELAR also intends to pursue an internship scheme once SOAS’ policies allow it. This is primarily driven by the value of the expertise gained by graduate students in putting their learning to work.
HRELP – past, present and future

A project on endangered languages was established at SOAS in early 2002 with the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP) under the direction of Professor Barry Supple, academic advisor to the Lisbet Rausing Charitable Fund (now Arcadia). ELDP made a call for applications for research grants in that year and the first selection panel meeting took place in March 2003, awarding 21 grants worth £1.2 million. In October 2002 Peter K. Austin was appointed as Mårten Rausing Chair in Field Linguistics and Director of the Endangered Languages Academic Programme (ELAP). Zara Pybus joined ELAP as its first administrator in December 2002. The Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR) was established in 2003 and its first Director, David Nathan, was appointed.

As a result of discussions between Peter K. Austin, Barry Supple and Lisbet Rausing, a name, brand (including the by now well-known three rings logo and strap line of “every last word is another lost world”) and a website was developed and the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project was officially launched in March 2003 at the first of what was to become a series of annual workshops (the papers from it were published in Language Documentation and Description Volume 1 that appeared in December 2003). The first MA and PhD students were accepted in October 2003. ELDP was administered by the SOAS Research Office while ELAP and ELAR were located within the Department of Linguistics.

In 2005 ELAP and ELAR began to offer 5-6 day training courses on the principles and practice of language documentation for ELDP grantees. Over the past seven years almost all researchers awarded grants have attended this training, enabling them to upgrade their skills, learn about the latest techniques in documentation and archiving, and interact one-to-one with HRELP staff.

In 2008 Professor Graham Furniss (currently Pro-Director of SOAS) took over from Barry Supple as Chair of the ELDP panel. In 2009 restructuring of HRELP was agreed between SOAS and Arcadia and ELDP moved into the Linguistics Department (together with ELAP and ELAR) and a new post of Director of ELDP was created with Professor Peter Sells (Head of Department) serving as Interim Director. In 2010 Mandana Seyfeddinipur joined SOAS as the first full-time Director of ELDP.

Since 2009 HRELP has expanded its operations in a number of areas, including student recruitment, outreach (Endangered Languages Week became a regular annual event from 2008), training (including onsite training in Africa and Asia), publications (with 10 issues of Language Documentation and Description having been published, including two in 2011) and archiving (with 10 terabytes of materials currently in our collection). We have also leveraged Arcadia’s support for HRELP through successful applications to the British Academy, Leverhulme Trust, Volkswagen Foundation, Alexander von Humboldt Stiftung, and the Higher Education Funding Council for England. Other applications, including to European funding bodies, are currently under assessment. We are building on the solid foundations established over the past nine years in research, training, grants, archiving, publications and outreach.
This document is the ninth annual report of the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP). It outlines the structure of HRELP and its activities for the year. Cover background image Tui Pritchard’s logo for the LDLT conferences.

HRELP, Linguistics Department, SOAS, University of London, Thornhaugh Street, Russell Square WC1H 0XG
Tel: +44 (0) 20 7898 4578       Email: elap@soas.ac.uk        Web: www.hrelp.org
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