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Making "collaboration" collaborative An examination of perspectives that frame linguistic field research

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Though increasingly hailed as a best practice for linguistic field research, the notion of "collaboration" is rarely truly inclusive of both the "researcher" and the "researched." This paper examines common assumptions about collaboration, particularly as they pertain to endangered language research, and advocates a paradigm shift toward a model that is truly in line with the "Respect for Persons" principle of the Belmont Report, the federal guide for ethical human research in the United States. We examine and critique other proposed forms of collaboration in linguistics, offering instead a model that incorporates the needs and expertise of all people involved in a research study. Specifically, we argue that true collaboration necessitates a collaborative approach in the very first stage of defining research roles and goals through *collaborative consultation*. We illustrate this approach through two case studies in Warm Springs (Oregon) and Miami (Oklahoma) communities. First, we examine our experiences conducting collaborative research within these communities. Second, we present a microanalysis of formal collaborative methods, focusing specifically on the question of determining speakerhood for linguistic fieldwork. We present collaboration as a philosophy and approach to developing a research program and demonstrate how this approach enhances rather than detracts from academic integrity.

1. INTRODUCTION.[1] In linguistics and in related fields, collaboration in field research is increasingly becoming both a norm for practice and an idealized goal. This paper itself was motivated by the 2009 International Conference for Language Documentation and Conservation call for papers, which stated that "[i]t has become apparent that there is too much for a linguist alone to achieve and that language documentation requires collaboration." This in turn reflects a growing movement to reexamine the role of researchers and "the researched" in a number of academic disciplines. For example, there is an increasing amount of scholarship on the issue in a variety of fields, including linguistics (e.g., Ahlers 2009; Czaykowska-Higgins 2009; Dwyer 2006; Junker 2002; Yamada 2007), anthropology and archaeology (e.g., Colwell-Chanthaphonh & Ferguson 2007; Evers & Toelken 2001; Kennedy 1995; Moreno-Black & Homchampa 2008; Stull & Schensul 1987), speech communication (e.g., Thompson 2001), social development (e.g., Broad & Reyes 2008),

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psychology and mental health (e.g., Fisher & Ball 2003; Mohatt 1989), and even natural resource management (e.g., Arnold & Fernandez-Gimenez 2007).[2] Anthropology in particular has embraced this discussion, incorporating the notion of collaboration into developing and implementing research methodologies and devoting significant professional attention to the topic. The American Anthropological Association 107th Annual Meeting in 2008, for example, was framed around the theme of "Inclusion, Collaboration and Engagement." Indeed, the participant observation-based approaches to research that characterize cultural anthropology in particular entail ongoing examinations and reexaminations of the roles of all participants in collaborative research design and outcomes.

However, attention to collaborative research processes and outcomes has not been developed to this extent in field linguistics, where the norm is for the basic design of the research to be established by the researcher(s). This approach is potentially problematic to the notion of collaboration because, as Keren Rice points out, "Collaborative working arrangements are not truly collaborative if the linguist still controls the content and framework of the research, and the form in which it appears" (2006:149-150). Part of what makes this issue difficult is that "collaboration" is multifaceted and fluctuates based on the field of research, the people involved, and their particular communities of practice. Harrison (2001) recognizes this fact, framing collaboration between outside academics and indigenous communities as that which entails the sharing of responsibility and authority for a project from its outset. We take this as our working definition of true collaboration and propose a model of field research in which all parties are involved in all aspects of the research process, including those which have traditionally been determined by the researcher(s), such as research goals, methods, and the assignment of roles within the research program. We discuss how true collaboration is not only desirable from a research perspective, but also more closely aligned with U.S. federal guidelines for human research. In doing so, we demonstrate that commonly accepted research practices in field linguistics are often not truly collaborative. Furthermore, these practices are seldom examined as part of a larger question of what should constitute effective research, but neglecting such considerations can jeopardize the integrity of the research outcomes.[3]

We demonstrate our model of true collaboration through a process we call *collaborative consultation*. First, we examine our collaborative research histories with two separate Native American communities: the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs (Oregon) and the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma. Next, we specifically examine what it means to be a fluent speaker of a given language in the context of these communities. Our case studies demonstrate how a model of true collaboration can be incorporated under the common constraints of academic research, such as deadlines, legal requirements for human research, and productivity. Moreover, through a particular examination of speakerhood in the context of our

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[2] Collaborative research is also called "Participatory Action Research" and "Community-Based Research," among other similar terms.

[3] Throughout this paper, "research integrity" is used in its broadest semantic scope, encompassing both ethical issues of human research as established in legal and cultural frameworks, as well as in terms of accuracy and rigor of scholarship.

larger studies, we show the pitfalls of assuming research norms based on any one cultural perspective. We conclude with a discussion of the importance of collaboration for the field of linguistics and a call for a paradigm shift in how field research is approached.

2. ON "COLLABORATION": MODELS AND CHALLENGES. As described in our introduction, collaboration has become a very desirable practice in recent social science research, usually with the proposed or actual collaboration occurring between or among persons described as "researcher(s)" and "community member(s)." As our proposed model of research will demonstrate, these terms are problematic, not only because they imply a false binary distinction in which these roles are assumed not to overlap, but also because they too easily facilitate a process in which roles are pre-assigned. The "researchers," who within this discourse are understood to be professional academics, develop the project and determine the tasks of "community members," who are in this discourse understood to be non-academic members of a particular speech or political community.[4] Nevertheless, given that this paper is in response to an existing discourse associated with issues of linguistic and anthropological fieldwork, we will continue to use these terms for the purpose of situating our critique within this discourse, as well as problematizing it.

2.1 EXISTING MODELS OF COLLABORATION. Research that has been described as "collaborative" often reifies the predetermined binary roles of "researcher" and "community member." For example, Cameron et al. discuss and critique the Advocacy model of research, which is "characterized by a commitment on the part of the researcher not just to do research *on* subjects but research *on* and *for* subjects" (1993:15, emphasis in original). While well-intentioned, this model nonetheless frames research as researcher-controlled and frames "subjects" as disempowered. A similar problem occurs in the growing practice among academics to involve "subjects" in the final product and to formally recognize their contributions, but not to involve them in the initial stages of research planning. For example, the essays in Newman & Ratliff (2001) present many arguments for developing open and respectful relationships with language consultants in which due credit is given to the language speaker(s). However, as above, the basic design of the research is established by the researcher(s). Finally, speaking specifically about research done in American Indian communities, Mihesuah argues that "[r]esearchers who are preparing grant applications that deal with Indians should be prepared to spend months, if not a year, to allow the subjects to thoroughly understand every aspect of the study" (1993:135). This approach is problematic in that it precludes collaboration in the initial stages of research by framing the study as something that the researcher creates and then explains to the "subjects."

