Researching multilingually, collaboratively, responsively

Insights and challenges in decolonising linguistic ethnography

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24th September 2020, Explorations in Ethnography Language and Communication 8

@bringing_in

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Outline

- Our project
- Need for the principles
- 3 principles for linguistic ethnography
- Principles in practice
- Reflections

Project

Bringing the outside in: Merging local language and literacy practices to enhance classroom learning and achievement

Global Challenges Research Fund project
May 2019-Aug 2021

AIM: To examine the ways in which multilingual practices can be harnessed to enhance experiences of education

The team

University of Essex

Nancy Kula

Tracey Costley

Hannah Gibson

Colin Reilly (Postdoc)

- **Botswana**

Mompoloki Bagwasi

Dikosha Dikosha (RA)

Phetsha Mmolao (RA)

- **Tanzania**

Gastor Mapunda

Edna James (RA)

Hassan Dasi (RA)

- **Zambia**

Joseph Mwansa

Martha Mwanda (RA)

Chileshe Mwansa RA)

Need for the principles

Linguistic ethnography is a useful tool for investigating language use

"the study of multilingualism in institutional settings needs to be carried out from an ethnographic perspective" (Unamuno 2014, p413)

Need for the principles

"One of the most unfortunate effects of the current 'silence' about language-related matters in ethnographic research is to leave intending multilingual fieldworkers with little guidance specifically towards their needs" (Gibb, Tremlett & Danero Iglesias 2019, p65).

"heightened methodological reflexivity as the only way of responding to the inevitably very diverse ways in which linguistic ethnography gets appropriated" (Rampton, Maybin and Roberts 2014)

Need for the principles

Multilingualism is often the object of study

There has to be increased engagement with how multilingualism affects the process of *doing* linguistic ethnography

Principles for linguistic ethnography

Principles for linguistic ethnography

1) **Researching multilingually**

- By researching multilingually we are not restricting ourselves to using particular languages when we are collecting data, analysing data, discussing and sharing data.

- We are actively encouraging the use of languages other than English and, where appropriate, putting English last.

- When researching multilingually we will not always understand everything that is happening within the research. This can be uncomfortable and may sometimes be strange but it is okay.

Principles for linguistic ethnography

2) Researching collaboratively

- By researching collaboratively we recognise that ethnographic work is not individual but is a group effort.

- Our collaborators include other members of our research team, our participants and the community more broadly.

- Through working collaboratively we are able to obtain a deeper understanding of the contexts we are researching.

Principles for linguistic ethnography

3) Researching responsively

- By researching responsively we are not restrained by a strict set of research practices.

- We can be flexible and adapt to the context that we are working in. We can explore topics which arise during the research and which are of interest to us and to our collaborators.

- We are also be aware that our research might not always go to plan and we are able to be flexible in our approach.

Guiding questions for realising the principles in practice

- Who is involved in this research and how will they be invited/encouraged to contribute to the research process?

- How will collaborators navigate the complex power dynamics within the research? Who has access to (and controls access to) resources, knowledge?

- Practically, how will collaborators communicate (at different levels) throughout the research?

- What is the range of language that is likely to be needed in the research context? How will these needs be met, with whom?

- What does data look like – what is the most beneficial data for everyone involved?

- What will the outputs be? Who will they be for?

The principles in practice for us

- Provide guiding principles that everyone on the team adopts

- Underlies how we conduct our research and work together

- Consistency across the team

- Allow tensions to be discussed

Communication

Whole team

Colin will send out fortnightly emails to the whole team providing updates on progress, reminders of deadlines, information regarding resources, conferences etc.

Essex team and all project CO-Is to have a Skype meeting every 6-8 weeks throughout the project.

Main communication: Email, WhatsApp, Skype

Essex team

The Essex team will meet weekly to discuss progress on the project. Colin will provide updates from Country Leads at these weekly meetings.

Africa teams

RAs and CPs should report directly to their respective Country Leads. Country Leads should then provide updates to Colin/Nancy.

Country Leads should coordinate with RAs/CPs to arrange regular updates as is appropriate/feasible. Country Leads should send Colin fortnightly updates on progress.

Country Leads should be RAs/CPs first point of contact regarding country-specific updates/queries. For any broader project related/methodology queries RAs can also contact Colin, copying in their Country Lead. For any potentially sensitive issues, Colin will discuss with the Country Lead before responding to RA.

Each Country Lead should communicate with RAs/CPs as is most appropriate and also create a country project WhatsApp group which includes Colin.

Main communication: Email, WhatsApp, Phone

Research Assistant team

A peer support group for all of the project RAs will be created. This is for informal support and so that the RAs have a sense of the wider context of the project. Colin will ensure that anything important raised within the RA group has also been raised with respective Country Leads.

