Field stations for linguistic research: A blueprint of a sustainable model

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COMMENTARY

Field stations for linguistic research: A blueprint of a sustainable model

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There are often practical barriers to doing fieldwork in a novel, remote location. I propose a model for linguistic research designed to overcome such barriers: a linguistic field station. It is a centralized facility that coordinates scientific research by providing (i) research infrastructure, (ii) access to specific social, biological, or ecological systems that are not immediately available otherwise, (iii) training for students at the graduate and undergraduate levels, and (iv) access to local communities with the goal of obtaining data from them as well as training local specialists. Field stations are particularly important for research on and documentation of Indigenous languages, including contexts where colonial languages are supplanting Indigenous ones. Although the field station model is not new in research outside of language sciences, it has not yet been utilized widely in language research. I describe how the proposed model has been implemented in Guatemala and compare the field station there with other linguistic field stations.*

Keywords: fieldwork, linguistic field station, training in language sciences, language documentation

1. INTRODUCTION. Linguistic fieldwork is a research methodology designed for studying a language that the linguist does not speak natively. This research is typically conducted through the collection of primary language data, gathered in structured interactions with native-speaking consultants. Although this description does not say anything about 'rugged terrain' or a 'remote and exotic' location, people often associate fieldwork with those kinds of realities. For some, working on an emerging German dialect in Berlin counts less as fieldwork than studying a heretofore unknown language in Papua New Guinea. Right or wrong, this perception persists in our field, alongside the image of a fieldworker as a seasoned and undemanding traveler whose features have been weathered under the sun, who can eat anything, who can live in a primitive setting, and who thrives on all of these challenges in order to produce new data.

Practical considerations surrounding fieldwork may be formidable, and sometimes it is impossible to anticipate them all. For this reason, it is not uncommon for someone to have a good idea for a project—such as studying glottalization in two languages under contact—but lack an understanding of where to begin.

One way to do fieldwork is for a researcher to find a consultant who speaks a particular language and lives in the same area they do. I refer to this as FIELDWORK IN MY OWN BACKYARD (FIMBY). FIMBY is a valuable and convenient arrangement; the researcher does not have to disrupt their own regular routine, and the interaction with a native-speaker consultant can be protracted, fitting into the rest of the linguist's schedule. Critics, though, are quick to point out the limitations of such an approach: working with a speaker who is separated from their own speech community, 'tainting' of the data by excessive bilingualism, and working with very few speakers, sometimes even just one. These considerations notwithstanding, many successful projects have been conducted this way. Do they count as fieldwork? Yes, of course, because they fit the origi-

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nal description: that of research conducted on a language that the linguist does not speak natively, through the collection of primary language data gathered in structured interactions with native-speaking consultants (see Hyman 2001 for an excellent discussion of what counts as fieldwork and how good fieldwork should be done).

Certain questions may be impossible to address in FIMBY, however. For instance, if the goal of research is to determine register variation, to study monolingual speakers, or to investigate L1 acquisition of a given language, FIMBY may be unable to provide the necessary empirical data. The researcher must instead go to the area where the language of their study is spoken and conduct FIELDWORK IN SITU (FIS). This is where practical considerations may become daunting, to the point that one does not even want to consider FIS. The first practical consideration has to do with the language of contact: the language in which the linguist and the consultant are going to interact. FIS can be done either in the language that needs to be studied—in which case the fieldwork may take a while, since the researcher needs time to attain at least a passable speaking ability in the object of their study—or using some other language as the language of contact, for example, French in parts of Africa, Tok Pisin in some Pacific Islands, Mandarin in China, or Spanish in Central and Latin America.[1] Assuming the issue of the language of contact is solved, we are ready to face other practical concerns.