These and similar examples illustrate an increasingly common movement toward collaboration that more concretely incorporates all participants in research. But in reality, they still embody the traditional research paradigm in which the scopes and types of collaboration are largely controlled by the researcher, whose needs and expertise frame the research

[4] For a particularly comprehensive and instructive analysis of what gets understood as "community" in indigenous language research, see Czaykowska-Higgins 2009.

program. This traditional view of pseudo-collaborative research is embodied in Czaykowska-Higgins's critique of the "Linguist-Focused Model" in which the linguist/researcher is "in a position of intellectual power with respect to the language-users" (2009:22). We illustrate a generic manifestation of this traditional view of community collaboration in Figure 1:

FIGURE 1. Traditional View of Community Collaboration in the Research Process.

In this figure, the differently sized circles represent how researcher needs and expertise outweigh community needs and expertise in the shaping of the research project. For the purposes of our model, we take "needs" to include the tangible goals associated with the research program, such as publications and teaching materials; indirect needs associated with research, including material support and official documents (e.g., a letter of support from the community in order to get permission to work somewhere); and finally, sociopolitical needs such as advocacy, legal support, or decolonization goals. We take a similarly broad view of "expertise" as referring to the knowledge gained from all of one's experiences and the perspectives that one has developed from those experiences. "Expertise," then, refers not only to one's specialized or technical knowledge, but also to cultural knowledge and beliefs, personal connections, and to other abilities that may be outside the immediate scope of the research, but which are nonetheless relevant.

We take as an example of Figure 1 the traditional paradigm of collaboration in language documentation. In this paradigm, a researcher may take into account community language needs (e.g., language teaching materials), but only as a secondary consideration to academic and professional goals (e.g., a technical grammar). Because the research is framed as a researcher-centric endeavor, the research development process is for the primary purpose of the researcher and the researcher's professional community, not the language community. Under this type of approach, it is not the case that research goals cannot or would not be adjusted to better meet community needs, expertise, or preferences, but rather that doing so is the prerogative of the researcher, who still frames the research and in some sense "owns" the project (however, see Newman 2007 on copyright issues, and Tatsch 2004 on indigenous intellectual property rights).

Conversely, and likely at least partially in response to increasing criticism within academia about this traditional approach, there is a growing discourse in which ethical research is framed as only that which is dictated by community interests, with researchers playing a sort of consultant role (see discussion in Bowern 2008:§1.2.4). We have come to refer to this view as the "new-age" view (see Figure 2), because it responds to past and contemporary power imbalances by wholly embracing a view (often essentialist) of the needs and expertise of a marginalized group, while denying the needs and expertise of one's own communities of practice. As noted earlier, in the case of the researcher, these will often include theoretical interests and expectations of academic productivity. The new-age view is seemingly progressive, and may sometimes be necessary to address extreme power imbalances, but simply reversing traditional power structures is in itself no more collaborative than the model illustrated in Figure 1.

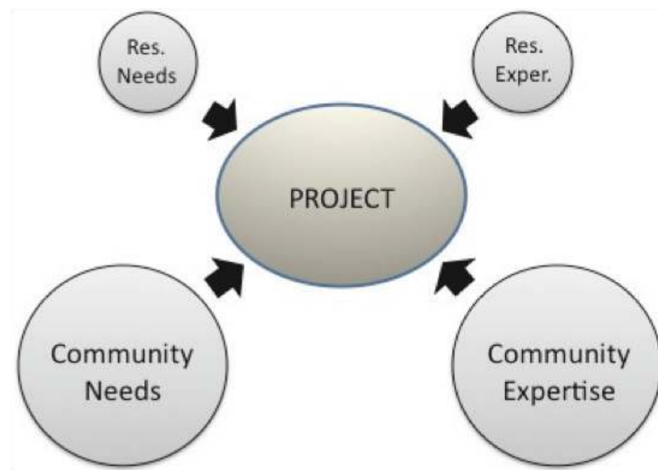

FIGURE 2. New-Age View of Community Collaboration in the Research Process.

A major issue with the model illustrated in Figure 2 is that academically-trained researchers really do bring expertise and needs to research projects. For example, many Native American communities have benefitted from outside linguists' expertise in language documentation methods, historical reconstruction, and theories of language acquisition and pedagogy. An extreme version of this model, in which the only valued input is "whatever the community decides," assumes that technical linguistic analysis is of no benefit to a language community. This fosters a discourse in which researchers who have specialized, theoretical interests may be viewed as intrinsically unprogressive or otherwise bad. Such a view disempowers the academic researcher from suggesting theoretical directions of study that are sometimes understood as not directly responding to community needs, but that may ultimately have long-term and/or indirect benefits for a given community in addition to augmenting general knowledge. Even for seemingly more "applied" research, where the immediate needs of the community are often prominent, framing expectations of ethical research as only that which is entirely controlled and/or run by the community may pre-

clude potentially valuable input, expertise, or social capital provided by outside experts (cf. Dobrin 2008). Moreover, ignoring researchers' professional obligations, particularly those associated with scholarly productivity, diminishes their chances of academic success.[5] This can reinforce a situation in which people with real concerns about issues of ethics and the continuation of imbalanced power structures do not easily become leaders within their academic institutions, thus facilitating the maintenance of the status quo that disfavors historically marginalized perspectives.

2.2 TRULY COLLABORATIVE COLLABORATION. In place of the models presented above, we advocate a model in which all parties have equal agency in the formation of the research program, and where the research, as a matter of design, has been framed in this way.[6] We approach this goal using our conception of the empowerment framework of research (cf. Cameron et al. 1993; Yamada 2007), which in its earlier forms has advocated research not *on* or *for* but rather *with* research participants. Under this framework, the research is intrinsically framed around people working together and thus seemingly diminishes the problems associated with the top-down approaches of the models we have discussed above. However, at issue with earlier descriptions of empowerment is what research "with" participants truly entails for research design. In the worst-case scenario, it allows for pseudo-collaborative designs along the lines of what we have called the traditional view. Moreover, as García et al. (2009) point out, research based on an empowerment model must also incorporate an acknowledgment of the notion of power and empowerment relative to research participants, as well as their multiple shifting goals and roles. As noted earlier, these roles have increasingly come to include performing many of the key research tasks within a given project, such as recording and analyzing language data. Czaykowska-Higgins (2009) formally extends the empowerment framework to include research *by* the language community, in this case within the specific context of linguistic research in Canadian indigenous communities, thus creating a broadly conceptualized model that doesn't

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[5] For an overview and specific example of this issue, see Warner, Luna, & Butler (2007:§3.4). These authors note that linguists who adopt significant community-based applied language work often need to maintain a second theoretically-oriented research program in order to meet professional academic obligations. It is also increasingly common that linguist-researchers literally are "consultants" or employees, hired by communities in order to perform specific research or applied tasks that utilize their expertise. In these cases, linguists enter a new paradigm of practice in which they conform to their employer's expectations. However, even in these cases, adopting a new-age approach in which linguists are disempowered to contribute to research decisions diminishes the benefits of having hired professionally-trained linguists in the first place (see Harrison 2001:65).

