CHAPTER 12. FIELDWORK ETHICS

12.1 INTRODUCTION

Establishing a 'best practice' for ethics crossculturally can be complex. On the one hand, there are universals or near universals of conscience such that the fieldworker can go a long ways towards establishing a sound ethical basis for his or her fieldwork by following his or her conscience and 'doing what seems right'. But regardless of how well-developed one's conscience is, this subjective rule of thumb is far from an adequate basis for governing the ethical aspects of any given field project. Ethical fieldwork is not simply avoiding gaffes or the giving or taking of offense, or failure to commit criminal acts. Just as peace is more than the absence of war, so ethics involves a positive, pro-active code of behavior and right-thinking intended to leave the field situation and language community better off than when the linguist first 'found' them. Moreover, no researcher can avoid explicit consideration of ethical issues because all major universities and funding agencies in the Western world require that all research projects associated with them receive pass rigorous ethical review that requires that the reseacher(s) deal with the issues discussed in this chapter.

There are several sources available on ethics and fieldwork on the internet.[62] I provide the URLs to several of them in the footnote above. This chapter is unable to provide more than the barest of overviews of ethical considerations. I therefore strongly recommend that the prospective fieldworker also consult the web sources in the footnote and their references. Nevertheless, this chapter does attempt to cover the basic issues of the major ethical considerations in fieldwork. We begin with a discussion of issues affecting the language community and then move to issues concerning government relations and then to the very sensitive issue of relating to missionaries, an issue that few fieldworkers will be able to avoid.

12.2. THE LANGUAGE COMMUNITY

CONSENT

The first issue that arises in any fieldwork session is the consent of the language community to allow and participate in the research and the subsequent dissemination of the research results and data. The key issue here is that the community and each individual participating in the research give *informed* consent to participate and that this consent be registered in such a way that it is accessible and clear to all that the consent was voluntary and informed. One way of doing this, when working with a literate society, would be to spell out the details of the research in writing and ask the community leadership and/or all language teachers to sign an agreement to work on this project as it is presented in the document. The details of the research that should be made clear include:

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http://www.lsadc.org/
http://www.als.asn.au/
http://www.stanford.edu/dept/linguistics/fieldwork/info/ethics.html
http://www.eva.mpg.de/lingua/files/ethics.html
http://www.aaanet.org/committees/ethics/ch1.htm
http://www.chass.utoronto.ca/linguistics/LIN458H1F/04.458.ethics.pdf
http://www.geneva.quno.info/pdf/tkmono1.pdf (very useful paper, perhaps the best I have seen on Traditional Knowledge and Property Rights).

() Research details for discussion with language community (all of these will ideally be made clear in writing with written consent from the community leadership):

a. The objectives of the research – what are your scientific reasons for being in the community? How did you make this clear to whoever is funding you? Work hard to ensure that the community really understands why you are there. Do not be satisfied with giving them vague ideas about 'studying your language' or some such.

b. The methodology of the research – how do you plan to go about finding out the things you said you wanted to know under (a) above? How do you expect the members of the community to be involved? What will they do? What are the possible risks to them in terms of physical safety, group or individual prestige or loss of face, etc?

c. The funding of the research: who is funding it; what are the categories of expenses; for how long is it funded; what percentage of the funding is for the community? People are rightly suspicious about where the money is coming from. And they may have heard all sorts of rumors about the linguist's nationality and its activities in the world. This has the potential downside of confusing people.[63] Why, for example, might the linguist have a grant for $100,000.00 if their share is only $8,000.00? Why is the linguist staying in a hotel, spending *their* money instead of staying with a community member and paying the savings to the community? This is a very sensitive issue. It is not always a good idea to tell everyone everything about the finances. On the other hand, it is not a good idea to ignore the issue either.

An interesting example of the kinds of unexpected issues that can arise in this regard comes from a recent research project of mine. As is common nowadays, the funding agencies listed my projects along with the total amount of funding in each on their public webpages. The language community found these pages and read about the projects. During my next visit, the people were all concerned that I was profiting from the research because the total funds listed by the funding agencies greatly exceeded the amount to be received by the community. I had thought before this that it made little sense to explain things like indirect costs, overheads, postdoc salaries, secretaries, and university office supplies to the community. But suddenly, I needed to do this. So I did. Along the way, I explained to the community that I received nothing in salary at all for the research and that I would earn exactly the same if I never returned to their community or indeed if I never did field research again. This was important news to them, because they thought that I was able to make a living only because of their consent to work with me and that therefore they should be seen as my employers. This was a very new experience for me, because previous groups I had conducted research on, in the Amazon, would never have looked at the internet or questioned me in this way. This is why it is essential to consider each group anew and not to lecture the

