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Published online: 03 Apr 2023.

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ABSTRACT
This paper discusses collaborative ethnographic work investigating multilingualism within education in Botswana, Tanzania, and Zambia. The paper takes a reflective perspective on how research is conducted and the role that multilingualism and collaboration can play in the research process itself. As a team of thirteen individuals, working across four countries, we bring a range of multilingual repertoires to the project. In this paper we discuss three principles which have been important in guiding our thinking and practice. These are: *researching multilingually; researching collaboratively;* and *researching responsively.* We discuss the rationale behind these principles and the role they play in our work. We then discuss challenges and successes which have emerged from implementing these principles in practice and use these to outline a framework that those interested in conducting similar work can use to guide their own thinking and practices. The data discussed in this article consist of a corpus of vignettes from members of the project team. Ten vignettes have been collaboratively analysed adopting a thematic analysis. Tasked with reflecting on, and evaluating, the principles the vignette data provide insight into the opportunities and challenges of working multilingually, collaboratively, and responsively within a team with diverse linguistic repertoires.

Ili peepala lileelanda pafyo bakafwailisha baibimbele mukufwailisha pamulandu wa mibomfenshe ya ndimi ishapusanapusana mumasambililo kumasukulu mufyalo fya Botswana, Tanzania na Zambia. Muli ili lyashi kuli ukuipusha pamifwailishe ine nga cakuti ukubomfya indimi ishingi mukufwailisha elyo nokubombela pamo kuti fyayafwilisha mukusambila pafintu. Muli ukukufwailisha mwali baakafwailisha ikumi

na batatu ababomba mufaylo fine, abaleetele indimi ishapusanapusana muli iyi nchito yakufwailisha. Muli ili peepala twalanshanya pa fikomo fitatu ifyo twalekonka mukufwailisha pali ili lyashi na mufyo twalebomba. Ifi niifi: ukufwailisha ukupitila mundimi ishapusanapusana, ukufwailisha mukubombela capamo, no ukufwailisha ukwakwasuka bwangu nokwalula imibombele ukulingana nefileisa nangula ifilecitika liyla mulebomba. Twalondolola ifyo twalecitila ifi elyo no lubali ifikomo fyasendelemo mumilimo yesu. Elyo Kabili twalanda na pamaafya nefisuma twatumbwilemo mukukonka ifi fikomo mumilimo yesu; twatankika nefyo abengafwaya ukukonka ifi twacitile bengacita mukutontonkanya kwabo na mumibombele yabo. Ifyo tuleebomfya muli ili peepala tuumalyashi twafumine kuli bakafwailisha abalelanda pafyo bapitilemo. Kwali ukupituluka muli utu tumalyashi ikumi kwibumba lyabakafwailisha, ilyabombele pamo, no kulemba ilyashi mufipande fyapusana-pusana ukukonka imilandu ilimo. Mukupituluka no kutontonkanya pabukankala bwafyali mutumalyashi twabaakafwailisha ciletulanga ifisuma na maafya yengasangwa mukukonka ifikomo fya kufwailisha kwakubombela pamo, ukubomfya indimi ishapusanapusana elyo nokwangukilwa mukwasuka pafiletumbuka mukufwailisha bwino-bwino, mwibumba lyabakafwailisha abalanda indimi ishapusanapusana.

Introduction

This paper presents a methodological reflection from a large collaborative linguistic ethnography project. The ways in which we conduct our research, and work together as a team, are guided by three principles: (1) Researching multilingually; (2) Researching collaboratively; and (3) Researching responsively. We begin with an overview of the ways in which language is positioned within (linguistic) ethnography to provide a methodological context for the work discussed in this paper. We then discuss our project, how the three principles emerged, and what they mean within our work. We explore why we felt they were important as well as how they have guided our work. We then move on to an examination of reflective vignettes from members of our team that focus on evaluating the principles. We conclude by looking at how the principles can form a lens for thinking through similar projects and studies. While we view the principles as integrated and overlapping, given the focus of the article we will discuss researching multilingually in more detail than the other two principles. These reflections outline how the principles have, thus far, been realised in practice and highlight the benefits and challenges of adopting an approach such as the one presented here.

