

Brief Idea and Practice on Field Linguistics: An Overview

Mashrur Imtiaz*

Abstract : Field Linguistics essentially relates to the method of gathering linguistic information and studying the linguistic phenomenon of a considerably less-studied language. Theories about the origin and nature of language and the interactions between languages have often characterized investigations here. Although, the name field linguistics might imply that the investigation must be carried in the field, a linguist can bring his source to himself. Fieldwork also bears a direct relationship with language description and thus the more fieldwork; the more information about the variability of language will be available to us. This paper aims to find the answer of these questions - what do we achieve through linguistic fieldwork and how does linguistics play an influential role in this kind of fieldwork. To explain this co-relation - linguistics as the technique in the fieldwork, its processes, common steps, used tools, ethical issues etc. are also discussed in here. Additionally, the idea and measurement along with the endangered languages of Bangladesh are also presented in here. Analysis level in linguistic fieldwork and creating a sketch grammar are two important aspects in the discussion in field linguistics. These dyadic scenarios are also introduced in this paper. At the end of the paper, some real life linguistic projects that ensembles collection of texts, activities and repositories regarding linguistic fieldwork are also briefly introduced.

Keywords: Field linguistics, Language documentation, Linguistic fieldwork, Language endangerment

1. Field linguistics: an introduction

Field Linguistics primarily refers to the process of collecting linguistic data and studying the linguistics phenomenon of a relatively less-studied language. It involves direct, personal contact between two

* Assistant Professor (on study leave), Department of Linguistics, University of Dhaka

participants- the informant (or language consultants) who is the speaker of the language, and the linguistic researcher. The success of the investigation highly relies on direct communication with the informant, who not only is the source of information but also can evaluate the utterances the investigator provides him. As per Hockett (1948), this approach to language study has also been called the informant method, or the contact method. In contemporary days, field linguistics has become inseparable part of language documentation, and language documentation basically supports the preservation of endangered languages. In language documentation, the role of field linguistics would be a linguistic technique that collects and preserves all the constructing components of languages. Field linguistics has broadened the horizon of the study of language. If we need to rely on the written records of language solely, our knowledge would have been severely limited. Thanks to the dedication of the many inquisitive linguists and researchers of the past few centuries who have personally collected data about little-known languages and dialects, now we have access to a vast source of information about the language. Those investigations were often characterised by theories about the origin and nature of language and the relationships between languages. Only a handful of linguists and linguistic anthropologists have shown interest in documenting how language is used as 'mode of social interaction [which] provides the material out of which group of people recognise themselves as a community' (Duranti, 1997). A traditional method of direct elicitation of language data from informants is not enough to capture the natural essence of a language. To do so, the fieldworker must become a long-term observant participator, recording extensive collections of audiovisual data of natural language exchanged among individuals within the community.

2. Literature review and rationale

According to Bower (2008) the definition of fieldwork is a broader one is linguistics, where the involvement of the language community and the linguists who are doing the fieldwork. The aims and narrative should be clarified as verified between those two subgroups in an ethical manner. The effective and fair interaction between the linguist and the community the third wheel in the fieldwork. Bower remarks-

Fieldwork (not just linguistic fieldwork) is about collecting data in its natural environment ... when linguists go to the field, they are going to study the natural environment for their object of study – that is, they go to study a language in the place where it is spoken, by the people who usually speak it....We work with real people, and become part of the data collection process ourselves...a (cf. Hyman 2001).”

The term field linguistics often is mixed up with anthropological linguistics, which is a distinctively different process. According to Carl F. Voegelin, anthropological linguistics parallels with five other aspects of linguistics- theoretical, psychological, critical, communicational, and comparative. Anthropological linguistics "comprises the analysis ... of either a wholly unknown language or of some unknown part of a language that is known in other parts" (Voegelin, 1961). It emphasizes the discovery part of linguistic research- be it the discovery of whole linguistic systems (e.g. grammar), or certain facets of these systems (e.g. phonemic systems), or even the differentiation based on area and various classes of society (for example, dialectology). Hoijer's definition of anthropological linguistics properly draws the line between these two terms as it describes anthropological linguistics as the "area of linguistic research which is devoted in the main to studies, synchronic and diachronic, of the languages of peoples who have no writing" (Hoijer, 1961). It means that anthropological linguistics works with not only the linguistic data but the language community as well. On the other hand, field linguistics solely focuses on the collection and analysis of linguistic data.

Although the name field linguistics might imply that the investigation must be carried in the field, the procedure suggests otherwise. While a "field archaeologist" must explore the site where he expects to collect his data repeatedly, a linguist can bring his source to himself. Thus, some fieldwork is done by drawing an informant from his rural locality to the researcher's city, and the interactions can take place in an office environment. Along with the continuing sophistication in the process of language investigation, a surge was seen in the direct study of living languages, mostly the dialects of the cultural languages or their culturally less relevant "sister" languages. Although research in non-western languages has not been as per with their western counterparts, there have been some considerable amount of work in the past. Some of the works are considered quite useful even in today's standard.