[63] Many PhD dissertations in the US, like much of the early work on Transformational Grammar, was funded by branches of the US Military and the US Department of Defense. This is common knowledge. Although there apparently were no strings attached to these grants and though there was no connection I am aware of between the linguistics research of that time (1960s by and large), still, people in countries suspicious of the USA might want assurances that the funding behind the project have no connection with the US military. This is an extreme example, but not implausible.

community but to dialog with it, giving plenty of time and opportunity about issues of finance, etc.

d. The outside participants in the research: The community will want to know if there are any 'silent' partners in the research, i.e. postdoctoral research associates, professorial colleagues, graduate students, etc. that are involved in the research, but who never come to the community.

e. The potential for profit of the research: Some anthropological studies make a profit. Anthony Seeger's book, *Why Suyá Sing*, (Seeger ()) has sold thousands of copies and makes a reasonable profit, a large part of it (perhaps all, I am not sure) goes to the Suyá community. As we discussed my linguistics research and the publication of a grammar and dictionary on Suyá, I assured that any profits at all would go to the community but that it was unlikely that this would amount to much (ergativity is a less likely marketing tool than exotic music). (Barbara Kern and I gave all the profits of Everett & Kern (1997) to the Wari' community. I think that this amounted to a few thousand dollars. Not a lot, but at least something.)

f. Payment to the community and to individual language teachers: It is crucial that everyone involved in the research understands how much they can be paid and what the parameters are, if any, for salary increments, non-budgeted requests, etc. Agreements should be reached and put in writing or on video about all finances. There is a serious issue that occsionally arises when a community wants to renegotiate financial terms as the project goes along, but that is an issue that each fieldworker will have to confront on their own. The only solution to that is to reason with people and stand firm within the parameters of the research budget.

On the DVD of the excellent movie 'The Mission', one of the special features – which I have used in my classes on Amazonian languages for some time – includes the documentation of a dispute over pay and working conditions between the production company of the movie and the Waurana people who played the part of the Guarani in the movie. The people refused to work at a crucial juncture for the movie, in the last days of production, because they believed that they had been lied to. Apparently, what had happened with regard to the payment was that the production company had thought that it could pay the community a lump sum which could then be used or divided as the community saw fit. However, the community had not understood things quite this way and individual Waurana were expecting to be paid at the proportionate amount that had been promised to the community. Moreover, the production company seems to have thought that the Waurana were committed to the making of the film, as something benefitting indigenous peoples, when in fact the Waurana were concerned about getting back to their villages, to their fields, etc. all of which were much more important to them that the goals of the movie. Eventually an understanding was reached. Part of the problem is that no one in the production company spoke Waurana. Another problem was, in my opinion as someone who simply watched the DVD, that the production company, like many Westerners, assumed that the community had a socialist rather than individualist view of economy and wealth. Whatever the reasons, it is an excellent example of why it is vital to explain all financial arrangements with the people before more serious problems develop.

g. Personal gain of the linguist: The linguist will get something out of the research, e.g. tenure, a job, promotion, a raise, fame, a book, etc. It is important for the

community to understand these advantages to the linguist as well as possible. But it is equally important that no one have the idea that the linguist is going to get rich off the research or that the linguist's higher standard of living is a result of his or her work with this particular language community. As I said earlier, I have made the effort to explain to groups that I work with that my salary, income, job security, etc. does not depend on my fieldwork, at least not on my fieldwork in their specific community. It is important to explain this at times so that the people do not get the mistaken impression, as I have heard said of me, that 'You live on their backs', i.e. that the linguist is exploiting the people since they live relatively well and can travel, whereas the community that is perceived as paying his or her salary does not.

It is also important that the form of consent from the community to work on the project with the linguist is a form that they have access to. And this can vary quite a bit for field linguists from, say, field psychologists or anthropologists, since linguists often work with languages where there have been few previous studies and where the people are pre-literate. There is little point in getting a headman to 'make his mark' on a contract that no one in the community can read. What I usually do in pre-literate communities is to record their consent on video and then let them edit it and rerecord it until they have explained the conditions as they see fit. I then leave a copy of this with them, whether or not they have the means to play it. At least then they can find someone with the means to play the tape or DVD and make sure that it says what they think it says. And these recordings should include the linguist explaining the goals of the project to the community *prior* to their giving of consent.