Reflecting on linguistic ethnography

Understanding how our experiences and expectations of the world shape and influence what we do and what we understand as ethnographers has been a central part of what has been described as the 'reflexive turn' within ethnography (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Gumperz 1972). As such, a reflective stance and critical engagement with our methodologies is key within ethnography (Clifford and Marcus 1986; Gumperz 1972; Grover 2023; Selleck and Barakos 2023) and there is a need to ensure that our methodologies continue to adapt and grow alongside theoretical advancements in our fields (Costley and Reilly 2021; Blackledge and Creese 2010; Blommaert 2010; Eisenhart 2001; Martin-Jones and Martin 2017). Linguistics, as a field, is paying increasing attention to the so-called 'multilingual turn' (May 2013) and it is crucial that this multilingual turn is also incorporated into our methodologies. As highlighted by Eisenhart (2001) and Blackledge and Creese (2010) the pace of innovation within ethnographic methodology lags behind innovation in the key concepts which are the focus of the research with which ethnography is concerned. There is therefore

a need to reflect on how the methodologies within ethnography are best equipped to study multilingualism in the twenty-first century.

Although the work of ethnographers has played a crucial role in developing our understanding of language use in the social world, many have acknowledged that there has been, and continues to be, a persistent tendency in ethnography for language to be overlooked (see e.g. Borchgrevink 2003; Gibb, Tremlett, and Danero Iglesias 2019; Holmes et al. 2013, 2016). Gibb, Tremlett, and Danero Iglesias (2019, 65) express the same sentiment in saying 'one of the most unfortunate effects of the current 'silence' about language-related matters in ethnographic research is to leave intending multilingual fieldworkers with little guidance specifically towards their needs'.

Linguistic ethnography is a valuable methodological approach for studying the ways in which multilingualism manifests in various contexts (Blackledge and Creese 2010; Unamuno 2014). As ideologies surrounding multilingualism move further towards translanguaging epistemologies which blur the boundaries between named languages, linguistic ethnography is well placed to collect and analyse data in these contexts (Pérez-Milan 2015). This is particularly the case in complex multilingual contexts and in interactions within institutions such as in schools and classrooms (Copland et al. 2015). While language is clearly the object of study in linguistic ethnography, there tends to be less of a focus on language as the medium by which and through which linguistic ethnography is conceptualised and enacted. It is therefore necessary to reflect on, and develop, our methodologies to take account of the developments in how we have come to understand language and multilingualism over the past two decades (Martin-Jones and Martin 2017).

In addition to the role of language, the 'implicit collaboration' which is integral to all linguistic ethnography work is often overlooked (Budach 2019). This is due to the fact that the 'relational processes go unwritten, with research write ups focusing on results, analysis, and outputs' and the behind-the-scenes 'messiness' of research remains hidden (Bradley, Moore, and Simpson 2020, 5; see also Bradley 2016). Despite significant and sustained criticism of the imagined 'lone ethnographer' (Rosaldo 1989; Wasser and Bresler 1996; Horner 2002; Denzin and Lincoln 2005) this is often the default position that is assumed and visible within ethnographic work (Copland et al. 2015). This individualistic way of conducting research continues to be the dominant image of how project design, data collection, analysis, and dissemination operate within the field of linguistic ethnography. Budach (2019, 204) highlights that 'the role of participants … and the place and legitimacy of their views and interpretations' within linguistic ethnography is an issue which does not yet have a definitive solution.

