

Collaborative Sociolinguistic Research among the Tohono O'odham

Ofelia Zepeda and Jane Hill

Ofelia: Reading and Writing the Native Language

I was still at Central Arizona College, a small junior college on the outskirts of Coolidge, Arizona, when I first saw written O'odham. This part of my recollections has as much to say about mentoring as collaboration. At Central Arizona College I had an English teacher who took a special interest in O'odham students, possibly because he was married to an O'odham woman.

On one occasion he brought a small group of us to the University of Arizona campus. It was on this visit that I bought two books, *Legends and Lore of the and Pima Indians* (Saxton and Saxton 1973) and the *Papago and Pima to English Dictionary* (Saxton and Saxton 1969). I recall reading only the English translation and being immediately curious about the content of the stories. The O'odham text of the book looked much like gibberish. I was able to make out only a few words in O'odham after looking at them for some time and looking at the English translation. I didn't understand what the problem was. Why couldn't I read it? I could speak it. The dictionary was a little easier only because it was a word list. I realized shortly that I could "say" the words and not have to read them. This was in 1973. I put these books away until I arrived at the University of Arizona as a student in 1975.

When I came to the university I made a most uncharacteristic move: I searched out two scholars who did research on the O'odham tribe. I learned about these two men from my Pima friends who came there ahead of me from Central Arizona College. They told me about Bernard Fontana and Daniel Matson. Both of these men had office space in the Anthropology Department and also conducted research for the Arizona State Museum. This was the first time I had ever met individuals whose job it was to study and describe the lifeways of the O'odham, my tribe. They were writing about us for mostly non-O'odham people. They were anthropologists, and one had even been a missionary.

Daniel Matson had done missionary work among the O'odham and lived for a while at Ajo, Arizona. He spoke O'odham and could write the language. Ironically, he tested my proficiency in O'odham so that I could use English as a foreign language to fulfill the university's requirements. Eventually he became my first language teacher of written O'odham. Dr. Matson told me he learned to speak O'odham from women speakers and said, "I speak like a woman." I didn't know what he meant until he gave me an example of the ingressive air stream characteristic of women's speech. This was perhaps the first linguistic feature I learned about the language I had spoken all my life.

Bernard Fontana was approaching the end of his teaching activity when I met him. He was concentrating on research and writing. I spent time with him listening to him tell stories about how the O'odham people behaved and why he thought they behaved in that way. It was odd for me to sit and listen to someone talk about what seemed to me to be everyday behavior, behavior I lived and never thought interesting.

During this time I was still an undergraduate filling my schedule with courses on social statistics, juvenile delinquency, and the sociology of minority groups. I was a sociology major. During this time I also arranged to meet with Dr. Matson regularly so that he could teach me how to read the O'odham language. I became literate enough to enjoy the books I had bought a few years earlier. I also read the New Testament and other stories from the Bible that had been translated and printed for the Christian churches on the reservation. I was raised Catholic, mostly Sonoran Catholic, and so was not accustomed to reading so much of the Bible. Now these were my texts. After all of these hours spent on the O'odham language, I never received, as far as I can recall, one hour of college credit. At the time it probably never occurred to any of us to suggest that I receive some kind of credit for this work. Thus, my study of the written O'odham language was certainly significant, but it was outside of the context of a university classroom. No one was doing this kind of teaching then. I was alone.

As a native speaker, I was beginning to learn aspects of O'odham linguistic structure, never realizing the potential for study in this area. The following semester Dr. Matson introduced me to Professor Kenneth Hale, the renowned Uto-Aztecan linguist from the Massachusetts Institute of Technology. Ken Hale was a visiting professor at the time and was part of the transition team for the Linguistics Department, which at the time was becoming a separate department from Anthropology. Part of the transition was made possible by a grant from the National Endowment for the Humanities that specifically supported the training of native speakers of

American Indian languages in the field of linguistics. When I met Ken Hale, he was very surprised and excited to learn that I had only been a couple of buildings away from him working on O'odham while he was running a small O'odham language class. He had two students: one was an O'odham student who couldn't speak O'odham very well and was interested in working on his skills. The other was the late Adrian Akmajian. I joined them, not as a student, but as Ken Hale's co-teacher. During that semester I spent a couple of hours a week teaching this course with Ken; after these sessions I would spend a couple more hours with him so that he could begin teaching me the basic rudiments of English syntax, which we would then apply to the O'odham language. The examples we used were primarily from my own speech. Although Ken did have many sample sentences from other speakers with whom he had worked in the past, my understanding of the structure of O'odham was primarily based on my own competence in the language.

After Ken left and went back to Cambridge, I changed my major to linguistics with much encouragement from him. I began taking the core courses within the field. Many hours of credits were earned via independent study sessions in which I continued to work on the structure of O'odham. This study of O'odham structure evolved into what would be my masters thesis on lessons on the Papago language. It was eventually published as the first pedagogical grammar of the O'odham language. *A Papago Grammar*, issued by the University of Arizona Press, is essentially comprised of sentence samples that come from my speech (1983). The grammatical judgments are also mine, based on knowledge gained from graduate courses and discussions with various non-speakers of the language whose evaluations I never questioned.

Jane: Becoming a Sociolinguist

I was trained in the late 1950s and early 1960s, when the tradition of American structuralism and philological linguistics began to divide into at least two major directions. The first, associated especially with the work of Noam Chomsky, aimed to be a science of the human mind, part of the "cognitive sciences." The second, led for many years by Dell Hymes (who calls it "sociolinguistics"), continued to focus on aspects of language that

are “historical rather than biopsychological”¹ and to retain close ties with disciplines like anthropology, sociology, history, and literature. Some well-known scholars contributed to both dimensions. (Sociolinguists read Chomsky’s work on mass media with great interest.) This two-way division is crude but will suffice for present purposes.

By historical accident I am a sociolinguist. When I completed my master’s degree in linguistics in 1962, the University of California, Los Angeles, which was later to develop a great department of biopsychological linguistics, did not yet offer a Ph.D. in that discipline. Since Americanists like William Bright and Harry Hoijer were members of the Department of Anthropology, I chose to continue my graduate work there. My dissertation was a grammar (of Cupeño, an Uto-Aztecan language of Southern California), and the linguist Robert Stockwell was on my committee. Bright and Hoijer, however, made me aware of exciting issues in language history and variation. One (an unfortunate issue that all who study indigenous languages face) was the problem of “language death”: what happens to a language as it goes out of use? How is a “dying language” spoken? Comparing texts that I had collected in the early 1960s in collaboration with Roscinda Nolasquez and a few other Cupeño speakers with material collected in 1920, I realized that the usage of the last generation of speakers was different from that of their own parents and grandparents. How might this be explained? I could not test hypotheses about this kind of variation in the tiny population of less than a dozen speakers of Cupeño—the accidents of individual life history would have obscured regularities. However, in Central Mexico a very large bilingual population speaking a related Uto-Aztecan language, Nahuatl (known by speakers as Mexicano), could be found, so I went to Puebla and Tlaxcala with this new question.

