



## Documenting intangible things

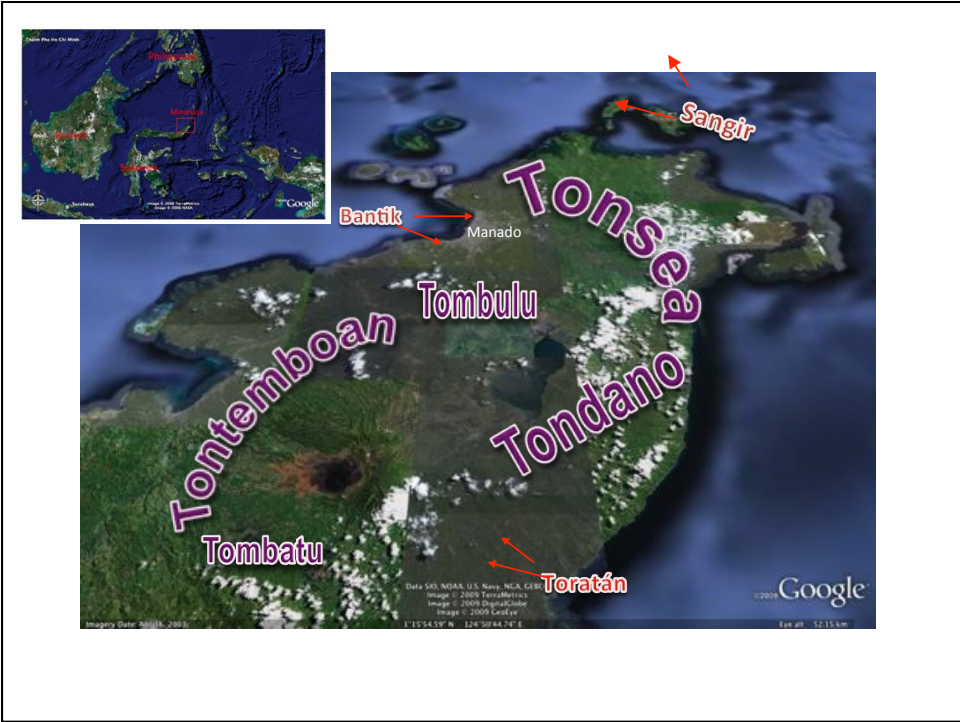
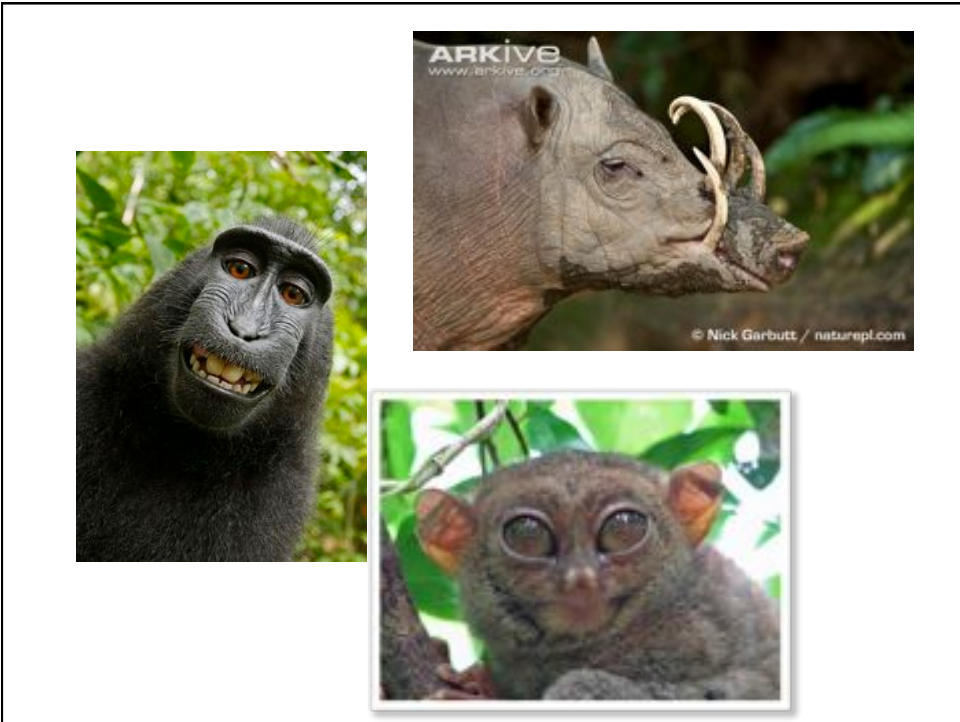
- Language
- Processes
- Techniques
- Activities
  