Blackledge and Creese (2010, 105) report that working with a multilingual team highlights 'the importance of language as a resource in the research process'. In light of the issues discussed in this section, our research principles act as guides within our work, to ensure that the importance of language, the importance of collaboration, and the importance of responsiveness, are emphasised at each stage of our research. They act as guidelines that everyone in the project can turn to when challenges arise due to language, team dynamics, or interruptions to the planned project activities. Copland et al. (2015, 61) talk about ethnographers 'investigating the investigation' arguing that '[t]his kind of reflexivity is usual in ethnography where it is common practice for researchers to describe the tensions they face in the field and their reconciliation of contradictions encountered'. The reflections reported on in this article are part of our collaborative process of investigating our investigations. The next section provides an overview of our ethnographic project and outlines the principles as we define them in our project, followed by an explanation and discussion of a set of reflective vignettes.

Project background

Our project examines the ways in which multilingual practices and linguistic heritage can be harnessed to enhance experiences of education in sub-Saharan Africa. It explores how language practices inside and outside of the classroom affect educational attainment and investigates the tensions between such practices and the lived language experience in three countries: Botswana, Zambia and Tanzania. The project develops three ethnographic case studies, each comprised of qualitative and

quantitative data employing a combination of methods, including participant observation, interviews, focus groups and questionnaires (for further details on our project see Gibson and Reilly 2022; Reilly et al. 2022). Our goal is to understand the reality of language use within educational and community spaces, how individuals use their multilingual repertoires to navigate spaces in their everyday lives, and to gain an understanding of attitudes towards multilingual practices. The project seeks to provide answers to three interrelated research questions:

(1) What language and literacy practices are promoted, valued and expected in schools – what languages are used by whom and when?
(2) What language and literacy practices are promoted, valued and expected outside of schools – what languages are used by whom and when?
(3) How can translanguaging pedagogies/practices be developed in schools and how can they enhance teaching and learning?

The principles

We consider our three principles of researching multilingually, collaboratively and responsively as being mutually interdependent, as captured in Figure 1 below. This representation aims to reflect the idea that there is no sense of hierarchy and highlights that these principles and the practices that they represent are present at different phases or stages of the research process. They also necessarily feed into and inform one another on an ongoing basis.

Taking our cue from Holmes et al. (2013, 2016) and Phipps (2019), the processes by which, in which and through which we research language need to be foregrounded and these principles are guided by the belief that if we set out to explore multilingualism and multilingual practices, we must do it multilingually, collaboratively, and responsively. The principles as we adopt them in our project are outlined in our project handbooks which provide detailed information on how we approach

Figure 1. Researching multilingually, collaboratively and responsively (see Costley and Reilly 2021).

various aspects of our work on the project, which all members have access to, and which all of the co-investigators on the project collaboratively developed. In the section below we provide a brief explanation of what it means for our work (for more detailed discussion of the rationale for the principles see Costley and Reilly 2021).

Researching multilingually

The principle of researching multilingually fundamentally views multilingualism as a resource (Lo Bianco 2001; de Jong et al. 2016; Polo-Pérez and Holmes 2023). In adopting this principle, we recognise that everyone involved in our project brings different linguistic repertoires and resources, which can be used at different times and for different purposes during the project. It seeks to reject a monolingual habitus (Gogolin 2013; see also Grover 2023) and to challenge the default position of anglonormativity or other dominant language hierarchies. Instead, it seeks to set up spaces in the project in which multiple languages and different multilingual practices can be used. This principle encourages everyone involved in the project to turn a critical lens onto how language is being used by individuals and when working together. We recognise the importance of multilingualism not only as the object of our study but also as the process through which we approach and conduct our research.

Researching collaboratively

In researching collaboratively, we recognise that all ethnographic activity is inherently a collaborative endeavour and through directing critical attention to this collaborative nature ethnographies can be of higher quality (see Lorette 2023; Rolland 2023). Researching collaboratively throughout, and as a guiding principle of, our linguistic ethnography affords us an opportunity to begin to challenge inequitable paradigms of knowledge production. This critical collaboration is important when it involves either participants or other researchers but considers members of a research team, participants involved and broader communities (academic and public) as equal and valuable collaborators at each stage within the linguistic ethnography. Through explicitly addressing how collaboration affects our work, and reflecting on the varied skills, knowledge and resources all collaborators are able to bring to the ethnography, we are able to develop a deeper understanding of the contexts we are researching.

