Ethical issues in linguistic fieldwork: an overview[*]

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My goal in this article is to talk about ethics and balancing power and priorities in linguistic fieldwork. This is a broadly construed topic, and one that has received surprisingly little direct attention in recent writing in the area of field linguistics (see, however, Craig 1993, 1997, Czaykowska-Higgins 2002, England 1992, Grinevald 1998, Newman and Ratliff 2001: 9-10, Rieschild 2003, Wilkins 1992). In recent years, there has been tremendous concern about what we might call ethics with respect to languages - the responsibility that linguists have to working to maintain and revitalize endangered languages (see, for instance, the volume edited by Grenoble and Whaley 1998, Nagy 2000, the volumes coming out the Teaching Indigenous Languages conferences, as well as numerous websites, conferences and funds[1]). Linguists have, however, paid less attention in writing to their responsibilities towards individuals, communities, and knowledge systems.[2] Yet ethical responsibilities in these arenas are important to think about very carefully before beginning fieldwork, during the field time, and on returning from fieldwork.

I have two major aims in this paper. The first is to provide some background on views of ethics in linguistic fieldwork in the past several decades. I limit myself, artificially, to ethical issues within the field setting, although those of the academic setting obviously play a critical role as well. The second aim is to focus on ethical issues with respect to responsibilities that the fieldworker has to communities, to individuals, and to knowledge systems.

A few remarks are in order before I begin. First, as discussed in detail below, I take an activist view of the responsibilities of linguists in doing fieldwork. This is based on the premise that fieldwork is a social act, and, as such, it carries with it a moral responsibility, as argued by Geertz 1968; see Czaykowska-Higgins 2002 for discussion with respect to linguistics. Such a

view of linguistic fieldwork is made explicit by Hale 2001, among others: "The scientific investigation of a given language cannot be understood in isolation. In carrying out field research, linguists are inevitably responsible to the larger human community which its results could affect" (2001: 76). This has not always been the view of linguists, and it is not the only perspective held today, as discussed below.

Second, I take a broad view of ethics, looking at it as the responsibilities that one has in a field situation to those other than oneself. I address what might now be called best practices as conceived in Canada and more generally, I believe, in North America. I limit myself to North America, recognizing that practices differ in other places around the world depending upon a multiplicity of factors; not even North America can be conceived of in a monolithic way. However, I find that in discussion with linguists who work, say, in Africa and those who work in North America, we often have different senses of what our full range of responsibilities are (however, see McLaughlin and Sall 2001 for discussion of Africa). I examine best practice with respect to the field environment, in the absence of trying to fit our responsibilities in the field into our responsibilities as academics, creating a somewhat unbalanced picture.

1. Some historical background: different ethical frameworks

1.1 Ethical frameworks

Fieldworkers have long recognized that it is necessary to think about working relationships with the speakers of languages with whom they work. Attitudes towards what constitutes ethical work in a field situation with respect to speakers of a language and the community in which the language is spoken have changed over the years, and this is reflected in statements made in the literature on fieldwork. In this section I briefly survey some of the perspectives on ethics found in the fieldwork literature, and discuss the kinds of paradigm changes that have come about in the past several decades.

In order to frame this discussion, it is helpful to consider the three models of language research proposed by Cameron, Frazer, Harvey, Rampton, and Richardson 1992. In their work, they identify three frameworks for doing language research in an ethical way. These are summarized below.

   a. Ethical research: "In ethical research … there is a wholly proper concern to minimize damage and offset inconvenience to the researched, and to acknowledge their contributions. … But the underlying model is one of 'research *on*' social subjects. Human subjects deserve special ethical consideration, but they no more set the researcher's agenda than the bottle of sulphuric acid sets the chemist's agenda." (pages 14-15).

   b. Advocacy research: "… the 'advocacy position' is characterized by a commitment on the part of the researcher not just to do research on subjects but research *on and for* subjects. Such a commitment formalizes what is actually a rather common development in field situations, where a researcher is asked to use her skills or her authority as an 'expert' to defend subjects' interests, getting involved in their campaigns for healthcare or education, cultural autonomy or political and land rights, and speaking on their behalf" (page 15).

   c. Empowering research: "We understand 'empowering research' as research on, for and with. One of the things we take that additional 'with' to imply is the use of interactive or dialogic research methods, as opposed to the distancing or objectifying strategies positivists are constrained to use. It is the centrality of interaction 'with' the researched that enables research to be empowering in our sense; though we understand this as a necessary rather than a sufficient condition … we [propose three] programmatic statement[s] and then pose various questions:

(a)   'Persons are not objects and should not be treated as objects.'

(b)   'Subjects have their own agendas and research should try to address them'

(c)   'If knowledge is worth having, it is worth sharing.'" (pages 22-24)

In the following sections, I address these research models with respect to linguistic fieldwork. Over time, there has been a shift from ethical research to empowerment research in linguistic fieldwork, just as there has been in many other types of fieldwork. I begin with an overview of literature on fieldwork that is explicitly within the ethical framework.

1.2 The ethical framework in linguistic fieldwork

Samarin's classic book *Field Linguistics* (1967) is perhaps the best-known text that exists on fieldwork and it has not been replaced with anything more recent although it is in many ways out of date.[3] As we will see, Samarin is very careful to outline the responsibilities that a fieldworker has, but at the heart of his discussion is the assumption that field linguistics in "primarily a way of obtaining linguistic data and studying linguistic phenomena" (Samarin 1967: 1).

One full chapter of *Field Linguistics* is entitled 'The Language Informant.' Samarin prefaces this chapter with the remark that the language learning process would be a very long one for the linguistic investigator if he did not have the help of an 'insider' – "someone who interprets for him and helps him to bridge the gap until the equation [relating the rules of the language to the rules of his own language, K.R.] is established. This person is the *informant*"[4] (20). Samarin further defines the informant: "the informant is one who furnishes the researcher with samples of the language, either as repetitions of what has already been said or as creations of what somebody might say. He also explains how the utterances were used or what they meant, using for this explanation either his own or some other language" (20).

Samarin discusses the need for informants (to get the corpus, checking the data for accuracy, going beyond data in a text), selection of informants, number of informants, qualifications of

informants (age, sex, cultural and psychological qualities [cultural knowledge, independence, intelligence, good memory, alertness, patience, honesty, dependability, cheerfulness], language skills [good diction, precise articulation, sharp and pleasing voice resonance, talkative, able to control his talk, ability to be analytical]), and training of informants. He also raises topics that fall under the rubric of ethics in discussing selection of informants. Samarin recommends a "thorough reconnaissance" (page 23) before selecting the informant. What follows is a series of quotes on the selection of informants and related issues. First consider selection of informants:

"This involves soliciting, if possible, the help of the language community in determining the availability and aptitudes of several candidates. The informant must first of all have enough time to more or less regularly meet with the field worker. He must also be a good speaker of the language. … One may leave the field without ever having had an informant of whom he could be proud. …" (pages 23-25, abridged)

Samarin also examines issues of remuneration with respect to selection of speakers in great detail:

"It might be thought that remuneration in the form of money, goods, or services would be a compelling reason for a person to make himself available as informant. Sometimes pay is the only means of getting informants, and when work is regular and intensive, the informant will usually expect it; but often the winning of an informant is achieved by ingenious ways of gaining his confidence or interest. … In some places the promise of pay is enough to entice almost anyone to work as informant, but in others hardly any amount of remuneration would strengthen an individual to go against the will of the community. If the researcher had established friendly relations with the community, a person might even be embarrassed in receiving pay publicly. He might want to consider the service an act of friendship. The rate of pay depends most of all on the local conditions – and not at all on the resources of the

investigator. … Whenever possible it would be advisable to begin with a lower rate than what one intended on finally giving. There are two reasons for this procedure. First, it is easier to dismiss a poorly paid employee than a highly paid one. Second, the increase in salary can serve as an encouragement for good service. … More important than the actual salary is the kind of relationship it establishes. … One of the undesirable aspects of our money economy in fieldwork is that it allows us to think that the informant is obligated to us for the salary he receives. This puts us in the position of power from which we can make all kinds of demands. The rightness of our position may appear to us incontestable since the work-pay pattern is so easily taken for granted in our Western society. The informant would see little sense in our view if it were explained to him, and when he does not understand the reasons for the investigator's demanding attitudes and words, he will be hurt, embarrassed, or angered. … Financial remuneration may actually be impossible in some situations, not because the informants do not want the money or cannot use it, but because they prefer another way to seal the bargain. … Tricking informants into rendering free service is an extremely dangerous undertaking; an investigator who practices duplicity usually deceives nobody but himself. … A better motive for reciprocity in fieldwork is the respect the investigator maintains for himself and his endeavors, a commodity whose value greatly exceeds the price which must be paid for it" (pages 25-27, abridged)

Based on these paragraphs, payment, avoiding deception, and attending to good criteria in choosing someone to work with are the major ethical issues faced by the field worker.

Next consider some of Samarin's remarks on training. Samarin writes:

"The general goal of training is to make of the informant an enlightened, interested, and cooperative coworker. The training involves getting him to understand the routine and mechanics of the work session: the time and place, the way he should respond when asked a

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question, how often he should say an utterance before and after it is written down, when additional information is to be given and what kinds are most desired, not accepting ungrammatical or meaningless utterances from the investigator, and looking toward the investigator (if not directly in his face) when giving an utterance. … The ultimate goal is to get the informant to think about language as the investigator does, that is, in terms of broad generalizations based on what is actually said or could be said. The investigator should not assume that the informant will appreciate being told about the problems and nature of linguistic analysis. Either because he has little capacity for abstract reasoning or because he does not see the relevance of analysis to the speech that everybody, even children, has obviously grasped, the informant will waste the investigator's time with his disinterest … If the informant should become only partially sophisticated, he may take more liberty in talking about his language than he is qualified to. " (pages 41-42)

Samarin goes on to say that: "no informant can remain 'naïve' after three or more months of working with a linguist" but points out that it is wrong to say that all informants become 'sophisticated.' Much depends on the intelligence of the informant, the nature of the linguistic project, the length of exposure to the habits of the field worker, the amount of training the field worker attempts to give' (page 42).

Samarin further discusses training informants to write, pointing out that inconsistencies and inaccuracies are to be expected. 'As for other skills – such as typing, manipulating a tape recorder or duplicating machine – nothing needs to be said except that the time involved in teaching must always be weighted against its return" (page 43). "The more that the linguist makes explicit and prepares his informant for, the better will be the returns in quality of work accomplished" (page 44). Overall, Samarin concludes that "the informant is an important member of a linguistic field project" (page 44).

Much of what Samarin has to say continues to resonant over thirty-five years later. Notice, that in terms of ethics, he has little to say beyond the need to pay the informant in some way, monetary or not. This is a linguist-centred perspective. Samarin's model is one that involves research *on* subjects (or, here, the language of the subject), with the goal being to further the linguists' own research. This, as we shall see, is quite different from current views of the responsibility of the fieldworker.

Kibrik 1977 includes a section entitled 'Work with an informant', with a subsection 'The "human factor" in field work' (pages 53-56). Like Samarin's important book, this book falls in the ethical research framework. Kibrik points out, as recognized by anyone who has ever worked with people, that "the informant is not an automaton for the mechanical generation of grammatically correct utterances in the target language, but a person who is used to the uncontrolled use of language for communicative purposes" (page 53). Kibrik remarks that this can be "a real hindrance to the work" (page 53). He assumes an unsophisticated informant, and points to the problems that this can create. But he cautions the reader:

"One shouldn't forget that a person always remains a person: he gets tired, has unconscious lapses of attention, is psychologically predisposed towards certain kinds of activity, acts emotionally, has social prejudices, etc., which often have an unforeseen influence on the results of field work. But all these difficulties do not mean that one should forgo trying to actively influence the informant's speech behaviour; they merely warn the investigator and force him at all times to take specific conditions of his work into account, which requires special methods for eliciting information and for carefully checking it" (page 54).

Kibrik goes on to say that "a 'good' informant is very rarely encountered if we demand a whole complex of qualities from him" (page 54). These qualities include "knowledge of the target language, knowledge of the mediator language, translating talent, pronunciation, the

associative mobility of thought, patience, honesty and a lack of the feeling of 'linguistic prestige,' strictness, experience, linguistic unsophistication" (pages 54-56). Kibrik clearly gave considerable thought to the need for the linguist to treat the consultant well, and to choose consultants wisely; he gives little credit, however, to the strengths of the 'informant', assuming that his/her knowledge beyond the language itself is limited ("The basic interest of the unsophisticated informant is concentrated on the content of the utterance and not its form … It is an even cruder methodological mistake to think that the informant can conduct a linguistic analysis or comparison of the utterance he has produced" pages 53-54).

The type of relationship with the speaker advocated by Samarin and Kibrik – the speaker is there to help the linguist achieve his/her research goals and is assumed to have little ability to contribute beyond giving data – represents how I was trained, a kind of training that made me uneasy at the time, giving little role to the speakers of the language, and essentially denying their ability to think about their language or have theories about their language. Dorian 1998, in a discussion of how the endangered language situation[5] that the world faces today might have developed, might characterize this type of relationship as part of the western ideology of contempt. This is not so much contempt for the languages themselves, but rather for the intellectual heritages. Such a notion of contempt for knowledge systems is recognized in the writing of Battiste and Henderson: "… how to create ethical behavior in a knowledge system contaminated by colonialism and racism" (2000: 132). As discussed above, within the ethical research model identified by Cameron, et al. 1992, ethics are of great concern, and are expressed in terms of dealing with the consultant as an individual so that the research of the linguist can be facilitated.

