

Proposal for funding the documentation of Lacandón (Maya) discourse

Submitted to: The Volkswagen Foundation.

Submitted by: Dr. B. F. Carlson and S.E. Cook

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## **LACANDÓN CULTURAL HERITAGE**

### **ABSTRACT**

This project is aimed at the documentation of Lacandón, a Yucatecan Mayan dialect spoken by around 600 people in the rain forest of Chiapas, Mexico. They are divided into a northern and southern group that are culturally similar yet ethnically separate. Both groups are descendants of Yucatec-speaking refugees who escaped assimilation and extermination during the Spanish Conquest and the nationalizing influences that came later. The southern Lacandonese were eventually converted to Christianity and have since lost most of their traditional knowledge. By contrast, the northern Lacandonese remained culturally intact right up until 21st Century. The northern Lacandonese are the focus of the documentation project, because they are now on the cusp of change. With the death of their patriarch, intensified deforestation, and a burgeoning migrant population, the community has begun to abandon their traditional way of life and join the modern world. Currently, all but the elder women are bilingual, and although the language of child-rearing is Lacandón, parents see proficiency in Spanish as an advantage and are sending their children to the new state-run primary school. At the same time, Spanish television has become the single source of entertainment, stories are no longer told in communal settings, and a Baptist church has recently been founded in the community. Several Lacandonese have expressed deep concern that the culture is not being passed on to the children, and have asked for help to preserve it.

Cook and Carlson aim to build a comprehensive visual, aural, and written record of the living traditions of the Lacandón culture. The approach entails developing a system of language description for Lacandón that incorporates all the relevant data to describe the language within its socio-cultural and historical setting. The description system is designed non-hierarchically, permitting an infinite number of links between pieces of textual, linguistic, socio-cultural information, and the raw (recorded) data. The documentation will be made available on DVD and the Internet. Also envisioned is a trilingual (Lacandón/Spanish and Lacandón/English) DVD dictionary with approximately 9,000 lexical entries, grammatical notes, contextualized examples, and short analyzed texts.

For the Lacandonese, this project will create a living record of their language and cultural traditions. The audio-video recordings and texts can be used to develop projects that aim to preserve Lacandón culture and provide the community with ways of maintaining and strengthening those expressions of their traditional culture. For the academic community, this project will mean the documentation of one of the least well

documented Maya languages. For historical purposes it will help to pin down the Yucatecan subgroup and all that took place in it. The dictionary would be valuable for other interests, including glyphic studies, since presumably Lacandón would contain much that may no longer be retained among the more acculturated groups of Maya.

## **KEY PARTICIPANTS**

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Barry Carlson has worked with the Spokane (Salish) linguistic community for over 30 years, recording and analyzing nearly two hundred narratives. His collaboration with informants, whom he has trained to write their native language, has led to the development of a successful language revival program on the Spokane reservation. His collection of Spokane texts, primarily based on traditional narratives, serves as the main data base for the program and the source for the Spokane Dictionary (University of Montana Occasional Papers in Linguistics, no. 6, 1989). The second edition of the dictionary is in press. Although his Spokane research is on-going, active field work on Spokane has slowed; with only a handful of speakers left, text collection is now impossible. Carlson would like to return to the field and apply his knowledge and linguistic skills to Lacandón.

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Suzanne Cook has extensive experience in the field, working as an anthropological filmmaker and linguist. She has had periodic contact with the northern Lacandones since 1989, filming a variety of cultural activities in collaboration with the community. Cook's linguistic research has focused on Native American ethnopoetics and discourse analysis. Her work includes, *The rhetorical structure of a Lushootseed narrative* (M.A. thesis, University of Victoria, 1999), *Verse structure of a Lushootseed narrative* (in progress), and *Non-apologies: A discourse analysis of public apologies* (in progress). Anthropological film credits include *Solitary Journey*, a one hour documentary on the impact of mountaineering on the Sherpas of Nepal, and *The Healing Ceremony*, a half-hour documentary on the effects of Canada's child welfare system on the First Nations.