There I found that the way speakers juggled and combined Mexicano and Spanish to manage their precarious socioeconomic situation was more interesting than the question of language death, so I ended up paying more attention to the way that Mexicano was being maintained than on the way that it was dying. Mixing the two languages turned out to be an active, strategic, and positive project on the part of the speakers, and not merely an

¹ By “historical” Hymes meant aspects of language produced by the processes of human social life. By “biopsychological” he meant those aspects resulting from the species-specific nature of the human mind, produced by the processes of biological evolution.

attrition of some pure essence called “Nahuatl.”² With this realization, I moved even more towards a “Hymesian” view in which linguistic “competence” involves skillful speaking. While I believe that a biopsychological capacity for language ultimately constrains what Mexicano speakers do, this belief doesn’t help me understand the publicly contested claims and counterclaims about speech that are for me the most interesting part of “speaking Mexicano.” Unfortunately, the biopsychological concept of language competence as homogenous knowledge is easily (although not appropriately) recruited by purists who condemn the usage of modern speakers of Mexicano as worthless jargon. Others use this ideal of language as an excuse to try to eliminate modern Mexicano, to “Castilianize” its speakers, and to preserve only ancient documents, written in the “Classical Nahuatl” that had become the exclusive property of a scholarly elite and the state that supported their efforts, not of those who continue the linguistic tradition that it represents.

Ofelia: Learning the Hard Way

During my graduate career I had the opportunity to teach courses on elementary O’odham. These courses were often requested by teacher aides and teachers from the Tucson Unified School District, whose jobs required them to learn some aspects of written O’odham. Many of these individuals were raised in urban areas and had limited proficiency in speaking O’odham. None of them could read and write the language. I then had the advantage of being a better speaker than most of them and also had the expertise to teach them how to read and write O’odham. In these classes what I taught about O’odham was, for the most part, not questioned.

This situation changed when I was requested to teach the same language course on the main reservation in Sells. This class also consisted of instructors and bilingual aides for the elementary schools; however, the majority of these people spoke O’odham and spoke it very well. Some, of course, spoke differently than I did. This experience during my budding career as an O’odham linguist and language teacher made me realize that other speakers of this language could and would disagree with what I had to say about the structure of the language; furthermore, they would have strong opinions about my own proficiency with the language.

Such disagreements and opinions were often handled in at least one of two ways, both very typical O’odham social behavior mechanisms: (1)

² This research is summarized in Hill and Hill 1986.

humor and (2) talking behind one's back. I received both barrels, as the following examples illustrate.

In the first lesson that I used for these language classes, a sentence reads, "*Gogs 'o med*" and translates as, "The dog is running." This simple example illustrates, among other things, an intransitive sentence, imperfective verbs, and the third person auxiliary. This sentence, in natural O'odham speech, should be, "*Gogs 'o 'am med*," which essentially means, "The dog is running." The difference, however, is the inclusion of the locative *'am*, meaning "there." Typically, native speakers prefer to indicate the location of action. In this instance the *'am* translates simply as "there" or "non-specific place." In the sentence without the locative the dog is running, but not running in the same way a "real world" dog runs. The students jokingly interpreted the dog in question as a battery-operated toy running in place. And when the sentence was negated, "*Pi 'o med g gogs*" ("The dog is not running"), the class said that the battery-operated dog had run out of batteries and simply stopped. This type of semantic ambiguity was generally clarified when I later introduced the various locatives. For teaching purposes, lessons progressed from simple to complex sentence forms. Another thing that became very clear was the need to explain that the O'odham language could be put into "textbook language" form, a form of the language that native speakers don't generally speak but do acknowledge as grammatical.

The second way in which I was duly notified that my written grammar on O'odham was somehow inaccurate was through second-hand comments about what had been said concerning my work. One particular incident stands out because I was very hurt by it. One day my friend pulled me aside after class and said:

You know what [Mr. So and So] is saying about your book? He is saying that many of the things you wrote about how the language works [are] all wrong. He is telling everyone [with emphasis on "everyone"] you just made up some things about the language and the white people believed you and let you publish it. He says you probably don't really speak the language anyway.

She went on to say, "You know he's just jealous." She continued to comfort me and tell me that she and others did appreciate what I had done with the grammar: "People will find problems with it or disagree with what you wrote, but we will all learn from those differences and your mistakes." She made a great deal of sense to me then and still does now.

My training in graduate school did nothing to prepare me for dealing with this hurt and sense of despair. In linguistics, particularly theoretical linguistics, the research is essentially done in what is seemingly a vacuum. The audience for the various theoretical treatments is generally a small, select group of faculty and graduate students, not an entire population of speakers with opinions, emotions, and attitudes about the language in question. None of my professors were really aware of the situation I was dealt in exposing my work on O’odham to a reservation full of speakers. Like other linguists who work on their native languages, I learned the hard way about working with fellow speakers.

Jane: Linguistic Theory and Linguistic Politics

Research in biopsychological linguistics focuses on subtle linguistic judgments, best accomplished by native-speaker linguists, that reveal fine-grained details of the “knowledge of language.” Among biopsychological linguists, “good intuitions”—the ability to notice grammatical and semantic distinctions that can shed light on the most pressing theoretical questions—indicate expertise. Generally speaking, biopsychological linguists have *not* borrowed from scientific psychology the experimental tradition that emphasizes statistically oriented research design, control populations, and double-blind methods. Most do realize that their intuitions can be biased by their theoretical commitments and try to solve this problem by consulting with colleagues and students. They often encounter linguistic variation, but to say that a particular judgment presented as evidence for an argument is not acceptable—“Not in my dialect!” as the saying goes—is often considered a vulgar line of criticism, definitely inferior to the thrust and parry of pure theoretical argumentation. From 1960 to 1990 in the area of biopsychological linguistic research in the United States, the number of papers that explicitly attended to problems of variation probably numbered under a dozen. Research on variation was the domain of sociolinguists, working at different institutions and under different influences from (although often in reaction to) biopsychological linguistics. With a few exceptions, this separation of disciplines continues to this day.