1.3   The advocacy framework in linguistic work

The second model of language research identified by Cameron et al. 1992 is one of advocacy, involving a commitment on the part of the researcher to carry out research on and for subjects. Sutton and Walsh 1979, in a manual on linguistic fieldwork in Australia with speakers of Australian Aboriginal languages, devote the first section of their manual to the nature of fieldwork in Australia. They identify a broader audience than that discussed by Samarin or Kibrik- they recognize that the person studying the language may be a linguist, a missionary, a teacher, an Aboriginal person, and others; the work may be carried out in a city or town, a station, or a distinctively Aboriginal community. Each of these situations carries with it a different set of properties. Sutton and Walsh caution that the linguistic fieldworker must have knowledge about the local culture and should cooperative with others who have knowledge of and experience in the community; such factors are important in any field situation. Sutton and Walsh further stress that the linguist has a responsibility beyond his or her own research goals, a responsibility to a community: "If the community has an interest in bilingual education, the linguist should be prepared to lend his or her talents and knowledge to this type of program" (page 2). Sutton and Walsh make a number of interesting points. First, they remark that linguists often do not give feedback to the Aboriginal people with whom they work; they link this to the fact that "an increasing number of Aboriginal people are undertaking independent research on their own people; specialised training in linguistics is available for Aborigines who wish to analyse their own language …" (2). Second, another important responsibility of linguists emerges in the discussion, responsibility to the community:

"Since the language belongs to the community, those with a primary right to the recordings and analyses of it are its speakers. It is A I A S (Australian Institute of Aboriginal Studies) policy to provide copies of such records to Aboriginal communities on request, and also to consider applications for assistance from fieldworkers who wish to make return visits to

communities where they have strong ties. The A I A S also encourages fieldworkers to prepare a report or summary of their work which is in a form appreciable by the relevant Aboriginal communities" (pages 2-3).

Sutton and Walsh note that the field linguist has a responsibility that goes beyond working on the language – the fieldworker must also work *for* the speakers of the language. This is clearly the advocacy model as defined by Cameron et al. 1992. The responsibility of the linguist to work not only on the language but for the speakers of the language comes out clearly in Sutton and Walsh's discussion in several ways: the language belongs to the community, the linguist should prepare a report that can be appreciated by the community, the linguist should be prepared to work with bilingual education programs.

Other linguists have been out-spoken proponents of advocacy research. In a well-known article, Labov 1982 makes a strong case for advocacy research based on his work on Black English, and many sociolinguists have followed his lead. Wolfram 1993 addresses ethical considerations in language awareness programs.

Comparing the work of linguists such as Samarin and Kibrik with that of linguists such as Sutton and Walsh, Labov, and Wolfram shows the kinds of changes that affected the field in the latter part of the twentieth century. The definition of ethics changed, broadening to involve not just ethical treatment of individuals, but also the development of an ethical relationship with a community. The linguist can certainly continue to do his/her research on the language, but beyond this becomes responsible to try to use that research to aid the community in meeting its needs.

1.4 The empowerment model in linguistic fieldwork

To begin the discussion of the third model proposed by Cameron et al., I start with a discussion about one code of ethics that encompasses an empowerment model. The American

Anthropological Association has long had a code of ethics, one that has changed considerably over time. While a study of the changes would be interesting, I examine only the most recent version, approved June 1998. In this code an explicit statement is made about the responsibility of anthropological researchers to people and animals with whom they work and whose lives and cultures they study. I cite only the most relevant part of this portion of the code. The full statement is available on the web site of the American Anthropological Association.

A. Responsibility to people and animals with whom anthropological researchers work and whose lives and cultures they study.

1. Anthropological researchers have primary ethical obligations to the people, species, and materials they study and to the people with whom they work. These obligations can supersede the goal of seeking new knowledge, and can lead to decisions not to undertake or to discontinue a research project when the primary obligation conflicts with other responsibilities, such as those owed to sponsors or clients. These ethical obligations include:

• To avoid harm or wrong, understanding that the development of knowledge can lead to change which may be positive or negative for the people or animals worked with or studied

• To respect the well-being of human and nonhuman primates

• To work for the long-term conservation of the archaeological, fossil, and historical records

• To consult actively with the affected individuals or group(s), with the goal of establishing a working relationship that can be beneficial to all parties involved.

The code also talks about ensuring the safety, dignity, and privacy of the people with whom anthropological researchers work, the need to discuss whether people wish to remain anonymous or receive recognition, provisions involving consent, and debt to the people with whom they work.

The preface to this section of the code forms part of the ethical model, as do the first two points – the researcher is responsible to the individual while carrying out his/her research. The final point is the new one – this point focuses on working with individuals and groups to do work that is beneficial to all. Here we see not just working for communities, as in the advocacy model, but working with, groups. This statement thus is part of a shift in paradigm to what Cameron, et al. refer to as an empowerment model. While, in linguistic fieldwork, an ethical model refers to work on a language and an advocacy framework to work on a language and for the speakers, the empowerment framework encompasses one further step: the work is on the language, for the speakers, and *with* the speakers, taking into account the knowledge that the speakers bring and their goals and aspirations in the work.

The empowerment model has had a powerful effect on work done by many field linguists studying endangered languages within North America, in recent years: conscious efforts have been made to develop working relationships within a community and with individual speakers within an empowerment framework. In part, a shift to an empowerment model in North America has probably come out of pressure on researchers from Aboriginal communities. For instance, Battiste and Henderson 2000: 132 state[6]:

"Ethical research systems and practices should enable indigenous nations, people, and communities to exercise control over information related to their knowledge and heritage and to themselves. These projects should be managed jointly with Indigenous peoples, and the communities being studied should benefit from training and employment opportunities generated by the research. Above all, it is vital that Indigenous peoples have direct input into developing and defining research practices and projects related to them. To act otherwise is to repeat that familiar pattern of decisions being made for Indigenous people by those who presume to know what is best for them."

However, such pressure is perhaps not the only reason that many field linguists have moved towards an empowerment model. Hints of this model have been found in the literature on linguistic fieldwork for some time. For instance, Nida 1981 includes a discussion of the value of training informants so that they can work with linguist as colleagues. His article is not so much a discussion of ethics and human rights as it is a statement on how to improve the linguistic work done on a language, but there is an incipient realization of the value of an empowerment model. Hale 1972 is similar, stressing the need for training in order to allow a deeper understanding of the language. Bobaljik 1998 and Wilkins 1992 advocate empowerment research, as does England 1992. While not all of the articles mentioned above argue for working with a community from an empowerment perspective, but rather some argue from an intellectual perspective, they prefigure the development of the empowerment model. Some of the articles in the recent *The green book of language revitalization in practice* (Hale and Hinton 2001) frame linguistic work that is explicitly conducted within an empowerment model. Craig 1993 makes brief reference to the work by Cameron, et al., and advocates empowerment research. Grinevald (formerly Craig) 1998 develops the empowerment model more explicitly, focusing on issues surrounding training of linguists and of speakers both, and Wilkins 1992 writes from his experiences of working in such a model in Australia. Two leading linguists, Emmon Bach and the late Ken Hale, are strong advocates of the empowerment model, stressing that a linguist has a debt to the communities in which he or she works, and must spend a certain amount of time doing practical work at the behest of the community in addition to carrying out fieldwork to meet his or her personal goals. While perhaps not so visible in the linguistics literature, empowerment research has found strong support in the actual day-to-day work of many North American field linguists who are dedicated to working *with* people and communities as well as for them, setting goals as a team.

After a very brief aside into human subject guidelines, in the remainder of this article I examine the consequences of an empowerment model of fieldwork in terms of responsibilities to a community as a whole, to the individuals within that community with whom the linguist works, and to the intellectual tradition that come together in doing such fieldwork.