Both documentaries have been broadcast on international television networks. *Solitary Journey* won eleven international awards.

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Dr. Penelope Brown is a linguistic anthropologist at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, The Netherlands. She brings to the project over three decades of experience working in the Tzeltal (Mayan) community in Chiapas, Mexico. Her particular research focus has been the the spatial language and cognition of adults. She has collected and archived over 800 hours of audio-video data, most of which records natural interaction between native speakers.

## 1. CONTEXT

### 1.1 The Lacandones

The Lacandón Mayas live in the rain forest of Chiapas, Mexico. They are the descendants of Yucatec-speaking refugees who escaped assimilation and extermination during the Spanish Conquest. Protected by their isolation and the hostile nature of the environment, these long-haired, barefooted fugitives preserved, perfected, and passed down their ancient Maya heritage to their children. This included a detailed knowledge of the rain forest and a remarkable system of swidden farming. At the time of the Conquest those Mayas who continued to practice their traditional religion were called the Lacandones. The origin of *Lacandón* is the Maya plural form *ah akan-tun-oob*, which derives from *ah* "the/they"; *akan* "standing/set-up"; *tun* "precious stone". Thus the *ah akantunoob* were "those who set up (and worshipped) stone idols" (Bruce 1982:8). Another analysis of the term is given by Tozzer (1907:4) as *acun* thunder; *tun* stone (thunder stone?). The Spaniards adopted the term and used it to refer to the "pagans" or the "Maya wild Indians". El Acantún became El Lacantún, which further deformed to El Lacandón. The Lacandones, however, refer to themselves as the *Hach Winik* "True People."

Today, the Lacandones number around 600 men, women, and children. All still live in their jungle settlements. Of the 600, roughly 250 live in Nahá, 50 in Mensábäk, and 300 in Lacanjá. These numbers change during peak tourist season, when ten percent of the population moves to Palenque to peddle their souvenirs. A few families reside permanently in Palenque, following a pattern that has been going on since the 1790s when Lacandón men were marrying Palenque women. A few others live in San Cristobal

de las Casas. However, the majority of families and individuals restrict their movements to travelling back and forth among the three villages (Jon McGee 2000, personal communication).

Although culturally similar, the Lacandones do not constitute a single ethnic group. The population is divided into a northern and a southern community. The northern Lacandones live west of the Usumacinta River, and southeast of the Mayan ruins of Palenque. The southern Lacandones reside southeast of the northern Lacandón territory and near the ruins of Bonampak. Each group views the other as being different, which is reflected in their terms for one another. The northern Lacandones refer to their southern neighbours as *Chukuch Nok* "Long Tunics." The southern Lacandones call the northerners *Naachi Winik* "Far Away People" or *Huntul Winik* "Other People" (Boremanse 1998:8). Although they speak their own regional variety of Lacandón, each group considers the other's speech to be deficient, and at times, unintelligible (Bruce 1992, personal communication).

One significant difference between the two groups is the degree of cultural conservatism each has retained. Efforts to Christianize the Lacandones have been partially successful, with the total conversion of the southern Lacandones in the 1960s. Conversion of the northern Lacandones proved futile, because the missionaries failed in their efforts to discredit and dismantle the prestige of the patriarch, Chan K'in Viejo, or his profound religious devotion. His community continued to practice the ancient traditions right up until his death in 1996.

## **1.2 Language**

Lacandón is one of many Mayan languages spoken in Chiapas, Mexico. It is a Yucatecan dialect that further divides into mutually intelligible northern and southern regional varieties. The language is far closer than other Yucatec dialects to the original Classic Maya, simply because the Lacandones were not subject to centuries of political, cultural, religious, and linguistic domination by the Colonial Spaniards and the Mexican State. Spanish influence is limited to isolated terms which have been incorporated into an otherwise pure Peninsular Maya system.