TRAINING AND EDUCATION: See section __ above. The project must include a component of training for all community participants. This can, but need not be, spelled out in the agreement with the community. It is important to emphasize again, however, that no one 'size fits all' in this regard. Each different field situation will favor or require different training and education relations between the linguist and the community.

EMPLOYMENT CONDITIONS: The community and all language teachers must understand the conditions under which they are employed. When and for how long are they to work? How much will they be paid? Will this pay exceed the national minimum wage (I recommend that people be paid at least five times the minimum wage in the developing world or an above average wage in the developed world)? Do they have to leave their community? What rights for return do they have if they fail to honor the agreement on time outside the village? Other questions will arise in different local contexts, of course. Much care must be taken to avoid misunderstandings. And all understandings and agreements should be recorded in a community-accessible fashion.

ADVOCACY: The researcher will often be associated with community aspirations, at least in the minds of the community if not in their own mind. The community may want the linguist to help them raise funds for community projects, speak to the government about encroachments on their reservation, travel with them to negotiate with people or groups that impinge on the community's well-being in some way, etc. Pro-active application of ethics will motivate the fieldworker to serve as they are able as an advocate for the group. This can be a very important service as the linguist, a prestigious intellectual, for example, can offer that will be deeply valuable to and appreciated by the community.

INTELLECTUAL PROPERTY RIGHTS & CO-AUTHORSHIP: One issue that is becoming more and more important for all indigenous communities is ensuring that they control the applications of their knowledge and community outputs. Who owns the linguistic data in a text for example? Who has the right to prohibit or constrain the use of all data?

The answer is that the community controls all data. The linguist must not use any texts, examples, etc. without the permission of the community (though blanket permission can be given at the outset of the research, it is still appropriate to seek community permission for data in individual publications, at least data heretofore unpublished). And the community has the right to demand the return of all tapes, videos, transcriptions, and so on – all forms of their language gathered by the linguist – at any time. And they must be apprised of this right and this understanding must enter the written or videod record of agreement between the fieldworker and the community. For further discussion and contemplation of this issue, I recommend a careful reading of the material in the websites mentioned above, especially the discussion paper by Correa (1999).

MEDICAL: This is discussed in __ above.

GOING NATIVE: Occasionally I meet linguists or anthropologists with the quaint idea that they can become just like any other member of the community. So if they see the people going nude to take their baths, for example, these people cheerfully skip to the river with the rest of the community, in all their European nakedness. Most communities are puzzled by such behavior. The fieldworker should show respect and not give offense. And they should adapt *to an appropriate degree* to the culture and behavior of the community, but they are usually expected to respect the simple fact that they are not one of the community and will never be exactly like them. There can be exceptions, of course, but it is important that the fieldworker enter the community aware that 'going native' can be and usually is both silly and offensive.

The chief of the Kisedje people, Kuiussi, raised this issue with me at the beginning of my project to study their language. He said "I don't want to see you or any of your people naked in our village. We go naked, this is our custom. But it is not your custom and it means something different to you than it does to us. And I don't want any of your group have sex with any of our group because you are not part of our group and we are trying to preserve our language, our culture, and our identity."

PERSONAL MORALITY: All the same ethical standards that would apply to the fieldworker in their home country apply to them in the language community. Moreover, to these can be added the standards of the language community and the laws and expectations of the country in which the community is located. 'Sex, drugs, and rock n' roll' are not what the fieldworker has gone to the community for. Most communities have extremely conservative values concerning personal dignity and morality. Some have more liberal standards. The general rule in this regard that I would like to suggest is that the fieldworker figure out the moral standards of the community and follow them closely, even if some members of the community appear not to do so.

INTERFERING: A final issue that I will raise here has to do with the fieldworker's potential 'temptation' to interfere in moral actions of the community. For example in a recent well-known case in Brazil, a missionary couple interfered with a community's practice of infanticide, by taking the baby that was about to be killed out of the village by emergency flight, causing some offense among some in the community (even though in this particular case the parents of the baby wanted it taken out of the community). This is roughly like an anthropologist studying US culture blocking access to abortion clinics. It may be a deeply felt moral conviction on the part of the fieldworker but it will always have extreme consequences.