2.   Human subjects guidelines

In recent years, ethical codes have been developed around the world concerning the protection of human subjects. One consequence of these codes is that all university-based researchers must receive approval from their university for research that they do with human before they can carryout such work. For linguists, this includes approval for fieldwork, psycholinguistic experiments, and sociolinguistic research, among others. Interestingly, in many countries including Canada, the United States, and Australia, the response of linguists to human subjects guidelines has been similar: the guidelines do not always apply to linguistic research; see Rieschild 2003 for detailed discussion of Australia. The Linguistic Society of America Executive Committee adopted a statement on human subjects in linguistic research in 1992, and I give this below:

Human Subjects in Linguistic Research, May 1992 (Linguistic Society of America Executive Committee)

Studies of a human language often depend upon a continuing relation with speakers of the language. Such a relation comes to be defined as much by the speakers as by the linguist. Their patterns of life govern when work can be done. Their expectations, and those of their community, shape what is to become of the results of the work. Understanding of the nature of linguistic inquiry grows in the course of the relationship. Sometimes lifelong friendships are established.

Such work must be conducted with respect for those who participate, with sensitivity as to their well-being, and with concern for consequences of publication or sharing of results.

Certain considerations may make the study of a language different from much research in the sciences and social sciences. One asks many questions in discovering the features of the language, of a kind the collaborator learns to expect and even anticipate. They are seldom of a sort that can be disturbing or injurious. Moreover, fruitful work may depend upon the linguist learning and observing the norms of politeness and friendship expected by those with whom he or she is talking. Those who participate in such a work often do so with pride in their command of their language and may wish to be known for their contributions. Not to disclose their names would do them a disservice. Native Americans sometimes justly criticize earlier work with their language for not having adequately proclaimed the contributions of the Native Americans themselves. Fairness to speakers of a language is very much a matter of understanding their viewpoint, and what is appropriate in one situation may not be in another.

Such considerations make it difficult to apply general rules in a mechanical way. In a round table on ethics at the Canadian Linguistic Association meeting in the late 1990's, people responded to draft guidelines on research with human subjects proposed by the Medical Research Council, the National Science and Engineering Research Council, and the Social Science and Humanities Research Council of Canada. The linguists working with endangered languages were particularly negative about the guidelines, feeling that they restricted linguistic work in unreasonable ways, and at the same time allowed linguists to conduct their research in many ways that would be considered to be unethical. The importance of relationships and respect in fieldwork were at the heart of the critique coming from the linguists: the proposed code did not take these notions, which are at the core of fieldwork, to be at the core of successful

fieldwork. Rieschild 2003 addresses many similar concerns from the Australian perspective, and has proposals for how such concerns might be handled.

3.   Responsibilities of linguistic fieldworkers

I now turn to the second major topic of this paper, a more detailed discussion of the ethical responsibilities of fieldworkers. I reflect here upon best practices as defined today within a North American setting.

Craig 1993:39-40 offers a preliminary list of ethical issues tailored for the field linguist. She identifies both issues that arise in the academic setting and those that arise in the field. In the second category, she lists the following:

- choice of consultants (issue of luring consultants away from national institutions and projects with US grant money, for instance)

- informed consent , a very key issue in social sciences about which linguists are mum. (The perception of paperwork by indigenous people. The sense that consent needs to be rechecked at every stage.)

- disclosure of purpose of the study (particularly key with missionary work, highly sensitive issue in politically sensitive areas)

- disclosure of source of funding (also a sensitive issue in politically sensitive areas, CIA spy syndrome)

- relations to indigenous community (issue of recognizing the consultants are members of a community, even if they are isolated in towns away ; issue of level of involvement and advocacy of the researcher; issue of reciprocity)

- relations to individual consultants (issue of empowerment of the individual, formal education, training, …)

- relation to local scholars (identify them, whether to negotiate with them, whether to engage them in collaborative research)

- relations to local indigenous institutions (the "gate keepers", sometimes staffed by indigenous people, sometimes not)

- relations to governments (visas and work permits …)

See also Wilkins 1992 for a more fully developed research policy addressing wide-ranging issues including control of research, responsibilities of the researcher, and ownership of materials.

In this section, I focus on just a few of the areas laid out by Craig, namely the responsibilities of linguistic fieldworkers with respect to three areas, the community in which s/he works, the individuals with whom s/he works, and the intellectual traditions which sometimes collide.

Before beginning this section, I should say a little about my own background, as much of the discussion that follows grows out of my personal experiences. I began intensive fieldwork in the Northwest Territories, Canada in 1973, and from 1976 until around 1983 I spent the majority of my time in the field, with lesser amounts of time doing community-based fieldwork until around 1989. I have spent little time in the field in the past fifteen years, but instead have worked in a collaborative relationship on a dictionary and have done 'fieldwork' by telephone, fax, and the like. In addition, I was involved in fieldwork outside of the community setting, in Toronto, with a speaker of Algonquin, for approximately two years, and for the past ten years I have been the director of the Aboriginal Studies Program at the University of Toronto, a program that has developed working closely with First Nations House, a part of student services at the University of Toronto. My research is on languages that fall in the category of endangered languages.

3.1   Responsibilities to the community

In this section, I examine some of the responsibilities that the field linguist has to the community at large in which she or he works, responsibilities that are independent of any code of ethics. In this discussion I ignore a set of issues which can be very serious, community internal politics and factions. A local government may represent one faction, and may keep the fieldworker from working with members of another faction. My own feeling is that it is important to avoid getting caught up in these internal politics to the extent possible - I found that I more often than not did not have the knowledge to understand them. I speak as if the band council, community council, or whatever is the appropriate organization from which to seek permission has the interests of the community as a whole at hand.

3.1.1 Permission from the community, and reasons why

The Northwest Territories, Canada, where I have done the bulk of my fieldwork, was, perhaps, forward looking - as long ago as 1973, when I began fieldwork, the Northwest Territories required that any researcher wanting to do research in a community there obtain a scientist's license. This involved receiving permission from the band council as well as from the government. The research had to be justified, and implications discussed. My understanding is that the requirement for a scientist's license arose because of what was perceived as unethical behaviour on the part of researchers - going into communities without permission, inappropriate treatment of individuals, and the like. It was not that researchers were excluded from working in the Northwest Territories, but rather that communities felt that they needed control what types of research occurred within the community.

Whether permission is required by a community, a granting agency, a higher level of government or not, it is important that, at least in the settings in which I have worked, a researcher seek permission from the community. I see two reasons for this. The first has to do directly with ethics, and the second is more practical. Linguists tend to say, as the Linguistic

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Society of America statement quoted above indicates, that our work does not have the kinds of effects on individuals that many other types of research do, and thus linguists often question the need for some of the ethical protocols that have been set out; for instance the human subjects guidelines. However, it is undeniable that our presence has an effect on a community. This is one reason for getting permission from the community. A second reason is more practical - the community can often help sort out some of the difficulties that we face in getting started in fieldwork.

Here are a few examples of how a linguist's presence can affect a community and how the community can help the linguist. We bring money into a community with us. How is this money to be distributed? How do we determine the rate of pay? Often a rate that might seem reasonable is not in fact reasonable within the community. As an outsider, we do not want to disrupt the socioeconomic structure of the community by overpaying or underpaying, and the community can often help us sort this out. See Samarin 1967 for discussion. Advice from an organization like a band council can lead one astray, however. When I worked in one community, the band council told me that I should not pay anyone (this was a community with oil money). When I returned to that community two years later, one of the people with whom I had worked extensively told me that she would like to work with me again but it was not worth her while as she had not been paid. At that point, I paid her, and the others that I worked with, at a rate that we negotiated as a group.)