[6] We recognize that the concept of "equal agency" is itself a Western cultural ideal, and that in some settings, this type of equal input is not appropriate or feasible. In these cases, collaboration should take the most appropriate form possible, with consideration for local cultural norms and legal regulations. Because what we advocate here is a philosophy and an approach to research rather than a set list of methodologies or standards, collaboration can be adapted to a number of settings as appropriate, and the discovery of what actually is appropriate can be part of the collaborative process.

limit the actual roles played by any given party. However, this still does not directly speak to the issue of equal agency in setting the research agenda itself.

Similar to Czaykowska-Higgins 2009, our conception of the empowerment model expands the community of people who have relevant input on research to include all who have special interest in the stated research project. However, we specifically seek to avoid a new-age approach, in which "empowerment" is too easily framed as reversing or otherwise manipulating an existing power structure. Our proposal is of a multi-directional empowerment in which the shared beliefs in the value and design of the research project empower all parties to articulate their needs and fully incorporate their expertise in light of the various possible ways in which the final goals could be achieved. In this sense, the shared vision in the value and possibilities associated with the project itself, along with a shared commitment to realizing its potential, is the source of the empowerment. We illustrate an approach to the research design process that facilitates this type of exchange below in Figure 3.

FIGURE 3. True Collaboration: Equal Access to the Research Process.

In this figure, all input circles are the same size, indicating every participant's equal access to the project's design. Crucially, our proposed model refers to the *input* into the research process in terms of the questions that get posed, the methodologies by which they are investigated, and the intended application and ownership of the data, analysis, or materials that they lead to.[7] It does not in itself prescribe what the outputs of the research project

[7] Research programs that arise organically among a group of people who already know one another or work together are ideal within this philosophy, but this situation may be untenable. There must often be an instance of instigation, often by researchers, who may have to identify a contact person to whom they must make a research proposal in the first place. However, this is not outside the scope of our collaborative model, which does not preclude unilateral proposals, but rather emphasizes that turning those proposals into a research project should occur collaboratively.

would be, or the exact nature of the research interactions. (Note that all arrows point inward.) Rather, it represents how the parties involved in the research would collaboratively determine the nature of those outputs. In this way, the model allows freedom and does not itself impose any specific rule about the particular tasks that any given party is supposed to undertake, or the extent to which the final project should directly benefit any given party.

We emphasize this distinction explicitly as a result of our own experiences with frequently-raised concerns about balancing the desire to "give back" while also meeting professional requirements of academic output (on the part of the researcher), and about the varying perceptions of a proposed research project's immediate direct benefit to academia or the community itself. For example, there is a commonly-cited discussion by Newman (2003) on the merits of the principle articulated by Emmon Bach (1995) that he would spend 50% of his (research) time in activities or material development that would directly help the endangered language community in which he was working. Newman argues that linguists and other specialists should devote as much of their time as possible to the tasks in which they have specialized training, under the view that other work, while in itself potentially worthy, would be better for others to do. In our model, these and similar considerations form important elements to be discussed by all parties during the development and implementation of the research program, but again, the model imposes no predetermined design to the goals and outcomes of the research. Instead, we call for a research paradigm in which the community expresses its expectations while the researcher conducts work within parameters that are realistic to the situation. Though there will likely be compromises in the crafting of the project, the end result is that it is *everybody's* project—not the researcher's project or the community's project, but rather one that by design reflects the ongoing negotiated needs and expertise of all parties involved.[8]

Additionally, this model provides a non-deterministic approach to addressing ethical issues in social science research with Native American populations, which have been drawing increasing attention (e.g., Battiste 2007; Mihesuah 1993, 1998; Nielsen & Gould 2007; Piquemal 2001; Rice 2006; Wax 1991). This movement stems from a history of abuses by unscrupulous (and/or ignorant) researchers, resulting in a general distrust that Western modes of scientific research are of benefit to Native American communities (Harrison 2001; Smith 1999), including field linguistics, which was largely developed within the auspices of colonial and/or missionary goals (Errington 2008). The American Indian Law Center, Inc. (1999) lists a number of problems stemming from such research, including exploitation and harm to individuals, breaches of confidentiality and publication of sensitive

[8] As one anonymous reviewer has astutely pointed out, the concept of "community" may itself become problematic for the linguistic researcher if the community of speakers is especially large, or if people are generally uninterested in the researcher's work (except, perhaps, as a source of income). However, we recommend that the researcher spend time getting to know the community, its members, and its social networks and leadership systems. The researcher will likely be able to work with a smaller group of people with a genuine interest in linguistic matters, who will define a "community" of speakers. If the researcher instead finds that members of a community are truly interested only in a business relationship, then there is nothing wrong with pursuing one's research within that context. We caution, however, that the researcher must be aware of personal biases and interests in making this evaluation.

personal and cultural data, appropriation of intellectual property, sensationalism of Native American community issues, and violations of cultural beliefs and practices. The model of research presented in this paper may ameliorate these problems in that members of Native American communities (or of any other community with a similar history of being "the researched") are involved in the design and goals of the research. Again, the specific issues that come up will reflect the specific researchers and communities involved in the proposal. Rather than presenting a fixed set of guidelines for ethical research, this model thus recognizes the heterogeneity of Native American communities and researchers, allowing for ethical research within the social, political, and cultural norms of any given group.

2.3 INSTITUTIONAL CONSTRAINTS ON COLLABORATION. We have been outlining a model in which the input into research comes from both researcher and community needs. A special kind of research need is that of negotiating the constraints and rules imposed by institutions such as grant agencies, tribal governments, and especially academic entities such as Institutional Review Boards (IRBs). While it is beyond the scope of this paper to respond to all of the issues raised by the various combinations of institutional control that a research program may encounter, we will present and critique three examples of common institutional guidelines and show how their spirit is met through true collaboration of the sort we propose.