As everyone who has done work in Indigenous communities knows, the researcher's first few weeks (or months) are spent building connections on the ground, finding speakers to work with, and proving that their intentions are serious. In places where they are rare, foreigners can be viewed with suspicion and may be accepted only superficially. In some communities, there are additional layers of difficulty that have to do with getting permission to work from an elder, a community leader, or a community organization. Without knowing the community, it can be easy to commit blunders by assuming, for example, that everyone in that community talks to each other and that there are no rivalries in the group. As a result, the researcher may upset future consultants and become isolated from the community even before FIS has started. Even when local connections are established, it takes time to prove to the locals that a researcher is looking for more than just a single hour of work filling out a questionnaire.

The Linguistic Society of America captures these difficulties well in their 'Ethics statement', describing how time, tact, and talent are required for an outsider to understand how the sharing of linguistic and cultural knowledge is perceived in a given community:[2]

> In many communities, responsibility for linguistic and cultural knowledge is viewed as corporate, so that individual community members are not in a position to consent to share materials with outsiders, and linguists must try to determine whether there are individuals who can legitimately represent the community in working out the terms of research. Some communities regard language, oral literature, and other forms of cultural knowledge as valuable intellectual property whose ownership should be respected by outsiders; in such cases linguists should comply with community wishes regarding access, archiving, and distribution of results. Other communities are eager to share their knowledge in the context of a long-term relationship of reciprocity and exchange. In all cases where the community has an investment in language research, the aims of an investigation should be clearly discussed with the community and community involvement sought from the earliest stages of project planning.

[1] One could argue that using a language of contact for fieldwork may not be much different from doing FIMBY, but in fact the differences are real. In many countries, speakers are bi- or multilingual, but they are still surrounded by the speech community of the language under investigation, whereas in FIMBY a potentially isolated speaker of a given language has much less opportunity to speak that language.

[2] http://www.linguisticsociety.org/files/Ethics_Statement.pdf, accessed December 21, 2018

In addition to interactions with speakers, logistical problems may include: finding a reasonable, accessible, and safe place to stay, finding a place to work, procuring food, or knowing where to go in emergency situations. Even if FIS is done bilingually, via a language that is not the one being studied, it is desirable to learn (at least to some degree) the language under investigation, and this cannot be achieved by the researcher spending just a couple of hours a day with a consultant.

Fieldwork is not for everyone. Being the only outsider in a local community can be difficult and uncomfortable. Some people may feel homesick or insufficiently safe, and if the connection to the outside world is limited due to poor phone service or internet connections, feelings of isolation may become even stronger.

All of these issues (I have only scratched the surface in describing them here) fall under the rubric of infrastructure, and they can be a major deterrent from conducting FIS. Is there a solution that is not ad hoc? I contend that the answer is yes: a linguistic field station.

2. A LINGUISTIC FIELD STATION. A field station is an effective way of solving the infrastructural issues discussed in the previous section and of overcoming other potential difficulties. A field station is a centralized facility that coordinates scientific research on particular projects by providing (i) research infrastructure, (ii) access to specific social, biological, or ecological systems that are not immediately available to researchers from different universities, and (iii) access to local communities with the goal of obtaining data as well as training local specialists in a given field. Thus, the mission of a field station is to promote research, education, and public service in global science, interdisciplinary research, sustainable development, and community involvement. In 2019, the Year of Indigenous Languages, it is also worth noting that field stations can facilitate research on and documentation of Indigenous languages—especially in situations where such languages are being supplanted by other dominant languages.

The general notion of a field station is certainly not new; field stations are popular in the natural sciences and have proven to be effective in promoting in-situ research in all kinds of disciplines, from agriculture to marine biology. Surprisingly, however, linguistic field stations are not common, despite the fact that the overhead for field station research—in the humanities and the social sciences generally and in linguistic research in particular—is much smaller than it is in natural sciences. Unlike natural sciences, where one needs lab space and storage space for expensive equipment, linguistic research is extraordinarily low-cost. Except in certain kinds of research such as neuroimaging, ultrasound imaging, eye-tracking, and so forth, expensive equipment is not needed, and lab space is not required. Furthermore, research benefits are substantial, and they extend well beyond linguistic theory.