Who do we hire? As a newcomer to the community, it is difficult to assess the sociopolitical situation in the community, and how we might affect that. Advice might help us to sort out this situation and make fewer blunders. In all of the communities in which I worked, a community council, band council, or local education authority helped me find the first speakers I worked with. A community tends to know who its linguists are, and can help guide the fieldworker to the

people who will be the most interested in and excited about the kind of work that linguists do. I was certainly lead to excellent people, sometimes directly and sometimes more circuitously. But the support of some official body was invaluable to me (see, for instance Dimmendaal 2001 and McLaughlin and Sall 2001 for other perspectives on this).

We may introduce new types of equipment into communities - tape recorders and cameras were not all that common in some of the communities that I worked in the 1970's. This too could create changes in a community, where we might unknowingly aid (or abet?) in creating a community where there is an imbalance in resources.

Where do we live? This could greatly affect how our work goes. For instance, in some of the communities that I lived in I stayed with an Aboriginal family, in others I stayed in school hostels. At that time, I think that a choice to live with a non-Aboriginal family would have not been a good one as it would have, I believe, adversely affected by relationships with the people with whom I was working. There might also be, within the Aboriginal community, families who are perceived as better to live with and families who are not. I was fortunate to be placed with highly respected families, and I believe that this benefited my work tremendously.

Permission began as a way of allowing a community to screen the kind of research that was done in that community. But having to get this permission can also be of great benefit to the fieldworker – it can help her/him in many ways in having an official body to get some guidance from in how the community works so that s/he can minimize the negative impact, and maximize the positive impact, that s/he has on the community. If one hopes to work within an empowerment model, the research will likely be very difficult to do if there is not cooperation from the start.

3.1.2   Returning something to the community

In addition to requiring that a researcher have permission from a community to work within that community, the community might make other kinds of demands. For instance, some communities require that researchers return something to the community in some way. This can be in an area of our expertise. I prepared topical dictionaries; conducted workshops on language with the largely non-Aboriginal teachers in the community; was involved in planning and conducting workshops within the communities on language awareness; trained individuals and groups in areas such as writing, introductory grammar; made dictionaries and collected cultural material as well as taught, work that I was usually paid for. I also worked with a group to try to increase the exposure to written language around the community – making signs for the store, the nursing station, and the like, written in the language of the community. In addition, I served as a consultant to the Slave Orthography Standardization Committee, a committee charged with revising and standardizing the orthographic system. Finally, I helped with a place names project that was important at the time in terms of land claims negotiations. Others have done projects that the community wanted - these can be research-related, such as training people in dictionary design, or more practical, such as preparing dinner for someone on a regular basis or helping to clean the roads. Many communities are happy to have researchers in the community, but only if the researcher understands that not only does s/he take from the community, but s/he must also negotiate some way of giving to the community.

In thinking about returning something to the community, it is important to keep in mind that the goals must be set realistically for both parties involved. It is difficult to make a major linguistically related contribution based on, say, an initial six weeks of fieldwork. Consider, for instance, the idea of preparing a preliminary noun dictionary on a language without an existing writing system. Even if the fieldworker is able to, say, come to a phonemicization of the language, there will not have been time to work out an orthography and work through the

process of having the orthography accepted. Thus, this may not be a realistic goal for such a short time. If the linguist is coming up for tenure, it might be important to negotiate with both the community and the university to find a project that can meet all needs. In the past fifteen years, extended fieldwork has not been right for me. Instead, I have been involved in a dictionary project that can be done long-distance, and I have worked to build the Aboriginal Studies Program in my university; I have also done theoretical linguistic work which will, perhaps, modify change the descriptive framework in which grammars of the language are typically written. Appropriate goals, given the time of fieldwork and the general time of life, must be set so that they can be achieved.

3.1.3   Summary

Ethical behaviour towards communities involves seeking permission from the relevant body within the community, ensuring that this body understand the research, seeking guidance from them as to rates of pay and the like, and working out issues concerning ownership of material. Such activities are common to all three research models outlined in section 1; empowerment research goes far beyond these in its ethical concerns.

3.2   Responsibilities to individuals

Fieldworkers have responsibilities to a community, as outlined above. But even once the community has given permission for the linguist to work there, many ethical problems must be worked out with the individuals with whom the fieldworker works.

I ignore issues such as finding people to work with, beyond noting the need to be upfront about the kind of work involved and dealing with issues of consent and pay, and instead focus on the kinds of relationships that the fieldworker might develop with different speakers with whom s/he works. Fieldworkers use different vocabulary for the native speakers with whom they work - informants, a word that is largely out of fashion these days in North America (but see

Dimmendaal 2001 for use of this term in the African context), consultants, collaborators, teachers. These different vocabulary items represent, I suggest, different types of relationships that we might develop with speakers, and I outline these below.

I first consider the word 'teacher.' I think that every person with whom I have worked has viewed themselves as a teacher – they are very conscious that they have knowledge that I do not have, and that their responsibility in working with me is to communicate to me that knowledge. Some of the people have taken an active role in this – they suggest things beyond what I am asking, both in the language and in English, they often direct a session, they try to help me understand things that I obviously do not understand. Others are more reactive in their teaching role, being careful to think about the best way of expressing something, but not elaborating on related words, further uses, similar constructions, or the like. Without these kinds of teachers, I would have missed a tremendous amount more about the languages that I worked on than I did. To me, it was important in doing fieldwork that I accept the teaching that the speaker was offering and try to learn from it. I was trained to ignore such statements on the part of a speaker, being told that they were naive and uneducated, and did not know how to introspect properly about their language. As soon as I began doing active fieldwork, it quickly became evident how misconstrued this concept is – at least the speakers who are interested in working with linguists over some time period tend to be excellent teachers, and it is the job of the fieldworker to learn to be an excellent student. Nida 1981 has some discussion of this, pointing out cases in which the speaker gave interesting analysis; many articles in Newman and Ratliff 2001 also provide rich examples of the relationship between the speaker and the linguist in terms of linguistic analysis. An analysis provided by a speaker may be stated in lay terms, but it is not to be simply rejected out of hand. As with any analysis, there will be strong points and weak points, insights and errors.

Having suggested that speakers who are likely to want to work with a linguist over time are teachers, let me address some of the other terminology used in the fieldwork literature. A traditional term used for the speakers with whom a field linguist works is 'informant.' This term is perhaps best viewed as being part of the ethical framework of research, where it is assumed that the fieldworker works with a linguistically naive informant, as described in the quotes from Samarin and Kibrik in section 1 above. Note that in a sense I deny the existence of this type of speaker, as I view all the speakers with whom I have worked as teachers, and the word 'informant' carries with it that the linguist is not making serious use of the speaker as an analyst (see Nida 1981 for discussion). One person who taught me as a graduate student used to say that an informant is like a machine - you put in a question and the machine spits back an answer. This linguist claimed to view fieldwork as a mechanical process of data gathering, with no credit given to the abilities of the speaker. This is, perhaps, what an 'ideal' informant would be.