Main communication: WhatsApp
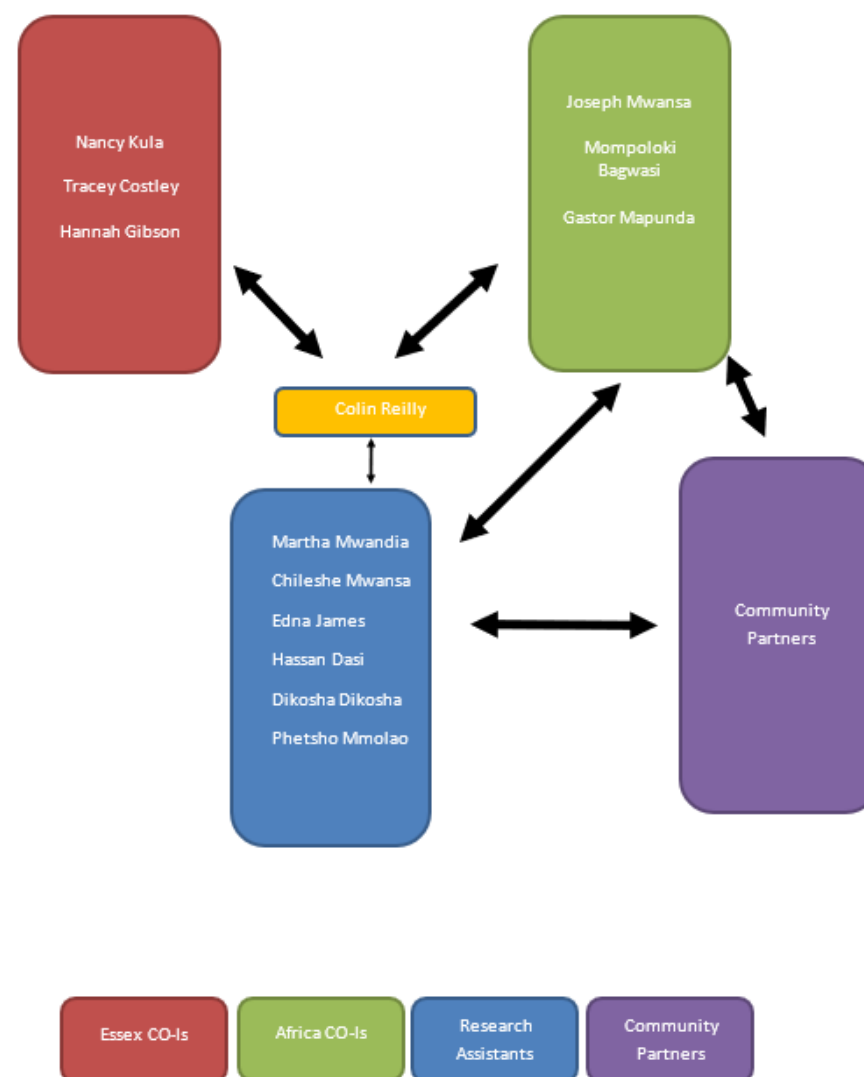
Research Assistant Induction

- Collaboratively designed

- Facilitated by Colin and Country Lead (Joseph, Gastor, Mompoloki)

- Multilingual

- Flexible

Research Assistant Handbook

UKULEETA IFYAPANSE MUKATI: MERGING LOCAL LANGUAGE
AND LITERACY PRACTICES TO ENHANCE CLASSROOM
LEARNING AND ACHIEVEMENT

Research Assistant Induction Agenda

University of Dar es Salaam 23rd-24th February 2020

Day 1

0900-0930: Introduction to the project

0930-1000: Roles, responsibilities and communication

1000-1030: Introduction to ethnography

1030-1100: Principles of ethnography

1100-1130: Preparing for ethnography

1130-1300: Doing ethnography

1300-1400: Lunch

1400-1430: Sharing ethnography

1430-1500: Reflections

Day 2

0900-0930: Reflecting on fieldnotes

0930-1100: Analysis

1100-1200: Engaging with research subjects

1200-1300: Lunch

1300-1330: Data management plan

1330-1400: Transcription protocol

1400-1430: Key concepts

1430-1500: Summary, reflections and equipment set up

* This was ==comprehensive one== collecting data because it involves the presence of the researcher in the area also several ways of data collection. As seen in all activities done day <u>one</u> it enables the RA to do detailed observation, and note down every data including participants' experiences during and after schooling

* ==Difficulties== : Wanaoshirika usipowataarifu ==wanasita kukupa ushirikiano== hana kueleweki vruri so unakua umewa- ==ambush — intruder.==

* It was easy for me to take photos also observation simply because hakuna mtu anayeuliza unafanya nini hapo ulipo and for what purpose. At the university students are busy with exams don't bother you.

Hassan

> **Martha**
>
> In terms of language use in school. Most of the children were using Namwanga whenever playing,asking for things and for clarification instead of Icibemba which is the regional language in Nakonde

Help me to understand something here. Icebemba is the regional language and Namwanga is the common language in Nakonde. Who dictates a regional language in your place? How many regional languages do you have in Zambia? I want compare it with our case in Tanzania where we have Kiswahili as a National language and several other languages in respective places.

06:28

Martha

> **Hassan**
>
> Help me to understand something here. Icebemba is the regional language and Namwanga is the common language in Nakonde. Who dictates a regional language in your place? How many regional languages do you have in Zambia? ...

Good morning Hassan. You're right Nakonde is in Muchinga Province this is a province with people speaking different languages such as Namwanga,nyika,lambya,tumbuka in some areas mambwe. But the government has given this region Icibemba as a language of classroom instructions. Meaning all the children speak different languages at home but when they go to school they learn in Icibemba which is the regional language

07:59

Type a message

Reflections

Keeping the whole team connected and collaborating

Different institutional processes

Working ethnographically is challenging and takes practice

Positions of language within academia

Communication is central

The decolonisation of linguistic ethnography

De-centering the positions of those involved in linguistic ethnography work mean beginning to critically question how all collaborators fit into the whole research process.

The decolonisation of linguistic ethnography

Collaboration as first step

Epistemological challenges

Twataizya

Kuusa munumunu

Twatotela nganshi

Nasanta mwane

Malo 'aupito

Ke a lebonga

Taboka

Asanteni sana

Twalumba

Zikomo kwambili

Litumezi

Msengwili

Bhabheja