Chapter 11: Modeling and Managing Field Research

11.1. *Individual Fieldwork*

As we consider some of the issues in individual field work, it is useful to ask what it means to work alone in the field or, indeed, even if it is possible to work alone. To work completely alone is a fiction; it is not possible. If it were, this would imply, for example, that there is no speech community you are working on – you are obviously not working alone if you are learning from another person (just as there is no such thing logically as a 'self-help' book. If the author of this book helps you, it is not 'self-help').[58] As Mithun puts it, 'The product of fieldwork will ultimately be shaped not only by the nature of the language, but also the methodologies chosen, by the roles assumed by the speakers, and by the preparation and sensitivity of the linguist.' (Mithun, p34, in Newman and Ratcliff). As experienced fieldworkers know, and as Mithun goes on to point out in her useful discussion, the linguistic record is a product of the collaboration between linguists and speakers. This means in practice and in theory that there is no way to really work alone. But let's consider this a bit more, because there is some intuitive appeal to the idea that some people are loners, while others work in groups.

If you go to the field with your partner or family, then you clearly are not going alone. On the other hand, if you travel into the community without any companion from your own culture, background, etc. can't you say that you are alone in the sense that there is no one to help you with your work? No, once again, because the language teachers are in fact your partners in the crucial senses (as Mithun aptly states it above). And you have, if you follow this guide, books with you that will help you, so you are still not working 'alone' in the strictest sense.

So let's try to be clear: field linguists do not work alone, not ever. In his excellent book, **The Art of Fieldwork**, the anthropologist Harry Walcott (2001, 37) puts it this way:

> *'A moment's reflection reveals how extensive are the strands that link, and important ways bind, seemingly lone and independent researchers, in the field or at their desks, to larger and more embracing social systems.'*

As I write this book, for example, I have potential readers, students, and reviewers looking over my shoulder. Still, though, if a fieldworker can be alone professionally, if they are the only linguist around. In this latter, special sense, they are alone. Working alone in this sense of 'individual' field research has both advantages and disadvantages. These are not frequently considered, however, because the 'individual' model is the default, usually unquestioned way to do fieldwork for most linguists. In any case, let's consider the pros and cons of working alone in this sense, beginning with the advantages.

Advantages of the 'Individual' model

Less Pressure and more flexibility

When you work apart from other linguists, you can experience less pressure, depending on your individual psyche, by not having people 'looking over your

[58] This is another bit filched from George Carlin's HBO special at the Beacon Theatre in about 2000.

shoulder'. When you work alone you are not immediately accountable to anyone else for how you spend your time. Your language teacher will put time constraints on you to some degree, but nothing like members of your own culture would if they were there to work with you towards a common research objective. Nobody in the field, when you are there without a linguistic research team, is going to watch you to see if what you are doing daily conforms to official project objectives. This is simultaneously an advantage and a disadvantage. It is a disadvantage because it removes the field researcher from some potentially useful and immediate quality control. However, it is an advantage in living in the field because it reduces strain, pressure, and potential conflict. If you get up in the morning, you can in principle change your schedule. Let's say you were planning to analyse the previous day's data and you have no lab sessions planned this day. But now that you think about it, it would be nice to spend the day baking cookies, going for a walk in the jungle, paddling a canoe, or reading the trashy crime novel you brought with you. If there are other linguists working with you in the field, you will probably feel constrained by them, to make the day useful. But psychological well-being in the field is often based on feeling like you are in control of your time (another illusion, but a helpful one). I do not like routine, to be frank. I do not like feeling that I need to do something because of others' expectations. When I am the only linguist around it is easier for me to give time to myself than when I have colleagues with me, especially if I am the senior colleague and the one the others are looking to for guidance and example.

Also, there is less temptation when you are alone to sit around and talk with friends from your culture about topics unrelated to the research. This kind of camaraderie can become a detriment to research by siphoning time and by making the linguist less dependent on the culture and language under study (see chapter ___ below for why this dependency is crucial).