The utility of a linguistic field station lies in the fact that it allows a researcher to hit the ground running in a new location without having to spend a significant amount of time on logistics. The infrastructure offered by a field station takes care of most logistical requirements; a researcher thus does not need to worry about transportation, lodging, or access to the community, meaning that their first day on location is really their first day of research. In addition, a field station is equally important as a place where graduate and undergraduate students can be trained in conducting research. Because this is real research, different from what can be done in a campus classroom, it is particularly valuable, and it allows the students to prepare for many different situations in their future work. Further still, fieldwork training at a field station frees up time during the academic year, so students can take more classes in linguistic theory or other disciplines. And for those

students who come from schools that do not offer linguistic field methods classes, participation in field station activities fills a gap in their academic preparation.

For a field station to be successful, it should include full-time staff responsible for maintaining the local infrastructure, scientific operations, administration, and outreach. Staff members serve as the main liaison between the local community and the visiting researchers, and some members of the full-time staff should be familiar with the organization and management of research and educational units in North America and Western Europe—where the majority of visitors come from.

As with any long-term project (and a field station's success is tightly connected to its longevity), funding is an issue that needs to be considered before the project is started. Budgets vary from location to location, of course, but the funding categories are relatively consistent. They include (i) funding for one or more initial trips to the location, to determine mutual interest and commitment (I refer to these as SCOUTING TRIPS), (ii) funding for the initial setup, and (iii) funding for the ongoing management of the field station. The latter category includes pay for local staff members, local facilities, the general operating budget of the field station, and staff time at the university with which the field station is affiliated.[3] Categories (i) and (ii) constitute the initial investment (seed funding) that is necessary to start the operations of the field station. As for ongoing funding (category (iii)), these resources should come from grants and user fees, which would make the proposed field station(s) self-sustaining. Student training is also crucial to a field station's fiscal design, as it will allow for more funding, since most grants involve students and training in some capacity. In §3, I illustrate the funding structure of the Guatemala Field Station in order to illustrate categories (i) through (iii) more concretely.

So far, nothing in the description of this concept has been specific to language sciences, and indeed, a field station does not have to be solely dedicated to linguistic research but can serve different disciplines as well. But for linguistic research at a field station to be successful, three components are important: language immersion classes, living with host families, and seminar-style group meetings.

First, researchers should begin their work with an intensive class on the language under investigation. For many languages, there are trained instructors (usually native speakers) who can conduct immersion-style language classes for newcomers. For other languages, instructors can be trained using existing immersion methods for less commonly taught languages. Language immersion is particularly important for researchers who are just starting to work on a language, during their first trip on location. Not only will immersion allow them to use that language for practical purposes, but it also will give them preliminary insights into its structure or usage—something they can build upon in their research.[4] It is both a blessing and a curse that linguists are always 'on call'. In other words, linguists never shut down their linguistic radar, so language data coming in during an immersion class can feed their research questions.

The second component that is valuable to a language scientist is living with a local family, if possible. This allows a researcher to have even more access to the language

[3] Staff time is needed for the remote fiscal and organizational administration at the university or research institution. In a well-run field station, such staff time can be rather minimal, maybe half of an administrative position.

[4] A language class does not have to be for linguists alone; for instance, researchers and volunteers working at a local NGO may also benefit from such classes, because they need some knowledge of the language in order to conduct their work. And having nonlinguists in a language class adds the healthy element of seeing the same facts through a different lens.

under investigation as it provides opportunities to observe language use and linguistic practices outside of the classroom setting. It also builds connections and trust with the local community, enabling the locals to better understand the seemingly esoteric nature of linguistic work. On some occasions, there may even be room for local community members to be trained in language research, something that may not otherwise be available to them. This latter point is important because it underscores the reciprocal nature of field research, in linguistics and beyond: the researcher and the community both benefit from engaging in it. Furthermore, since host families are compensated for hosting outsiders, they are provided with an additional source of income.