The clause structure is morphologically ergative; yet, the extent to which it is syntactically ergative needs yet to be determined (Christian Lehmann 2001, personal communication). Verbs take suffixes to indicate valency (especially transitivity, causation, reflexivity), tense/aspect/mood and person. Nouns take possessive suffixes. Both nouns and verbs are preceded by clitics of personal reference (possessor and subject, respectively). The verb complex is introduced by tense/aspect/mood markers that co-occur with corresponding suffixes on the verb.

## **1.3 Previous Research and data collection**

Research: Lacandón is one of the least known of the Middle American languages (Campbell 1979:929; Andy Hofling 2000, personal communication; Nora England 2000,

personal communication). A grammar (Bruce 1968) and an unpublished dictionary (Canger 1969) are available for northern Lacandón. Baer and Merrifield (1967) give a sketch of the Lacandón pronominal system. Comparative studies of Lacandón and other peninsular Maya languages are provided in Fisher (1973), Romero Castillo (1977) and Tozzer (1978[1907]). Oral performances of northern and southern Lacandón are examined in McGee (1987, 1997a, 1997b) and Boremanse (1981) respectively. Narrative texts of the northern Lacandones are published in Bruce (1974, 1976, 1979). Anthropological studies on Lacandón ceremonies, folklore and mythology are found in Boremanse (1978, 1979, 1981), Soustelle (1959), and Thompson (1930, 1977). Baer and Baer (1952) provide Lacandón ethnographic data on the material culture and life cycle of the northern Lacandones.

Audio-visual collections: Some audio-visual materials have been collected over the years, primarily by Robert Bruce and Jon McGee. Bruce's collection presumably consists of narratives, songs and ceremonial speech he recorded during his 30 years of fieldwork in Nahá. These recordings were most likely recorded on 1/4" reel-to-reel tapes. But this is purely speculation, because his materials have neither been archived nor made publicly available.

McGee's principal materials include myths recited by Chan K'in Viejo and interviews with Lacandón women on their marriages. The texts were all recorded on audio cassette tapes using a Marantz cassette deck. McGee also shot two films on Super 8 and transferred them to one-inch video tape. Most of these recordings are neither archived nor publicly accessible.

Cook has recorded various cultural activities and interviews on 16mm film and 1/4" reel-to-reel tape. These materials have been transferred to Digital Beta. Cook and Carlson video taped several hours on Digital High 8, 1/4" reel-to-reel and audio cassette tapes, in 2000. An inventory of their data is included in the Appendix.

## **2. DETAILED DESCRIPTION**

### **2.1 Urgency of documentation**

Although the northern Lacandones had managed to escape the fate of all other groups in Mesoamerica, they are now facing cultural extinction. A burgeoning migrant population, accelerated degradation of the forest, and the pressures of modern western consumerism are having an undeniable impact on the Lacandón community. Young men are devoting more time to manufacturing souvenirs for the lucrative tourist market, and less time to traditional activities, such as swidden farming (McGee 1990). Instead, they hire immigrant laborers who use commercial farming techniques that are fatal to the forest ecology. Not only is this practice exhausting the soil, it is also replacing a remarkably productive system that is part of a single cultural complex of interrelated, recurring cycles that integrate the natural and the supernatural. The Lacandón swidden cycle finds expression in an important myth of creation and destruction. Each episode in the myth

finds a corresponding real-life stage in the swidden cycle (McGee 1997:189). Conceivably, when the real-life cycle becomes irrelevant so too will the corresponding myth, since it will no longer have a basis in reality. Traditional wisdom will soon dwindle away along with the language used to convey it.

Lacandón religion is also starting to disintegrate. After the death of Chan K'in Viejo, many young Lacandones abandoned ritual activities, including the communal balché ceremony. The balché ceremony is a central ritual in Lacandón religion. It is a time when communion with the gods is sought, and inebriation on balché is the means of initiating this contact (McGee 1987:108). Part of the ceremony includes a song that displays the semantic couplet structure characteristic of Classic Maya literature and the metaphorical symbolism of pre-Hispanic Maya. Today, Chan K'in's god-house is silent, and his god-pots - portals through which the gods receive their offerings - have been shelved. A new Baptist church has been raised nearby.