More learning (since you have to do more on your own)

I hate mechanical things when they break down. And in the field they break down a lot. For my field research among the Pirahãs, I needed a motorboat, provided for me by the National Science Foundation. One morning, after a heavy rain, I woke up to the smell of gasoline. I went to the river, over thirty meters deep in the peak of the rainy season, which this was, and looked. There, about six meters down, held only by a very taut nylon rope, was my motorboat, my only transportation to the road (the Transamazon) where my car was stored, 100 miles upriver. One night of hard rain had sunk it. With the help of many Pirahãs and a Brazilian missionary, I was able to raise the boat, just until the edges were about one inch above water. Pirahã women came running with gourds and bailed the water out. But even though the boat was up, I had water mixed with my gasoline and the cylinders of my boat motor were full of water. I had to fix the motor and get the water out of the gasoline and cylinders on my own, or I would not get out of there. I did. And in the process I learned more about motors.

As a linguistic example of forced learning when working alone, consider my attempt to discover comparative structures in Pirahã. First, I gathered a number of sticks and leaves of varying sizes. Then working first with the sticks I got the words for 'long' and 'short' (all work with the Pirahãs is monolingual, as described in Everett (2001) and chapter ___ below). Then I would hold up a short stick and a shorter stick from my carefully size-arranged array in front of the language teacher. Then I would hold up an even shorter stick and try to get 'shorter/more short', the comparative form. What I got were answers like the following:

(11.1) a. ʔ**ii** **tio**ʔ**óíhii**
woodshort
b. ʔ**ii** **pii**ʔi**sái**
woodlong
c. ʔ**ii** **tio**ʔ**óíhii** ʔ**iahá**
woodshort go

I had to conclude, after hours and hours of this, that either (i) Pirahã had no comparatives or that (ii) it used ʔ**iahá** 'go' to indicate that one stick was particularly short, though with no specialized morphosyntactic comparative marker, or (iii) I was incompetent (and the latter feeling rarely goes away entirely). Before this experience (and countless others like it), I thought every language had certain structures, e.g. comparatives. Since then, I have read more, but as a graduate student my ignorance was, perhaps, even greater than it is now. So I had to struggle with this and, in the struggle, learn more than I might have otherwise have learned had others been with me. A partner in the field might simply have told me that some lack comparative structures. But finding this out on my own made the learning more effective.

It can also be an advantage to work alone because this simplifies interpersonal and intercultural interactions between linguist and speakers. The more outsiders that are present at one time in a community, the more complex the social dynamics. Working alone avoids many of these complexities (see Chapter ___ for a discussion of some of the ethical issues that can arise).

Few barriers between the researcher and the speech community

The more people present with the linguist who do not belong to the speech community, whether government officials, fellow linguists or friends – i.e. anyone except family (see ___ below on how children and family can be of tremendous help in field research), the more insulated from the target language culture the fieldworker becomes. And insulation slows, impedes, and halts learning. If there are multiple linguists present in the community at a time, for example, the people can feel less comfortable approaching them, especially if they stay together in the same house or location, for example, reducing chance for observing and engaging in spontaneous conversations, etc.[59] But a 'lone' field researcher will have a more direct and constant connection to the community and, an extremely important correlate, will *need* members of the community socially more if they have no colleage or partner or family member along.

Getting more credit (or more blame)

The final advantages of working alone that I will mention have to do with money and fame. The more people working on a project, the more money needed and the less control over the project's funds will the fieldworker exercise. And the wider the credit will have to be shared for discoveries and the work of the project. So if you work alone, you have the advantage of keeping the money and fame to yourself. OK. Those are

[59] This is only true, of course, if the entire team goes to the community at the same time, which is not at all a necessary correlation of team research.

some of the advantages of working alone. Let's now consider a *dis*advantage of working alone. We will then see how team work need not have the disadvantages associated with it above and can have the advantage of multiple individual field research.

A disadvantage

My favourite quote on fieldwork is the following from Margaret Mead, the distinguished American anthropologist on her first field trip. It is found in a letter to her thesis supervisor, Franz Boas:

> *'I have no idea whether I am doing the right thing or not, or how valuable my results will be. It all weighs rather heavily on my mind.' (January 16, 1926)*

This is honesty. And just about anyone who has done fieldwork alone has felt somewhat like this at some point. But notice how this is expressed – in a letter to a colleague thousands of miles away. Alone in Samoa, Mead had to grapple with the responsibility of her (thesis) research without local academic interlocutors or any local anthropologist to share her field responsibility with her. The advantage of this for the researcher is that it makes them think harder and learn more than they might otherwise have learned. But the disadvantage is obvious – working alone can at times nearly overwhelm the field researcher with self-doubt and emotional pressure. I will take up other disadvantages when we move to the section on team research.