Because the “Universal Grammar” was believed to underlie all languages, the narrow range of languages native to those holding advanced degrees in theoretical linguistics did not concern most biopsychological linguists. However, in the late 1960s, Kenneth Hale showed that certain kinds of evidence for the nature of human language capacity were simply not going to emerge from such a small sample of languages—instead,

evidence had to come from indigenous languages of Africa, Australia, and the Americas, from speakers who had not traditionally had access to higher education (see, e.g., 1972). Hale's solution that the study of these languages be accomplished by a new cadre of trained native speakers was satisfying for many reasons: (1) it was consistent with the emphasis on subtle grammatical judgment as the most important raw material for linguists; (2) it promised to empower people who had often been oppressed and exploited under colonialist regimes (including the scholarly and academic dimensions of these regimes); and (3) it in effect allowed native speakers to replace scholars engaged exclusively in theory of phonology and morphology, many associated with sociolinguistics rather than the biopsychological approach, such as the great Algonquianist and theoretician of phonology and morphology, Charles Hockett (e.g., 1977). Hale's proposal was politically brilliant: even those scholars excluded from this proposal could not but be impressed by the theoretical logic and obvious justice of the plan. Hale's proposal (not accidentally) coincided with the rise of indigenist political movements in Australia and the Americas that found linguists struggling to position themselves as handmaidens within indigenist projects rather than as lordly outside experts pursuing their own agendas.

Another interesting coincidence was that many linguists excluded from Hale's proposal were, by training and academic affiliation, anthropologists. Anthropologists were easy targets for indigenist politicians. Not only were they relatively powerless (being regarded in most of their "home societies" as fuzzy-minded and irrelevant intellectuals), but over the years in the communities they studied they had also compiled a dismal record of offenses, ranging from countless instances of inevitable intercultural clumsiness and individual poor judgment, through racist and imperialist claims on what was not rightfully theirs, to blatant exploitation, theft, and fraud motivated by the desire for career success and personal gain. "Anthropologists" became the "white men" indigenous people loved to hate, and it was highly unlikely that a young indigenous scholar would elect to study a kind of linguistics that was "anthropological."

By the mid 1960s biopsychological linguists were largely split off into their own academic departments, aligned with philosophers and psychologists, and focused on the study of such languages as English, Italian, and Japanese. Consequently, they had no particular political identity as far as most indigenous groups were concerned. But those biopsychological linguists who had studied indigenous languages were very aware of the new political trends. While established scholars continued in old relationships, new "fieldwork" could hardly be respectably undertaken

(it sounded too anthropological), and “informant” came to be synonymous with “victim” or “dupe.” At the University of Arizona, courses in linguistic field methods were not offered for twenty years, requiring those students who became interested in any of the thousands of non-Western languages that lacked a native-speaker grammarian to depend heavily on published sources or else to reinvent the fieldwork wheel (often by sneaking down the street to consult with anthropologists).³ Biopsychological linguists often flaunt their ignorance of anything “cultural.”⁴ “Linguistics”—of the biopsychological flavor—was certainly a politically safe choice for a young indigenous scholar looking for a disciplinary home, and biopsychological linguists were eager to recruit native speaker grammarians in whom they could instill a thirst for theoretical intelligence and a gift for subtle grammatical judgment.

Jane: Starting O’odham Sociolinguistic Research

The above discussion illustrates the unlikely political climate—and one that was especially acute at Arizona—in which Ofelia Zepeda, with a freshly minted Ph.D. from Arizona’s Department of Linguistics, was gracious enough to agree to a collaboration with a linguistic anthropologist! She may not have felt she had much choice. In 1983 I joined the Department of Anthropology at Arizona as a professor committed to developing a research program on Southwestern languages to fill in the gap between my dissertation work in California and my subsequent work in Central Mexico. Ofelia, then still a graduate student, was offering her one-year course in Tohono O’odham, and I asked her permission to sit in on it—and she agreed. Since I had worked on two other Uto-Aztecan languages (the family to which Tohono O’odham belongs), the director of her dissertation, Susan Steele, suggested that she invite me to serve on her dissertation committee, and she agreed again. When I suggested a possible collaboration (I did wait until after she defended her dissertation), Ofelia

³ “Linguistic field methods” is once again offered at the University of Arizona and is a course thoroughly grounded in the ethical issues involved. Many “anthropologists,” of course, are now engaged in a very penetrating critique of colonialist and postcolonialist discourses and practices, including the ethics of crosscultural scholarship, to which most biopsychological linguists are oblivious.

⁴ I once asked a colleague, famous for important grammatical scholarship on a Native American language, about the great historical ethnography of its speakers. The reply was, “Why would I want to read that?”

said “yes” yet again! I’m afraid that as a full professor and a member of her dissertation committee, even though I always asked nicely, I was a bit like the 500-pound gorilla who sits wherever she wants to sit!

My research idea was that we would study Tohono O’odham regional dialects. There were several important reasons to do this. First, Tohono O’odham people are interested in dialects, and the existing literature on the regional variation in the languages was both contradictory and perfunctory. Second, dialect differences in the language complicated bilingual education programs in reservation schools because parents did not like their children to be taught by instructors who spoke a dialect different from their own. Since bilingual education is one of the main avenues for language maintenance available to O’odham people (before the 1991 Native American Language Act,⁵ it was the only way to get funding to teach the language), it seemed important to develop a sound understanding of dialect differences that could provide a basis for training parents and teachers. Finally, a dialect survey allowed us to obtain a sample of the usage of elderly people, speakers who could provide not only the basis for a mapping of the most conservative regional variation, but also samples of what was generally accepted as “good” usage. Such samples would be useful for language curricula. There were also “sneaky” reasons. For example, my Mexican fieldwork had given me very good experience with the necessary methodology: I knew how to study the language variation that regional dialects embody. Also, research on dialects would not step all over Ofelia’s own research (which was then on morphology, especially derivation). In fact, it could even help it by providing a large sample of usage. Further, since Ofelia used O’odham language in her poetry, I thought she might like the idea of being able to go out and listen to turns of phrases from the best speakers. Finally, I knew I didn’t have a prayer of ever getting onto the reservation as a researcher unless I had her help! I needed protective coloration, both as a collaborator with a member of the O’odham community, and, not least, as a “linguist” instead of as an “anthropologist.” The importance of this last point can be easily shown. After we had been working on the reservation about three years, we were sitting one morning in the kitchen of the (then) tribal chairman. He was enthusiastic about the

⁵ The Native American Language Act of 1991 is a federal law acknowledging the status of Native American languages and encouraging the use, protection, maintenance, teaching, and research of these languages. The Native American Language Act of 1992 appropriated funds to meet some of the conditions in the 1991 bill. These funds are dispersed by the Administration for Native Americans through a competitive grants program.

dialect study and I'd had many pleasant conversations with him. He looked sternly at me and said, "You're in the Department of Anthropology, aren't you?" I admitted that I was.⁶ Fortunately, he didn't withdraw his support for the project.