Story-telling has come to an end. As is the case in oral societies, story-telling serves to instruct and entertain. In Lacandón society, story-telling is typically the job of the patriarch. Since no one succeeded Chan K'in, this practice has stopped. Instruction is now taken over by a state-run primary school, which teaches children about the world and everything Mexican in the language of the dominant culture (Spanish.) Television has made its way into the village. Nearly every Lacandón household owns a satellite dish, which funnels in 60 channels of Spanish and English programming.

Barring any changes, the opportunity to observe and study an essentially pure Maya institution in terms of language, thought, and values will soon be gone.

### **3. PRIMARY FOCUS OF DOCUMENTATION**

The project we are proposing is a comprehensive documentation of Lacandón. It will embody a representative sample of communicative events recorded in natural settings and annotated textual representations (transcriptions and translations) together with the context and ethnographic details of the speech situation. The documentation will include approximately 9,000 lexical entries and a short reference grammar that draw on the information in the recordings. The entire corpus will be organized more on the order of a chrestomathy (collection of passages to help in learning a language), which goes beyond grammatical description to include cultural annotation. It will be implemented on a computer database program that permits the interface of pieces of information from each module through a network of links within the language description system and between it and the audio-video recordings. Because the contents of the language description system are not organized hierarchically, the number of potential links is infinite. As such, it is not only useful for linguists, but to any person wishing to use it in his or her own investigations in any one of the disciplines of the Humanities. As a comprehensive visual, aural and written record of the living traditions of Lacandón culture, it is both a priceless artifact and a resource for those in the community who wish to preserve and revitalize their heritage.

A documentation of this sort is essential, because the current Lacandón research is woefully incomplete. There is no complete grammar or dictionary of the language. Moreover, most language descriptions are based on a very small sample of texts that were recited by three illustrious old men. There is no adequate documentation of the speech situations in which the language is used. As a result, we do not have a fair impression of how and for what purposes the language is used in the community.

### 3.1 Text Collection

Lacandones have words to describe a few language styles: *baxa* "joke"; *k'ay* "song", and *tsikbal* "chat, talk". Although *tsikbal* typically refers to conversation, in reference to myth telling it describes a characteristic genre of Lacandón mythic narrative that is different from conversation. Researchers have generally focused on the mythic type of *tsikbal* to the exclusion of jokes. Songs, although published, have not received adequate linguistic treatment. Ordinary talk has not been described at all.

Despite the lack of Lacandón labels, other types of language or speech styles must exist. At the very least, we expect to find instructional, procedural, and descriptive language. Presumably these fall within the Lacandón category referring to "ordinary talk". Concentration on certain types of speech situations and/or text genres appears justified, to the extent that existent material has to be complemented.

**3.1.1 Kinds of data to be collected.** In most of the following speech situations we expect to find and document a variety of genres, subgenres and styles.

#### Jokes and songs

Relative Priority will be given to documenting jokes and songs, because they have not been adequately described.

#### Women's speech (or "kitchen" Lacandón)

Special attention will be given to documenting the communicative lives of Lacandón women. Because researchers ignored the women in favor of working with the men, we do not know what differences exist between the language of men and women in Lacandón society. Documenting the speech of women is important to a better understanding of the communicative life of the community. Not only because they constitute half of the society, but because their speech (and discourse) may differ from men's in certain respects. It has been shown that in "primitive" societies women and men have different knowledge associated with male and female occupations (see work by Mary Haas and Margaret Mead). And that specialized knowledge is reflected in their language. Women have been found to have different pronouns, use special words, and employ different grammatical markers than men. Women also have their own discourse routines associated with domestic tasks. Cook and Carlson have already found a special Lacandón discourse routine related to tortilla-making. Presumably the women know others. Moreover, most of the older women (over 45 years) are monolingual and hence many use special expressions or archaic forms not found in the speech of the bilingual community.