The third component of linguistic field station research involves working in groups. The stereotype of a seasoned fieldworker often includes the idea of going at it alone, but that is neither necessary nor important. The days of David Livingstone do not have to be relived. Researchers who choose to work at a field station can set the parameters of their own project but should be encouraged to tap into resources offered by the local community and to use their field station projects as a way to promote interdisciplinary cooperation. This could be realized by combining field-based linguistic research with research training in a given academic discipline—for example, speech and hearing or education. Additionally, since living with a host family allows a researcher to get to know members of the speech community on a personal level, which can lead to insights on language attitudes, the history of the community, and other aspects of FIS that can further inform their work in a broader sense, field stations can be an ideal place for visits from research groups working on a topic of their choosing. The size of the group may vary, but it is important that such a group includes specialists in different subdisciplines as well as researchers at various stages in their careers, from undergraduate students to more senior academics. Such groups allow researchers from different institutions to meet on location, and the field station can serve as an idea incubator for future projects.

It is efficient to bring a group of researchers to a field station at the same time. In such situations, the third component of FIS involves the principles applied in lab management. These principles deal with conducting and sharing research across a group of people unified by a similar vision but varying in their expertise, interests, and immediate goals. In the context of a field station, the researchers in a group would all start together in an immersion class, live with different families, work with a number of consultants on a rotating basis, and meet regularly. The group will inevitably include both those who have more experience and those who are just starting out—a concept familiar from a lab setup where everyone, from the primary investigator to the beginning research assistant, has a common vision and shared goals, and is accustomed to lab meetings with intensive feedback. Bringing this lab setup to FIS is not difficult. It requires the same skills that are needed in lab management: planning research and keeping an eye on the big picture; keeping researchers organized and connected through research meetings (think LAB meetings); helping people grow in their work, often by pairing more experienced people with those who are just starting out; taking care of daily organizational issues; and relaxing and having fun as a group. As researchers begin working on individual projects, connections within and across projects may start to emerge. An effective research leader can strengthen these connections—and enhance the work—by bringing the connections up in research meetings. Regular meetings with the whole group keep researchers informed of developments in individual projects, and they are an ideal forum for brainstorming and troubleshooting. In a lab, lab meetings tend to take place once a week, or even less frequently. In the field, where time is compressed, it is important to have frequent meetings at a dedicated meeting time.

In closing, let me underscore that immersion-style classes, living with host families, and seminar-style group meetings are excellent practices that should be encouraged in fieldwork. These are generally good fieldwork practices (see Kibrik 1977, Crowley 2007, Bowern 2008) and are not exclusive to a field station—they can be, and often are, part of fieldwork that is conducted on other models. However, the field station model makes these practices much easier to achieve, institutionalizing them as part of linguistic training.

3. Proof of concept: the guatemala field station. In §2, I described the basic principles of a field station, where the mission is to support linguistic research. But can these principles be transformed into reality? The answer is yes, and in this section I describe the Guatemala Field Station (GFS), which was founded in 2015. The GFS constitutes the desired proof of concept and can be used as a template for future field stations worldwide. I first discuss the fundamentals of establishing this field station in that particular part of the world and then elaborate on the details of the GFS's operation.

3.1. Why guatemala? For any field station, there are typically specific reasons why a particular location is favored. Though not all-encompassing, the reasons presented here are compelling. The first has to do with the large number of Indigenous languages spoken in Guatemala, from Mayan languages to the isolates Xinka and Garifuna. Guatemala is a linguistically lively scene and can thus serve as a testbed for a number of linguistic studies. (The choice of a multilingual area is neither necessary nor sufficient for selecting a field station site, but it can be a factor in at least some field station models.)