The project was eventually funded by the National Science Foundation. Our first job, even before the grant proposal was submitted, was to get permission from the Tohono O'odham Nation to do the work. Ofelia dealt with the politics, including the essential informal networking and the formal presentations, while I sat quietly and tried to look like anything except an anthropologist. Once approvals and funding came through, we worked with two research teams, each with a native speaker and a support person. Interviews had to be conducted in O'odham, so Ofelia and Mary Bernice Belin, a bilingual aide and researcher on language and health issues, did most of the work involved in the field survey. Our goal was to interview at least one speaker (and preferably more than one) from every village on the reservation that had been inhabited during the lifetime of the generation of speakers over 55 years of age. While I and Molly Dufort, then a graduate student in anthropology, did the endless driving and worked the tape recorders, Ofelia and Bernice did the talking, making initial contacts (usually in O'odham, since many people of the generation in which we were interested don't like to speak English) and interviewing in the O'odham language. Bernice Belin did most of the transcription of the interviews. Ofelia did some, and I did a very little bit, mainly word lists.

Ofelia: Starting O'odham Sociolinguistic Research

My work with Jane Hill began with the sociolinguistic research on O'odham dialect variation. When she first approached me with this proposal, I was immediately interested because many speakers are themselves aware of salient features in speaker variation. Documenting this information seemed worthwhile. My greatest worry in such a study was acquiring the permission from various people that was necessary for such extensive collecting on the reservation. The O'odham tribe, like other tribes, had become much more selective in granting permission for research

⁶ I had never hidden this fact, since my *curriculum vitae* was included with the grant proposal that was submitted to the tribe when we requested permission to do the research, but he hastened to add that I was "really" a linguist. He proceeded to lecture me for several minutes on the sins of anthropologists and how I should behave.

carried out on the reservation and among the population as a whole. I knew we would have to get approval from many people, and it was apparent that, even as a member of the tribe, I would be treated as an outside researcher first and as a tribal member second. Luckily, I had gotten much favorable publicity from the tribe because of an earlier publication, *Mat Hekid O Ju: / When It Rains* (1982), a collection of Pima and Papago poetry published by the University of Arizona Press. As a result of this book, my name was familiar to more people. I also volunteered as a radio announcer for a popular half-hour weekly O'odham program on the local PBS station. It seemed that these two factors were more significant than my publication of a major grammatical work on O'odham. Even less significant was the fact that I had a Ph.D. We began speaking with the various committee members, and their acknowledgment of my other work and of my contributions to the tribe was especially significant to those who did not know me or my family. Jane and I received endorsements from the tribal chair and other politically significant figures. Some tribal council members who served on the committees that reviewed and eventually approved our proposal knew me personally or knew of my family. Such acquaintances did not hurt our chances either.

Now I want to discuss some specific aspects of fieldwork that I found uncomfortable while researching O'odham dialect variation: (1) working with other O'odham speakers and (2) explaining how and why we would be asking strangers various questions. I mentioned earlier that during my graduate career I never used the language of other O'odham speakers in any of my work. I had a few dialogue exercises that others wrote for me, but otherwise all information and examples on the O'odham language came from my own speech. This project gave me the opportunity to rely quite heavily on others' speech. And now we were faced with the ominous task of finding willing speakers. Jane and I began with my friends and relatives. The friends were mature people all in their mid-sixties. These were O'odham speakers from Tucson and the San Xavier area. Some of these were women who did demonstrations of their basketry for mixed audiences and so were accustomed to being asked questions, sometimes annoying ones at that. I thought that they would make cooperative participants, and they did. Others were parents or relatives of friends. This is easy, I thought. I believed that Jane expected other participants to be almost as easy to meet and to offer their cooperation. I knew, however, that once we finished with my friends, acquaintances, and relatives, there would be complete strangers to locate and approach, an exercise I did not look forward to.

It was fortuitous that we found out about the gerontology program, a federally funded program designed to meet the special needs of tribal

members fifty-five years and older. I vaguely knew of this organization from an O'odham friend who used to tell me of the "elderly feedings." I thought that this feeding only took place at San Xavier, since that was the one that he attended. He told me the tribe would bring the elderly together for a communal lunch once or twice a month. He said he would go there, invite himself to lunch, and just visit with them. My friend was particularly interested in talking to other speakers about O'odham songs and traditional dances. At these lunches he gathered information from some of the elders. He warned me though that some of the elders "were kinda mean, you know how they are." And then he quickly added, "but some are very eager to talk and give information. They like to share their knowledge." Originally, I thought of these elderly feedings as a place we might be able to solicit volunteers from one geographical area and that we still had the main reservation to consider.

As it turned out, this "elderly feeding" was part of a federally funded gerontology program for the entire tribe. It seemed that each political district had one of these regular meals for their elders. Such meals were weekly or biweekly, depending on the size of the district's budget. We made appointments to meet with the administrator of the program and her assistants. They were very helpful but somewhat guarded at the same time. The staff members who had the most regular contact with the elders were the most helpful because they knew the various personalities of many elders. They told us which elders liked to talk to people and which would be less helpful in the survey because of poor hearing, poor eyesight, or senility. Some elders, they warned us, had extremely protective children with whom we would have to deal first. This background information was definitely a time-saver in compiling our list of elders in the various districts, areas that roughly corresponded to the earlier proposed dialect regions. This was the beginning point for the entire project. We solicited other speakers at district and village meetings where we asked to be put on the regular agenda so that we could inform the public about our project and ask for volunteers. When we had obtained volunteers or names of potentially willing elders, we sought them out and began knocking on the doors of strangers.

Another uncomfortable part of the project for me was explaining what we were looking for in the study. Dialect variation, we said. And, yes, people we approached seemed to understand this point at least. However, there was some doubt as to what else we wanted. No, we had no ulterior motives, I tried to tell them as convincingly as possible. Some continued to doubt us throughout the entire interview. Some also convinced themselves that we wanted to ask questions about more exotic

cultural, ritual information even though I said only, “Taiccu ‘ac matt ‘ab o ha’icu m-kakk’e ‘ab ‘amjed g O’odham ñi’okĩ mo has masma gawulig g O’odham ñi’okĩ” (“We want to talk to you about the O’odham language and how there are differences in how O’odham is spoken”). Even with several such explanations, some people tried to refuse us by saying they did not remember the “old things.” “We just want you to say some words for us to collect and compare to other speakers,” we explained. Perhaps some could not believe the task could be so simple. Surely we wanted more for all this trouble of driving out to find them, setting appointments, and coming all the way from Tucson to see them.