There was a point at which the term informant came to be perceived by fieldworkers as inappropriate and perjorative, and the term 'consultant' became more commonplace. One can understand why, given the analogy to a machine, and the shifting paradigms in social science. This shift in terminology arose as part of a move from the ethical framework to the advocacy framework, where the field linguist is not only working on the language but also working for the speakers/community. As discussed by Sutton and Walsh, the fieldworker is expected to give material back to the community in some form, and participate in bilingual education programs, if wanted by the community. Something more than an informant is needed if the linguist is giving something back to the community, or to the speaker - the speaker must at least be able to receive and understand the material that the linguist prepares. In this sense training is going on, and the speaker becomes a more active participant in the work. Such a person came to be called a

consultant. This term does more to recognize the necessary role of the speaker in the process of fieldwork than informant does, as it implies a bidirectional process.

Another term that is sometimes used with respect to the speakers who work with fieldworkers is collaborator. Although some people shy away from this word because of negative political connotations, the term fits well with a shift in paradigm to the empowerment model. As discussed earlier, this model describes the situation in which the field linguist works on the language, for the speaker/community, and with the speaker/community. By adding in the component of working with and not just for, the relationship of the fieldworker and the speaker changes - they are now working together as co-workers in the research, hopefully towards a common goal.

As I said above, all the speakers with whom I have worked have been teachers. None have been informants in the traditional sense in that all have been active participants in the fieldwork, and each contributed in helping come to analyses. Some speakers became interested in formal training and others did not, but all participated in a major way in the analysis. In these contributions, these speakers were truly consultants. However, I largely controlled the research agenda, be it on a topic for a grammar, a topic of theoretical interest, or a dictionary. The consultants played an active role in helping and guiding me, and in leading me further than I would have been able to go on my own, and I played a role in encouraging this and helping them to do it better. This work resulted in a grammar and, probably more important, dictionaries, work that was directed towards the community. This represented advocacy work. The empowerment model, a true collaboration with people, came only later.

It is important to note that the relationship with a speaker is not a constant one; it is one that needs to be consciously thought about, and renegotiated as time goes on. The collaborative arrangements in which I have worked did not begin this way. I think that all the work began with

a consultant relationship – we worked together to try to come to an understanding of the language, but I was the primary one to set the goals, and define the type and scope of the research. This research was done *for* the community and with the approval and support of the community, but not really *with* the community. It was not until we participated in an orthography standardization committee that the relationship became collaborative, being done together with members of the community to meet the needs of the community rather than or in addition to the needs of the linguist. There is only a small number of people with whom I have truly developed a collaborative relationship (when I first wrote this, I immediately thought of two such speakers, but over time I have identified several others). I would have been happy to move from consultant to a collaborator relationship with others. We sometimes tried it, but because of factors such as time and interest, these relationships did not develop in the same way with all individuals.

I should also note that there is another model beyond the collaborative one, one in which the speaker takes over the role of the linguist; see Hale 1972 for detailed discussion. At this point, the linguist may be involved in work on the language, but the relationship changes as control over the language work really comes to rest entirely within the community.

Individual field linguists will have different relationships with different individual speakers. Some speakers want to provide information to the fieldworker. Others want to do this, and also take an active role in determining the type of information to be gathered. Others want to be equal participants in the process. What does it mean to be equal participants? There are different ways of thinking about this. I will discuss two extremes in which such collaboration can take place. First, there is what I will call the linguistic training approach. By this, I mean not the training that is given to each person with whom the field linguist works, but rather that specific training is given so a speaker or speakers can take over the role of linguist. Many, especially Hale (1965, 1972, 1976; see also de Reuse 1997), have identified the reasons for why linguistic training

approach is important – there are parts of the language that can only be known by a native speaker of the language, the speaker becomes a full part of the total intellectual exercise, the work more easily gets carried on when the fieldworker leaves. This model thus trains the speaker to take on the role of the linguist - do the analysis, understand the theory, contribute to the theory. Another possible model is a team model, where the linguist and speakers work together, each contributing their expertise. Such a model works best, I have found, when each member of the team knows something of each of the areas, and each member is an expertise in at least one area. In such a model, the linguist may well retain a role over some time period, or the absence of the linguist might alter dramatically the type of work that is done.

My experience with people with whom I have worked is that they have enjoyed receiving basic linguistics training about the structure of the language. With rare exception they do not have formal linguistic analyses as their primary interest, but instead are more interested in using linguistics to further their work in language education, dictionaries, translation, and the like. Each is a linguist, but each has chosen to define the term in a way that is different from that usually recognized by academics. They have been cooperative about grammar work, but it has not sparked their interest in the way that other things have.

Given that a variety of collaborative models exist, it is important to negotiate the appropriate model in any given circumstance. People need to find themselves in appropriate roles, and those roles have to be changeable. As Wilkins 1992: 189 puts it, "It is important to realize that the social, cultural, political, physical, and historical contexts within which linguists do fieldwork are probably more remarkable for their differences than their similarities. Just as remarkable is the diversity of people who undertaken linguistic fieldwork. The results of introducing a fieldworker into the field are, therefore, never able to be predicted beforehand. … … once in an alien field situation one must (i) Realise that research methods that have worked for others may

prove a disastrous failure in the situation at hand, and may, therefore, need to be abandoned. (ii) Understand that academic-linguistic concerns are never so important that they should be allowed to undermine either the rights of the host community or the personal ethics and sanity of the fieldworker" (Wilkins 1992: 189). Recognizing the need for diversity and change then get added to the list of ethical issues - being sure to find a model that works for the group, not for just a subset of it, and reexamining this model as changes become necessary.

This discussion leads me to the final area that I would like to discuss, one that I will call responsibility to intellectual traditions. This is an area that has received little direct attention in the linguistics literature, but has been discussed in the anthropology and education literature.

3.3   Responsibilities towards intellectual traditions

Many Aboriginal researchers have spoken of the lack of understanding of western scholars concerning research. Smith 2000: 214, for instance, makes the following remark: "What I am talking about is the need to develop theoretical understandings and practices that arise out of our own Indigenous knowledge."

What does this mean with respect to linguistic work and knowledge traditions? I begin with a discussion of ownership, and then focus on control of the research agenda.

3.1.3 Ownership of data

Field linguists tend to gather a large amount of language material in the form of notes, audiotapes, and, sometimes, videotapes. Sutton and Walsh 1979, in their monograph on fieldwork in Australia, mention that since the language belongs to the community, those with a primary right to the recordings and analyses are it and its speakers. This can mean many different things. Some communities have no interest in archiving the linguistic data that is collected in that community, no matter what it is. Others want copies of all materials stored there or somewhere of their choosing, and want copies of any materials prepared based on data

collected in that community. Other communities claim ownership to data in a more complex way, not only archiving but also not allowing the use of data without permission of the community. This can slow the work of the fieldworker tremendously, and be a source of deep frustration. If the need for permission to use data is understood from the start, however, it may perhaps be easier to deal with. Use of data thus may require complex negotiation to ensure that the rights of the community, and the knowledge of that community, are respected.

Ownership of data is a complex question. What about data from someone who has died? What about material that was collected in the past, before guidelines about ownership were advanced? What if an individual is happy to have data used but the community is not? Or vice versa? Is there a difference between words, elicited material, and texts? Are all texts of the same type or are there some which cannot be used by the fieldworker and others that can be? These types of questions may not necessarily all be worked out in advance, but they must be worked out over time.