Ethnologue (Eberhard et al. 2019) lists twenty-seven languages spoken in Guatemala, but this number is quite conservative, since related languages are sometimes counted as dialects. At least nine local languages (all of them Mayan) are used in education and official communications, albeit on a limited basis. Furthermore, a number of Guatemalan languages have already been studied (for a recent overview of Mayan languages, see Aissen et al. 2017), which means that new researchers can build on existing scholarship while also updating that scholarship in a meaningful way. Additionally, a number of Guatemalan languages have featured prominently in modern theoretical work, from the analysis of glottalization to studies of agreement or ergativity to the semantics of modals (Bennett et al. 2016), which adds value to the ongoing study of these languages.

The second factor that determined the choice of Guatemala for the field station has to do with the desire of local communities to interact with researchers and students from the outside and at the same time to promote training in languages of the area. Guatemala is well known for its strong tradition of Indigenous activism (Warren 1999). This activism, which has grown stronger in collaboration with a number of NGOs long present in Guatemala, has now entered a new stage: helping preserve local languages and cultures, with the goal of training local experts. As a sign of changing times, Guatemala has recently experienced a major resurgence in Indigenous language advocacy, with bilingual Mayan primary-school education now a legal mandate (Maxwell 2009, Greebon 2011). In choosing Guatemala as the location for the field station, we were certain that we could work with the local communities in a meaningful way, promoting sustainable collaboration between outsiders and locals. Both foreign students and local community members thus receive important training in language study and linguistic work of all kinds: language documentation, experimental work, applied linguistics, and linguistic theory, to name just a few. This commitment to collaboration in training and research is an important consideration—one that makes a field station all the more successful and helps move this work away from the undesirable 'colonial model', where researchers, who think that

they know better, come in with their own set of plans and merely pay lip service to collaboration with the community.

The GFS has thus far addressed the goal of community engagement in a number of ways. First, speakers of several Mayan languages have been offered training in the methodology of language instruction at the elementary- and middle-school levels. Such training is necessary because, despite the seemingly large number of speakers, Indigenous languages are quickly fading away in Guatemala due to the rising influence of Spanish. In another manifestation of community involvement, several ongoing projects at the GFS include the on-site training of native-speaker linguists in the collection, documentation, and analysis of language data from adults and children. This training allows native-speaker linguists—who may have had fewer educational opportunities than Western linguists—to study corpus linguistics, L1 acquisition, and linguistic analysis, as well as learn the technical tools of modern linguistic research (e.g. Praat, ELAN, R). Incoming researchers who work at the GFS are encouraged to present their work to local audiences, and such presentations at the Universidad del Valle de Guatemala (where many Indigenous students receive their education) have become a regular event. Finally, several local researchers are involved in ongoing collaborations with visitors (e.g. Burukina & Majzul 2018, Mateo Pedro et al. 2018, Mateo Pedro, Polinsky, & Solis 2019).

So far, I have mainly discussed the work in language sciences proper done by local experts and outsiders, but the collaborations go in other directions as well. The GFS enjoys a strong partnership with the NGO Wuqu Kawoq (Maya Health Alliance, located in Tecpán, Guatemala), whose goal is to promote healthcare in disadvantaged Indigenous communities with an emphasis on bringing information, goods, and services to these communities in their own language, rather than Spanish. By working with Wuqu Kawoq, the GFS has been able to promote language courses (so far in Kaqchikel, the main Mayan language of the area where the GFS is headquartered) and develop joint projects on language, such as the use of language among young children as a measure of their growth and development. Another NGO that partners with the GFS is Renacimiento. Located in Patzún, Guatemala, their overarching goals include support for Indigenous children and youth in health and education.