Before closing this section, I want to urge prospective field researcher to read others' accounts of their own field research on the individual model. Such exercises remind us of our commonalities, that no one's experience, however good or bad, is truly unique. In general ethnographies contain accounts of the ethnologist's own field experience. The lessons our predecessors have learned and their very experiences can teach important lessons before going to the field and save hours of wasted effort, as well as providing an emotional vaccine against some of the hardships of different field experiences. Here is a list of some of my favorites, though this is only the tip of the iceberg: Dixon (); Chagnon (); Macaulay (); Conklin (); Malinowski (); Mead (); Darnell (); and Darnell ().

These all tell stories of independent, resilient, and resourceful fieldworkers who entered 'alien' environments alone and thrived as scientists and as human beings. They discuss their research and, often, explicitly discuss their personal challenges as lone field researchers. I recommend that all fieldworkers read at least the chapter by Macaulay before going to the field, especially women.

11.2. *Team fieldwork*

Fieldwork has long been considered the domain of the individualist, the strong personality who is self-motivating, able to withstand loneliness, well-rounded, etc. A sort of Indiana Jones. That is, it is not normally thought of as an environment for teamwork (at least not with members of one's own culture), even though, as I have shown above, this is a fallacious concept. What I want to do in this section is to argue that a research team has a better chance of success than a lone researcher.

Composition of the team

The team is composed of at least the speech community, the professional linguist or graduate student who is responsible for the written form of the results to a host

institution or funding agency, the program director of any relevant funding agency, the government officials or local academic representatives who must monitor the research project for local government agencies, academic officers at the linguist's home institution who must authorize his or her absence and activies, as well as his or her host insitution's ethics committee (and any other ethics committee, e.g. funding agency, government of host country, etc.), consultants, PhD students, co-Principal Investigators, secretarial staff, and postdoctoral research associates, depending on each individual research situation. When the team contains more than one designated fieldworker, management becomes even more crucial.

Advantages

The advantages of team research are best framed in terms of the tasks the linguist takes on in the field. One of the most important tasks facing linguistics today (though it has always been important in spite of recent more general awareness) is the documentation and description of endangered languages. At one time 'documentation' was seen as little more than collecting word lists. Early explorers, naturalists, and missionaries, among others, often seem to have collected almost random lists of words.[60] But to document and describe a language in the modern sense draws on a number of specialized skills that may go beyond those possessed by any one linguist.

More help, more specializations present

When you work in a team, there is more knowledge available to you. If your team is balanced in terms of specialities and experiences, you could have solid knowledge of most of the field of linguistics with just, say, three people, along with different kinds of practical and information-processing knowledge. For example, if the team leader is a phonologist, working alone they would struggle a bit more with syntax analysis, perhaps, than if they had a syntactician on the team. Likewise for other subdisciplines.

Ever since tape recorders began to make their impact on field research, we have come to expect more from documentation than mere word lists. Today, the documentation of a language requires a wide variety of skills. Photography, videography, sound recording and storage, web design, computer programming, and other specialized knowledges may all be called upon in documenting a language. Even if one person had all the requisite skills, to use them all in a particular project would take so long that it is unlikely that a full (e.g. dictionary, text collection, and grammar – see ___ below) project would be completed. But people do not commonly have all the skills and training necessary to fully document and describe the parts of a language considered crucial in a documentation project. And, I say this from raw experience, people change as they age. I no longer feel inclined to learn agricultural vocabulary, for example, by working all day chopping trees in the tropical sun. But I do know how to collect and analyze data better than ever before in my career. And there could be graduate students on my team who would jump at the chance to swing an axe among flies and mosquitoes in 99% humidity, in exchange for an array of chopping/cutting verb paradigms and plant (and insect) names.

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[60] In spite of their obvious shortcomings, these early efforts have been much-appreciated by posterity because they are often the only record left of lost languages. In many cases these lists provide bases for historical reconstruction and understanding of language change. One ought not to look a gift horse in the mouth after all.