The typical materials that fieldworkers are involved in producing are grammars, dictionaries, and texts. Ethical issues around texts have long been discussed. A clear presentation is found in Cassell1987, an article of case studies and responses to ethical dilemmas. n anthropologist posed the following case involving ownership of information gathered in ethnographic fieldwork:

In my research on the language of the ____, a small group of Indians dwelling in the Southwest, I obtained a good deal of ethnographic information as a windfall from my intensive linguistic study. There has been only one ethnography written about the _____, a master's thesis written in the 1930's. Not only is this work difficult of access, it is also incomplete. Because no major ethnographic work has been done on the group, it is generally assumed in the literature that their culture is identical to a larger group with whom they were associated in the 18th century. I have found out that this is not so, and that they had (or had,

as their culture is rapidly westernizing) a distinctive culture, especially in the area of religion, ritual, and the supernatural. My dilemma is this: Although the group does not object to descriptions of their former material culture, they are strongly opposed to any discussion of their nonmaterial culture. I was told outright that these beliefs and practices were not the property of non-Indians, and that I had been told about them only because I had found out about certain aspects of these ideas, and they did not want me to be in error about them. In conclusion, I was told that these things should not be published.

Because of the opposition of my consultants, I have done little with my ethnographic notes. At one point I had begun to write an article on their culture, but abandoned it because I felt moral qualms about going against the expressed desires of my consultants. My question is this: Do the wishes of my consultants override the need of science for an ethnographic description of a little-known culture that is becoming westernized? Would it be ethical to produce a work that would appear only after all of my consultants are dead, which could be 20 or 30 years? Or does the right to privacy, which my consultants insisted on, have to be observed as long as the _____ people maintain their independent existence? (pages 63-64)

Two people responded to this. Nancy Lurie (Milwaukee Public Museum) suggested that the researcher follow "an ethical course of action: striving to discern the overall interests of the people one works with, leveling with them, and involving them as much as possible in presenting their own story" (page 64). Keith Basso, then of Yale University, stated unequivocally: "The wishes of the people with whom this ethnographer has worked must be honored at all costs" (page 64).

There is agreement between the two respondents on the course of action in this situation, and I suspect that there would likewise be general agreement among field linguists about texts that

were given to them – material that individuals or the community desire to have kept private must be kept so. The concept of ownership of materials, or copyright, is important, and agreement in advance, plus discussion during and after the work, should help in such a situation.

3.1.2 Content and form of materials

The issue of ownership with respect to texts is perhaps a fairly clear one. What about materials like dictionaries, grammars, and teaching materials? Are there ethical issues that surround these? I believe that there are, especially in those cases where the speaker is primarily a consultant, with the fieldworker working for the community. I would like to focus on the word 'for.' I will discuss two concrete incidents to illustrate this point.

Consider first writing systems, an important foundation for all written work on a language. In a committee concerning standardization of orthography of writing systems of Athapaskan languages in the Northwest Territories, Canada some decisions that were made about standardization proved to be unworkable. One decision made by the committee was that a word should have one and only one spelling. When we came to work on dictionaries, we found that adherence to this principle hampered work on the dictionaries. We were aiming to create dictionaries that had as their audience speakers and learners of the language rather than linguists. While standardization of spelling perhaps suited the linguists' needs, it frustrated speakers and learners. In at least the Dogrib and North Slavey dictionaries, the rigid notion of standardization was abandoned in favour of a dictionary that was more usable by the people for whom it was designed. See Rice and Saxon 2002 for detailed discussion. I can speak to my own intellectual development in this case. I began by using English dictionaries as a model. It was only when I began truly collaborative work on the dictionary rather than working with people as consultants that I came to see clearly the problems with the dictionary that I had in mind. I wanted it to be for the community, but it would not have met the community needs. We did much rethinking of

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how to accomplish our goals, and continue to do so. Such collaboration extends the time to complete a project, but if a dictionary is truly meant for the community, it must be designed in such a way that the members of the community can use it. Many dictionaries of endangered languages include a statement in their preface that they are designed for linguists, speakers, community members, and the like. I have found that such dictionaries tend to be designed for linguists despite such statements. They are good dictionaries, but not for the audience for whom they are purportedly designed.

In the late 1990's, I served on a committee to provide feedback on curriculum materials being developed for kindergarten to grade 12 on the Native languages of Ontario, languages from the Algonquian and Iroquoian families. These materials are designed to teach non-speakers of the language to speak and communicate orally in the language with a fair degree of fluency by the time that they finish school. When we examine the content of the materials, we find that they are organized around grammatical topics - for instance, obviation and gender, two areas that play an important role in Algonquian grammar, are important topics in the Algonquian materials. Both the Algonquian and Iroquoian materials introduce independent pronouns early on, yet these languages make rather limited use of these pronouns. One has the impression that the materials are based to a large degree on other language models and that they are designed more to teach students about the language rather than to teach them the language, although the latter is the goal that is claimed. The people who prepared these materials are all highly experienced native language teachers who entered language teaching as fluent speakers. In their teacher training, they received linguistics training based on traditional linguistic descriptions of the languages. My sense is that what was created are speakers who know their language and know a lot about their language, but who know how to teach the latter and not the former. This is fine if this is the goal, but if the goal is language fluency, these materials do not work. This is another case in

which I believe linguists have not been successful at being collaborative – the grammatical models that linguists are interested in are not necessarily appropriate models for language teaching. Grammar is a component of language learning to be sure, but to speak a language requires hearing the language, listening to the language, and speaking the language as well as learning about the language. The former goals are in many ways more difficult to achieve, but the emphasis on the linguistic analysis can allow one to lose sight of the original goals. Perhaps if this work had been carried out within an empowerment model rather than an advocacy model, the materials might have been different.

Collins 1992, 1998 gets at the issue of recognizing intellectual traditions in a different way. He argues that fieldwork based on the structural assumptions of modern linguistics can be sharply at variance with native consultants' views of their language. Certainly with an Algonquin speaker with whom I worked closely on grammar, she was not particularly keen on the linguistics issues that I introduced to her although she has deep insight into the language. She was far more interested in, say, looking at meanings than investigating structures. She read a fair amount of Algonquian materials, and could work with them, but did not feel that they brought the language alive. Cyr 1999 makes similar observations based on her work on Algonquian languages. Gil 2001, in an article entitled "Escaping Eurocentrism: fieldwork as a process of unlearning" speaks to the need to listen to the story that the language has to tell, and to this we can add that the linguist speakers of the community have a story to tell about their language. We thus must question whether it is ethical to assume that the descriptive and theoretical models that linguists have developed for looking at language are the only models, and whether they are the most appropriate models. They may be, but if they are not, to be truly engaged in participatory research with a community means, at an abstract level, working to understand the intellectual tradition of that community and, at a more concrete level, working to develop materials that are

primarily useful to that community rather to the linguistic community (of course, if they can be useful to both, all the better). This means bringing together different intellectual traditions rather than assuming the western tradition in what is otherwise collaborative work. As Smith 2000, quoted above, says, understanding Indigenous knowledge can lead to a very different kind of understanding. It is possible that the use of traditional linguistic materials has played a role in leading speakers to believe that their languages are very hard, too hard for children to learn. I have heard this articulated by many people on many occasions – this language is too hard for the children to learn. This cannot possibly be true, given the generations of speakers that have spoken the language without any problem. Linguists, in viewing materials from their perspective, have perhaps unwittingly been part of the problem, the very problem that linguists hope to overcome. Empowerment demands respect for people and for intellectual traditions outside of the traditional academic paradigm. This can be difficult to achieve, even when working collaboratively with a community, and it is important that field linguists, like other researchers, take care to recognize the different perspectives that exist on what, if anything, should be produced and how it should be designed.