A third factor in choosing Guatemala for a field station has to do with its accessibility and safety. Accessibility is always relative; it depends on where researchers are coming from. Certainly, Central America is quite accessible to researchers from North America, but it is easily reachable from Europe as well. Transportation from Guatemala City (the capital and the location of the main airport) is relatively easy, and from there it takes about two hours to reach the GFS, which is located in Chimaltenango. It is advisable to hire transportation from the airport rather than use the public bus service (the so-called 'chicken bus'), and such transportation is easy to arrange, reasonably priced, and reliable. As with the host families, using prearranged transportation offers local providers much-needed extra income.

To summarize, the main reasons for setting up a field station in Guatemala had to do with its dazzling linguistic diversity, strong interest from the local community in collaborating, excellent training opportunities for graduate and undergraduate students, who are a constant presence at the GFS, possibilities to train local experts, connections to existing NGOs, relative accessibility, and the safety of the area.

3.2. Inside the GFS: organizational structure. The GFS is currently affiliated with the University of Maryland (UMD), and several faculty members of the UMD Linguistics Department and UMD's Language Science Center are part of the GFS. One of the faculty members serves as Director of the Field Station. Membership can change

depending on researchers' interests. The US partner is in charge of the website representation of the field station, and GFS faculty regularly present its activities and future plans at professional meetings.

The executive director of the GFS, who serves as its director on the ground, is a linguist who was trained in the United States: Dr. Pedro Mateo Pedro, an expert in child language acquisition who has worked on a number of languages of the area and is a native speaker of Q'anjob'al (see e.g. Mateo Pedro 2015, his work on the acquisition of verbal inflection in Q'anjob'al). Year-round, Dr. Mateo Pedro dedicates 60% of his time to running the GFS, bringing a unique combination of experience to the table, including a profound understanding of the structure of research in North America and Western Europe and firsthand knowledge of the local exigencies in Guatemala. Throughout the year, Dr. Mateo Pedro vets, approves, and plans GFS activities; evaluates applications for work at the GFS, which I discuss below; promotes the field station within Guatemala; and supervises the training of local experts. During guest visits to the GFS, his duties also include supervising the research of more junior scholars and providing advice and logistical counsel to more advanced visitors.

The field station includes a local ethical review board (also known as Institutional Review Board, IRB), staffed by local academics and community leaders—something that had not previously been done in other Central America-focused research. The inclusion of the local IRB allows scholars to demonstrate ethical review of their projects locally while drawing members of Guatemalan communities into the field station through participation in reviewing projects. Some projects, including group projects, are also supported by the IRB at the UMD, but the relevant US protocols are reviewed and stored at the GFS.

In §2, I talked broadly about the costs associated with the work of a linguistic field station. In the case of the GFS, the scouting-out period spread over several years, and seed money included several trips by American researchers to the highlands of Guatemala, as well as Dr. Mateo Pedro's trips to the US. The GFS does not have a dedicated office building, nor does it seem to need one, and that helped minimize the initial costs. At the current stage of the GFS's existence, its largest expenses have to do with the costs of personnel on the ground and some administrative staff at UMD who help with the operation of the field station.

The payment structure of the GFS is designed to balance the needs of outside researchers, the needs of the local communities, and the need to make the GFS sustainable on a long-term basis. Each researcher is asked to pay a fee, which is broken down into several components: a user fee for the use of the GFS services and facilities in situ; payment to a host family, which provides them with a room, facilities, and meals; consultant payments, based on hourly estimates; local transportation; and, optionally, payments for weekend sightseeing and excursions.

3.3. Visiting the GFS. As a prerequisite for visiting the GFS, researchers are asked to submit a short research proposal explaining the main issues they want to investigate and outlining their needs. It is helpful to think of such a proposal as a blend of a conference abstract and a funding application. It has to state the main problems one is planning to explore, situating these problems within existing scholarship and explaining the significance of potential results. The researcher is also asked to identify the main steps and primary needs in their proposed work; for example, they can state that they need to work with at least three consultants speaking a particular dialect of a given language. The motivation behind this application structure is twofold. First, the applicant is required to think through the whys and hows of their project. Second, by outlining their

needs, the applicant helps the GFS staff prepare for their visit most effectively. Each proposal is evaluated by the linguistic staff of the GFS at UMD and by the executive director of the GFS. Successful proposals may go through several iterations where GFS faculty members make suggestions for modification or improvement. It is impossible to anticipate every step, but thinking through a research proposal helps minimize the unanticipated.