### Language of occupation and technology

Previous researchers ignored the language associated with hunting, farming, and other male activities. To better understand how and for what purposes the language is used in the community, we need to examine the language associated with cultural preoccupation and technology. It would also include language associated with the Lacandones' detailed knowledge of their environment and the swidden cycle. Ethnographic accounts of the *milpa* cycle are abstract accounts of the activity, showing the relationship of the milpa cycle to myths of creation and destruction. What is needed are descriptions of the communicative events that are associated with the cycle, including narratives on the relationship of the cycle to the seasons of the forest, and procedural and descriptive language. Similarly, botanical/zoological lore, species identification and descriptions of use/preparation will be documented.

### Rituals and narratives

Documentation will also focus on varieties of ritual performances and traditional narratives. Most of the descriptions focus on communal ceremonies, notably the balché ceremony, to the exclusion of the variety of private rituals individuals perform. Of the traditional narratives, only mythic stories have been documented. Other narratives, such as personal histories or narratives recounting personal experiences, have not been documented. It is important to document these communicative events not only for a better understanding of the range of narrative genres, styles, and narrative performance, but for the content as well, since they embody a wealth of knowledge that will soon be lost.

### Material previously collected by others

Another important task of the documentation will entail integrating materials previously collected by others. These materials include Bruce and McGee's recordings, which have never been made available. Presumably, these materials contain a valuable information that can never be recovered. Not only is it vital that these records be preserved, but they may provide important data for this project. Old texts would help to better understand the language of the contemporary recordings, while the visual information on the video would help better understand the context of the old texts.

Utmost attention will be given to recording high quality texts. High quality texts are those whose content is central to the culture, and which exhibit textual cohesion, style, good articulation, and a richness of system resources. Ensuring high quality recordings may entail repetition of recording, production of alternate versions (with different speakers), and production of edited versions.

**3.1.2 Processing of the data.** The audio-visual recordings will be digitized and converted into WAV (MP3 for large files) and MPEG1(MPEG2/4) files. In-field processing of the data includes the transcription and translation of the recordings. The texts will be represented in a format that combines them with three annotation tiers: orthography using the Mayanist conventions, and free translations in both Spanish and English. An adequate sample will include three further annotation tiers: a morpheme-by-



morpheme tier with glosses in Spanish and English; a syntactic tier; and a phonetic transcription using the International Phonetic Alphabet conventions.

**3.1.3 Linguistic/ethnological analyses.** Linguistic/ethnological analyses of the data include the representation of data at diverse levels, i.e. linguistic analysis, socio-historical, situation of language, and comments on the description (history of research and place of present description), and annotations. Annotations and lexica will be generated using the EUDICO Linguistic Annotator (ELAN), developed at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, and SIL Shoebox 5. Metadata descriptions, which describe the sociolinguistic context of the speech event, will be generated using the IMDI Editor developed by the ISLE Metadata Initiative.

The result is the documentation proper: twenty-two hours of fully documented audio-video recordings, 1,300 pages of textual representations, and 9,000 lexical entries.

**3.1.4 Interface to the description.** The linguistic description system will be designed non-hierarchically, so as to permit an infinite number of links among pieces of textual, linguistic (phonology, grammar, lexicon) and socio-cultural information. The Interface between the audio-video files and the description will be achieved through an indexing system that associates each piece of text with the corresponding piece of audio-video data.

**3.1.5 The final version.** The final version of the project will be totally coherent, self-contained and user-friendly, useful for linguists and to any person wishing to use it in his or her own investigations in any one of the disciplines of the Humanities.

### **3.2 Additional objectives**

The project will be recorded on DVD and made available on the Internet in a format that adheres to the DoBeS standard.