While difficulties could, and are likely to, arise when attempting to incorporate a range of co-researchers' perspectives and understandings, this is unavoidable and should be conceptualised as a core aspect of the ethnographic process. Negotiating the multiple authorities and the tensions between epistemic positions is not without challenges but offers an opportunity for linguistic ethnography to explore new, more nuanced ways of producing knowledge and reflecting on what knowledge is viewed as valuable within ethnographic work. The approach we suggest within our framework is of a collaboration which is both multilingual and epistemic. A research partnership then becomes not just a collaboration in which knowledge is produced but is also an epistemic collaboration in which all collaborators are part of creating the framework for conducting, understanding, and sharing the linguistic ethnography.

Researching responsively

The principle of researching responsively recognises the 'messiness' of ethnographic research (Bradley 2016; Bradley, Moore, and Simpson 2020). Additionally, it recognises that linguistic ethnography is inherently interdisciplinary and that our work will likely draw from a range of disciplines (Copland, Shaw, and Snell 2015). Individual collaborators will bring their own research traditions, practices, and knowledges to the project.

This principle also ensures that there is flexibility built into the project design to explore additional areas of interest that may arise during the research. As our project collects data in three countries with distinct histories and sociolinguistic contexts, this principle also acknowledges that the ways in which the project operates in these contexts will not necessarily be the same. There is therefore a freedom for collaborators to adopt research practices which are most appropriate, and which will be most valuable, within each specific context.

In summary, researching multilingually means not being restricted to particular languages whether in terms of data collection, analysis, dissemination and discussion. It prioritises the use of languages other than English, where possible, and acknowledges that researching multilingually means not always understanding everything. Researching collaboratively means recognising that ethnographic work is always group work and involving all members of the team and the participants is essential. Finally, researching responsively means not being constrained by fixed practices, adapting to changing contexts and recognising that research might not always go to plan (see also Costley and Reilly 2021 for further discussion).

The principles grew out of necessity as a way of introducing team members to linguistic ethnography. After presenting the principles to the wider team, it was felt that they would be useful principles to guide our wider research processes. The way that the principles are defined within our work is due to a number of factors. There are a wide range of languages present within our research team and within the contexts in which we work. In Botswana, our project team members mainly use Setswana, of which there are many dialects. Other languages apart from English such as Shekgalagadi and Ikalanga are also languages of discourse and interaction with participants. In Zambia, our project team members use Bemba, Namwanga and Nyanja and their dialects in addition to English, depending on location and who is involved in the interaction. And finally, we also have similarly multilingual practices in Tanzania where Swahili, Ngoni, Sukuma and Kinyakyusa are some of the languages used, among team members and with participants. Within these different teams as part of our collaborative project, there are a number of people working at different levels, resulting in power dynamics at play due to the combination of institutions from the Global North and Global South, and the fact that our funding is ultimately derived from the northern hemisphere, in which context, but also more broadly, patterns of academic language use predominantly privileges English.[1] Finally, the range of contexts and challenges with operating collaborative, international projects means that a flexible approach is often essential.

Materials and methods

Our reflections on researching multilingually in this article draw on researcher vignettes produced at a mid-way point in our project as a way of reflecting on how the principles had worked so far in practice. Tagg et al. (2017, 277) state that '[r]esearcher vignettes are short narratives produced by team members in which researchers reflect on the research process, and which serve to make visible the research process and the ways in which researchers' experiences, backgrounds and values shape the co-production of knowledge'. Reflective vignettes can act as a useful tool within linguistic ethnography as they provide a chance for critically reviewing the methodological processes which are being adopted (Blackledge and Creese 2010; Goodson and Tagg 2018) and can be used to highlight how issues around collaboration and language are being constructed by the researchers (Creese et al. 2015).