Grants provide an especially important example of institutional constraints because they are often necessary to the research fiscally, but are rarely awarded without complying with pre-existing goals or guidelines set by the granting agency. For example, one major source of funding for linguists doing language documentation projects in the Americas is the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP) administered through the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project (HRELP). The stated objectives of its documentation grants are to support the documentation of as many endangered languages as possible; to encourage fieldwork on endangered languages, especially by younger scholars at an early stage in their academic career; and to create a repository of resources for the linguistic, social science, and language communities.[9] While these goals may be uncontroversial on the surface, questions do arise, for example, as to who has access to the repositories, or even who counts as a scholar within the auspices of the grant. Under our model, these questions are addressed before any grant application is submitted, thus allowing the research to determine the grant, not vice versa, and for "scholarly" roles not to necessarily go to the "researcher" by default. An added bonus is that in our experience, many granting agencies are more likely to award proposals that contain strong support from all parties involved and that make the most effective use of the talents and interests of all participants in the research program.

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[9] As of the time of this writing, ELDP administered four different types of grants that were demarcated by the scope of the research and the professional status of the researcher(s). These goals are referenced in the 2009 grant application information packs for all four types of grants. See http://www.hrelp.org/grants/ for more information.

A less commonly acknowledged institutional role is that played by local tribal governments or organizations, which increasingly have explicit, written research guidelines that conform to local cultural norms. With the hundreds of indigenous nations (federally recognized or not) within the United States alone, it is impossible to give a single description that encompasses all of them. However, there are two especially common themes. One is that such guidelines seek to prevent the types of ethical breaches that are perceived to have occurred with academic researchers in the past. The other is that they assert sovereignty as a discrete nation and culture. For example, the Model Tribal Research Code, as developed by the American Indian Law Center, Inc. (1999, 3rd Edition) provides guidelines that meet these two general goals by encouraging tribes not only to set up protocols for ethical research, but also to define what even counts as "research" in their own terms. The collaborative model advocated in this paper supports these standards by assuming that all parties in the research—outside academic researchers, tribal members who are academic researchers, and other parties who are directly participating in the research—contribute to its goals, definitions, and assumptions.

Finally, persons affiliated with an academic institution in the United States must conform to the guidelines of their Institutional Review Board (IRB) in all matters of human research. While the exact guidelines and application process vary from institution to institution, the basic principles are framed around United States federal guidelines, which in turn stem from the Belmont Report (The National Commission for the Protection of Human Subjects of Biomedical and Behavioral Research 1979), the document that outlines basic ethical principles for human research in the United States. Our experience has been that these review board guidelines show little overt support for truly collaborative research and impose structures that make collaboration from the outset of a research project difficult (see Grinevald 2006 for a discussion of this issue). For example, the University of California (UC), Berkeley Committee for the Protection of Human Subjects (CPHS) Application cover sheet does not recognize, legitimize, or promote collaboration with "the community" and makes no reference to collaboration of this kind in its application forms. Figure 4 shows the only direct reference to collaboration in the application process that UC Berkeley affiliates must undertake to gain approval for human research. This form implies that ethical concerns are only recognized with respect to collaboration between or among academic people or institutions.

Part IV: COLLABORATING INSTITUTIONS

1. Are any institutions collaborating in this research? No ☐ / Yes ☐ **If yes:**

Institution Name	Individual Contact/ Affiliate of Institution	FWA #	Local IRB Review? (Y or N)	IRB Approval Date	IRB Approval Expiration Date

2. **Attach a copy of the most recent IRB or Ethics Committee approval.**

FIGURE 4. UC Berkeley CPHS Application Portion on "Collaboration" (May 2008 Version).[10]

It may appear that IRB requirements are antithetical to our model of collaboration, particularly if they formalize a traditional type of "collaboration" in which the researcher first outlines the project's goals and methodologies and later invites potential members of the target community to participate. However, a key issue is one of interpretation. In fact, we maintain that the underlying principles behind these requirements, namely the Belmont Report in the context of research in the United States, actually *require* collaboration from the initial stages in order to meet standards of ethics. Specifically, the Belmont Report puts forth "Respect for Persons" as one of the three basic principles for human research. This principle requires that subjects, to the degree that they are capable, be given the opportunity to choose what shall or shall not happen to them (The National Commission 1979: "Application" Section, ¶2). Under the common narrow interpretation of this principle, research subjects are presented with the research plan and are allowed to decide to participate. That is, the ethics are framed around "informed consent."

However, for research where there is extensive contact among all parties, such as most linguistic fieldwork, we contend that a broader interpretation of the "Respect for Persons" principle is necessary. Under our proposed broad interpretation of the principle, "subjects" choose what happens to them as part of the research by participating in formulating the research plan itself. In long-term research, the choice to participate in a predetermined research project may be inherently negative for people who would enjoy the benefits of participation (e.g., economic, social, etc.), but who are uncomfortable with the project. Under our broad interpretation of the Belmont Report, "subjects" are part of the planning, thereby having the opportunity to frame this choice in a manner that recognizes their needs and expertise.

While there may be certain types of research in which the common, narrow interpretation may be appropriate (e.g., a lab-oriented study involving a temporary interaction with a larger number of participants), the processes and goals that characterize most linguistic fieldwork or related projects are not of this kind. Rather, long-term, ongoing interactions

[10] For more information, see http://cphs.berkeley.edu. The specifics of the model outlined in the application forms can be negotiated, but it is the applicant who must provide a justification for doing so and make a case as to why a different protocol might be necessary for ethical research within a given cultural or other context. In this sense, the default is still one where institutionally-affiliated academic researchers maintain control.

of the sort that are common in linguistic field research normally entail greater expectations of involvement as well as larger-scale concerns about the direction and outcomes of the research. In our experience, truly understanding those results and their possible outcomes entails not only a list of possible dangers or benefits as brought forth from the cultural and academic frameworks that the researcher may hold, but also of those that become apparent from the perspectives, relationships, knowledge, and cultural assumptions that the community holds. As Grinevald notes, "Ethical issues are embedded in a host of other -'ical' issues, such as methodological and technological ones, and permeate the whole enterprise of fieldwork" (2006:347). Under the traditional model, the researcher is expected to somehow determine what those issues might entail, but often does not have the appropriate framework to make an accurate determination. Ensuring that the community has equal agency in framing and evaluating the project from the outset diminishes this problem.