These are advantages which are difficult to overcome for any one working as an individual linguist in the field.

More work can be done (in theory)

Just as there are more specialities available within a team than to an individual worker, a team can do more work. The task of, say, writing a grammar, can be distributed and each member of the team can work on a section of the grammar. To be sure, everyone should read everyone else's work on the grammar and comment on it, but there is no way that a single individual can do the same amount of work in the same amount of time as a well-organized, well-selected team. One member can take, say, primary responsibility for a dictionary, another for a pedagogical grammar, another for the reference grammar. There are many ways the task could be divided so as to increase both its scope and quality.

Replicability

Another important advantage of team research is that it can help make results more replicable for non-team members, as well as facilitating replication of results prior to publication. This is so because working as a team enables all results, methodologies, and analytical decisions to be subjected to discussion, criticism, testing, refinement, and development by the group as a whole. If the research team is well-managed, with each team member contributing a needed speciality, then each member will teach the other members, challenge the other members, and strengthen the project as a whole, beyond what any single field research could accomplish working alone.

The team concept is hardly new, of course. Linguistics, like other sciences, has always benefited from cooperation and group-based research, whether in small local groups such as particular labs, or in international theoretical ventures, e.g. chomskyan linguistics and functionalism. But in field linguistics the common assumption has been that research will be conducted by a solitary field researcher 'figuring out' how a language works on their own. If I am correct, however, it is important to challenge this assumption.

For the sake of completeness, however, let us briefly review the disadvantages of team fieldwork and how to counter them.

Disadvantages

The advantages listed for the individual model earlier would be disadvantages for the team model if everyone on the team went to the same community location at the same time. For this reason, I recommend instead that members of the team with a responsibility for team work only go to the field as individuals, trying to cover the entire year in the village, at least in the first year of a multiyear project. (Another reason for this is that many aspects of culture and language are seasonal and only by being there for the entire year can the team hope to observe and learn these seasonal aspects.)

The principal disadvantage of the team model is that it entails group dynamics. People might not get along, they might be different in practice than they are on their CV, they might turn out to do terribly in the field situation, they might decide that they do not like you, they might complain about their salaries, they might not want to follow the team objectives after all, etc. There is no way around the issue of 'group dynamics', which is why I have added the following section on management. Management is vital in any project, team or individual, but it becomes especially critical in a team situation. The principal ways of overcoming the disadvantages of team research are selecting the

right team members and managing the team well. Whether you are a team manager/Principal Investigator on a grant or a team member (postdoctoral research associate, PhD student, or language teacher) solid management principles can help you contribute to building and understanding what makes a successful team for field research.

11.3. *MANAGEMENT*

I want to review a few principle management principles in directing and working together in teams, though many of them apply to individual workers as well. Not everyone who is part of a team will perceive themselves as directly concerned with its management, but all members of a team should be familiar with some of the issues involved in getting the best out of team work.

No algorithm for success

First, it is important to realize that in team fieldwork, just as in individual fieldwork, there is *no algorithm for success*. Good judgment is always more imporant than lists of priorities and principles. What follows are points that have been important to me. Since this is not a management manual, it is likely that I am omitting principles that business administrators would consider vital. But this reflects my experience as a fieldworker.

Mission statement

The team must have a clear statement of what their objectives are, some might refer to this as a *'mission' statement* or goal statement, or some such. There should be no ambiguity as to what you as a team are trying to accomplish. If you have a funded project, the written project can offer guidance, of course, but it is not sufficiently succint to serve as a mission statement. It is very important that you be able to summarize in a sentence or two what your entire project is about and what it hopes to contribute to the world. The entire team, secretaries, PhD students, postdoctoral research associates, and co-Principal Investigators should all know and agree to this.

Criteria for success

All members of the team also need to know and agree on what the *criteria for success* are. How will the team know that it each individual and the team as a whole has finished its job and finished it successfully? These criteria must be explicit, specific, and, above all, measurable.'Finishing a dictionary', for example, is not a well-stated criterion for success. 'Publishing a 3000 entry, tri-lingual dictionary, with publisher __ is', however. The criteria can and should be refined and reassessed as research goes along, in discussion involving all team members.