Samarin (1967) says, the science of language and the amount of fieldwork in language research have simultaneously progressed by leaps and bounds since the beginning of the last century. The history of this progress would not have been possible without the contribution made by linguists working on the living, for the most part, non-Western languages. Hundreds of researchers are currently engaged in some form of field linguistics. Millions of dollars are being invested in linguistic research each year, which proves the importance of linguistic research, substantiated with fieldwork, has been widely recognised. Fieldwork also bears a direct relationship with language description. The more fieldwork, the more information about the variability of language will be available to us.

Beginning from the nineteenth century, sometimes the idea of fieldwork has overlapped with the theories of Chomsky, but in the contemporary period the linguistic fieldwork continued to its' revival of self-claimed distinguished sub-discipline. There are many reasons for conducting fieldwork - combining different methods, styles, and places - still, researchers should do the fieldwork as part of their basic and usual work. The purpose of this paper is to discover an response to these issues – firstly, what are we doing with language work and secondly, how linguistics play an important part in the fieldwork of this kind. Finally, some real-life linguistic projects were also briefly introduced that combine text collection, work and repositories concerning linguistic fieldwork. This is to be noted that, this empirical research is not based on first-hand field experience or subjective theorization. This paper tries to bring the introductory concept along the description of linguistic methods applied in the fieldwork.

3. What do we achieve through linguistic fieldwork?

Crowley (2007) states that, in a hugely diverse discipline like Linguistics, there is a wide variety of ways field linguists can contribute to our knowledge. Most linguists are primarily interested in matters of phonology, morphology, and syntax. As a result, how language is used in real life situations often remain unexplored. Through linguistic fieldwork, in a consolidated manner, we achieve the some specific outcomes. Through linguistic fieldwork, in a consolidated manner, we achieve some specific outcomes. For obtaining those achievements, linguistic fieldwork aims for doing the following tasks:

- To document linguistic diversity within all the remaining languages, linguistic fieldwork is essential one. Therefore, we get documented languages, which are mainly endangered, as the major outcome of linguistic fieldwork.
- Among the 7097 (Ethnologue, 2018) living languages spoken in the world today, 50% are endangered and may disappear within this century. Fieldwork is essential to preserve information about these languages.
- Many languages have never been recorded or written down. Around 2000 languages have writing, most of them very recently, yet there are around 5000 languages with no written form. Fieldwork can be helpful for the preservation, or future decision about writing the orthography of these languages.
- Studying languages in the field yields data that answer fundamental questions like: ‘what are languages like and how are they used?’, ‘do all languages, cultures and societies share some universal characteristics?’, or ‘how much variation/difference can exist between languages/varieties and how is it patterned?’
- To attain intellectual contentment by solving complex descriptive and analytical problems, testing theories, encountering alternative ways of being/living/talking and trying to understand them.
- To support communities preserve their endangered languages by documenting them, and hence making them strong
- To ensure meaningful connectivity with members of other languages groups and cultures and relive their unique ethnic and social events
- To learn about the amazing properties of new languages in interesting and challenging ways.

4. Linguistics as the technique in the fieldwork: processes and tools

4.1 Theory, technique and data

The basic concept of fieldwork is, it is usually done in remote, rural locations, requiring long-distance travel, living in underlying conditions, with exposure to diseases and at some personal risk. However,

fieldwork can be done in major urban areas, especially among diasporas or immigrant communities, as well. For example, a major city like London has over 400 languages various vibrant linguistic communities and cultures. Access to field sites often depends on who is doing the research. However, in some cases, physical, political or social dangers might make it impossible for a field worker to go to remote locations. In that case, local fieldwork is the best or only alternative. There are several tried and tested fieldwork methods, each with its advantages and disadvantages: 1) elicitation; 2) staged communication (experiments); 3) participant observation.

Some linguists insist on studying the language and use it (monolingual fieldwork) as much as possible, whilst others depend on language francas and translation. The mix of both techniques are used by many linguists too. Elicitation is one of the most used techniques in linguistic fieldwork. Different types of elicitation process are described below (Austin, 2012):

- Contextualising elicitation: The researcher requests the speakers to comment on or provide contexts for a given word or construction.
- Translation equivalent: Speakers are asked to translate a given word or utterance.
- Judgment: Speakers are invited to evaluate the acceptability/grammaticality of a given form.

After collecting linguistic data by using different fieldwork methods, it is expected to do the following things to complete the linguistic fieldwork.

- a. Getting the data
- b. Preserving the collected data
- c. Processing the collected data
- d. Analyzing the collected data

The final and fine-tuned process after the completion of linguistic fieldwork is considered as language documentation. Woodbury (2003) defines, language documentation is the creation, annotation, preservation, and dissemination of transparent records of a language. It is Important for both theoretical and empirical branches of linguistics

such as typology, historical linguistics, etc. Documentation is particularly crucial for endangered languages, as the field workers' work might be the only substantive record of a language:

- few speakers
- the field might view the language as “done”
- speakers might view the language as “done”

4.2 Tools used in linguistic fieldwork

The active involvement of the researcher and speakers of the endangered languages, it has been proved that linguistic fieldwork is about working on language in a culturally, socially and ethically appropriate way in a context where the language is being used. We need some specific hardware or tools in the fieldwork for collecting and preserving field data. A standard list of the equipment are as follows:

Table A: Tools in language documentation

Major tools	Additional tools	Other tools
▪ Laptop	▪ Backup devices (hard drive, DVDs, etc)	▪ Ways of keeping the equipment clean
▪ Audio recorder	▪ Memory cards for recorders	▪ Carry bags
▪ Video recorder	▪ Paper and pens	▪ Stills camera (cell phone, ipad, etc)
▪ Microphones	▪ Notebooks and	▪ Other power equipment
▪ Backup means of recording (e.g. laptop, second recorder)	▪ Personal logbook	▪ First aid kits

Last but not the last the required entity is the stimuli or the research. One of the most used questionnaire in linguistic fieldwork is ‘The Lingua Descriptive Studies Questionnaire’, which was developed by: Bernard Comrie & Norval Smith in 1977. A common and widely used phonology questionnaire was developed by Dan Everett. For lexicon, ‘Swadesh 200 Word List’ is a classic one that was compiled by Morris Swadesh in 1952.

4.3 Ethical issues in the fieldwork

The use of human participants in linguistic fieldwork is very prevalent. The linguistic data are collected straight from the speakers of the languages involved. In most instances, researchers are therefore asked to seek the authority or affiliate's approval. Rice (2011) explained the impact of linguistic fieldwork as part of social science and the ethical codes to follow by the researcher. In his view a linguistic study – ‘examines ethics to ethical codes, individuals, codes, communities, languages beginning with a dictionary definition of ethics followed by research with people (Rice, 2011).’

The conduction of fieldwork requires different ethical aspects to be fulfilled before the fieldwork begins, even before any pilot survey (Stanford, 2018). The typical ethical considerations are the combination of the following topics:

- Responsibilities and obligations to the speaker or the language consultant (confidentiality, right to know the procedure of the research, right to have the disseminated outcomes etc.). Therefore, the participant should get a consent form that will let them know the whole field data collection process with crystal clarity.
- Intellectual property rights for the collected texts should be ensured, common narratives like stories, poems etc. should be preserved under copyright issue under selective authority.
- Compensation or financial aid to the community is usually discouraging. It is always better to pick language consultants who will participate in their own interest. If there is any travel cost or remuneration cost for the language consultant, there must have to be some valid reasons to provide the amount.
- Grant money use should be fair; there should be a financial maintenance logbook for keeping track of the expenditure.
- Making available the collected field materials to the general linguistic community is a responsible stand for any linguistic fieldwork. This sharing with the other linguistic community will enhance the chance of working on the concerned language at the macro level.

Therefore, the researchers are accountable to the authorities like university academic bodies, academic supervisors, and grant agencies for conducting linguistic fieldwork. Usually the academic researchers get the approval of the fieldwork from the university ethics board, commonly known as Institutional/Internal Review Board (IRB). There are some guideline in every ethical body that maintains the criteria of the ethical issues regarding fieldwork. After getting the approval from ethics committee, a field linguist is ready to move out for the fieldwork. Moreover, the field linguist needs to continue to be mindful of ethical research practices, since it's impossible to anticipate all circumstances (and take care of them) at the time of writing the ethics application.

In the field, recording is an important thing during the data collection process. Illicit recording or recording without the consent of the speaker is strictly prohibited in any linguistic fieldwork. Ethical measures should also be taken care of, for archiving the collected data. A robust and previous determined outline of the storage and access to the archived data is necessary. Permissions from the local authorities, clan chiefs, and of course from the consultant is top-most ethical concern regarding fieldwork. It is not a great move to visit the field without having all these required permissions. In case of working with children, the authorization from guardians is essential- not only for the access but also for the future connectivity with the child informant. The collected data can be used for further research by the mean of secondary usage of data; again, this is essential to seek permission at the period of negotiating the primarily informed consent to use the collected data for future research. For the data collection of endangered languages from indigenous communities, as a researcher, we have to be more conscious to some extent. The social interaction will take place, which is always complicated – we have to ensure the positive vibe or perception of the self and the research as well.

5. Language endangerment: idea and measurement

Researchers anticipate that there are about 5000 to 6000 living languages in this world (Grenoble & Whaley, 1998). Moreover, Ethnologue (2018) published a report where they mentioned about 7097 living languages, but only twenty among those have the vast number of speakers with a great practice of the languages. More than half of the population of the world speak in a handful of leading

languages such as Mandarin, English, Spanish, Arabic, Bengali, Hindi. Rest of the languages are endangered because of an inadequate amount of speakers. There is a list of 2,500 endangered languages, according to the 'Atlas of the world's languages in danger' published by UNESCO (Moseley and Nicolas, 2010). Among them, 230 languages became extinct by 1950. Researchers predict that 3000 languages will be in danger of extinction within the next hundred years. UNESCO published a list in 2010 based on the languages used in different generations. The list is given below –

Table B: Rank of vulnerability of languages by UNESCO (Moseley and Nicolas, 2010)

Rank of vulnerability	Language communication in different generations
▪ Safe language	Languages which are used by the different generations of the language communities.
▪ Vulnerable language	Languages used by children or very young people. These languages are not used outside of the families.
▪ Definitely Endangered	Children do not learn these languages as their mother tongue or to not learn them at all.
▪ Severely Endangered	Only the earlier generations or the old people use these languages.
▪ Critically Endangered	Old people, grandfathers and grandmothers use these languages, but only as their second language. They are not spontaneous in their use of these languages.
▪ Extinct	Languages which are not in use at all.