In the next section, we take what we have outlined thus far and situate it within the case studies of our own collaborative field research programs. We first provide detailed descriptions of the collaborative nature of our individual research programs within two indigenous communities. Second, we give a more formal microanalysis of a specific collaboration within the broader context of our collaborative relationships. This specific collaboration jointly investigates an underexamined issue in linguistic fieldwork, namely defining and determining speakerhood, which in turn leads to larger insights about the notion of collaboration in fieldwork.

3. APPROACHING TRUE COLLABORATION: A CASE STUDY. Our proposal is that collaboration in linguistic fieldwork should be an important aspect of all stages of research—true collaboration does not occur as an afterthought. In this section, therefore, we examine the notion of collaboration in one of the first and most basic aspects of linguistic fieldwork: finding (a) speaker(s) to work with. We present the mode of research we call *collaborative consultation*, which forms the basis for our microanalysis in Section 3.4.

3.1 WHY SPEAKERHOOD? Though any element of research could work within our model, one issue that is almost intrinsic to the initial plans of linguistic fieldwork—hence to the original crafting of the research project—is identifying the speaker(s) who will be involved in the research. This is commonly overlooked as a potential area for collaborative discussion and decision-making, even though the social implications of being a speaker in an endangered language environment are widely recognized as riddled with potential prestige and/or stigma (see Evans 2001). There can be a lot riding on whether (and to what extent) a person speaks their heritage language, with political, social, and economic issues revolving around their speaker status. Furthermore, the assertions of an outside researcher that somebody is a speaker without having come to understand what being a speaker means within the cultural context extends the historical colonialist practice of imposing Western ways of knowing without acknowledging that other ways of knowing exist (see Smith 1999).

This latter point in particular problematizes the notion of the linguist as "the expert" (cf. Dorian 2002; Hill 2002; Mihesuah 1993; Warner, Luna, & Butler 2007). Certainly, it seems natural for linguists to make judgments about the level of speaking ability of their research consultants. After all, many linguists, ourselves included, have spent many years studying and analyzing languages and language use, and this is an area where we feel that

we have a great deal of expertise. However, literature on the subject of fieldwork is surprisingly sparse in its information about speakerhood—that is, who counts as a "speaker." Davies (2003) notes that the term "native speaker" seems to be negatively defined in that it is conceptualized as a lack of malfunction instead of something positive, but the specific criteria are not fixed. More important for this paper, what is often ignored is the ideological lens through which we view what being a speaker entails (see Bucholtz's 2003 discussion on the "authentic speaker" and linguistic isolationism).

In fact, while there are general discussions in the literature on finding a good speaker for linguistic research (e.g., Chelliah 2001; Dimmendaal 2001; Everett 2001), very few linguistic studies state how speakerhood was determined (Haynes & Leonard 2007), leaving one to assume that this was a unilateral decision by the researcher(s). In some cases, researchers have developed objective tests for assessing different levels of fluency as a means of determining speakerhood. However, objective language proficiency assessments such as sentence repetition tasks (Radloff 1991), self-reported ease of speaking in pre-determined domains (Hogg & Rigoli 1996), or body-part naming tests (O'Grady et al. 2009) may not adequately measure competence because of their Western cultural bias and other shortcomings (see McKinnie & Priestly 2002 for discussion). More crucially, such seemingly "objective" tests may impose pre-determined criteria that do not allow for culturally relevant aspects of speakerhood to frame the research program.[11] For all of these reasons, identifying speakerhood becomes a natural avenue for the application of true collaboration, as we illustrate in the following collaborative approach to defining this crucial, but oft-overlooked, component of linguistic research.

3.2 APPLYING TRUE COLLABORATION TO THE PROCESS OF DETERMINING SPEAKERHOOD. To implement the collaborative approach we introduced in Figure 3, we propose *collaborative consultation* as a general method. Collaborative consultation is a recursive open-interview method that reveals the needs and expertise of all potential participants throughout the research process. Similar methods have been proposed in other fields (e.g., Idol, Nevin, & Paolucci-Whitcomb 2000 in special education), but here we illustrate its use in field linguistics, where it refers to any kind of open interview in which the initial investigator's theoretical and other goals are explicit and continually reframed and revised by *all* research participants—that is, including those traditionally defined separately as "researcher" and "subject." Speaking generally about issues in indigenous research, Māori scholar Linda Tuhiwai Smith offers an important distinction that effectively captures the ways in which this can occur. Sharing information, Smith notes, refers to the disclosure of surface facts or conclusions, while sharing knowledge extends beyond these to include "the theories and analyses which inform the way knowledge and information are constructed and represented" (1999:16). Collaborative consultation, then, entails "sharing knowledge" throughout the research process (see Eggleston, Baina, & Benedicto 2009 for an example).

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[11] There is nothing in our model that precludes the use of any of these or similar assessments. Rather, the key lies in who determines which test is used, the process by which it is deemed to be relevant, and how the results will be analyzed and interpreted.

Interwoven into this section is the assumption that this collaborative research does not end at the stage of data collection and dispersal, but rather that we as the authors of this academic text are responsible for presenting the context in which this research occurred as well as the larger social context in which it will be interpreted. In this section, we therefore contextualize our interpretation of events within the larger collaborative research programs we have pursued in the Warm Springs and Miami communities. As part of this, we give brief overviews of the communities in order to situate the sociopolitical contexts of the language research issues discussed in this paper. Finally, we present findings from formal collaborative consultations about speakerhood, which yielded some differences from Western norms and illustrated the importance of collaboration throughout the whole research process.

3.3 BACKGROUND TO OUR CASE STUDY COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATIONS. Both of these case studies primarily reflect formal research programs that we began as part of PhD programs in linguistics at UC Berkeley, but where the relationships in which the research developed actually began earlier. Erin Haynes, who is not a Warm Springs tribal member, first began her relationship with several tribal members while she was working in the Warm Springs Language Program as an intern in 2003. Her internship was part of a joint language archiving program with the Anthropology Department at Oregon State University, where Haynes was then an undergraduate student. Her subsequent matriculation to a graduate program in linguistics was largely influenced by the language revitalization efforts she observed in Warm Springs. Similarly, Wesley Leonard, a Miami tribal member, entered a graduate program in linguistics as a direct result of his prior participation in Miami language revitalization activities during the late 1990s, when he was an undergraduate linguistics student at Miami University (Ohio). The cultural ideas discussed in this paper stem from his ongoing direct involvement with the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma both as its language committee chair since 2004 and as a tribal member, though the specific quotations and examples primarily come out of his dissertation fieldwork on child language development with one Miami family in Indiana (Leonard 2007).