- How do we document them? And how do we present the documentation to others?
- A case study: Minahasan regional cuisine



## Sulawesi, Indonesia



- Slightly smaller than Honshu
- Population c. 16 m
- 114 languages (Ethnologue)
- Population concentrated in north and (esp.) south peninsulas
- Economy – cocoa and coffee (south), cloves and coconuts (north)



## Particular issues in Minahasa

- The languages are all under pressure from Manado Malay and Indonesian
- The last domain of use tends to be in the farms, gardens, forests — but the speakers are becoming too elderly for agricultural work
- Traditional agricultural practices are changing through modernisation
- There are many things to document!
- Many Minahasans live in diaspora (Japan, Netherlands, US, Australia, HK)

## Toratán project

- ELDP funded postdoctoral project.
- Two years (12 months in the field)
- Over 70 hours of video and 20 hours of audio recorded.
- 15 speakers, from 45-78 yrs of age
- approximately 30 hrs of video + audio from 67 separate sessions selected for archiving at Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR)
- About 80% transcribed and translated into Manado Malay and English using ELAN
- A smaller amount further analysed and interlinearised with Toolbox

Endangered Languages Archive

Documentation of Ratahan

This deposit has been accessioned.

Search this deposit

Best keywords

Access protocol

Type

Participants

Documentation of Ratahan

Language: Ratahan [rh]

Depositor: Anthony Jukes

Location: Indonesia

Summary of deposit

This deposit consists of audio and video recordings of speakers of Toratán (Ratahan), spoken in North Sulawesi, Indonesia, resulting from fieldwork conducted between June 2005 and September 2007.

Group represented

Toratán

Language information

Toratán, Bertonian

Deposit contents

The deposit comprises over 120 audio and video files, as well as transcriptions of many of the recordings in the form of ELAN files.

Genres include personal history, elicitation, folk tales, and free conversation.

Other information

Toratán (Ratahan), an isolated member of the Sangiric family, is spoken fluently by only a few hundred people, all of advanced age. The language is giving way to Manado Malay and the national language, Bahasa Indonesia. A nearby dialect, Bertonian, may have already disappeared. Eight speakers of the Woi and Wongkai dialects were recorded for the deposit.

Depositor: Anthony Jukes

Nationality: Australian

Affiliation: SOAS, La Trobe University

Approved subscribers

Edward Gerratt

Tools

Download metadata

Administer bundles

Set file access

Email subscribers

Elan - RTH014\_extract.eaf

File Edit Annotation Tier Type Search View Options Window Help

Grid Text Subtitles Controls

| Nr | Annotation                          | Begin Time  | End Time    | Duration    |
|----|-------------------------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|
| 1  | jadi, ore' to a...                  | 00:00:00... | 00:00:02... | 00:00:02... |
| 2  | makawengke, oras makawengke.        | 00:00:03... | 00:00:05... | 00:00:02... |
| 3  | mar,                                | 00:00:05... | 00:00:06... | 00:00:00... |
| 4  | ma-sae nggereja.                    | 00:00:06... | 00:00:08... | 00:00:01... |
| 5  | ore' muane,                         | 00:00:09... | 00:00:10... | 00:00:01... |
| 6  | tane' kumanga' ra' wawine,          | 00:00:10... | 00:00:12... | 00:00:01... |
| 7  | mayuma ter,                         | 00:00:13... | 00:00:14... | 00:00:00... |
| 8  | masuk re papuna,                    | 00:00:15... | 00:00:17... | 00:00:01... |
| 9  | sab, to wawnei mera' su oo ngkamar? | 00:00:17... | 00:00:20... | 00:00:02... |
| 10 | masuk re papuna,                    | 00:00:21... | 00:00:23... | 00:00:01... |
| 11 | waa...                              | 00:00:23... | 00:00:24... | 00:00:00... |