Some individuals, male participants in particular, said such things as, “I will need to think about things before you ask me about them. Why don’t you come another day later?” On one occasion I told a gentleman that this wasn’t the kind of information he would have to spend time thinking about. As I reflected on this remark, I thought it a rude thing to say. I had misunderstood his intention. His hesitation was perhaps a way of hiding his nervousness. Others confided after the interview was completed that they had been worried about what we were going to ask them. They lost sleep, anticipating potential questions that we might pose. Again, when they confided such anxieties, I felt badly for having imposed such a burden on them, an unnecessary burden. Had I not made myself clear when I told them what we wanted? Why had I thought they understood when either they hadn’t or they had some doubts? Such doubts may have resulted from my being perceived as an “outsider,” conducting the interviews with a white person at my side. Whether it was Jane or our graduate student assistant, Molly, there was always a white person from the university present. Fear that one of these “outsiders” wanted to know the exotic elements of O’odham ritual and custom must have prompted many of them to worry about what they were going to be asked. I believe the majority of the interview participants did understand what we were going to be asking questions about, but even they experienced considerable anxiety simply because they were chosen to respond to our interview.

Jane: Doing Fieldwork

I now want to discuss survey research in the O’odham community from my own perspective as an English-speaking American and as an anthropologist. The dialect survey gave me endless opportunities to be a clumsy outsider in full view of competent adult insiders, including Ofelia, the director of the project. The experience has been humbling, but also

very enlightening in terms of my anthropological concerns at the broadest level. Through my work with Ofelia, I discovered that fundamental differences stemmed not only from ethnicity, but from our having been trained in distinctly different scholarly cultures. I found myself working not simply with an O'odham person, but with an O'odham person trained in biopsychological linguistics!⁷

While biopsychological linguistic analysis is difficult, survey research can also be painful and embarrassing. This is often true even in English-speaking American culture, where many of us detest religious proselytizers who knock on the door to offer us literature and people who call us on the telephone during dinner to sell us bargain carpet shampooing or ask for our donation to the Fraternal Order of Police Rodeo. Survey research is not the most favored form of ethnographic research because most ethnographers emphasize seamless participation in contexts that would go on even if outsiders were not present. So, if survey research is so humanly alienating, why do it? The answer to this question is deeply rooted in the ideology of knowledge of the Western academic tradition: knowledge is inherently good and its pursuit is so important that every doubt and difficulty must be set aside. If a scholar wants to understand language variation, survey research is the best way to study it. So, just as physicists sometimes stay up all night in the laboratory destroying their health with dangerous radioactive materials, sociolinguists get up in the morning, dragged down by the existential dread, and take to "the field," hoping to construct survey techniques that exploit, as far as possible, local interactional contexts and ways of obtaining knowledge. "As far as possible" is very much restricted when the techniques employed involve getting approximately one hundred strangers to speak into a tape recorder.

I won't burden readers here with the esoteric details of populations and sampling, but it should be fairly obvious that no single speaker, even if that speaker is a highly trained linguist working on her native language, will encompass all its variations in her speaking competence. Furthermore,

⁷ In my field research in Mexico, my assistant was Alberto Zepeda Serrano, who conducted the interviews and prepared a rough transcription and translation. Alberto is now a high school principal and has several times represented his community on international television. However, the dynamics involved in this fieldwork were different from my work with the O'odham. As a *gringa* in Mexican indigenous communities in the 1970s, I was perceived as simply very exotic and strange and was usually very welcome as a possible contact with the United States. Alberto was an employee, not a full collaborator. (He was a teenager at the time.) I was speaking mainly Spanish, and much of my cultural incompetence was written off by the locals as linguistic incompetence. I've written about some of the interactional difficulties of that fieldwork in Hill 1980.

since language variation is often freighted with social values, the problem of having one's conclusions shaped by ideological preconceptions is acute. One must simply enter the community with an open mind and a good research design, find a way to get people to talk in the language being studied, and listen carefully. Unfortunately, sociolinguists and linguistic anthropologists have, at times, compromised on method. Since their results (unlike those of, say, clinical trials of new drugs) are not a life-or-death matter, researchers often justify the use of less than ideal techniques such as the so-called "snowball" samples.⁸ The reason for this is that a number of societies aren't accustomed to random sampling, where it is frankly dangerous to knock on doors without an introduction. The O'odham Reservation is not such a place, but a minor variation on a "snowball" sampling was still our choice; before knocking on a door, we always knew more or less who was going to be behind it, and had good reason to believe that we had some chance of recruiting them to our study. Yet every stage of finding study participants and conducting interviews was complicated by crosscultural interactional traps and moments of awkwardness.

Before focusing on such difficulties and embarrassments of our enterprise, I want to say that O'odham country is breathtakingly magnificent, that many O'odham villages are picturesque and charming, and that individual O'odham people are warm and hospitable. Indeed, I have seen extraordinary things and met extraordinary people during our research. We've picnicked "under the mountain"—Baboquivari, center of the universe—in April with all the flowers in bloom and watched the long blue summer rains sweep across its peak in August. I remember sitting under a ramada at Ku:pik in June, looking far out into the desert at horses running through the heatwaves (we could barely hear their hooves), while an old man and his sister told us stories of the Apache raids. I've sat in the receiving room of a great shaman and heard deep discourses on plants and animals. Mild-mannered elders have quietly shared with us lives full of wisdom and courage and drama. Every time I listen to the tapes, there is something new and wonderful to ponder.

But to the details. First, we could not telephone to make appointments. When we first began our fieldwork, only district offices and stores had telephones. So we had to go out in the car and find participants, a process that took as many as three two-hundred-mile round trips for each

⁸ In this method, a mutual acquaintance introduces the fieldworker to the first respondent, who then suggests a second or third, who in turn suggests a fourth. As each new respondent is met, the name of the previous one is mentioned. For example, "Mr. Lewis suggested that I talk to you."

potential consultant. Second, O'odham communities usually consist of a very loose agglomeration of widely separated and anonymous house compounds, spread over a square mile or so of desert and linked by a tangle of dirt tracks that seem to branch in every direction. Third, O'odham people are generally known locally by nicknames that we often didn't know, and local people didn't know the formal baptismal names that we had in our files. Confusion also resulted from the O'odham custom of giving directions by gesturing vaguely toward the relevant horizon. The outsider is forced into a process of triangulation that involves a long series of embarrassing requests for directions and might even include knocking, eventually, on the wrong door. Bernice Belin and I had a running joke in which she, as knowledgeable passenger, would gesture in what seemed to me an indeterminate semicircle towards the car windshield in order to tell me, the ignorant driver, where to go. I would say, "Bernice, I don't know *which* road you *mean*." She would then perform a hilarious parody of a non-native person pointing, and I would turn the car in the appropriate direction.

Once we were fairly sure we had the right house when looking for a potential respondent, we had to get to the door. There always seemed to be dogs. Fear of strange dogs turns out to be fairly evenly distributed among O'odham and non-O'odham people. I am afraid of dogs. Bernice is afraid of dogs. Ofelia and Molly are not afraid of dogs. Unfortunately, Bernice and I usually worked together, with no help from the two dog lovers. So we would sit uselessly for long minutes, joking nervously about the dogs, and which side of the car the small mean ones might be on, and about who would get out of the car first.