### **3.3 Schedule Of Activities And Projected Output**

**The components of the documentation will be broken down into smaller tasks, which will be integrated into a three-year work schedule. The activities and projected output of each year are as follows:**

#### **Year 1**

Year 1 of the project will entail several tasks. One is processing the rest of the data previously collected by Cook and Carlson. This will take place in the Lacandón village of Nahá, where Cook, Carlson and a research assistant will work with three Lacandón consultants hired on a full-time basis four hours a day, five days a week during May - June. At the same time, the team will record and process two additional hours of textual material and collect lexical data and morphological forms through interviews with Lacandón speakers. On their return to Victoria, they will convert the data into a machine

readable format and store them on disks while the database is created. During this phase Cook/Carlson will work on the development of the overall design of the documentation and language description system. Once the design has been determined, and the database configured, all the materials collected by Cook and Carlson will be downloaded into the system. A research assistant will help in the linguistic work, in addition to exploring all the previous published and unpublished work (both recorded data and descriptions) and integrating it into the projected documentation. Two student assistants will be employed to do the technical work, including typing unpublished manuscripts into the database. These activities will continue through to the end of the first year. Cook and Carlson will attend a DoBeS workshop and meet with the technical advisors to discuss the technical details and matters relevant to the project.

Projected Output of Year 1: five hours of audio-video recordings fully documented (i.e. represented at all the relevant linguistic and medial levels), six genres (i.e. conversation, description, explanation, song [formal and secular], ceremony, and narrative); 300 pages of text; 2100 lexical entries; an established language description system containing all the documentation data; thorough exploration of relevant materials previously collected by others.

## **Year 2**

The second year of the project will continue documentation and description activities. Because the Lacandones engage in different (ceremonial) activities corresponding to the four seasons, fieldwork will take place at different times each year. Fieldwork will be scheduled to coincide with different cultural activities. Cook and a research assistant will return to the field where they will spend two months documenting ceremonial offerings and other communicative activities, with the assistance of our three Lacandón consultants, who will work according to the schedule set in Phase 1. At the same time, they will continue to review their data for omissions and ambiguities. Activities at the University of Victoria will include: converting and processing the materials previously collected by others, and integrating these data into the database, with the assistance of a research assistant and two graduate students. During this time we may bring a Lacandón consultant to the University of Victoria to work on a phonetic analysis of the language with Dr. John Esling for electronic publication on the International Phonetic Association's web-site. The results would also be integrated into the project. During this time, the consultant may also consent to giving talks on his culture in small, informal seminars for the University community. The university has already committed funding to bring a Lacandón consultant to Victoria for this purpose.

Projected Output of Year 2: conversion and integration of materials previously collected by others; expansion from five to ten hours of fully documented audio-video files; 600 pages of text representations; 4200 lexical entries; further expansion of the language description system; the preparation of a paper by members of the research team for conference presentation and publication; possible phonetic analysis.

## **Year 3**

Year 3 of the project will entail the preparation of an additional paper for conference presentation and/or a workshop, linguistic analysis, and the development of a trial version of the DVD version of the project. Cook, Carlson, and a research assistant will make a third trip into the field where they will document cultural activities and associated communicative events, and record speakers re-telling narratives and performing rituals described in the "old" manuscripts (i.e. texts previously collected by others) but which had never been recorded. These performances will be cross-checked with the old materials for omissions and ambiguities. Linguistic analysis and elicitation work will be ongoing. The collected data will be converted and integrated into the language description system on their return to the University.

Projected Output of Year 3: presentation of paper and/or workshop; expansion from ten to fifteen hours of fully documented audio-video files; 900 pages of textual representations; 6300 lexical entries; further expansion of the language description system.

### 3.4

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#### **4. COOPERATION: Speech community; Institutions in Mexico and Germany**

**Community cooperation:** Cook has lived and worked with the northern Lacandones on and off since 1989. Over the years she has developed a strong rapport with several members of the community. Many of the members she worked with are eager to participate in this documentation project. Five young adults have already spent countless hours helping transcribe and translate texts Cook/Carlson recorded on their field trip there last July. Others who were involved in that project include seventy-five year-old Antonio Martinez, the community's most respected elder; Chan K'in Viejo's widows and son, K'ayum Ma'ax.