Selection: 00:00:03.600 - 00:00:02.830 - 770

00:00:00.000 00:00:01.000 00:00:02.000 00:00:03.000 00:00:04.000 00:00:05.000 00:00:06.000 00:00:07.000 00:00:08.000

Woi014\_0001 Woi014\_0002 Woi014\_0003 Woi014\_0004

fe@BH so, if the one who will get married, when they're going but come to the church.

fn@BH jadi, kalau yang makaweng, diwaktu makaweng tapi mo pigi kasana di g...

rh@BH jadi, ore' to a... makawengke, oras makawengke mar, ma-sae nggereja.

w@BH jadi ore' to aa makawengke, oras makawengke mar, masae

sn@BH jadi ore' to aa ma-kaw Ce oras ma-kaw Ce mar ma-sae

g@BH so or NR um AV- mar CPL time AV- mar CPL but AV- comese

p@BH conj conj prt int pref v prt n pref v prt conj pref- dir

## Archived collections: who is the audience?

- A lot of material is being produced – but who's going to watch it?
- The endangered language archives do a vital job – but they are not (yet) generally accessible to various potential audiences
- A lot of the material produced is simply not interesting
- 9 years of RTH project deposited at ELAR.
  - 1 MA student accessed data
  - 1 heritage speaker (Netherlands) contacted me but didn't actually access anything

## 'Giving back'

- People have been 'giving recordings back' to communities for a long time
  - Typed-up/published stories
  - Cassettes
  - CDs
  - iTunes library on language centre computer
- Video and internet have changed things

## Video in language documentation

- Many (most?) people are using video these days
- There are very good reasons to do so
- But are we doing our best?
- Two main types:
  - sit and talk
  - point and show

### Sit and talk



Here are Willem, Anes, and Bert

And here they are 63 minutes later



## Point and show

- Pan around! Look at everything! This is great! Problem is – it looks terrible



## Should LDC video be watchable?

- Sure, why not? Or at least **some** of it should be. Great cameras are available these days — if we know how to use them
- Many language documenters have been given significant amounts of funding (public or private)
- they are working with people who are often custodians of unique linguistic and cultural knowledge
- they have both the opportunity and the responsibility to record this in ways that are both comprehensive and accessible.
- ‘linguists may learn from ethnocinematographic contributions... that there is also an aesthetic aspect to the video documentation of communicative behavior’ (Dimmendaal 2010:155)





## Narrated videos

- Videos of local cultural/economic activities can serve as culture documentation as well as linguistic stimulus
- Narrations can be collected from multiple speakers, in multiple languages
- They can potentially be interesting to watch — and narration in local languages with subtitles in wider-used language means they can appeal both to communities and casual viewers (language by stealth!)
- To be interesting they should be well-filmed – there is an aesthetic component
- Editing is important – find the balance between brevity and completeness

## Minahasan cuisine

- Everyone loves food
- Minahasans have an attachment to their cuisine, and their use of the 'festive meats'
- A particular focus of nostalgia in diaspora communities



## How to deliver videos?

- VCDs/DVDs
  - This used to be the only practical way — but increasingly people are post-physical media
- Online options are better
  - (but people will watch them on phones and your nice clear video will be tiny and jerky)

## Online solutions

- Vimeo
  - good quality
  - small but active user community
  - late support for subtitles or alternate audio
- You Tube
  - good support for subtitles
  - none for alternate audio
  - large user community (yay), including the very dregs of humanity (boo)



**Water (sago grubs)**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=wVy2QsFqdYI>



**Paniki**

<http://www.youtube.com/watch?v=mITluBEHpTg>

Warning: somewhat gruesome in parts  
38,000 views – the most watched Tomblu broadcast in history! and it was stolen by a tourism company!

## Reactions

- Producing them
  - It is quite easy to collect narrations — people are familiar with the processes and environments shown, and enjoy explaining them
- Watching them
  - *Water* (sago grubs): 25,783 views on YouTube — the Tondano version with 1071
  - They are linked and discussed in Facebook groups