Because the nature of long-term collaborative work entails fostering a strong understanding of the respective social, economic, political, and historical perspectives of all people who are party to the research, we feel it is appropriate to include descriptions of these contexts for the communities we work with. We are assuming a general familiarity among our readership with the context of academia, so we will not discuss it here, though it plays an equally important role in collaborative relationships.

3.3.1 WARM SPRINGS. The Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs is a community of approximately 4,000 people in central Oregon. Three indigenous languages, Ichishkin, Numu, and Kiksht,[12] are spoken by an increasingly limited number of people in Warm Springs. This decline can be attributed to a number of reasons that have been common in Native American communities, mostly arising from colonization and particularly from a

[12] Ichishkin, Numu, and Kiksht are known in English as Sahaptin, Northern Paiute, and Wasco, respectively.

series of forced removals to the current Warm Springs reservation, a reservation boarding school that forced the use of only English, and more general current-day social factors that encourage the use of English. The history of the shift away from these heritage languages due to colonization is widely felt and expressed among tribal members. This has led to a general distrust of researchers, who are often perceived as coming from the colonizing tradition. This distrust is compounded by specific examples of previous unethical research by "culture vultures."

Because relying on outside help in language revitalization has been deemed neither necessary nor desirable, the Confederated Tribes of Warm Springs has dedicated many internal efforts towards language revitalization, most of which originate through the Warm Springs Culture and Heritage Department. Haynes has continued to work closely with the Warm Springs Language Program on a number of projects, some of which are research-oriented (e.g., Haynes 2004; Johnson & Haynes 2008), and others of which are oriented toward community needs (e.g., an annotated archive of Kiksht language recordings). She recently completed dissertation research on the phonological acquisition of Numu (Haynes 2010), while at the same time working on an online audio dictionary of Numu for tribal use. Her dissertation project arose out of a series of conversations with Myra Johnson, then Director of the language program, who encouraged Haynes to do her research in Warm Springs. They decided to start with the dictionary, which could not serve as a dissertation project, but which would allow Haynes to collect audio recordings of Numu and work closely with Numu speakers while meeting the needs of the language program.

The dissertation project itself, as with Haynes's previous research projects in Warm Springs, was largely guided by ongoing conversations about Haynes's needs as a researcher, the needs of the Warm Springs community, and the goals of the language program. The language program goals were compatible with (or at least not contradictory to) what was required for dissertation research. The collaborative relationship through which the project was designed and carried out was highly conducive to achieving Haynes's desired results, and she hopes that it was also favorable to the language program in terms of establishing a better understanding of learners' Numu acquisition. Aspects of the current paper arise in part from the way in which she experienced this mode of research.

3.3.2 MIAMI. The Miami people comprise a population of around 10,000 individuals, with political communities in Indiana and Oklahoma, the two groups having arisen due to a forced removal of part of the Miami community from the ancestral homelands in Indiana and an ensuing split of the Miami people. The Miami language, known in technical linguistic circles as Miami-Illinois or Miami-Peoria and to its speakers as *myaamia*,[13] is an Algonquian language that underwent around 30 years of dormancy from the early 1960s to the early 1990s. Leonard, himself a highly involved member of the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma, naturally fell into the role of Miami language learner when he was an undergraduate linguistics student, as this was around the time that Miami language reclamation efforts

[13] In written Miami, the name *myaamia* is normally not capitalized, and we follow this convention here.

were gaining momentum. During this period, one family in particular was becoming well known because the father, Daryl Baldwin, had taught himself the Miami language from documentation, and was raising his four children to be speakers of the language. Moreover, to facilitate the reconstitution of the language from documentation, Baldwin had also pursued professional training in linguistics, and in 2001 began formal employment to conduct tribal language research and create language and cultural programs.

Around the time that Leonard was formally considering dissertation projects, there was a general trend among the Miami people toward more interest in the language and a consensus that its future depended on its being learned and used by children. This led to increasingly specific questions about whether and how that generation was learning and identifying with the language. The Baldwin home thus became a natural locus of investigation, as it was one of only a few where *myaamia* was being acquired by children as a first language, and from this the dissertation project arose. While in some ways a report on the six members of the Baldwin family and the researcher as the "seventh participant," the dissertation study became focused on the specific question of how the two younger Baldwin children were learning the Miami language and how several variables, the presence of the linguist uncle (the "researcher") included, guided this process. In this case, though the researcher was already immersed in the perspectives on research held by the larger Miami community, it was nevertheless also a topic of frequent discussion.

From its outset, this study was guided by the collaborative philosophy discussed in this paper. Its design was one in which anybody could articulate goals and ideas, not one in which an expert had an upper hand or the prerogative to overly determine the agenda. While most directly instigated by Leonard as a dissertation project, Baldwin had already been talking about the need to document and better understand what was happening in his home, and this research evolved from those previous interactions. Leonard approached the Miami Tribe of Oklahoma Cultural Preservation Officer, and from this ensued several conversations that also involved Baldwin. Eventually, the three established an understanding that the tribe would assist in research travel funding (a researcher need) and that in exchange, the insights and any products resulting from the study would be put to use in larger Miami language efforts (a community need). The shared vision in the larger project was easy for all to achieve because those most involved in Miami language teaching needed to know whether and how children were learning the language, and the topic also lent itself to a reasonable research project for a PhD dissertation.

3.3.3 SUMMARY. In both the Warm Springs and Miami research contexts, the expertise that framed and was exchanged throughout the studies reflected the various backgrounds of the people involved. Haynes has brought to her projects the technical and theoretical expertise of linguistic research, but has also learned a great deal about conducting research in Warm Springs, endangered language teaching, and technological techniques for language recording and archiving. As a specialist in child language socialization, Leonard shared his working analyses of how the younger Baldwin children were acquiring and understanding the language with their parents. In this way, the actual analysis of the younger children's language development largely came from the "researcher," but the research questions and philosophical underpinnings to the methodology of investigation, as well as specific areas of grammar to investigate, developed through ongoing discussions. Similarly, as a linguist

with specialized knowledge of Miami grammar, Baldwin regularly explained points of Miami grammar to Leonard, and included with those explanations some background as to where his analyses came from and how certain he was about their accuracy.

In both research programs, ideas and concerns have been shared openly, with potential findings discussed regularly among those involved in the studies and projects. Those involved have been active participants in these exchanges, and no one has been considered a "subject." This distinction is an important one, as it is not only ideological but also realized in practice, as shown in the microanalysis below.

