

## COLLABORATION IN DOCUMENTATION

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**Goal:** We will present a description of the current collaborative project involving Mohave and Chemehuevi, discuss the relevant aspects of collaborative documentation, and use some of our projects as examples of collaboration. Our goal is to suggest a theory of language documentation for Indigenous communities.

### 1. Background:

The languages in focus are Chemehuevi, a Uto-Aztecan language with 3-5 fluent/semi-fluent speakers remaining, and Mohave, a Yuman language with approximately 30 remaining fluent speakers, both still in use on the Colorado River Indian Tribes Reservation (CRIT) where the project is being conducted. CRIT community members and researchers from The University of Arizona are working together as a team to accomplish the documentation of these two languages by assigning specified roles to each group. This project is funded by the NSF/NEH program for Documenting Endangered Languages (DEL) and builds on previous work by the Susan Penfield under a grant from the Bill and Melinda Gates Foundation aimed at language revitalization, rather than documentation.

### 2. Language Collaboration:

- The notion of collaboration between Indigenous communities and linguists has been recently emphasized as a means to better accomplish language work.
- A collaborative model for preparing language curators (Furbee & Stanley, 2002) with a focus on language revitalization.

#### The relationship between revitalization and documentation

- What is documentary adequacy from a community perspective?  
All things that support the revitalization/pedagogical goals: grammars, dictionaries, pragmatics, conversation, and discourse.
- For communities, revitalization and documentation are inseparable - they energize each other.
- Documentation feeds revitalization.
- This presentation focuses on collaboration and training related specifically to language documentation.

### 3. Points of consideration when collaborating:

- Who
  - Linguist team members
  - Community team members

- When
  - As often as possible
  - Language vs. Job
- Where
  - Onsite
  - Offsite
- How
  - Meetings (group and individual)
  - Electronic communication (OLE board & e-mail)
- Equipment
- Collaborator education

### **The Research Team**

- Linguist team members
  - Motivated to work with the language
  - Trained in linguistic, language learning and documentary methods
- Community team member
  - Motivated to work with the language
  - Knowledge of the language
  - Familiarity with the community and social factors
- “The Captain/Coach” (Linguist or Community team member)
  - Motivator
  - Follow-up
  - Responsible

### **Meeting Types (Training Sessions)**

- Group Meeting
  - Opportunity to meet together as a group
  - Discuss and establish group goals
  - Conduct training on material relevant for the group
    - E.g. equipment, local cultural practices, basic linguistic
- Individual Meeting
  - Team members can work one on one
  - More comfortable
  - Establish individual goals
  - Work together on projects
- Frequent contact is central - both onsite and offsite
  - Onsite contact is always the best
  - E-mail
  - *The OLE board* technology (OLE) –a voice, video and text environment for asynchronous communication.  
<http://www.ole.arizona.edu/>

### **Collaborator Education**

- Community team members
  - Descriptive linguistics, language acquisition, dialectal difference, language attitudes, bilingual education, training them to be researchers, explain linguists’ motivation...

- Equipment education, documentary “best practices”
- American Indian Language Development Institute (and other native language institutes) as a resource
- Linguist team members
  - Social structure, cultural issues, political environment
  - Equipment education, documentary “best practices”
  - AILDI (and other native language institutes) as a resource

#### **4. Examples of collaboration: Chemehuevi**

- Online Chemehuevi Dictionary
- Video Lessons: A trial

#### **5. Toward a working model for community partnerships:**

*What constitutes ‘best practices’ for the construction of language documentation teams?*

- A. ‘Best Practices’ are still being defined in the context of working within a community...
- B. Individual motivation

#### **Conclude that there are four essential elements in our model:**

- **Collaborative effort**
- **On site training**
- **Documenting toward revitalizing**
- **Community based protocols for use of materials**

#### **References:**

- Furbee, N. Louanna and Lori A. Stanley. 2002. A collaborative model for preparing Indigenous Curators of a Heritage Language. *International Journal for the Sociology of Language*. 154, 113-128.
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