Permission to conduct fieldwork is initially sought from a community council (of a sort) comprising any number of men who convene to discuss civic matters as they arise. Although there is a President, decisions are made collectively. Ultimately, permission is granted by the individual directly involved in the project.

The community in general supports the project and anticipates our return. The Lacandonese have always shown a willingness to help in whatever way they can, be it conducting ceremonies, telling stories, acting as guides in the forest, etc. Although the community as whole has not indicated what it expects, individuals with whom we have worked have expressed an interest in developing tools they can use to teach the children about the ceremonies and stories. Some young adults have asked us to teach them how to read and write their language.

Copies of the transcriptions, audio cassettes, video recordings (VHS), and the field dictionary will be given to community.

**German cooperation:** Dr. Penelope Brown, with the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, The Netherlands, will be the German partner on the Lacandon Cultural Heritage documentation project. Dr. Brown brings to the project her expertise in the documentation and analysis of natural discourse. She will be advising on matters relating to the collection and processing of the Lacandon data, and will provide input on the collection and documentation techniques of recording and documenting language use, especially as it relates to the documentation of women's discourse in natural contexts.

## **5. PROJECT FEASIBILITY**

**Permission:** Permission from the Mexican government is not necessary. The community has given its permission, as have the individuals who worked with Cook and Carlson on their last field trip. Having gained experience in transcription and translation procedures, several consultants are sufficiently prepared to contribute to the processing of the texts. Elders who will be taking part in the project are hale and hearty. All the consultants are close at hand.

**Expertise:** The research team is composed of linguists who have experience in fieldwork situations. Each brings to the project individual expertise in language documentation and description, dictionary design and compilation, and audio-video production. Barry Carlson has extensive fieldwork experience in documenting endangered language in the Northwest and in designing and publishing two editions of a Spokane (Salish) dictionary. Suzanne Cook has a working knowledge of Spanish, and has filmed a variety of aboriginal communities on location over a twenty-year period. Penelope Brown has vast experience collecting discourse in field situations, and analyzing discourse recorded in natural settings.

**Technical infrastructure:** The technical infrastructure needed to transfer, digitize, and organize the data according to the criteria specified by the Nijmegen DoBeS team is in place at the University of Victoria.

## **6. APPLICANTS' AGREEMENT**

The applicants will record and process their data in accordance with the technical, linguistic and juridical framework of the program group "Documentation of Endangered Languages", and transfer the Lacandón documentation to the archives of the central data bank project.

## **7. GENERAL ACCESSIBILITY OF THE DATA**

The applicants will not put restrictions on the distribution of their archived database. However, they expect to be granted exclusive right of access to their data for a period of up to three years following the completion of the project.

## **8. APPLICANTS' PREVIOUS WORK ON THE SUBJECT**

Cook and Carlson conducted fieldwork in the village Nahá in 2000, recording a number of cultural activities and communicative events in natural, authentic situations. Texts include: traditional narratives; songs; ceremonial and secular rituals; procedural and descriptive discourse; and ordinary conversations from other community members whose ages ranged from twelve to seventy-five. They also recorded ordinary conversations between Lacandón women and their daughters, including a traditional discourse associated with the ritual of tortilla-making. A portion of that text was analyzed and presented as a paper by Cook at the Society for the Study of Indigenous Languages of the Americas (SSILA) Meeting in Santa Barbara in July 2001. Cook and Carlson worked closely with several consultants to transcribe and translate some of these texts, a new experience for these young men and one they thoroughly enjoyed. Prior to this fieldwork, Cook had engaged the community in a documentary film project that spanned two and half years. All of the data exist in digital formats, i.e. Digital Beta, digital 8, and DAT. An inventory of the collection is included in the Appendix.

As regards work on documenting endangered languages, Carlson has over thirty years experience recording Spokane, an Interior Salish dialect spoken in Washington State, USA.

## **9. ADDITIONAL FUNDING APPLICATIONS**

Applications for funding this project have not been submitted to other institutions or agencies.