3.4 ONE SPECIFIC EXAMPLE OF COLLABORATIVE CONSULTATIONS AND THEIR IMPLICATIONS. The microanalysis presented in this section serves as a continuation of informal conversations that we have been having with language reclamation leaders in both Warm Springs and Oklahoma about issues in linguistic field research. For the purposes of this study, we formalized the process somewhat with structured questions that guided a nonetheless open-ended discussion of what constitutes a good speaker of the three Warm Springs languages and of Miami. We recorded conversations with three people from these communities: Haynes spoke with Myra Johnson, who was then Director of the Warm Springs Language Program; and Leonard spoke with Daryl Baldwin, who is Director of the Myaamia Project at Miami University,[14] and Karen Baldwin, who is a Miami language learner, teacher, and curriculum developer.

Here, we present themes from these two conversations and a discussion of what they imply for academic research. Our purpose is twofold: first, we wish to demonstrate the types of information that can be gained by pursuing collaborative consultation in framing research. Second, we wish to demonstrate that Western assumptions about foundational aspects of linguistic research such as speakerhood may actually vary from culture to culture and person to person, and must therefore form part of the collaboration process among research participants, even when a given individual is both a "researcher" and a "community member." For purposes of illustrating this point, we focus only on Johnson's, Daryl Baldwin's, and Karen Baldwin's portions of the respective conversations. However, the actual discussions were two-sided; our original question structure was expanded and altered by our interlocutors, and their responses were informed to some degree by our questions and comments, which in turn reflect the ongoing back-and-forth relationship of joint inquiry that characterized the larger programs we report on in this paper. The quotations that follow are taken from conversations recorded in late 2006.

3.4.1 REGARDING THE QUESTION OF THE RIGHT TO DETERMINE SPEAKERHOOD. Haynes and Leonard each began the conversations by talking about why we wanted to have

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[14] The Myaamia Project is itself an example of a collaborative program for Miami language and culture research, in this case of collaboration between an academic institution (Miami University) and an indigenous nation (Miami Tribe of Oklahoma). Baldwin's ideas about collaboration, along with those of Leonard and others involved in these efforts, have shaped and been shaped by the project's implementation and development. For more information, see Baldwin & Olds 2007 and http://www.myaamiaproject.org.

a formal, structured conversation in the first place: we wanted to explore some Western assumptions about linguistic fieldwork, determine if those assumptions held true for Warm Springs and Miami cultures, and share these results with a larger audience. We explained that we were specifically concerned with how we perceive researchers' common approach to determining peoples' ability to speak a given language, namely reaching a unilateral decision based on their own experiences and needs. Johnson agreed that linguists should not come to that decision on their own, stating,

> It's strange that we would leave it up to linguists to define who's a fluent speaker. … When I first came to work for the tribes in the language program, the linguists were determining who was fluent. And I thought, in my mind, there's nobody that can determine the fluency of people, other than the people themselves. And it shouldn't be anybody else.

In reference to a more specific scenario in which a linguist would newly encounter a potential consultant, she later noted,

> If [the speakers were] talking broken, then the linguist would say, "Oh, you're not fluent." And I don't think that should be their place. If they speak a broken Native American language, then maybe that's how they learned it, and I think that's justifiable for them, still being fluent. It shouldn't be somebody else's call to say they're not.

Daryl Baldwin, who like Leonard plays the dual role of linguist and Miami community member, expressed his discomfort with coming to a decision about language fluency on his own:

> I just never felt comfortable to think that it was my place to question whether someone was a speaker. If they felt they were a speaker, if they had knowledge to share about that language, then they were a speaker of that language.

Each conversation later evolved into a discussion about what does constitute fluency in a given language, with Haynes and Leonard pointing out some specific methodologies that linguists use, such as age of language acquisition or ability to carry on an extended conversation. Baldwin reacted to these ideas, saying,

> I never really questioned necessarily whether they [potential "speakers"] could hold extended conversation—random conversation—in the language … most important to me is that they knew what they were saying; they were able to explain what they were saying with some cultural context.

Similarly, Johnson questioned the idea that fluency should be determined by a particular testing method, saying, "I don't think there's a real actual written or theoretical or scientific way of saying, 'This is exactly how you speak this language.' …. So I don't think there

would ever come a time when a linguist could say, 'This is all right.'" She also pointed out that childhood learning may not be sufficient to call a person fluent:

> Even if she [a speaker] spoke it as a child, the things you learn later on in life, like learning how to debate, or learning how to do political stances, or learning how to orate, or whatever you want to talk about. She wasn't of the age to learn that type of language, so she didn't become fully fluent. Although in a sense as a child, whatever age level she started learning English, she was fluent for that age group.

When asked then what would constitute fluency, Johnson said,

> If I were to use my personal judgment, it would be based on the fact that someone … who has continually used her language, who grew up with it, who spoke to the elders … in the language, she learned how to orate, or how to talk the language that adults speak, and so I would consider her fully fluent.

Ultimately, she advised linguists to "talk to the people themselves, and have the community people be the ones to call it."

As discussed in Section 3.1, though the field of linguistics has not proposed a satisfactory definition of speakerhood, linguistic researchers nonetheless often take it upon themselves to make that determination in framing most linguistic field studies. While such a decision may indeed be appropriate in some communities, this does not seem to be the case with the Warm Springs or Miami programs. The implication of these statements is that speakerhood may be conceptualized in unique ways depending on cultural norms, and an understanding for determining who is a speaker must be arrived at collaboratively in many cases. The discussions we had with Johnson and Baldwin further problematize the Western status quo, in which definitions are taken to be static and absolute, and methodologies are assumed to be objectively valid. Errington reminds us that (historical) linguistic documentation reports on "enormously different languages, yet a quick perusal shows that they also resemble each other in obvious ways … that can be traced to the fact that each describes an object which falls under a single, common category" (2008:3). Here, Errington speaks about the notion of the language itself and the ways in which the analysis of an outsider's language is located within a space of comparison to those of more familiarity to the researcher. Assuming any given definition of speakerhood, particularly when couched within the expertise of one who is working with people who come from a different group, is just one of a whole host of specific examples that fall within this general pattern. Planning research from a collaborative framework reveals perspectives that are easy to overlook for researchers who are not trained to examine them; multiple ways of knowing (including Western norms) can be explored and incorporated in this way. Overall, this leads to better modes of research, because it does not rely on a single set of assumptions, but rather explores several avenues of thought.