Expectations

It is important that *expectations for all team members be reasonable*. If, say, the team leader is an experienced researcher and regularly works at a particular rate of accomplishment, clearly measurable in terms of project goals, it must be recognized that other team members with less experience may not work as fast or as well, initially at least. Expectations must therefore be negotiated at the outset between the team leader and team members, on an individual basis, and then evaluated and reset as necessary as time goes on. The team leader should be very hands on in the beginning of a research project to ensure that all members are using their time well, working with a

clear sense of mission, a commitment to the to success of the project, and that they are able to meet the expectations that the team has of them. The project must be seen as belonging to the entire team, not merely the Principal Investigator.

Records

Teams must keep records of team administration as well as team intellectual output. Therefore, a procedure of record-keeping and filing is essential to the well-being of the team. Some types of records that need to be kept are given below.

DATA: How are you going to record the data that you collect? Are you going to use proprietary software, e.g. *Shoebox* (see http://www.ethnologue.com/tools_docs/shoebox.asp), or software developed to serve as a long-term record, universally usable, e.g. *Elan* (http://www.mpi.nl/tools/elan.html)? How will you store backups of data? On a server, on DVDs, or some other means? These decisions will no doubt be required from the early days of writing your proposal for funding, since most funding agencies these days are very careful about data-storage and data-ownership. Most field researchers these days will be required to turn over copies of all of their data in an XML-compatible format. (For further information, the reader is urged to consult, as an entry point into the general area, the website of EMELD (http://emeld.org/), a project developed in connection with the LinguistList (http://linguistlist.org/)). There are many linguists working in various places around the world to maintain long-term storage facilities and standards for the preservation of linguistic data. Before going to the field, all researchers should be familiar with the basic standards for data-storage, an issue discussed briefly in Chapter ___ below.

WORK MEETINGS: Team members should meet to discuss the project face-to-face on a regular basis. meetings can be less frequent perhaps as the project goes on and people know each other better, but they should not stop. Regular contact, discussion, and assessment must be a vital part of the project from start to finish. Minutes must be kept of all these meetings, in the language of the funding agency, so that if any problems develope or if conflicts arise, it may be determined whether such issues were foreseen, previously discussed, etc. Was any action taken to avert such consequences? Why not? If your project has a secretary, they can be appointed to keep records of regularly scheduled project meetings. Otherwise appoint someone at each meeting to keep the minutes and to distribute them for approval and then filing within forty-eight hours of each meeting.

CORRESPONDENCE: All project correspondence must also be stored in an easily accessible manner. Correspondence with the speech community, between team members, with the funding agency, with government officials, etc. must all be carefully stored. If it is email, then it can be stored as electronic media using the filing system on your mail program, though I also recommend that hard copies be kept in an old-fashioned drawer filing cabinet.

FINANCES: Your project will also generate financial records which must be stored. If you are ever audited (an unpleasant experience), you must have careful records of project expenditures. In most cases, your home institution will keep records of financial transactions. But the Principal Investigator, and team members to a less degree, ultimately bears responsibility for all financial decisions and use of funds in the project, so I suggest that the project office keep duplicate records of all transactions.

AGREEMENTS: Everyone on the project, as well as the relevant members of your home institution's personnel department should receive copies of the agreed-upon structure for project accountability and administration. This is important. Even the most

reliable team members can forget or selectively remember what the agreements are in this regard. It is vital that everyone be clear on how the project is administered and who is accountable to whom. And this must all be written down and read and approved by all. The originals of these agreements should be filed in the project office (which may simply be the Principal Investigator's university office). Documents on accountability and administration should also include a record of time commitments, job descriptions for the overall project, job descriptions for each individual field trip, and any other expectation of individual team members that could affect the overall results of the project. It should also be made clear in these administrative documents what the publication and presentation guidelines and constraints are for the project. For example, how many papers should the project produce per year according to its funding commitments? Who should write the bulk of each paper? Does everyone know that the Principal Investigator (and this is very important!) has veto power and editorial control over every project publication or presentation? These matters must be spelled out clearly in advance and a copy of the agreements filed in the project office and with each individual team member.