## **10. GRANT RECIPIENTS**

The proposed grant recipients are Dr. Barry F. Carlson and Suzanne Cook.

## **APPENDIX 1. Inventory of Cook/Carlson's collection**

### ***Narratives***

- "Antonio Martinez's narration of *Jaguar and Rabbit*. 2000. Digital video (DV).  
Transcribed and translated.
- "Antonio Martinez's narration of the *Jaguar and the Man*. 2000. DV. Transcribed and translated.
- "The story of *Jaguar and Rabbit* narrated by Kin Garcia Paniagua. 2000. DV.  
Transcribed and translated.
- "Chan K'in Viejo's story to Lacandón children. 1992. 16mm film, 1/4" reel-to-reel.  
Transcribed and translated.
- "Antonio Martinez's story of the birth of the Lacandón Lord, Hachäkyum. 2000. DV.  
Transcribed.

### ***Songs***

- "Chan K'in's song in praise of women. 1989. 16mm film, 1/4" audio. Transcribed and translated.
- "Antonio Martinez's *Song to the Jaguar*: 2000. DV. Transcribed and translated.

### ***Rituals: ceremonial***

- "Antonio Martinez's chant under a tree. 1991. 16mm film, 1/4" audio. Transcribed.
- "Chan K'in Viejo and K'ayum Ma'ax chanting during a balché ceremony. 1989. 16mm film, 1/4" audio tape.
- "Chan K'in Viejo and K'ayum Ma'ax give offerings to Hachäkyum at Yaxchilán. 1989. 16mm film, 1/4" audio tape.
- "Chan K'in Viejo and Old Mateo chant together in the god house. 1991. 16mm, 1/4" audio.

### ***Rituals: Secular***

- "Chanuk's "kitchen Lacandón": tortilla-making discourse. 2000. DV. Transcribed and translated.

### ***Procedural /Descriptive language***

- "Antonio Martinez's explanation of the solar movements during winter solstice. 2000. DV. Transcribed.
- "Plant terms and descriptions provided by K'ayum Garcia. 2000. 1/4" audio.  
Transcribed and partially translated.
- "Plant terms and descriptions elicited from Antonio Martinez. 2000. 1/4" audio.  
Transcribed and translated.

### ***Conversations***

- "Conversation between Chan K'in Viejo and K'ayum Ma'ax regarding the selection of gods for the balché ceremony. 1989. 16mm, 1/4" audio. Transcribed and translated.

"The Kohs gathering of water snails: DV.

"Antonio Martinez's ritual to the leaf cutter ants. 1991. 16mm, 1/4" audio. Transcribed and translated

"Chan K'in Viejo's incantations during a balché ceremony. 1989. 16mm, 1/4" audio.

"Chan K'in Viejo's offering of balché to the gods. 1989. 16mm, 1/4" audio.

"The Kohs and their family visit grandma. 2000. DV.

"The Kohs and their family search for medicinal plants and mangoes in an abandoned corn field. 2000. DV

"Casual conversing of men during a balché ceremony in the god house. 1989. 16mm, 1/4" audio.

"Koh III and Chanuk discuss Lacandón traditional marriage customs. 2000. DV.

"Koh IV converses with neighbors on her way to the lagoon. 2000. DV.

"Chan K'in Viejo and his son K'ayum Ma'ax converse while weeding their milpa together. 1989. 16mm, 1/4" audio.

"K'ayum Ma'ax chats to his Chan K'in Viejo while he paints his portrait. 1989. 16mm, 1/4" audio.

### ***Interviews***

"Chan K'in Viejo talks about the history of his family, his community, and the founding of Nahá. 1989. 16mm, 1/4" audio.

"Chan K'in talks about the changes in Lacandón society and the Lacandón youths of today. 1992. 16mm, 1/4" audio.

### ***Other speech situations***

"Baptist church service translated "UN style" by Sako'. 2000. DV and 1/4" audio.

"Lunch-time sequences in the Kohs' kitchen. 2000. DV.