All thirteen members of the research team[2] were invited to contribute a vignette reflecting on the three research principles. It was agreed that the vignettes should be between 500 and 1500 words in length. Prompt questions were developed to assist individuals in writing their vignettes; however, these were to act as suggestions and team members were able to use them, or not, to the extent they wished. In total, ten vignettes were produced and analysed. Whilst this was not the whole team, we had vignettes from all countries and roles. Participation was voluntary and team members consented to have their vignettes analysed and referenced in this paper.[3] Each vignette varied in length

and focus, mainly influenced by the specific roles that individual team members have in the project – as such they cover a wide number of topics ranging from research design, data collection and analysis, practical and financial issues, communication and team meetings, and working with external partners and institutions.

The vignettes have been analysed thematically to highlight the key topics and insights that are focused on (see Tagg et al. 2017; Goodson and Tagg 2018). All vignettes were shared with all members of the project team, to allow everyone to contribute to the analysis and they were discussed during virtual collaborative analysis sessions. The following section discusses this analysis, highlighting the main themes which were discussed regarding the principles overall and for each specific principle, drawing on anonymised extracts to highlight key points.

Results and discussion

As discussed above, the principles underpin our research and the vignettes offer us a window into how these have worked within the project and an opportunity to reflect on the role they have played. Overall, from our analysis the vignettes show that team members viewed the principles positively and the texts indicate that the principles have been clearly embedded into our research processes, they have been adopted across the team as a core aspect of our research and how we do our research. The reflections below from team members highlight this overall positive attitude towards the principles within our research.

> Researching multilingually, collaboratively and responsively are essential principles for guiding the project. (Vignette #3)

> For me the research principles are fantastic both in aligning with how best to carry out and conduct the work, but also with what we are trying to do through the project. (Vignette #1)

The principles thus act as a 'core foundation' (Vignette #5) for the project. They have been successfully communicated to, and embraced by, these members of the team and have permeated how we approach a range of aspects of the project. Having a guiding framework based on these principles has been useful for our collaboration as it enables us to emphasise, and hold ourselves accountable to, a core set of research values.

Researching multilingually

The vignettes reveal a number of successes and challenges of researching multilingually. When discussing data collection, researching multilingually is viewed as a valuable approach which increases access to communities, builds trust with research participants, enables research assistants to feel more at ease and in control of the research, and ultimately leads to better quality data. Using languages which were 'familiar to the research site allowed for the researcher to gain trust with the community' and taking a multilingual approach 'promotes communication' (Vignette #6). A recurring theme that arises from these vignettes is that through researching multilingually, participants and the researchers collecting data would 'feel free' (Vignette #6). It is also viewed to be an important principle to ensure that the data collection 'displays inclusiveness' (Vignette #3). This facilitated access to research participants and also increased the attractiveness of participating in the project as one vignette reports: 'Some participants were eager to take part since they were informed that using a language they are comfortable with is not a problem and were also allowed to translanguage' (Vignette #3).

Research assistants on the project report that they were 'not limited to using a particular language' (Vignette #3) and that by creating a multilingual space on the project they felt 'empowered as I was not restricted to only using English despite having people on the project who may not understand [other languages]' (Vignette #5). This was also beneficial for the data collection as

'without restricting oneself to one language, this allowed for a much more accurate collection of the views of the respondents' (Vignette #8).