Other issues like infanticide abound, though different issues will affect different people differently. For example, I have seen Amazonian Indians torture animals, roasting them alive, plucking out their feathers and chasing them around, giving them to little children to pull apart while they are still alive, etc. I have never interfered. I have been bothered by this many times and deeply. Perhaps another person would have interfered. I did interfere once when a group of men were about to rape a young girl in the village. Should I have done that? I felt that I should have at the time. And there were no bad consequences to anyone, though I had no way of knowing what the outcome would be.

These are hard choices and I have no wisdom to offer. But if practices regularly arise that so deeply offend the fieldworker that they feel compelled to intervene, then I suggest that the fieldworker is in the wrong line of work and should consider leaving at least this community and, likely, fieldwork altogether.

13.3. Intellectual outputs and co-authorship

The primary results of scientific research are publications, webpages, or other forms of public dissemination of one's findings. The decision as to who should share co-authorship (and thus blame or fame) for a particular article, book, report, etc. is a very important one. Should all language teachers automatically be entitled to co-authorship? Or if the linguist is helped in their living in the village, introduction to the people, or data-gathering by a third-party is this third-party (e.g. local missionary, government official, non-indigenous citizen of the country, etc.) entitled to co-authorship? This is a thorny issue. But I suggest the following rules of thumb:

() Guidelines for co-authorship credit

a. Was the person essential to the research in whole or in part?
b. Did the person make a major intellectual contribution to the research?
c. Was the person actively involved in the writing of the piece?
d. Was the person responsible for obtaining funding or the PI of the grant?
e. Does the person want co-authorship?
f. Does the person believe that they have earned co-authorship?
g. Would it be intellectually dishonest to award or deny co-authorship?
h. Did the person collect the data for your study?

Let us say that your entry to a community, your having a place to live in the community, and the people's willingness to help you learn their language are all the results of someone else's efforts. This would be deserving of credit in the acknowledgments to the research, but by themselves do not entitle the person to co-authorship. However, there could be additional factors, e.g. if they spoke the language and ran your experiments for you, served as third-party interpreters, or otherwise became essential to your data-gathering. Further, if during the course of data-gathering they offered suggestions that were crucial to the final shape of the research, then this would also cause re-thinking of whether or not they deserved co-authorship. At this point, the other factors would 'kick in'.

Did this person give you ideas, suggestions, and help intellectually without which the research could not have been conceived or carried out or had anything like its final form? Then co-authorship seems appropriate, subject to the other considerations in ().

If the person was actively involved in the writing up of the research (either by actually contributing original sections or by consulting with the linguist on many major

or subsidiary points), then, subject to the other constraints in (), this person should be considered for co-authorship.

If the person assisting the linguist is the actual PI of the grant then, for some people, this would automatically entitle this person to co-authorship. In some of the natural sciences, this is common. However, although I believe that PIs rightfully demand veto power over any research coming out of their funded projects, I do not believe that PIs are automatically entitled to co-authorship if this would violate (g), e.g. if they made no intellectual contribution to the particular research of the report.

It is also important for the fieldworker to know what a person (language teacher, government official, etc.) wants with respect to co-authorship. Do they believe that they have earned it and do they want it? Then, subject to (g), they should receive it. If it would be intellectually dishonest in the eyes of the fieldworker to award co-authorship, then perhaps it should not be offered. I suggest that in such a case the linguist contact someone from their home institution or at the journal or other outlet they plan to submit their research to for publication, to get advice. On the other hand, if the person feels very strongly, there could be cultural value differences involved, and likely are, and these are likely to have long-term effects on the researchers, the research, and feelings of exploitation. For this reason, I believe that co-authorship should be offered when the person feels they have earned it and they want it.

Occasionally it arises that one researcher collects data and does not analyse it. Then another linguist may find the data (openly and honestly with no violations of any ethical standards), analyse it, and publish the results. In such cases, does the original gatherer of the data deserve co-authorship? Not if the data are published. However, if the data are unpublished, then the linguist should contact them, ask them about the analysis that the linguist is proposing, asking if the collector of the data knows of any counter-examples or other problems in the linguist's analysis and then offer co-authorship, if the original collector of the data feels that they have earned it and if they want it.

It is always better to err, modulo intellectual honesty, on the side of giving too much credit than not enough.

12.4. The government

Legal environment: In a new country, the fieldworker must not forget that the legal environment is not the same as in his or her home country. They must be sensitive and aware of local laws and customs and avoid anything illegal insofar as possible. This may require reading on the legal system, major laws, etc. and in discussing potential issues with friends from the country in question. Permissions and visas are discussed in __ above.