SUCCESS CULTURE: Aside from filing and documents, there are even more important considerations for team management. First, a team is responsible for creating a 'culture of success'. What does this mean? It means that each member on the team is committed to the success of the project, that she knows what the criteria for success are, that she feels that her contribution will be a success – because she feels well-trained, well-equipped, well-guided, and well-supported for this success – and that the contributions of the other team members will also be successful. People should enjoy the challenges of the project and be excited about the likely scientific and career benefits of successfully concluding the project.

PROJECT CALENDAR: All research projects must have a (somewhat but not completely fluid) project calendar. A project calendar should lay out the responsibilities of the entire team, the timing of its deliverables for the funding agency and the language community and a detailed breakdown of each team member's responsibilities in the field and out of the field. Ideally, each team member should provide the team with a breakdown of how she plans to spend each week in the field, giving the amount of time estimated for each task. This is done by breaking the principal task(s) assigned for each field trip into subtasks. These can then be translated into daily, weekly, and monthly 'work quotas', based on project duration. So, for example, if it is my responsibility to analyse the segmental phonology, then how much time should I give to that task (I suggest one month of regular fieldwork), what are the subtasks (e.g. consonants, vowels, syllable structure), how much time should I give to each? And so on. It is important, however, that you realize that you will be regularly interrupted in the field, by visitors, by the community, by your health, by many unforseeable factors. Use every minute. Field time is precious. Don't waste it. Therefore, I recommend that you *double your estimates for all project tasks* and schedule your time accordingly. For example, if you believe that you can collect five new words per day, learn them, and analyze them, then you need to shoot for ten words per day or double the amount of days that you have dedicated to this task, such will be the unforseeable variables that affect your time.

TRUST & RESPECT: Nothing can kill a project, ruin its chances for success, and embitter all participants more easily or more permanently than a lack of trust or respect by team members for one another. The project participants must trust one another. The PI must have the trust of all subordinate members of the project. And, perhaps even

more importantly, the PI must give all project members trust and respect. Do not try to micromanage their assigned responsibilities. If there is evidence that someone is not fulfilling their responsibilities, this will emerge in the regularly scheduled reports. But micromanagement can be/is a symptom of distrust and paternalism (or maternalism). Everyone should be trusted as a highly-qualified professional. If appointments to the project are made carefully, this will be true.

FINANCIAL MANAGEMENT: Research projects also require financial management. If an organization gives you money to complete a research task then you must have a process in place for managing the income. In general, your home institution will have procedures already in place. If you follow these procedures, your home institution will support you in your financial accounting to the funding organization. If you do not follow these procedures, you will not receive the support you need. And you also open yourself up to potentially very unpleasant consequences if and when you are audited. Therefore, each team member must be fully aware of and careful to follow, the financial regulations (for receipts, advances, equipment purchases, etc.) of the home institution and the funding organization. Managinging money is not something that all academics are good at or want to be bothered with. But these days getting external funding is a strong expectation that universities and many research institutions place on their staff and therefore all academics must attempt to get funding and, when successful, must know the operative regulations for managing this money. One very sensitive issue, for example, that arises is the use of per diem funds, i.e. funds that are used to pay the living expenses of team members in the field and at conferences. Each team member must, again, be very clear on how these funds are to be used. They must also be very clear on how much is to be paid to language teachers, what amount of money is available for gifts to the community as a whole, and they must be able to resist pressure to increase such payments and gift amounts. The project cannot invent money. It must live within its budget.

CONFLICT RESOLUTION: A project must be prepared for conflicts to develop. Someone is going to get upset at someone else or disagree strongly with some aspect of the project's management, etc. This is unavoidable. Therefore, a project must have some way of resolving conflicts. In my own projects, I have taken advantage of services already available from the University of Manchester, which allow members of my own research team to discuss their role in the project regularly with other faculty in the department or members of the personnel department. I also maintain regular and informal contact with other team members, in the field when possible (certainly with language teachers and the language community in the field), and also at the home institution.

ROUTINE: In the field, it is also vital that you have some way to avoid boredom. I offer a number of suggestions in Chapter __ below. But here, let me say that the most important component of mental health, in my experience, in field research is the sense that you are making solid, measurable progress towards your goals, and that you have a workable routine established that you follow daily.