Often, as we pulled up to the last reasonably polite place to park a car (and I made many embarrassing mistakes in determining where this was, since the line between someone's yard and the open desert was often indistinguishable to my outsider's eyes), there would be someone in the yard around the house. That person, ninety percent of the time, would disappear, strolling far way behind an outbuilding, or, astonishingly, going into the house and closing the door. Only twice, in my recollection of over fifty such embarrassing moments, did an O'odham person actually come out to the gate and ask what we wanted! This disappearing act usually is simply polite: O'odham people believe that visitors should be able to make their own decisions about whom they want to talk to, without anyone asking invasively, "Can I help you?" Sometimes, of course, it simply means that the potential respondent *does not want to talk to you*. The possibility of this meaning (and, for an English-speaking American, the erroneous sense that this is the probable meaning) makes this form of O'odham politeness

extremely frustrating and tempts one to leave without venturing further. But science requires that one forge ahead.

How does one get to the door of an O'odham house? A non-native, like me, calculates a trajectory that is roughly a straight line between the gate and door, walks briskly, straight ahead, and knocks in the middle of the door. This is not the O'odham way. I learned how to walk up to an O'odham door from Ofelia and Bernice. They calculate not a straight line, but a sort of semicircle that provides the dogs (who are at best barking in the near distance and at worst growling and making phony charges, teeth bared) plenty of time to size visitors up and decide they mean no harm, and potential respondents plenty of time to get out behind the shed or wherever they want to be when visitors knock on the door. Then the visitor walks, very slowly, looking almost anywhere except at the door, usually at the house wall on the hinge side. The visitor, far enough from the door to fully extend an arm, then reaches out and taps lightly. Then one must wait (and wait, and wait, from my point of view). After a decent interval—and I never figured out the length of this interval—if the householder wishes to converse, he or she will come to the door, peek out, and give the visitor an opportunity to make a pitch. On occasions when I had driven over one hundred miles, asked local directions five times or so to get to a particular door, and was absolutely determined not ever to walk past particular dogs again, I would often knock repeatedly until I was dragged away by a desperately embarrassed Bernice. On other days I remembered that O'odham people like to be given a great deal of interactional space, would leave after one knock and a minute or two, and be reproached later by the householder who would say something such as, “Oh, we saw you come, but then you went away again.”

The interactional niceties of what to do once the door was opened a crack for us were fairly tricky and involved a good deal of local improvisation. The whole scenario was utterly unnatural in O'odham terms, but Ofelia and Bernice would generally start out with some bland and obvious opening like, “Well, we've been going around hereabouts,” and would gradually lead up to the issue at hand, describing the project in a way that, for them, was excruciatingly and embarrassingly direct, but the best they could do under the circumstances. Eventually they asked tentatively if the householder would like to participate. I would generally lurk in the background, again trying not to look like an anthropologist and providing a limited type of moral support (in the form of the dubious presence of someone who insanely believed that knowledge was worth going to any lengths to obtain). As we left I would often try out one of my few reliable

O'odham phrases, "*Nt o a ep m-ñei*" ("I'll see you again"), hoping that it was appropriate.

Jane: Female Breathy Speech and Other Dilemmas

In 91 instances (out of approximately 100 contacts) we were actually able to arrange interviews, and my role in each of these seemed equally bizarre. Conducting interviews involves speech acts that are normally unheard of in O'odham society, such as asking elderly people direct questions. My (or Molly's) silent presence made it clear that what was happening was probably not Ofelia's or Bernice's fault—everybody knows that O'odham people sometimes have to do strange things because some *milga:n* (white person) insists on it. Further, Ofelia and Bernice found ways of phrasing questions as if they were not really questions. I would generally sit quietly, try not to stare,⁹ chuckle a little bit when other people were laughing (hoping that the joke had not been on me), operate the tape recorders, and try to take notes. I don't speak O'odham. I hardly understand it. After a while, though, I had almost memorized the way that Ofelia and Bernice asked questions and was able to understand the more routine parts of answers. I could partially transcribe and translate recorded material, but I had to keep running to Ofelia for help, and I made hilarious interpretive mistakes.

O'odham people seemed to be very tolerant of my linguistic inadequacies, and I decided that they simply didn't expect a *milga:n* to speak the language. It was extremely common, however, for O'odham people to discuss among themselves, in my hearing and at some length, those remarkable cases of *milga:n*, such as priests and traders, who spoke excellent O'odham. I listened to these discourses for several years, thinking of them as interesting anecdotes that people for some reason wanted me to hear. I finally realized that they were probably a form of reproof. The first lesson of working with O'odham people is that they will not directly criticize. They will tell a friend about inappropriate behavior (on the theory that it will get back to the guilty party eventually). Or they will praise someone who is acting appropriately in the offender's presence. Ruth Underhill, the great ethnographer of the O'odham, described how parents instructed misbehaving offspring; they would deliver sonorous

⁹ In O'odham terms this means hardly looking at your interlocutor at all. Molly claims to have timed Ofelia and an elderly man for an hour and a half without ever seeing their gazes meet.

monologues (in the morning darkness, after the Morning Star was visible, but before the sun was up), about the virtues of the neighbors' children: for example, how Maria was always first out of bed to make the fire (in the presence of a child who lay drowsily under the blankets), how Catalina was so modest and virtuous (in the presence of a child who knew well that she had danced too long with handsome Husi at last weekend's feast), about how Felipe had gone far into the desert to recover a lost calf (while the stock that were another's responsibility wandered who knows where). In much the same way, I heard about the linguistic virtuosity of Father This and Mister That, but for years these gentle reminders of my responsibilities rolled right off me, because when *my* parents were disappointed with me, they spoke right up: "Frances Jane Hassler [no question about who was being talked about], I told you two hours ago I wanted the bathroom clean, and pronto! Now hop to it!" And when a friend is really disappointed in something I have done (but wants to go on being my friend, rather than quietly disappearing forever from my life), she'll come and say, "We need to talk. I want you to know I'm very upset by what you did last week." Thus goes interaction among many *mimilga:n*, but not among the O'odham.