Relationships with national scholars: The fieldworker should (and may be obliged to) develop close relationships with national scholars. It is important that the local scientific community know about the linguist, about the research being conducted, about the community's response to this, etc. There may be legal requirements to this effect in the country in question (as there are in South American countries, for example), but beyond the legal requirements it is simple professional courtesy to develop and cultivate relationships with linguists or related disciplines in the country of research.

12.5. Missionaries

No matter where you decide to do field research, there is a good chance that in the course of your time in the field, you are going to come into contact with missionaries, especially Christian missionaries. The work of Christian missionaries is very controversial and most field researchers will have to decide how they are going to relate to them professionally and personally. The choice made in this regard could affect your relationship to the language community and to host country intellectuals and partners dramatically. Moreover, the linguist will also likely be forced to consider the ethics of the missionary enterprise whether or not they have ever considered it before and whether or not they want to consider it. So let us consider this here. To do this, for the potential field researcher who knows little of Christian missions, I will need to provide some background. This background will include generalizations based on my many years of experience in a missionary organization. Some of this discussion touches on uncomfortable issues of religious and political beliefs. But the discussion must cover these issues, I believe, in order to fully understand why missionaries and missionary work are controversial.

First, let me say that I began my career in Brazil as a missionary with what was then known as the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL). My assignment with SIL included the following responsibilities: (i) produce a solid descriptive study of the grammar of Pirahã; (ii) produce at least two hundred pages of translated, glossed, publicly accessible texts of the language; (iii) produce a dictionary of the language – as large as I could, but certainly one of at least 2,000 or so entries; (iv) develop a literacy programme in the Pirahã communities where every Pirahã man, woman, or child wanting to learn to read and write their own language could do so, subject to the permission and direction of the local community; (v) translate at least the New Testament into the Pirahã language; (vi) share my Christian faith, on an individual basis with Pirahãs, but without any proselytising, pressure, or church-related activities. The aim of the latter was to see an 'indigenous church' (one initiated by, managed by and formed doctrinally by the Pirahãs themselves). Had I been with another missionary agency working with Amazonian Indians, my goals might have been to found a church by preaching, baptizing, and never hesitating to let the people know when their culture violated 'God's law'. If I had been a Catholic missionary, depending on which 'order' or organization I belonged to, my goals might have been to baptize the people and see a chapel established for semi-regular visits to hear confession, provide communion, etc.

Often missionaries from one mission are suspicious of missionaries from other missions and across the Protestant vs. Catholic divide their is a yawning chasm of centuries of mistrust. So if you befriend or associate with one missionary or group, you may automatically, however unintentionally, alienate another group with consequences potentially adverse for your research.

Most Christian missionaries are motivated primarily by verses like the following:

> **Matthew 28: 19, 20**
> *"Therefore go and make disciples of all nations, baptizing them in the name of the Father and of the Son and of the Holy Spirit, and teaching them to obey everything I have commanded you. And surely I am with you always, to the very end of the age."*
>
> **Acts 1: 8**

"But ye shall receive power, after that the Holy Ghost is come upon you: and ye shall be witnesses unto me both in Jerusalem, and in all Judaea, and in Samaria, and unto the uttermost part of the earth."

No matter how these beliefs emerge practically, they still are there and knowing about them can help understand missionaries better.

Whatever anyone may eventually conclude about missionaries, they are doing what they believe to be right. Many if not most of them are also motivated by love of their god and love of the people with whom they work. Contrary to most stereotypes, including the utterly silly portrayal of missionaries in films, e.g. *At Play in the Fields of the Lord*, missionaries are generally kind, reasonable on many issues, attractive, and loving, often with a deep satisfaction with Life and a sense of security that is many ways enviable. It is important to say this, because most of us find it easy to befriend and enjoy the company of such people, especially when otherwise isolated from our native language, culture, and countrymen. Moreover, in many, many parts of the world, the only medical, educational, economic, and political assistance available to the local community is from missionaries. Many missionaries sacrifice personal comfort, the company of their families and friends, their own career aspirations, their health, and material well-being (contrary to many popular stories, missionaries I know who work with Amazonian Indians are poor by US standards and live very simple lives materially) for the sake of the people to whom they 'minister'. Most missionaries that I know would die for the communities they believe they have been called to serve. This latter may sound melodramatic, but the emotions on this issue can run high and it is worth bringing out some of the depths of feelings that people have. Moreover, the members of the language community are likely to support the continued presence of the missionary because many of them will now be believers and because none of them will want the missionary to leave if this removes all the medical and other material support that the missionary has been providing. Of course, this latter source of support for the missionary is part of the problem. One reason that missionaries do 'get converts' in many tribal areas in my experience is because of this support. The missionary may use this support as both carrot and stick to convince people of their 'need' for the church and its doctrines (though certainly not all missionaries do this). The missionary is a powerful person by local standards and it is almost never the case that members of the local community are able to make fully objective decisions about what role to provide to the missionary in their community in the absence of alternative forms of medical and material support.