David Crystal classifies clarifier languages into three groups based on the perspective of their usage. These are – Safe language, Endangered language and Extinct language (Crystal, 2000). Michelle Krause explains the endangerment of language by the thought that languages no longer being learned as mother-tongue by children. This type of languages is called 'Moribund language'. David Crystal showed that Wurm and Baumann (1996) divided language endangerment into five classes. They are – 1) Potentially endangered language; 2) Endangered language; 3) Seriously endangered language; 4) Moribund language; 5) Extinct language.

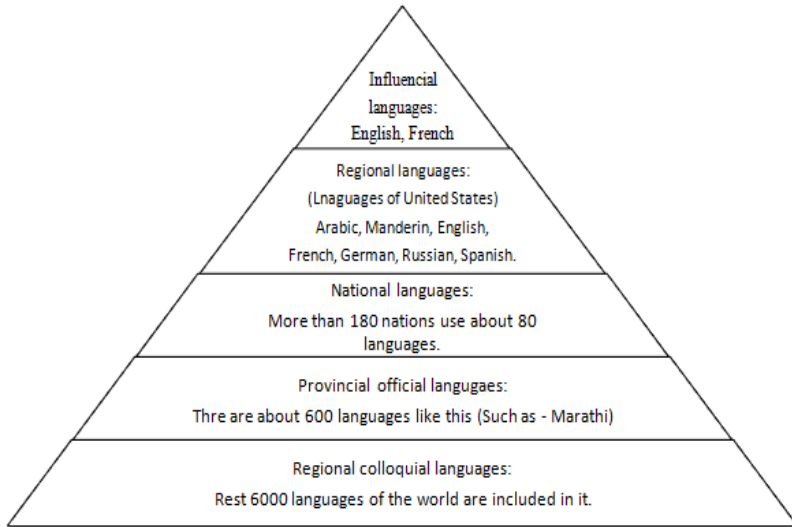


Image A: Sequence of the height of world languages (As it is being used)

Graddol source: presented (1997), in Crystal (2000), pp. 29

The terminology on degrees of endangerment is exceptionally diverse, and often inconsistent, even within the usage of one author. Furthermore, judgments about the level of endangerment differ widely between authors, even in collective studies such as Brenzinger (2007) where a specific scale was mandated. The maximum system is Fishman (1991) which refers to eight numbered stages on his Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS). The most widely used scale is outlined in Wurm and Baumann (1996), and has five degrees of endangerment: potentially endangered, endangered, severely endangered, moribund and extinct. Krauss (1997) provides a schema with seven points: A+ (safe), A (stable), A- (unstable/eroded), B (definitively endangered), C (severely endangered), D (critically endangered), and E (extinct).

The previously mentioned UNESCO standard implemented in Moseley and Nicholas (2010) is the Wurm five-point scale with a new term 'Unsafe' referring to languages which have some child speakers (equivalent to A- or unstable/eroded in the Krauss model and to potentially endangered in the Wurm model). Endangered languages are used mainly by the grandparental generation and up; critically

endangered (equivalent to D or critically endangered in the Krauss model and moribund in the Wurm model), mostly used by very few speakers of the great-grandparent generation; and extinct. According to Ethnologue (2018b), there are some significant matters that determine whether a language is endangered or not. These are as follows –

- a. The population of language user and the age limitations of the speakers.
- b. Population stability and the tendency of growth.
- c. The habitat and migration of speakers.
- d. The trend of the use of second language and usage of another language as the second language.
- e. Attitude towards the mother tongue among the language community and various fields of language use.
- f. Recognition of the language in any other nation or residence regions.
- g. Language acquisition in children and method of language learning in schools etc.

In contemporary days, EGIDS model is the most significant version of measuring endangered language. It is an expanded version of Fishman's Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale. Fishman's 8-level Graded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (GIDS) is considered as the critical evaluative framework of language endangerment. However, many problems started to come out when GIDS was applied to languages outside of Europe. To counter the shortcomings of GIDS, Paul Lewis and Gary Simons took the task of expanding it so that any language in the world could be scored by using it. Hence they came up with the Expanded Intergenerational Disruption Scale (EGIDS). They combined GIDS with UNESCO's six-level scale (Brenzinger et al. 2003). The UNESCO scale focused more on endangered languages, labelling anything above a six on GIDS as "Safe". A combination of the two scales, EGIDS is a 13 level scale rich enough in every aspect to score any language in the world. Each level has a number and label, given in the table below.