However, challenges were also raised concerning the collection and processing of data, and translation was raised as a key theme within this. These challenges often centred around the difficulties for those who were tasked with translating data into English transcripts for the wider project team to review. It was felt that it could be 'difficult to properly capture the accurate translations' (Vignette #8). Those processing the transcripts for the wider team had to 'navigate between cultures and languages' and faced the challenge of communicating the messages within the data 'to an international audience in a team without being accused of embellishing messages or even showing some bias' (Vignette #6). Similarly, one team member reports that, in researching multilingually, when processing the data there may be 'exclusion of some extracts in fear of being inaccurate because sometimes one is uncertain of what is said' (Vignette #9). It is apparent then that, while researching multilingually has been a crucial aspect for gaining access to communities and providing data, it does place pressure on those team members who feel responsible for ensuring that the data are presented accurately at each stage of the analysis (see Polo-Pérez and Holmes 2023 for a discussion of 'Intelligent transcription').[4]

From the reflections on researching multilingually it is clear that this happens in different ways across levels and stages of the project. For example, teams in each country would often use multiple languages when working together. As one team member writes:

> Discussions surrounding the project with other team members always involved the use of more than one language, there were no challenges encountered when discussing the research using more than one language, rather; it helped the team in carrying out the research effectively. (Vignette #8)

Researching multilingually is not solely confined to the specific task of data collection and analysis but is something which permeates work on the project as a whole as team members will also use multiple languages to discuss administrative and practical matters. It is a natural and unmarked use of language and to adopt a monolingual approach would be restrictive. While this was common within country teams, it was not commonly the case in discussions between different country teams or, for example, at whole team meetings. In the vignettes, team members evaluated the extent to which the 'international' communication had been multilingual. The major theme which emerges when reflecting on this is that there has been a tendency in the project to default to English. As one team member writes:

> However, given the international and multilingual nature of the project, many reports and compilations of experiences encountered in the research have not utilized any multilingual tools; rather, only one language, English has been used to document experiences throughout the period of the project. (Vignette #8)

This is repeated in other vignettes: 'English has tended to be the main language we used to communicate with each other' (Vignette #1) and 'in the discussion and analysis of data ... conversations have mainly been in English' (Vignette #2). As the international nature of the project means that there are multiple linguistic repertoires amongst the team, one team member notes that this may be to be expected as English acts as 'the common language' (Vignette #1), with another stating that although we have 'consciously tried' to adopt a multilingual approach, given the global position of English as an academic language, all team members are 'so "used to" operating in the default of English switching out of this monolingual mode is an ongoing process' (Vignette #10). While there was an acknowledgement of a default to English and a desire, from some, 'to see (and hear) more different languages' (Vignette #1) during team meetings the extent to which this was an example of us not adopting our principle was a key topic of discussion during collaborative analysis of the vignettes.

The use of English during team meetings highlights that researching multilingually does not manifest in identical ways through each aspect of the project. There are layers of multilingualisms on the project, and individuals are enabled to enact their identities in different ways through

drawing on multiple resources from their linguistic repertoires. While in team meetings we may use English as the main language, it is not the only language which exists within the space and it is not the only language which can be used in the space. Individuals are not operating monolingually and are still free to use any language which they wish to. Multiple languages are always there, even when they are not visible. In adopting the principle of researching multilingually we are able to cultivate spaces during team meetings which are multilingual spaces and through the project 'different multi-lingualisms will arise and be of value for different parts of the project at different times' (Vignette #5).

This connects to another major theme regarding researching multilingually – it encourages a critical reflection on one's own linguistic repertoire and language practices. Researching multilin-gually is 'a learning process' (Vignette #4), an opportunity to 'think and reflect' (Vignette #10) which 'helps one to develop a higher level of sensitivity to one's use of language' (Vignette #6). Adopting this principle encourages individuals to reflect on their language practices, and choices, when interacting with project members and with participants. This has additional benefits for the research itself, as one team member writes:

> It is all too easy to talk about multilingualism in a monolingual way, or to impose our own notions – and experiences – of what languages are, on our colleagues, collaborators, participants involved in the research and even onto the findings. Whether we realise this or not! (Vignette #1)

It also brings a heightened awareness to the particular sociolinguistic contexts in which we work. One team member states that they felt 'uncomfortable' and 'like a colonizer' before beginning data collection as they are a speaker of the dominant language of the region and did not want to appear to 'perpetuate the dominance' of the language amongst speakers of minoritised languages (Vignette #6, see King 2023). For our project, researching multilingually provides a criticality which challenges a monolingual way of doing research. Reflections on this principle from team members highlight the opportunities and challenges which this approach brings and makes clear that researching multilingually manifests in a variety of ways across the project.