3.4.2 APPROACHING RESEARCH FROM A COLLABORATIVE STANDPOINT. A discussion of determining speakerhood became a natural starting point for discussing research

methods in general. In the two formal conversations discussed here, Johnson and Haynes, and Daryl Baldwin, Karen Baldwin, and Leonard examined the methods that linguists and other researchers should use or avoid when developing a successful research relationship in their respective communities. Johnson said,

> Linguists shouldn't march in. They really need to be able to be quiet, sit and listen and be able to gain the knowledge of the people, and understand them first. … And that doesn't mean that all tribes have the same cultural sensitivities or cultural norms, you know, so it's different in every community.

Daryl Baldwin provided specific examples of relationship development, saying,

> Sitting by the creekbed fishing one Sunday afternoon might reveal important ideas about the way things are in a particular community, which would, I think, make sense later when it comes to documenting or working with a particular group or language. … Linguistics is still very much "get data, bring it back, bluh bluh bluh bluh bluh."

Later in the conversation, he noted on the same topic,

> [Researchers] should set their judgments aside and acknowledge within themselves why they're doing the work in the first place. And if they can go into a community and let whatever level of language and culture exist and be what it is, and give it credibility and … respect whatever the community determines is what they deem to be their language, their culture …

At this point, Karen Baldwin noted, "My theory is, all the time, … to just listen. To just go in and listen and … just pay attention." Her comment speaks to a larger issue of listening to not only what is spoken, but also to what remains unspoken. In some cultural contexts, particular issues may be important but not openly discussed, so "listening" may also include actively observing what is not talked about, and developing culturally appropriate strategies to address these issues.

When asked about the notion of collaborative consultation, and what role it could play in the research process, Daryl Baldwin said,

> It's a good question for the community. [The researcher might initially say,] "This is work I'm interested in. I'm here. What do you want from this work? Or do you …" Maybe they don't know, but it's certainly a question that's worth asking because the simple question alone would, I think, set the stage for more of the equal reciprocal sort of relationship to occur.

Daryl Baldwin's final comment speaks to the need for the instigation of research; somebody has to get it started. Note that in the current study, the authors initiated (and participated in) the discussions of speakerhood and research norms. However, what these discussions reveal is that, whether the initial research instigator is a community member or not, wider

input should always be sought from the entire group of people with interest in the topic. For example, within Miami language and culture research, the norm is to seek out and involve any relevant parties. In Haynes's experience, researchers in Warm Springs are empowered to conduct meaningful research by mutual planning of research projects.

Johnson, Daryl Baldwin, and Karen Baldwin separately agreed that a large part of understanding community norms is in relationship-building through open discussion and listening, as has also been articulated by Harrison (2001). Based on this realization, articulated explicitly by our interlocutors, we have determined that an additional layer is necessary to complete our model of truly collaborative fieldwork. This layer is mutual relationship-building, major tenets of which are time and trust. We illustrate these additions in Figure 5.

FIGURE 5. A Model of Truly Collaborative Fieldwork.

As before, all of the circles in Figure 5 are the same size, illustrating that all parties have equal access to the design of the research project. However, the figure shows that this process is facilitated by the building of mutual trust among the parties over time. Note that the "trust" and "time" arrows go in both directions; not only must the community come to trust the researcher, but the researcher must also come to trust the community, and both parties must devote time (and effort) into building a relationship that allows for mutually open discussions of research. Harrison notes that it is "nearly impossible to design and establish collaborative programs without knowing the community well" (2001:54). Indeed, our particular example of collaborative consultation occurs within the larger context of our long-term relationships. However, we encourage linguists to begin their research relationship with collaborative consultation, as it encourages research integrity and may facilitate a faster transition to trust through the openness it entails.

We do not pretend that true collaboration is an easy model to implement. The continuous negotiations inherent to collaborating with others can be both time-consuming and

emotionally demanding. Depending on the context, collaboration may seem to limit what can be accomplished. However, it is not implausible that members of a given speech community have important insights about their language that may not be immediately clear to the linguistic researcher, but that may be revealed as part of ongoing conversations about a project. Furthermore, a basic tenet of this model is the building of enduring relationships, through which alliances are created that can facilitate long-term research programs. Finally, as discussed above, true collaboration addresses many historic and current ethical issues, which, if left unaddressed, could cause harm to future academic research by creating (or reinforcing) general mistrust.

In this paper, we have demonstrated the use of this model in one initial aspect of the research project, namely determining speakerhood in a language community. Though we do not suggest that the specific ideas articulated by Johnson, Daryl Baldwin, or Karen Baldwin about speakerhood should serve as a definition in other communities or linguistic research projects, we do maintain that such a conversation is necessary to reveal possible cultural and social differences in the conception of some of the most basic elements to linguistic research. What is also crucial is that the researcher enter equally into conversations on these sorts of assumptions, perhaps, for the case of identifying speakers, providing their linguistic expertise about what it means to speak a language, and articulating their needs for a particular type of speaker for a given project (e.g., someone who tells stories well).

4. BROADER IMPLICATIONS AND CONCLUSIONS. Through our experiences working in the Warm Springs and Miami communities, and through both formal and informal discussions with language leaders in these communities, the following broad implications for linguistic field researchers have emerged:

- First, independent of who initiates research, collaboration should occur from the beginning stages of research and should entail equal agency from all parties in the research process. Research definitions and assumptions, methodologies, goals, and expected outcomes should all be part of this discussion, and may or may not resemble prescribed agendas by the research community or the language community.

- True collaboration entails "sharing knowledge" (i.e., what we have referred to as "expertise"), not "sharing information" (i.e., results) (Smith 1999:16) from the earliest stages of research.

- Some research, especially long-term fieldwork, calls for a broad interpretation of the Belmont "Respect for Persons" principle rather than a traditional, narrow interpretation. Under this broad interpretation, "subjects" have the right to determine what will happen to them, not simply by signing a predetermined consent form, but by being party to the research process from the beginning.

In practice, "collaboration" is multifaceted and fluctuates based on the field of research, the people involved, and their particular communities of practice. Collaboration is a philosophy and approach rather than a set of guidelines about research roles and out-

comes. We recognize that the researcher's community of practice may make the process of collaboration difficult, given the practical restrictions of academic research—particularly timelines and expectations for productivity as established by research institutions. Therefore, a reanalysis of what are considered best practices in academia are needed. We call for a shift in the way research is approached so that collaborative consultation is itself a best practice, where funding, credentials, and academic advancement are framed accordingly. Indeed, while we advocate the use of collaborative consultation as a field research device, it may also be an essential tool for collaboration among linguists (and researchers from other fields) as we continuously refine and define best practices in data collection and analysis.

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