Table C: 13 level EGIDS table

Level	Label	Description
0	International	The language is used internationally for a broad range of functions.
1	National	Language used in education, work, mass media, govt at the nationwide level.
2	Regional	The language is used for local and regional mass media and govt services.
3	Trade	The language is used for local and regional works by both insiders and outsiders.
4	Educational	Literacy in language is being transmitted through a system of public education. This is considered the level of sustainable literacy. In order to be scored a 4 the language must be at, or above a 4 in all FAMED conditions.
5	Written	The language is used orally by all generations and is effectively used in written form in parts of the community.
6a	Vigorous	The language is used orally by all generations and is being learned by children as their first language. This is considered the level of sustainable orality. In order to be scored a 6a the language must be at, or above a 6a in all FAMED conditions.
6b	Threatened	The language is used orally by all generations but only some of the child-bearing generation are transmitting it to their children.
7	Shifting	The child-bearing generation knows the language well enough to use it among themselves but none are transmitting it to their children.
8a	Moribund	The only remaining active speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation.
8b	Nearly Extinct	The only remaining speakers of the language are members of the grandparent generation or older who have little opportunity to use the language.
9	Dormant	The language serves as a reminder of heritage identity for an ethnic community. No one has more than symbolic proficiency. This is the level of sustainable identity. This is the state where no fully proficient speakers remain but the language is still closely associated with the community identity and is used as a symbolic marker and reinforcer of that identity.
10	Extinct	No one retains a sense of ethnic identity associated with the language, even for symbolic purposes. This is the level of sustainable history.

Source: Lewis and Simons Assessing Endangerment: Expanding Fishman's GIDS (2010), pp. 28.

6. Endangered languages in Bangladesh

According to the information provided by UNESCO, any language with less than ten thousand speakers can be called endangered language. There are 41 languages found in Bangladesh so far, and among them, many are endangered. Some standards have been followed to determine the level of their vulnerability. Some indexes serve as the primary determinants to assess the vulnerability of a language. The positive momentum of these indexes keeps a word alive. The following indexes are to determine the susceptibility of a language –

- The number of the language users.
- Nature of language usage or how the language users use their language.
- Whether all the people of the new generation are using their language or not, and how spontaneously.
- Expansion of the speaking area.
- Things which catalyze a mother language.

We can consider fourteen languages as endangered in Bangladesh by following the above standards, as the primary data collection report of the Ethnolinguistic survey of Bangladesh claims so. It is to mention here; these languages are considered as threatened based on only the linguistic situation of Bangladesh. If we think the case from a global perspective, some languages among them are not endangered. In the neighbour countries, many of these languages have enough speakers, so they are not considered endangered in those regions. Some languages are not deemed to be endangered even with a small number of native speakers. Two languages like this are Nepali and Ahamia. We do not call them endangered because these languages are well established in other countries and are the languages of majority people. Here is the overview of fourteen endangered languages of Bangladesh following the international standards –

Table D: Endangered languages of Bangladesh

Sequence	Languages	Population	Language family
1.	Kharia	1,000 (Approximate)	Austro-Asiatic
2.	Soura	1,000 (Approximate)	Austro-Asiatic
3.	Koda	600 -700 (Approximate)	Austro-Asiatic
4.	Mundari	40,000 (Approximate)	Austro-Asiatic
5.	Kol	1,600-2,900 (Approximate)	Austro-Asiatic
6.	Malto	8,000 (Approximate)	Dravidian
7.	Kondo	600-700 (Approximate)	Dravidian
8.	Khumi	3,300 (Approximate)	Sino-Tibetan
9.	Pangkhoa	2,300 (Approximate)	Sino-Tibetan
10.	Rengmitcha	40 (Approximate)	Sino-Tibetan
11.	Chak	2,900 (Approximate)	Sino-Tibetan
12.	Khiang	4000 (Approximate)	Sino-Tibetan
13.	Laleng/Patro	2,100 (Approximate)	Sino-Tibetan
14.	Lushai	1000 (Approximate)	Sino-Tibetan

Source: IMLI (2018)

All these previously mentioned numbers are approximate, and have been estimated based on the previously done linguistic researches and population censuses. The fourteen languages mentioned above are considered as endangered in the context of Bangladesh because of the speaker number, multilingualism of the speakers and language mixing. Usually, a language becomes endangered if the number of its speakers drops to less than 5,000 (Crystal, 2000). From that point of view, these 14 languages are undoubtedly endangered in the land of Bangladesh. However, there are some languages, which are extremely endangered. Kharia, Soura, Malto and Rengmitcha can be considered as seriously endangered languages. Another thing is notable here; among the languages of North Bengal, some languages of Austro-Asiatic language family (like Kol, Koda) are endangered. Sadri language has a significant influence because of the bilingualism and multilingualism of the speakers in this case. These endangered languages of small ethnic communities of Bangladesh do not have their writing system or usage as the medium of education among the natives. As a result, the language diversity of these communities is facing disastrous

consequences. Their cultural tradition is gradually disappearing along with their languages, which have been passed down to generations for a long time.

Language is an innate medium of communication among human beings. However, the usage of language depends on the social situation. Decreasing speaker number is not the only reason responsible for language extinction; the state or the government also plays a very crucial part. The collective effort of the relative language communities and institutions can play a great role in this regard as well. Application of modern methods of linguistics can increase the language usage among the comparable speakers. Extinction of a language is a massive loss for a country as it damages the cultural diversity. This is why it is vital to take initiatives to preserve the endangered languages of Bangladesh with linguistic documentation properly.