To summarize, I have suggested that field linguists have ethical responsibilities not only to individuals and communities, but also to knowledge systems. Collaborative working arrangements are not truly collaborative if the linguist still controls the content and framework of the research, and the form in which it appears. A reexamination of what the study of linguistics is all about is not necessarily easy, but under the best of circumstances it will ultimately lead to deeper insights into language, combining different intellectual traditions. It is this opening of the mind that, in the end, makes this type of research truly exciting and empowering for all.

4. Summary

I have surveyed three ethical models, identified by Cameron et al. 1992, and the roles that each has played in linguistic fieldwork in recent decades. I have suggested that empowerment models, working with the community, are now generally considered to be best practice, at least within Aboriginal communities in North America. Just what this means cannot be uniquely defined –there is not a 'one-size-fits-all model, as different situations call for different types of interactions. On the side of the community, there may not be people in the community who are interested in being part of a collaborative team. Some communities may be interested in developing a long-term relationship with linguists and educators, and not taking complete ownership at this time. Some communities may choose to go their own directions, without collaborating with field linguists or other interested partners. On the side of the linguist, particulars of the time of life of the linguist may prevent her/him from becoming fully involved in a collaborative effort. (See Cameron 1998 and Wilkins 1992 for discussion of some of the obstacles faced in empowerment research.) Following best practice means redefining worlds and rethinking and negotiating relationships and responsibilities. The field linguist has, I believe, relinquished considerable control since the time Samarin wrote his book; to have truly collaborative relationships, the linguist must often be willing to relinquish even more. In real life, we can hope to strive towards these ideals, but balance them with the practicalities of the real situation, being careful to maintain an awareness of the core ethical issues and to recognize that there are no single answers, or that the only single answer is to recognize diversity.

It is interesting that in Canada at least, the major granting agencies are beginning to recognize the responsibilities that academics have towards communities with which they work. A major experiment is now underway through the Social Science and Humanities Research Council (SSHRC), Community-University Research Alliances (CURA). These are designed to facilitate work between university researchers and communities, with the latter defined in the

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broadest of ways. Two of these grants have gone to projects jointly designed by a university and a nearby Aboriginal community, with educators, speakers, artists, and linguists from the community and the university involved. In early 2004, SSHRC announced. Aboriginal research grants, designed to "support university-based researchers and Aboriginal community organizations to conduct research on issues of concern to Aboriginal peoples" (SSHRC website); one of these issues involves languages. Such projects funded by granting agencies should help in the quest for empowerment work to be recognized academically.

While I have thought about the various issues that I have discussed in this article for many years, since I first began doing active fieldwork, I first began to write this article at the end of 1999, when I was invited to be part of a symposium on power and priorities in linguistic fieldwork. I was sitting at my computer, listening to the radio as I worked. On one program, some people were playing scruples, a game about what to do in situations where an ethical dilemma is faced. This made me think back over many of the decisions that I have made over the years, and what I would do today if I had the chance to start from scratch again. Many things I would change, but many would remain the same, especially the core responsibilities to give as well as to take, to learn as well as to teach, to be a responsible citizen, to show respect for all. Somewhere in the midst of my thinking, on New Year's Eve 1999, with Y2K unfolding around the world, I listened to a call-in show on ethics and morals in the 20th century. The typical caller deplored what had happened to morals in the twentieth century. I listened, and felt very differently. I think that what we consider to be ethical behaviour in fieldwork has changed in the past thirty years or so, and that we have become, at least in terms of our thinking if not in reality, far more conscious of the wide range of responsibilities that we have as field linguists and academics. The very celebration of diversity that we so often speak of brings with it several things: a responsibility and a respect that must characterize all of the work that we do with

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people, no matter who they are, as well as a focus on relationships and reciprocity. These responsibilities perhaps make life more difficult in some ways, but, I believe, ultimately will lead to better work and a deeper understanding of languages, the goals that we hope to attain as linguists.

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[1] To give just a few, see the websites of the Society for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the Americas (www.ssila.org), the Endangered Languages Fund (ELF, sapir.ling.yale.edu/~elf)), the Foundation for Endangered Languages (FEL, www.ogmios.org/home.htm), the Volkswagen Foundation (http://www.volkswagen-stiftung.de/), The Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (http://www.hrelp.org/home.htm), Teaching Indigenous Languages (http://jan.ucc.nau.edu/~jar/TIL.html).

[2] This is not to say that linguists have been inattentive to ethical responsibilities; there has simply been less written about them. Anthropologists have written far more about ethical issues in fieldwork; see, for example, Clifford and Marcus 1986, Fluehr-Lobban 2002, and Schieffelin , Woolard, and Kroskrity 1998 for just a few examples.

[3] See Vaux and Cooper 1999 for a recent textbook on field methods. As pointed out by Czaykowska-Higgins 2002, Vaux and Cooper identify fieldwork as playing a role in saving an endangered language and as providing personal enrichment and satisfaction for the linguist in addition to gathering the broad range of data that is required for quality linguistic work. As

Czaykowska-Higgins says, this is not a claim about social responsibility, and thus even this recent text most properly falls within the ethical research model.

A second book, Newman and Ratliff 2001, is a collection of articles on linguistic fieldwork. As Newman and Ratliff discuss in the introduction to the book, "… linguistics has paid so little attention to ethical concerns" (page 9). They point out that, while "concerns about ethically appropriate behavior in the field are implicit in all the contributions to this volume, but on the whole receive only passing mention. … the focus is almost exclusively on responsibilities towards one's informant(s) and sometimes the related question of covert tape recording" (page 9). Newman and Ratliff go on to identify a number of questions that fieldworkers should consider, including how forthright fieldworkers should be in explaining their scholarly objectives, whether secrecy is necessarily inappropriate, responsibilities regarding university regulations regarding human subjects, protection of anonymity, proper acknowledgement, intellectual property rights, recompense, responsibilities of an outsider in a community, ethics of how grant money is used, obligations to host country scholars and students, making materials available. A few of their questions touch at the heart of the issues that I raise in this article, and I quote from their questions: "What recompense if any does a fieldworker owe the community as a whole for allowing him or her to be an uninvited guest? That is, apart from avoiding bad behavior, does the fieldworker have a positive duty to devote time and energy to community projects, and if so how much (see Newman 1999)? Conversely, if a linguist has been contracted to do practical work in the field – for example, prepare literacy materials (perhaps in a majority language for use by minority-language speakers), is it ethical for the linguist to steal time away to do pure research that he or she feels is of critical importance, such as documenting an endangered language?"

[4] The term 'informant' has been largely replaced by the term 'consultant' in linguistic fieldwork; see below for further discussion.

[5] There has been a growing awareness over the past twenty years or so of the increasingly rapid rate at which languages are disappearing; this is referred to as the loss of linguistic diversity or as language endangerment. For detailed discussion, see Grenoble and Whaley 1998; see also Crystal 2000, Nettle 1998, and Nettle and Romaine 2000 and references therein for further discussion..

[6] See Czaykowska-Higgins 2002 for further discussion of this point.