As previously described in more general terms (see §2), visitors are exposed to local languages via immersion classes and contact with host families. So far, most visitors to the GFS have received two-week-long immersion instruction in Kaqchikel, one of the largest Indigenous languages of Guatemala. The classes are given by several native-speaker instructors who have expertise in the immersion method. During the first two weeks of the visitors' stay, these classes run daily from morning to dusk, and they have been remarkably effective. In addition to training visiting linguists, Kaqchikel classes train volunteers for the partnering NGOs, as well as local activists who would like to learn language-teaching methodology or one of the languages that they do not speak. However, classes alone would be less effective if visitors did not also stay with local families. Through the host families, guests are exposed to the language and culture all the time, which helps tremendously with their research.

Along with immersion classes, researchers gather at the field station for regular group meetings to discuss their ongoing work and exchange data and ideas. This is the lab-meeting model I described above. The meetings bring together researchers who are at different stages of their careers, serving as effective idea incubators for people working in the field. To reiterate, this model of meetings and exchanges is not unique to the GFS, but the field station is designed to institutionalize the meetings and make interactions between researchers easier and more productive.

As of the writing of this piece, the GFS is in its fifth year of existence. Throughout this time, it has served as the hub for five group trips, conducted four immersion classes in Kaqchikel (in 2019, the plan is to introduce K'iche' as an additional language of immersion), and hosted a number of independent researchers. Several researchers have returned to the field station over the past four years—a testament to its success and staying power. The GFS has become an important hub for graduate and undergraduate training in language sciences, with students working on group projects and applying for funding for future work. Not only does this reflect well on the attractiveness of the GFS, but it also shows that new, younger researchers are investing their time and expertise in Guatemala. It is certainly to their advantage that the GFS allows them to hit the ground running, without losing significant amounts time on practical or logistical issues, to conduct sustainable, innovative work during their visit(s) to Guatemala.

4. What about other linguistic field stations? Although the concept of a linguistic field station is still fairly novel, the GFS is not the first of its kind. A previous example of a successful field station is the Jakarta Field Station, set up by in 1999 by David Gil and Uri Tadmor. Part of the Linguistics Department of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology—which financed the field station entirely—the Jakarta Field Station started with three staff members and had eleven by the time it closed in 2015 (when the Linguistics Department also closed).

Just like the GFS, the Jakarta Field Station was an institution with the goal of facilitating linguistic research, with a focus on language description and data collection. A large portion of the Jakarta Field Station's material came from child language acquisition data, and as the result of their effort, we now have a set of good data on the acquisition of several varieties of Indonesian and Malay. The station was set up in central

Jakarta, but language data were collected at various locations across Indonesia and Malaysia: Jakarta, Bandung, Semarang and Pemalang in Java, Palembang and Riau in Sumatra, Makassar in Sulawesi, Dayak villages in the highlands of East Kalimantan and Sarawak, villages in West Kalimantan, and Ternate Northern Maluku. In the beginning, the Jakarta Field Station hosted individual researchers on a case-by-case basis, but later it also hosted groups, with students and professional linguists working together.

One of the most difficult aspects of the work in Jakarta was dealing with the local bureaucracy. The field station required over twenty different permits and registrations to operate legally, and it had to employ someone almost full time to ensure that these were always up to date. This particular aspect of field station operations is currently not an issue in Guatemala.