An unexpected problem for me was the O'odham preference for speaking very quietly. Indeed, to be "noisy" (*s-nakosig*) is considered childish. The most extreme forms of quietness are employed by women of middle age and above (like me) in one-on-one conversation. (O'odham people are perfectly capable of making themselves heard in settings such as public meetings, although not at the amplitude that an English speaker would achieve.) During the interviews I would strain to hear, desperately wanting people to "speak up," but knowing that I could not ask them to do that. I could often hear flies buzzing in the distance and trucks on the highway half a mile away, but not what a speaker on the other side of the table was saying. After many minutes, through a sort of self-invented meditative process of focusing all of my attention on the barely moving lips of a speaker (this had to be done with the mind, not the eyes, since it's very rude to look at people), I would finally be able to tune in. After a day of this I'd be whispering myself, and my husband would ask, "What did you say?" One research consequence of this voice quality preference was the need to use lavalier microphones, attached as close to the speaker's mouth as possible, in order to get decent recordings; less intrusive microphones built into our tape recorders were useless. This experience made me aware that the relatively loud voices and clatter of my own culture may suggest that many people really don't pay very much attention to one another. English speakers who feel they deserve attention generally "speak up" to get

it, while the O’odham assume that if someone is speaking those who want to hear will take the trouble to listen carefully.

An articulatory device that I found enchanting and genuinely exotic, used by O’odham people (especially by older women) in the service of respectable quietness, is what linguists call “pulmonary ingressive air stream.” The speaker breathes in, not out, while talking. The discourse context in which this is most common is when speakers repeat themselves for emphasis—exactly where an English speaker might talk a little louder! Probably the most frustrating uses of the ingressive air stream during our project occurred when speakers were going through our picture book. We had a big book picturing items whose corresponding words we expected to exhibit regional variation. Respondents would look through the book and name the pictures. Often I wouldn’t quite hear them the first time they said a word and would wait eagerly for them to repeat it so that I could check my transcription. Fortunately for us, O’odham people use repetition for emphasis. Older women would repeat words—but on the ingressive air stream! Gone would be the hope of hearing whether the constricted or spread glottis final consonant had been used, or the hope of hearing unstressed /u/ versus /e/. We found, though, that exact characterization of the interactional and discourse functions of ingressive airstream was an inviting research project, and one to which Ofelia (who ingresses without thinking, while I turn slightly blue even on a one-syllable word) could contribute native speaker intuition.

Before Ofelia discusses “pulmonary ingressive airstream,” I’ll provide a short example of its use in a brief reminiscence by Marie Velasco, who grew up at Pi O’oikk in the extreme southwestern corner of the Tohono O’odham Reservation. Bernice Belin talked to Mrs. Velasco on a cloudy day in March, 1987, at her house in Ge Wo’o. When we came to the dialect-survey item *hakko*, or “head-ring,” a ring of soft material (basketry in the old days, more recently cloth) used by women when they carried buckets and ollas on their heads, Mrs. Velasco did not remember the word. Bernice reminded her, and the word triggered memories from Mrs. Velasco’s childhood. The pulmonary ingressive airstream speech comes at the climax of her reminiscence, and continues as she jokes about how her head must have been hard if she could carry water with her mother. The ingressive airstream speech is marked by underlining. Whispered speech is double underlined. Bernice’s responses are in parentheses; sequences such as “*hhh*” indicate Bernice’s chuckling.

Hegi mo ge sikol? (aha)

B ‘o ‘a’aga, mmm . . . (Long pause while Mrs. Velasco thinks)

Bernice: *Hakko*

Mrs. Velasco: *Hau'u.* (hmmm)

B 'o cei g ñ-je'e, "I be'i g ñ-hakko, nt o wa'igam." (ah, aha)

Matt 'am 'I cea k 'am 'as hihhim c gahu wa'ig 'abi. (uhhuh)

Wenog 'o pi b mas mo hemu 'ab haha 'I-ku:g g şu:d. (aha)

Pş o wa'igk o wa'igk o şu:dad g walin. (hhhhh,uhhuh)

Hekaj 'o t-wapko, hekaj 'ep 'o t-waccwi. (hm)

Ş 'I masma (mhm)

Woho 'o mo:t hegi mo d five gallon,

'in o dai 'e-mo'o 'an (ah, uhhuh)

'In 'ep o gi'acugad g bucket

'Añ we:maj (hhhm)

kĩhu kawka g ñ-mo'o,

hem s-kawk g ñ-mo'o! (hm! uhhuh, hhh)

That thing like a circle? (aha)

That's called, mmmm . . . (Long pause while Mrs. Velasco thinks)

Bernice: *Hakko*

Mrs. Velasco: Yes. (hmmm)

My mother used to say, "Get my *hakko*, I'll go get water." (ah, aha)

Then we did what she said and just went and got water over there.

(uhhuh) Back then it wasn't like it is today where the water is right here.

(aha)

She'd just be getting water and getting water to fill the barrel. (hhhhh, uhhuh)

Because we used it for washing, we'd also use it for taking baths.

That is the way it always was (mhm)

Really she carried on her head that five-gallon can.

She'd set it on her head (ah, uhhuh)

and also she would carry the bucket.

I'd go with her (hhhm)

My head was probably getting hard then,

now my head is hard! (hm! uhhuh, hhh)

Ofelia: Female Breathy Speech

Jane has discussed the pulmonary ingressive airstream practiced by female speakers and the problems it can cause for those not accustomed to listening to words spoken in this manner. Here I want to make a few observations based on our fieldwork. To put it briefly, the manner of speaking by breathing in, or sort of "swallowing" words, is certainly more common in female speech. Men ingress to a certain extent but not to the same degree. Earlier I mentioned my first written O'odham language teacher who said he learned to speak from females and so spoke like a woman. He was, of course, referring to the ingressive speech, which he did

quite well although it seemed slightly exaggerated. My other linguistics teacher, Ken Hale, learned O'odham from adult male speakers and did not exhibit this characteristic. He sounded like a typical mature male speaker.

Female ingressive speech is more common, and, as Jane points out, I exhibit this speech form myself. In fact she has a habit of saying, "Oh you're doing it" and pointing at me when I do it in mid-speech, even in English. I noticed in some of the taped interviews that if a woman I spoke with ingressed noticeably, I would pick up on her rhythm and ingress more so than with women who did not ingress as much. I recall my mother mimicking my aunt who had an extreme practice of this ingressive speech. My aunt also had a shrill voice that made the ingressive airstream speech that much more noticeable. And because she would ingress continually in her speech, she made the events she was relaying sound exciting and as if they needed emphasis. Even though my mother did ingress in her normal speech, she was so aware of the unusual form of speech that my aunt used that she would mimic her.

Jane perceives this particular style as a feature of being quiet and says that being quiet is a desirable characteristic for O'odham. This ingressive speech is undoubtedly a quiet way to talk; however, it is not quiet in the manner that whispering is for most English speakers. This ingressive speech form for O'odham is an ordinary volume of spoken O'odham that simply happens to have the airstream moving inward instead of outward. This inward movement of airstream is something English speakers' ears are not accustomed to. O'odham people also whisper. In fact, whispering is a very intimate act, much as it would be in English, and speakers tend to whisper very close to the listeners' ears, requiring that the participants be of the same gender, typically females, or otherwise adolescents. With the ingressive speech style, however, women don't need to be as close to one another physically when they speak. To the extent that it doesn't require any physical repositioning by the listener or the speaker, I consider the volume of ingressive speech to be "normal" for O'odham women.