7. Linguistic entities in Linguistic fieldwork: Basis of language documentation

7.1 Analysis level in linguistic fieldwork

For the analysis of languages from the collected field data, there are many levels of aspects. Ranging from the core to peripheral surface of linguistics, the generalized analytical level in linguistic fieldwork is shown below:

- Phonetics: the study of the sounds and sound production
- Phonology: the study of the sound pattern in languages
Morphology: the study of the word structure and word typology
- Syntax: the study of the amalgamation of the words in a higher construction
- Semantics & pragmatics: the study of the meaning of words and the use of meaningful words in different contexts
- Historical linguistics: the study of languages whose historical relations are recognisable through similarities in vocabulary, word formation, and syntax
- Lexicology: The study of compiling the dictionary

- Language acquisition: The study of accruing and learning languages from infancy
- Stylistics: the study of linguistic style in languages

7.2 *Creating a sketch grammar*

Grammatical sketches are different from full grammar, in their length and full aspects as well. Usually, a sketch grammar consists of 20-30 pages whereas the complete grammar could be over 200 Pages. A sketch grammar should be compactly written because its primary audience is linguists, though it should not be so complicated so that the regular readers will reject it.

Mark Donohue (n.d.) mentioned some significant usages of sketch grammars, which should:

- project the basic demonstration of proficiency in any language - along with all the essential construction of core linguistic entities
- draw an acceptable illustration of specific rules of grammar which could be intelligible to any reader- salient feature doesn't mean to fill out the sketching with all the sophisticated grammatical entities.
- provide foundation of the base grammar of that concerned language, so that future researchers, who are seeking the preliminary idea of the language, can work in future in some full extent. Additionally, they can work on specific grammatical aspect in the long run. Also, connectivity sister languages should be present in any grammar sketching.

Following the discussion of Dononue again, we can portray that a typical sketch grammar includes the following components with minimal description:

- a. introduction: introductory non-linguistic information about the language'
- b. phonology sketch: phoneme inventory, unusual restrictions on co-occurrence, unusual allophone etc.
- c. grammar summary: the brief summary of the grammar; including salient typological aspects of the language, word

- order, case marking or verbal agreement, serial verb, obligatory objects, the complex parts of the grammar etc.
- d. Clause types: verb less clauses and verbal clauses with their subsection.
 - e. syntactic ~ pragmatic variation
 - f. word classes: typical word categories like noun, verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun, demonstrative, numerals, adposition. Also, semantic type (objects, properties, actions, manners), discourse function (referential, modifying, predicating), and morphological markedness (how much and what morphology appears).
 - g. noun phrases and verb phrases with detailing
 - h. simple and complex sentence patterns and types
 - i. discourse and narrative

Usually, short field trips on specific language aims for the sketch grammar on previously non-described language. For a complete grammar, it needs extensive time and observation from the field, and generally, this kind of project requires institutionally structured guidance.

7.3 Collection of texts

Text collection is the process of recording of language consultants' speech, then transcribing, translating and analyzing it. This collection is the uninterrupted, non-structured long version of speaking of the language consultant rather than sentence-by-sentence utterance for data elicitation. It's more natural speech which is relatively pure and non-violated. In this kind of utterance of the text, the naturalness of the speaker remains intact because the speaker doesn't have to be too conscious about the exact pronunciation or the correctness of grammar. Vaux & Cooper (2001) remarked that some particular words, sentence patterns or any other unique linguistic construction could come out from this kind of texts, apart from that the broader aspect of cultural and linguistic connectivity among human race could also be discovered in this journey. Using electronic devices like the microphone and digital sound recorder, either in a controlled lab setting or a regular data collection session in the field. For me, the collection of the text straight from the field would be more suitable for the integration of the speakers would be more comfortable in my field condition.

The following topics will be considered as texts in the process of text collection:

Table E: Necessary equipment for doing linguistic fieldwork

▪ Folktales and stories	▪ Superstitions	▪ Proverbs and poems
▪ Fables	▪ Songs and sayings	▪ Speeches, oratory
▪ Legends	▪ Descriptions of events or objects	▪ Jokes
▪ Riddles	▪ Ritualized blessings and curses	▪ Insult games
▪ Own calendar year	▪ Reminiscences of the speaker	▪ Written genres of many forms etc.

Vaux and Cooper (2001) later classified these broad aspects into three joint portions, which are - 1) Personal narratives; 2) Folktales; 3) Invented texts. While the collection of this kind of texts, the field researcher needs to focus on some problematic issues, like - omitting speech errors, positive approach of requesting to the speakers, bridging the cultural gaps between speaker and researcher, backup materials for the collected texts etc.

8. Post linguistic fieldwork scenario: activities and repositories

Once the linguistic fieldwork is completed and the endangered languages are digitally archived, there must be a database or repository with some kind of access. From those repositories or online database - linguists, language enthusiastic people and community members of the concerned speech community would be able to retrieve data and subsequently use those linguistic data for their linguistics usages. Either it might be used for academic or research purposes, or it can be marked as the source material for the revival of those endangered language by the speech community members.

