

## Example of the use of methods advocated in this chapter

### Scenario 1

Having established my field location and the relationships with the people I will be working with, I am now in the process of eliciting and recording information. I set off for a story-telling session with my backpack of equipment (video and still cameras, audio recorder, headphones, tripod, and microphone) and my notebook. The speaker has already completed a consent form and I have taken their photo to include in future presentations of stories they have told. After a cup of tea and a chat they are ready to start. I do my best to ensure that there is no background noise and that the lighting is appropriate, then set up the tripod, video, and audio recorder. I put on the headphones, then start the recording by saying the date, place, and name of the speaker. They then tell their story and I take notes of contextual information that may be relevant, like the direction they are facing, or gestures they use to help in communicating the story. When they are done they may want to retell parts of the story or explain aspects of it, and I will try to record that information as well. Afterwards, I note the name of the file assigned by the recording device. If the location of the recording is not easily described with a place name, then I would also have a geographic reference from a GPS and that would be part of the metadata for the recording.

I employ a speaker of the language to transcribe recordings, using exercise books to write the language and a translation. These books are then scanned for ease of access and will be typed when I return from the field.

My notebooks are the primary source of information about this recording session, and when I can get to a computer, I enter that information (e.g. speaker name, place and date of recording) into a database, with the key field of the record being the name of the media item. Later, as I proceed with my analysis of the language, the name of the transcript of the media will be entered, or at least, the fact that it has been completed would be checked off in the database. Then, when I extract a text from that transcript for interlinearization, I note the identifier of the text in the database too.

## 4.3 Managing Your Data

If you work in a location with electricity, much of your initial data management will be done in the field on a daily basis as you collect recordings, including naming your files appropriately, recording the associated metadata in your database, creating backup copies and preparing files for archiving. If there is no electricity in your field site, you will want to take care of data management at the soonest possible opportunity, either on a visit to a town or immediately upon returning home. Be vigilant and resist the temptation to do it later, as it is too easy to lose track of what you have collected. It is useful to audio record simple details of who is speaking, where, and when at the beginning of the recording session; if you forget, you can add it at the end of the recording.

### 4.3.1 File naming and persistent identification

File names are critically important, and, while a seemingly trivial matter, the failure to plan properly for file names can wreak havoc with your data organization. Each file that you create has to be named in a way that lets you find it later. The names have to be unique—i.e. you should avoid having one directory with file 1, file 2, file 3, etc., and another directory with exactly the same file names in it. If those files are ever removed from their original directory (and they surely will be), there will be no way to trace their provenance.