Molly, our graduate assistant, told me of an incident during one of the interviews with a female speaker conducted by Jane and Bernice. Apparently Jane was quite conscious of the quiet speech between the two O'odham speakers when she found herself having to ask the interviewee to repeat a word for clarification. Jane made the request by whispering very softly. It took Bernice a second to realize Jane was whispering, and she adjusted so that she could understand Jane's request. Later Molly confided that both Bernice and the interviewee mentioned they were not sure why Jane was whispering; both women were surprised by it. Bernice thought that Jane was trying to mimic the ingressive speech of the O'odham female

speakers, or that she felt self-conscious, fearing that her natural female voice would seem loud in contrast to the soft voices of the two O'odham women. Instead of letting out a booming *milga:n* voice, she attempted something in the middle, which for the O'odham ears did not work. Whispering was too quiet and, perhaps more importantly, out of context.

I would now like to comment further on this exotic speech form by describing occurrences other than those in O'odham women's normal speech. I have observed that it is common for O'odham males to repeat women's speech or to quote a woman by using this ingressive speech form. This is done most often when the quote relates excitement, drama, or humor. At other times, men may quote or paraphrase women and use the ingressive speech form when they are very familiar with the the woman being quoted. For instance, elderly women or women who ingress noticeably, such as my aunt, will have their speech represented in this way. Ingressive speech can also be used as a performance device when talking about women or when talking for them. This speech form helps to embellish an anecdote and so fulfills a specific function for both the listener and the speaker. I often use the following example from my own experience to illustrate variation in speech. My father would use the ingressive speech form as a way of kidding around, especially with his own children. He would only ingress certain words, in particular the word for "yes." In O'odham the word for "yes" has quite a bit of variation in normal speech: *hau'u*, *heu'u*, *hau*, *heu*, and so on. My father would produce the last form in this list, *heu*, with an ingressive airstream. When ingressed this form of the word "yes" sounds much like someone very quickly slurping up a big spoonful of soup. Hearing him say this was funny to us as children, and what was funnier is that he would not say it only once but a couple of times in a row. For instance, he might use the ingressive "yes" if we asked him whether he wanted the last orange in a bag, when he knew that we probably wanted it too. As children, we knew using the ingressive airstream on "yes" usually meant it was not a serious "yes" on his part.

Jane: Conclusion

The "disappearing act" pulled on visitors, the vague gestures when giving directions, the avoidance of mutual gaze, the long silences between interactional moves (exemplified here by the "decent interval" waiting at the door), the reluctance to ask questions, the idea that comfort in human relationships may be more important than knowledge, the indirect forms of instruction and reproof, and the quietness of O'odham speech seem to me a

part of a coherent interactional package. Through these interactional forms (and no doubt through others that I have not yet noticed) people give one another enormous autonomy and respect. No interaction is forced because people are expected to care enough about one another to be keenly attentive to subtle signals. Forms of knowledge that do not involve such careful attention are not as highly valued. Such characteristics reflect a special form of individualism that is quite at variance with the type that has developed in the middle class of American English communities in which I was raised. In many such communities, people engage in a constant noisy battle for attention, by questioning, interrupting, staring, outshouting one another, and defining many superficial human relationships through needs for knowledge, rather than permitting knowledge to emerge through deep attention to a few other people. Such a conclusion can easily sound very negative, and I don't intend that. As a member of my own culture, I am convinced that its forms of knowledge and human relationships have their own value. However, the work that I've done with Ofelia has reinforced my conviction that these values are local, the product of a particular history. Their worth does not come from their universality, but emerges from a specific historical context. O'odham forms of knowledge and relationships are similarly worthy, and, one hopes, new forms of value may emerge from the engagement of these two historical trajectories.

Ofelia: Conclusion

As I reflect on my own role as a researcher in this project, I know that many speakers of this language who either participated in the research or are familiar with it know that we have not conducted any interviews in the community of San Lucy, and therefore the study is flawed in their eyes. Similarly, others from the village of Ge Wo'o know that we interviewed a speaker in Ge Wo'o who was not originally from that village, and so for them the study is flawed. Some are also aware that one particularly prominent village would not agree to allow any member from there to be interviewed, and so for those particular villagers, as well as for others who were interviewed, the study is incomplete.

And so in typical O'odham fashion some let us know what they thought about us, and some made jokes about our adventures out on the reservations as we went looking for people to talk to. In fact, a running joke for a while was that Jane and I were looking for men, old men at that. This joke was a result of our having had particularly bad luck in finding willing males to interview. Still other speakers spoke behind our backs

about the quality of our work, remarked on our intrusive natures, and said that we were asking questions we shouldn't. Although I realized that these responses were possibly going to occur, I was never fully prepared for them. Fortunately, the negative response to our work was minimal.

I do agree with our critics that our project was an intrusive one, but intrusive only in that we had to rely on the speech of others. While there is no other way to collect this kind of data, we worked very hard at minimizing the intrusion. We made appointments for the interviews, appointments that could only be met by driving to the person's home on one day and two days later driving back. The distance of trips ranged from 40 to 200 miles roundtrip. Sometimes we made these trips two or three times if appointments weren't kept for any variety of reasons.

For some speakers, our intrusions were a nice distraction. They relished the opportunity to talk to willing listeners. These were individuals who spent time alone for long periods because of their isolated location or because children visited only on weekends. One elderly woman refers to Molly and me as her guardian angels because we came by her house, which was in an isolated area, and found her ill and bedridden. The weather was particularly bleak, and rain and wind were blowing through the cracks around the door and windows. We helped move her bed so the drip from the ceiling would miss her and closed all the cracks as best as we could. We felt badly that we had to leave her there like that, but she promised us that her son was coming that day and that the sisters from the church were going to visit her in the evening. Needless to say, she was a very willing participant in the project. Molly and I thought of her after the study was done and said we should go visit her, but we never did.

I would have preferred not to have interviewed certain individuals. I never said this to Jane because it would have been unprofessional. I thought we had intruded greatly on one man in particular whose wife was near death, but for him we were a welcome distraction.

I went back later to some homes, especially of people I knew, and brought payments of watermelon, cantaloupe, and squash. Jane went back to one area for a burial of one of the participants. Molly still spends time with some of the families from one part of the reservation because they are her friends, and her subsequent work requires her to travel in those areas. And so as we intruded we became connected to a group of people in a special way. Sometimes when I see some of the elders at gatherings, they shake my hand and smile, not really curious about what transpired from

their interviews with us. I only imagine they felt good that they were able to assist in the best way that they could.

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