There are currently lots of institutes and authorities, who are paying higher attention to linguistic fieldwork. Their ultimate target is to preserve undocumented languages. In developed countries, where indigenous people have been residing for a long time, particular focus and consideration were given to the language documentation projects. There lots of academic bodies (mainly the linguistics department of different universities), project consortiums, and publication house –

who are paying the central attention to preserve all the languages through fieldwork. In this segment, we are going to have a brief look at these, especially motivated field activity supporters. Different organizations are dealing with linguistic fieldwork by providing funding, training, gathering for linguistic fieldwork based repositories. Some of them are listed below:

- HRELP (Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project). It consists of three programmes: ELDP, ELAP, and ELAR
- DoBeS (Dokumentation Bedrohter Sprachen) Project
- European Science Foundation Better Analyses Based on Endangered Languages programme (EuroBABEL)
- the US National Science Foundation (NSF) and National Endowment for the Humanities (NEH) Documenting Endangered Languages initiative (DEL)
- The Language Conservancy
- SIL International
- Ethnologue
- PARADISEC Archive
- LACITO and the Pangloss Collection
- First Peoples' Heritage, Language and Culture Council
- World Oral Literature Project, Voices of Vanishing Worlds
- Resource Network for Linguistic Diversity
- The Endangered Languages Project (A project by the Alliance for Linguistic Diversity)
- EMELD (Electronic Metastructure for Endangered Languages Data)
- The World Oral Literature Project based at Cambridge University

There are also repositories, which are open to the linguistic researchers, and previously documented linguistic data are digitally archived here along with specific keywords and search option with online access.

- LRE (Language Resources and Evaluation) Map Language resources map

- Richard Littauer's GitHub catalogue Research Network for Linguistic Diversity (RNLD) software page Research Network for Linguistic Diversity's page on linguistic software.
- Language Documentation & Conservation (Free Open Access Journal)

In academia, linguistic fieldwork is a common story. In the Asian context, countries like India, Japan, Singapore have some excellent academic initiatives for the language documentation through linguistic fieldwork. University of Hawai'i, Stanford University and UC Berkeley, are prominent institutes that deal with language documentation in the USA. Department of Linguistics at SOAS, University of London is another influential institute. Department of Linguistics, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Germany is playing a crucial role as the base hub of field linguistics in context of Europe, as well as in the background of academia. Linguistics department of major Australian universities like Monash University, University of Melbourne, La Trobe University, University of Newcastle etc. In Canada and New Zealand, there are different linguistics department in different universities where extensive work on field linguistics are taking place. In these universities, individual researchers are conducting linguistic fieldwork on different endangered languages of the world. The academic institutions fund most of these documentation projects and those documentations are the outcomes of the masters or PhD projects by research. Researchers are academically trained there through graduation or post-graduation level coursework, and henceforth conduct the linguistic fieldwork as a part of their academic pursuit.

9. Linguistic fieldwork and the preservation of endangered languages

Woodbury (2011) expands the language documentation notion as 'creation, annotation, preservation and dissemination of transparent records of a language'. Therefore the in the field linguistics there would linguistic fieldwork where the emphasis on diversity of goals, purposes and outcomes would be ensured. Apart from these, the emergence of a documentary corpus theory and overall field data planning are crucial part. If we visualize the diagram below, there is a connective flow in

between field linguistics for the preservation of endangered languages, the real life fieldwork for the documentation, and finally the outcomes of the linguistic fieldwork.

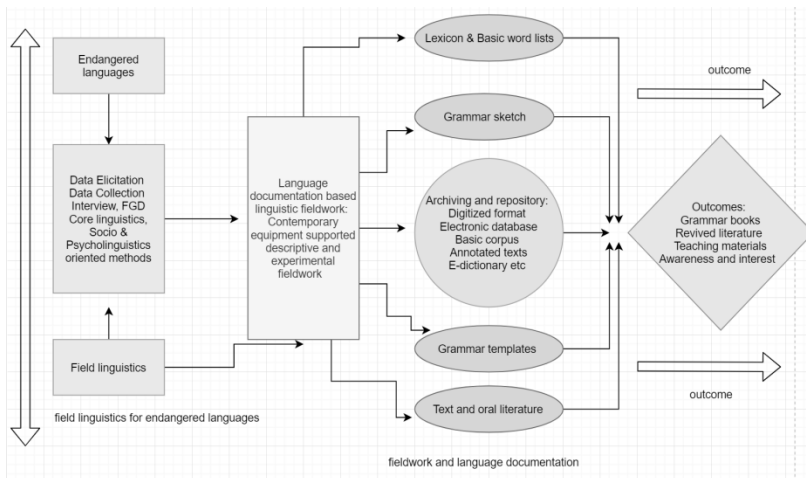


Image B: linguistic fieldwork and language documentation outcome connectivity markers

Source: Though this flowchart is loosely based on the work of Gibbon (2016)

Though this flowchart is loosely based on the work of Gibbon (2016), it tries to represent to actual scenario of field linguistics for endangered languages where contemporary linguistic fieldworks occur in a descriptive and experimental manner covering all the entities for language preservation. Moreover, the dissemination of the collected linguistic data in an usable manner by the language users is important as well; because the linguistic metadata is mostly for the researchers and much more theoretical and complex. Therefore outcomes should be really helpful and user friendly for the non-linguists or language users of the endangered language community. Only then the preservation would walk on the line from theory to practice.