In this regard, many intellectuals have concluded that missionaries' 'retrograde' thinking (to use a common expression) is harmful for the peoples where they work, largely forced on them, overtly or covertly, and that the paternalism, condescension, and backwardness of much missionary thinking, should be stopped from reaching the language communities facing severe problems in the modern world, problems serious enough to threaten their very survival. And this fairly natural view is likely to be one that many readers of this book share.

The linguist must therefore be prepared for how they are to relate to missionaries. Because of the close relationship that often obtains between the missionary and the community, open hostility or rudeness is not a good choice. This is divisive for the community in almost every case, leading to potential antagonism between 'believers' vs. 'unbelievers' or, from another perspective, the 'rational' vs. the 'superstitious'. On the other hand, completely unguarded, unreserved friendship and

support of the missionary can lead to the linguist being classified as a missionary, since to many indigenous peoples with very limited experience with other nationalities, for example in Brazil, 'American' can already be a synonym for 'believer'. The default assumption is often that all those who share the missionary's nationality share his beliefs. And this assumption can extend to local government officials as well.

How then does one sort this issue out? First, be careful of generalizations. By and large, attempt to evaluate your potential relationship to people in the field not based on their occupation, religious beliefs, nationality, or culture, but based on your assessment of the person as a specific, sui generis whole. Second, maintain your distance and build relations very carefully. I suggest an initial attitude that I often urge on my junior academic colleagues when they first begin teaching, namely, 'maintain polite aloofness'. The practical application of this 'aloofness' will need to be worked out in individual cases. In some cases, for example, the linguist may be forced to choose between paying for space on a missionary plane to the language area, though this is likely to associate the linguist with the missionary, or travelling in by car or boat or on foot. Travelling to some of the peoples I work with, for example, this can mean a plane trip of one hour vs. a boat trip of one week. Alternatively, the linguist may have to choose between a local 'air taxi' vs. a local missionary plane. The former will almost certainly be more expensive and will often be less safe than the latter (missionary pilots and planes tend to be the best trained and maintained, respectively). Whatever the decision, the missionary presence presents the linguist with an ethical issue with stark choices over several issues, some clear, some nebulous.

In my very close connection over a period of more than twenty-five years with so-called missionary linguists, I can think of only a relative handful of missionaries who can in any sense be called linguists by training, interest, or motivation. But the 'handful' is not insignificant and these tend to be professional linguists by anyone's standards and quite unlike most missionary stereotypes I have encountered.

On the other hand, some missionaries do produce excellent linguistics. And no linguist has any ethical justification for either refusing to cite that linguistic research or to acknowledge its importance in their linguistics research (as I have known some more radically anti-missionary linguists to do). Moreover, in the case of SIL, the organization produces some of the best software for linguistics research available anywhere in the world, including fonts, data-management programs, electronic libraries, phonetic analysis, and so on. And some missionary-produced grammars and research is among the best in the world as well. It is unethical for researchers to use such software and intellectual output (including grammars and articles) from missionaries on the one hand, while on the other accusing the missionaries of not being linguists in any sense, as some are wont to do.

The world is complex and people are complex. Simplifications that involve complete vilification (or beatification) of entire groups is not only unethical (since it is the basis of prejudice), this kind of behavior leads to the worst (and most infantile) kinds of intolerance. This is not to say that people should avoid negative conclusions of this or that enterprise or organization and eschew any contact with it. Even so, it may be hard to avoid, say, the work on morphology by Nida () or the work on phonetics by Pike (), simply because they were doing missionary work at the time they wrote these books, although, according to Anderson (), exactly this has been done to some degree, by the way that modern linguistics has failed to acknowledge the debt it owes to these two missionary linguists.

Trying to apply an 'orthodoxy' test to writers before reading their writings on any subjects is akin to book-burning and has a long and sad history in Western culture that we have, hopefully, come to reject in modern society. That said, missionaries are at once people and an issue. There will be times that opposing them or befriending them could either be appropriate in particular circumstances.