Among the Pirahãs, in my early years, I fell into a routine quickly. I would get up about 545AM, just as it was starting to get light, get my flip-flops and two 25-liter containers and walk down the path to the river. I would then make four trips, hauling up roughly 200 liters of water to a large barrel mounted above our kitchen sink (which I built) and then poor the water into the barrel, add chlorine, and then recover the barrel (looking for frogs that often got into the barrel). Then I would help my wife get breakfast for our three children and us, most often oatmeal, powdered milk, and coffee.

After that, usually about 815AM, I would work with a language teacher (arranged the day before usually, but sometimes just opportunistic, depending on who was in my house) for two hours. After that, I would help with our children's correspondence courses, usually teaching my oldest daughter language and history. Then I would visit Pirahã in the village, doing more elicitation, but mainly just visiting and practicing the language. I helped with lunch. We always took a brief nap after lunch, to help cope with the jungle heat. After lunch, I worked most of the afternoon on processing and clarifying (with an additional language teacher) data that I had collected in the morning. In the evenings, we went to the river to bathe, after exercise (jogging when trails were wide enough, skipping rope, lifting weights, etc.). Our home, completely open as it was, with no doors, no full walls, etc. would fill up with Pirahãs at night. They often slept in the house with us. After a time with the Pirahãs, we would go to the back part of the house, the one part that had a door, walls, and screen, and spend time as a family, usually with me reading to the children. The Pirahãs respected this space usually and would not come back to that part of the house, though of course they could have done and occasionally did. As you can see, my day was hardly a morning-to-night linguistic marathon. This is partially because I had gone to the village with my entire family, but also partly because I could not absorb more than that. I don't think it is reasonable to plan long days and seven-day weeks in the village. You can 'burn out' that way. I recommend a much easier pace, one that allows you to develop an enjoyment of village living, at least in the first months of your research.

And time for recreation is crucial. So weekends, or at least one day per week, should be reserved for doing nothing whatsoever on the project. Fieldworkers differ about this. But I need at least one day a week in the field to myself, to read novels, to play my guitar, etc.

Case study: the Suyá project

If field researchers were to attempt to develop more team-centered approaches, what would be needed to achieve success with this type of model? Let me provide a case study of team-based field research, my own projects for the study of the Suyá language (the people prefer the autodenomination, Kisedje). Kisedje is a Ge language spoken by approximately 378 people in the Xingu Park region of Brazil. Although their culture has been studied extensively, especially by Seeger (), documentation and description of their language is very sparse (see dos Santos () and Guedes ()). An apparently related language, Tapaiuna, is spoken near the Kisedje villages. In 2004 I received grants from the Arts and Humanities Research Council and the Economics and Social Research Council, both of the UK, to prepare a reference grammar, dictionary, pedagogical grammar, and theoretical & descriptive articles on the language, along with a comparative study of Tapaiuna. For this research, I received two postdoctoral research associates, a PhD student, and a secretary (also a PhD student in Linguistics, but not doing research on Kisedje). This was a huge change for me. All of my previous research followed the 'Indiana Jones' model.[61]

[61] The project also began with a Brazilian consultant who later dropped out, citing my bad management, though I think that there were other motives. Still, if I had been a better manager, perhaps this would not have happened.

My first tasks were to hire the postdoctoral research associates. What qualities should I look for in my partners? Analytical ability? Theoretical interest and insight? Field experience? Data-base experience? Knowledge of Brazil? Knowledge of Portuguese? In the end I hired two Brazilian PhDs who turned out to be a marvelous combination of all these various desiderata and more. But they did not always find me all that easy to work with. Apparently, my management style can be at once dictatorial and laisser-faire, which naturally led to misunderstandings and occasional hurt feelings. That is, after explaining the project objectives and my view of what everyone should do and could do on the research, I tended to leave people on their own, only getting back to team members when they failed to meet my expectations, an experience we all found unpleasant. But my team wanted regular meetings, clear feedback, assessment, encouragement, and linguistic help. All reasonable items. And they pointed out my problematic management style. Without management and leadership from me, therefore, the project would slow down. I could no longer just do my own thing, as it were, on analysis and elicitation, as per the Indiana Jones model, but needed to be concerned about others. And I needed to give thought to project management principles.