Researching collaboratively

In reflecting on researching collaboratively a number of vignettes focus on the practical and logis-tical challenges of coordinating a project involving four separate university institutions as well as external funders and government bodies who grant research permits. The process of creating and signing the memorandum of understanding (MOU) between all of the universities is frequently mentioned in the vignettes. This process, while necessarily including the research team, also included numerous external individuals within each institution representing legal, administrative and senior management teams. This was a process in which 'it took long to reach a consensus' as 'some legal clauses were incompatible' (Vignette #9) between different countries. In commenting on the process of preparing the MOU, one team member writes:

> In this partnership, an MOU had to be drawn, negotiated and agreed upon by the...Universities, a process that required accommodation and understanding of the interest of all those involved. (Vignette #7)

Having a principle of researching collaboratively to emphasise collaboration as an important value of our work helps to cultivate 'mutual respect' (Vignette #8). However, these practical issues serve to highlight a key challenge of researching collaboratively in bringing attention to the 'different power dynamics involved' and 'cast a light on how unequal many of the systems are' such as the funding and contractual systems the project operates within (Vignette #10). A number of other factors can affect power dynamics within the core project team. We come to the project with different roles and responsibilities – e.g. as project managers, co-investigators, research assistants – and with varying expectations for what we seek to achieve through our involvement in the project including, for example, publications, research impact, future grants, and employment.

The principle of researching collaboratively seeks to address these issues through creating an equitable partnership within the project and acts to 'hold us accountable' (Vignette #5). Individuals' abilities to access, control, and participate in the collaborations are, however, influenced by a number of factors. Depending on one's specific role within the project, individuals may have 'other responsibilities and different amounts of time that we are able to spend on the project' (Vignette #5). For some, their contractual arrangements can make it 'difficult for them to commit fully to project activities' (Vignette #9). Similar then to the principle of researching multilingually, reflections on collaboration highlight that it manifests in different ways throughout the project. There are different levels of collaboration that involve different team members at particular points in time and managing these multiple collaborations is a 'balancing act' (Vignette #2). The collaborations within the project are not fixed but 'shift and change' (Vignette #10).

Researching responsively

For all team members researching responsively has been an incredibly relevant principle in ways we could not have foreseen at the beginning of the project. The COVID-19 pandemic has had a significant impact on the original plans for the project and affected our data collection, stakeholder engagement, and team meetings. As a consequence of this:

> almost nothing has gone according to plan and it has been crucial to be flexible and adapt plans and also use this in an instructive way to crucially continue to include the whole team so that the overall momentum of the project is not lost. (Vignette #2)

Having a responsive and flexible approach to the project 'from the beginning' (Vignette #1) has enabled individuals to embrace the challenges with a freedom to alter plans to find what is most suitable in the changing contexts of our research.

Aside from dealing with the larger impact of the pandemic, researching responsively has also allowed for flexibility between the research contexts. An emerging theme from the vignettes discussing our responsive approach is that it enables the team to do what is most valuable in a specific context at a specific time. Adapting to the unique situation within each context is essential and 'brings rich contrast in terms of approaches' (Vignette #2). However, flexibility must also come within the overall scope of the project goals as 'some coherence over the whole is also to be maintained' (Vignette #2). Ultimately, having this 'flexibility built into the project' means that 'we don't have to be trying to make everything absolutely identical in each context' which is not 'necessarily feasible and also isn't necessarily most valuable' (Vignette #5).

This also allows for teams doing data collection and analysis to adapt their plans to maximise 'efficiency and effectiveness' (Vignette #8). Individuals on the project are able to take control of their own roles and, within data collection, can adapt their practices to the 'terrain of the fieldwork and the demands that come with it' (Vignette #8).

