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Language documentation and local ecological knowledge: Interdisciplinary approaches

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Language documentation is, by its very nature and ideals, an inclusive undertaking. With its overarching goal to create a comprehensive record of a language that is lasting and multipurpose (Himmelman 2006: 1), it is predestined for interdisciplinary collaborations (see also Evans 2011). In this workshop, we are particularly interested in collaborations between field linguists, anthropologists, and biologists who work together to document local ecological knowledge. It has often pointed out that a community's ecological environment, (traditional) lifestyle, and language are closely intertwined, and that endangerment and change of the first, leads to loss of the latter. That is, the decrease of culturally important species from a community's traditional lands may mean that those organisms and their cultural associations are no longer used or talked about, which in turn may lead to a loss of traditional ecological knowledge and the language associated with it (cf., e.g., Tang & Gavin 2016). However, as pointed out by Si (2020), the exact nature of the interrelation between these different areas of endangerment is often not made explicit, and in order to make more robust cross-cultural and cross-regional generalisations in this regard, more case studies from different parts of the world are needed (cf. also Maffi 2007). However, an accurate documentation of traditional ecological knowledge, cultural practices, and associated language requires expertise in biology, anthropology, and linguistics (cf. McClatchey 2011, Martin 2004). Ground-breaking studies, such as Berlin et al.'s (1974) *Principles of Tzeltal Plant Classification*, have shown how an appreciation of linguistic precision and scientific empiricism can result in research outputs that are of value to both academics and the target language community. More recently, comparative lexicosemantic projects such as the four-volume *Lexicon of Proto-Oceanic* (Ross et al., 2008), the *Kalam dictionary* (of a Papua New Guinea language) by Pawley & Bulmer (2011) or the *Encyclopédie des Pygmées Aka*, resulting from decades of research in Central Africa by Thomas et al. (2019) have revealed, from a human view point, biological worlds that have either disappeared, or are in danger of vanishing.

The aim of this workshop is to reflect on how interdisciplinary collaborations between linguistics, anthropologists and biologists can lead to meaningful and lasting outcomes as well as to create an opportunity to exchange on innovative research methods and best practices for research on local ecological knowledge in remote communities, especially in the context of rapid linguistic, cultural and ecological changes. While this workshop primarily addresses documentary linguists who have called on biologists, we would also be interested to hear of biologists that sought collaborations with linguists and anthropologists to gain better insights into local biological knowledge and conceptualisations (cf. Roué et al. 2015).

We invite abstracts related, but not restricted, to the following topics:

- Best-practice models for collecting, accessing and utilizing varied ethnobiological and associated ethnolinguistic data
- Testimonials and critical reports about successful collaborations between linguists, anthropologists and biologists
- Case studies of ethnobiology and child language socialization

- Case studies on how language loss correlates with loss of ethnobiological knowledge
- Case studies on ethnoclassification/ folk taxonomies and on specific domains of the ethnobiological lexicon, resulting from interdisciplinary collaborations

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