10. Conclusion

This article deals with an overview of the linguistic fieldwork's essential and practical aspects. When we use linguistic languages to preserve the endangered languages of the world, the grander idea of achieving linguistic diversity can be realized. It is an attempt to briefly capture

the theoretical and practical aspects of linguistic documentation. The language endangerment situation in Bangladesh should be a prime concern right at this moment, though there is a sheer lack of practical and authentic linguistic activities for fighting that endangerment scenario. After a strong theoretical idea in core linguistics, rigorous training in language documentation, and the heartiest efforts in field linguistics, our linguistic environment would definitely gain a steady yet positive transformation. This process of making a subtle beneficial linguistic change could be a wonderful reward for the International Year of Indigenous Language 2019 declared by the United Nations.

Reference

- Austin, Peter K. (2012). *Linguistic Fieldwork by Peter K. Austin, Endangered Languages Project Linguistics Department, Powerpoint Presentation, SOAS*. Retrieved from <https://www.slideserve.com/Olivia/linguistic-fieldwork-peter-k-austin-endangered-languages-project-linguistics-department-soas>
- Bowern, Claire. (2008). *Linguistic Fieldwork. A Practical Guide*. New York: Palgrave MacMillan.
- Brenzinger, Matthias. (2007). *Language diversity endangered*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Crowley, Terry. (2007). *Field Linguistics. A Beginner's Guide*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- Crystal, David. (2000). *Language death*. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press.
- Donohue, Mark. (n.d.). *Grammar Sketch Outlines*. Retrieved from Monash University website: https://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/tools-at-lingboard/pdf/donohue_grammar_sketches.pdf
- Duranti, Alessandro. (1997). *Linguistic Anthropology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Fishman, Joshua A. (1991). *Reversing Language Shift: Theoretical and Empirical Foundations of Assistance to Threatened Languages* (Multilingual Matters 76). Clevedon: Multilingual Matters.
- Gibbon, Dafydd. (2016, February). *What can endangered languages teach the language technologies?* Presentation at the ELKL-4 (4th Endangered and Less Resourced Languages) conference, Agra University, India.
- Grenoble, Lenore A. and Whaley, Lindsay J. (Eds.) (1998). *Endangered languages: Language loss and community response* (1st ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- Hockett, Charles F. (1948), Implications of Bloomfield's Algonquian studies. *Language* 24:117-131.

- Hojier, Harry. (1961). Anthropological linguistics. In Christine Mohrmann, Alf Sommerfelt, and Joshua Whatmough (Eds.), *Trends in European and American Linguistics 1930-1960*. Utrecht and Antwerp: Spectrum Publishers. Pp. 110-125.
- Ethnologue. (2018a). *How many languages are there in the world? | Ethnologue*. Retrieved April 17, 2018, from <https://www.ethnologue.com/guides/how-many-languages>
- Ethnologue. (2018b). *Endangered Languages | Ethnologue* Retrieved April 18, 2018, from <https://www.ethnologue.com/endangered-languages>
- Hyman, Larry M. 2001. Fieldwork as a state of mind. In *Linguistic Fieldwork*, ed. by Paul Newman and Martha Ratliff, 15-33. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.
- IMLI (2018) Ethnolinguistic Survey of Bangladesh (Volume 1). Dhaka, Bangladesh : International Mother Language Institute (IMLI), Ministry of Education, Government of Bangladesh.
- Krauss, Michael E. (2007). Classification and terminology for degrees of language endangerment. In Matthias Brenzinger (ed.), *Language Diversity Endangered* (Trends in Linguistics: Studies and Monographs 181), 1–8. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.
- Lewis, M.P. & Simons, G.F. (2010). ASSESSING ENDANGERMENT: EXPANDING FISHMAN'S GIDS. Retrieved from <https://www.semanticscholar.org/paper/ASSESSING-ENDANGERMENT%3A-EXPANDING-FISHMAN'S-GIDS-Lewis-Simons/814884cabb0e9d7d85641b50a6f7aea4333cdc57>
- Moseley, Christopher & Nicolas, Alexandre. (2010). *Atlas of the world's languages in danger*. Paris: UNESCO.
- Rice, Keren. (2011). Ethical Issues in Linguistic Fieldwork. In *The Oxford Handbook of Linguistic Fieldwork* (1st ed.). Oxford, UK: Oxford University Press.
- Samarin, William. (1967). *Field Linguistics: A Guide to Linguistic Field Work*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc.
- Stanford. (2018). *Ethics & IRB - Stanford, Department of Linguistics*. Retrieved April 15, 2018, from <https://linguistics.stanford.edu/research/linguistic-fieldwork/resources-linguistic-fieldwork/ethics-irb>
- Vaux, Bert and Cooper, Justin. (2003). *Introduction to Linguistic Field Methods*. Munich: Lincom Europa.
- Voegelin, Carl F. (1961). Anthropological linguistics in the context of other fields of linguistics. In [Summer Institute of Linguistics], *À William Cameron Townsend en el XXV Aniversario del Instituto Lingüístico de Verano*. Mexico, D. F. Pp. 673-685.
- Woodbury, Tony. (2003). Defining documentary linguistics. Peter K. Austin (ed.), *Language Documentation and Description* 1: 35-51.
- Wurm, Stephen A. & Baumann, Theo. (1996). *Atlas of the world's languages in danger of disappearing* (Language Arts & Disciplines). Paris, France: UNESCO Publishing/Pacific Linguistics.