Conclusion

The three principles we follow in conducting our research were created as an approach which addresses key concerns in contemporary linguistic ethnography. Concerns which we believe do not yet receive sufficient discussion within the field. The act of creating this framework has been a useful one as it enables our team to critically reflect on what we value as important aspects of research and of partnership working. Our different ways of working and different research processes are able to coalesce around these core principles and they are a marker against which we can hold ourselves and our research to account. As our reflective vignettes highlight, the principles have manifested in different ways throughout the project and practicing the principles is not without its challenges. Nevertheless, we view them as a crucial step in developing a more critical,

Table 1. Framework for researching multilingually, collaboratively and responsively.

Multilingually	Collaboratively	Responsively
• cultivate different multilingual spaces for different aspects of the project or do not expect a singular way of multilingual interactions • reject monolingual interactions • identify multilingual spaces for different purposes (e.g. data collection, analysis, sharing, admin, etc.) • view multiple languages as a resource • use languages that are familiar to the research context/site and change as appropriate • be comfortable with discomfort – you may not understand everything • break down barriers – be inclusive • navigate between culture and language to inform translation • promote natural interactions • be aware of English-first or English-dominant practices or assumptions • actively encourage the use of a wider range of languages and multiple languages	• foster joint production of knowledge • challenge inequitable knowledge productions • cultivate mutual respect amongst different partner dynamics • adopt a broad perspective of research participants (including non-academic participants and communities) • accept different roles and expectations of different members • acknowledge and use varied skills • ensure interests of all researchers contribute to shaping the research • acknowledge and discuss financial expectations and constraints	• factor in the role of different contexts • adapt research practices for different contexts for the greatest value • promote less rigid boundaries on research topics and questions • allow contexts/emerging findings to reshape research goals to add value • allow for the effect of different systems and processes • appreciate different expectations of different members • allow for changing and shifting roles of members • be committed to honouring complexity over simplification • allow for change and accept change, working fluidly • be aware of changing realities outside the project • build in opportunities for reflection within the project, including reflecting on how the principles are being operationalised

multilingual, and equitable approach to linguistic ethnography which can be adopted and adapted by others working in the field.

In Table 1 below we present an emerging framework which suggests key action points for engaging with these principles. Moreover, these principles and the associated framework can function to guide future work and collaborations, our own included, and serve as a useful point of departure when establishing priorities, ways of working and encouraging us to reflect on our own language practices within our research. These guiding principles also pertain to other aspects of research design which are distinct from language. They relate to expectations in different contexts, different 'academic' currencies in different countries and institutions and the way in which individuals are impacted by and choose to engage with these. They also interact with broader concepts relating to positionality and researcher identity. In many ways therefore, we are encouraging the conceptualisation of language and multilingualism as part of the research methodology and for this to be seen as a tool and an asset that can be employed by a project, as well as an integral part of doing research. Given the close link between languages and their users, it is not surprising that these considerations also tie into broader considerations and frameworks which are important to consider in research, in linguistic ethnography, and in collaborative endeavours more broadly.

Notes

1. Specifically, our funding is from the British Academy on a Global Challenges Research Fund scheme that must involve research that is relevant to countries that are on the UK's Official Development Assistance list.
2. Each of the Botswana, Tanzania and Zambia teams have three researchers and the UK team consists of four researchers.
3. The wider project has received ethical approval from all universities involved.
4. We are grateful to the reviewer who suggested that we may consider including specific translation strategies that we used within our team, as this provided us with an opportunity to further reflect on this aspect of our work. We do not have extensive suggestions for strategies to offer, as this was not something which we have developed together during our project. This does point to a wider issue within this type of work, and within

our own collaboration, in that expectations of translation often fall on a few members of the team who have particular linguistic repertoires.

Acknowledgements

Disclosure statement

Funding

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