The conceptual underpinnings of both field stations are similar, and they shared the same general goals: first, to facilitate and expedite linguistic research in a remote location, and second, to forge lasting and meaningful connections between local language researchers and outsiders. It goes without saying that the realities on the ground are different, and each field station has to take unique circumstances into account, which is why the staffing of field stations by local researchers is indispensable.

Some of the differences between the two field stations have to do with RESEARCH FOCUS, CONNECTION BETWEEN DATA AND ANALYSIS, THE STRUCTURE OF FIELD TRIPS, and PRACTICAL ASPECTS of the field station.

As mentioned, the Jakarta Field Station was specifically designed to investigate child language data, though its scope of work expanded throughout the years. The GFS was specifically set up to facilitate linguistic research more broadly construed. If the GFS has any emphasis, it is on interdisciplinary work that connects linguistics to education, public health, or political science. A large number of projects being conducted at the GFS represent theoretical investigations with Mayan languages as the source of critical data, but a child language project focusing on acquisition in the context of language contact was also added in 2017, and the first results are already available (Mateo Pedro et al. 2018, Mateo Pedro et al. 2019).

Recall that applicants to the GFS are asked to submit a research proposal which is then discussed with the GFS faculty (see §3.3). This advanced application allows for a tighter connection between the raw data collected in the field and the analysis of these data and the associated scholarship. As far as I understand, such a planning approach was encouraged at the Jakarta Field Station but was not standard practice. In contrast, work at the GFS is largely conducted in research groups, and these research groups have regular lab meetings while in Guatemala—as discussed in §3 above.

Turning to the more practical, administrative aspects of field station organization, the GFS has only two or three people, a smaller permanent staff than there was at the Jakarta Field Station. Unlike the Jakarta Field Station, the GFS adopts a more modular approach, where staff members are hired on a project-by-project basis.

Guatemala has a larger concentration of NGOs than Indonesia, and the connection to NGOs is crucial for the GFS, in terms of both partnering with them on specific projects and including NGO workers in immersion classes.

As far as funding is concerned, the goal of the GFS is to diversify its funding sources. The Jakarta Field Station was exclusively funded by the Max Planck Institute. Their funding was generous but finite, since the field station closed with the relevant department. Part of the GFS funding comes from the UMD's Language Science Center, but additional funding comes from usage fees charged to the researchers who visit the GFS, independent grants (soft funding), and donations. The latter two sources require a sig-

nificant investment of time, and in an ideal world, a field station should have a dedicated staff member who could pursue these funding sources on a regular basis.

5. Conclusions. In this paper I discuss the concept of a field station for linguistic research as a tool to create new opportunities for fieldwork that can be done in an efficient and timely way. A field station provides the infrastructure necessary to allow researchers to conduct fieldwork in an effective and proactive manner, hitting the ground running from day one. Language scientists work individually and in teams (both types of projects are facilitated by the field station). The field station thus emerges as an important training facility for graduate and undergraduate students who can learn the basics of language research, work in groups, and supplement their academic-year campus options with unique educational opportunities. A field station offers immersion courses in some of the languages of the respective area, and it serves as a research hub where local and visiting researchers can work together and develop future projects. Visiting researchers are hosted by local families, which provides even more exposure to the local language and culture and forges more connections between the local community and the visitors. Since language is central to so many aspects of human behavior, from health to psychology to educational achievement, placing language at the core of research activities makes a linguistic field station a natural hub for projects in diverse areas of social sciences, humanities, and natural sciences (for example, public health and nutrition).

The final section of this paper discussed how the concept of a linguistic field station can be brought to life, as in the Guatemala Field Station, which was founded in 2015. I presented a comparison between the GFS and the well-established Jakarta Field Station, and that comparison underscored the fact that each field station has to adapt to the particular location in which it is set. Several lessons from both field stations can be carried over to future linguistic field stations. Among these are the training of local language scientists, the promotion of local minority languages, outreach from the field station to the community at large, the development of long-term sustainable projects, and connections between language research and several other fields (education, nutrition, public health).

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