



The “villagesign” project

Endangered sign languages in village communities

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Context of our project:

A crash course for non-signers

- What is a sign language?
- What is a deaf community?
- How do we study sign languages and deaf communities?
- What is a village sign language?
- Why are village sign languages endangered?



Life in a deaf village

- Ban Khor (Thailand): 3 examples of language use *in situ*
 - Foraging for cicadas
 - Fishing
 - At a shamanistic ceremony
- *Desa Kolok (Bali)*



Foraging for Cicadas



Fishing



At a Shamanistic Ceremony

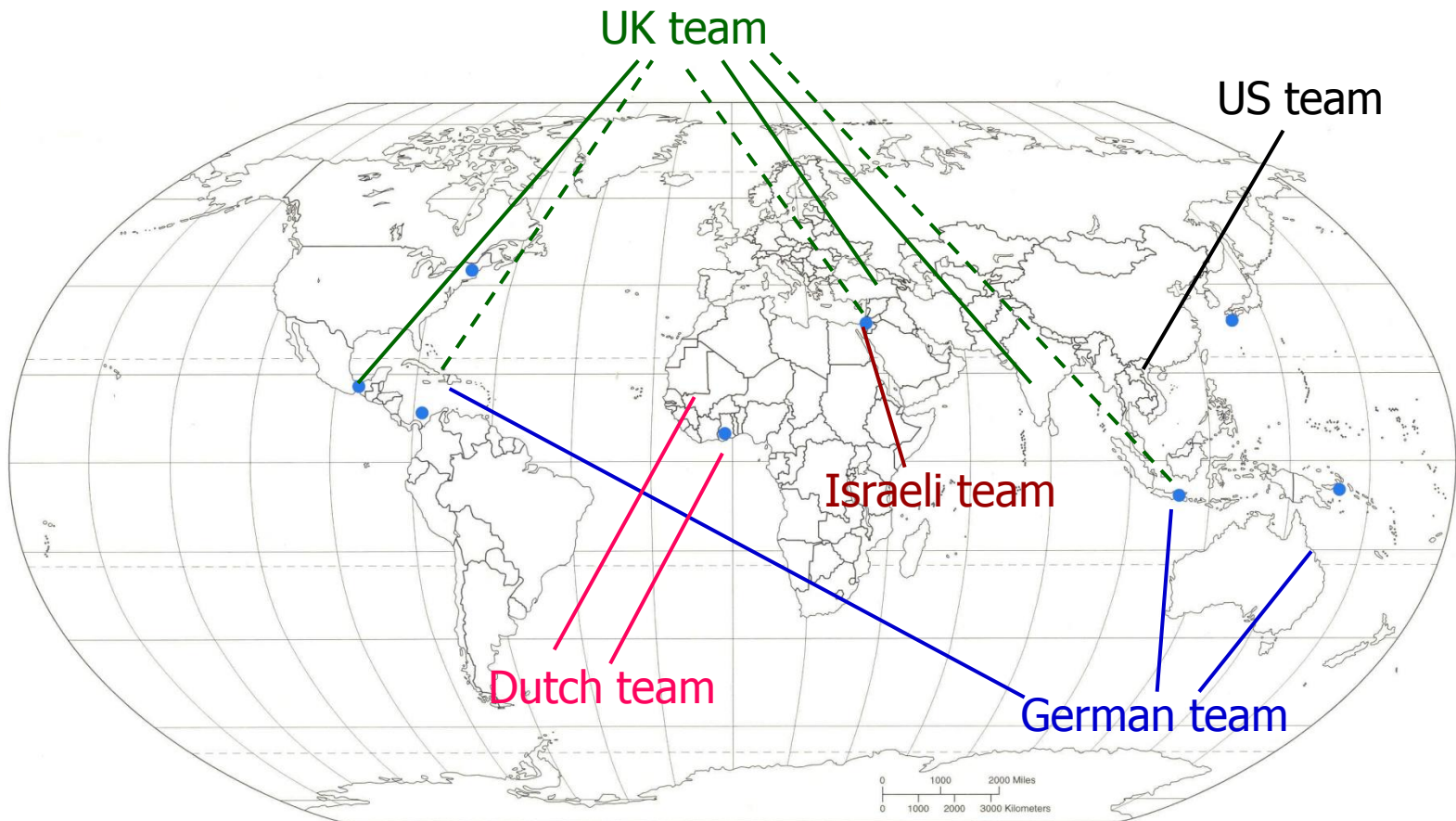


(Desa Kolok example)

Our field sites



Our research teams





Research questions

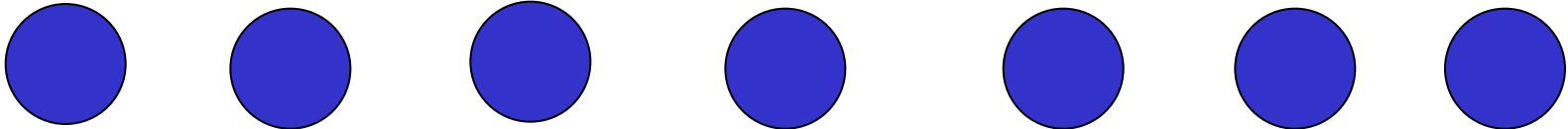
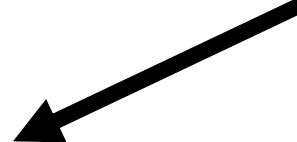
- How do village sign languages challenge received views about the characteristics of “sign language” as a unified type of language?
- What role does the sociolinguistic setting of these village sign languages play in relation to the differences between rural and urban sign languages?
- How does our perspective on language modality, that is, signed versus spoken language, change if we consider a wider range of both urban and village sign languages?



Methodologies

Typology research protocol

Anthropology research protocol



FIELD SITES

Support strands:

- Ethical standards working group
- Corpus development working group
- Fieldwork methodology working group



Methodologies: Examples

- From sign linguistics
- From anthropology



Documenting Sign Languages

Sign Language Typology

TYPOLOGICAL
PARAMETERS

COMPARISON WITH
SPOKEN LANGUAGE
DATA

DATA COLLECTION

INDUCTIVE
GENERALISATIONS


*A.1.1 What are the possible word orders?

[X] pron - poss

[] poss - pron

[X] pron - poss - pron

[] poss - pron - poss



Skin rash	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pain in throat	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Pain in ears	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
Weakness	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>	<input checked="" type="radio"/>	<input type="radio"/>
				Common cold	Measles



Anthropology in a deaf village

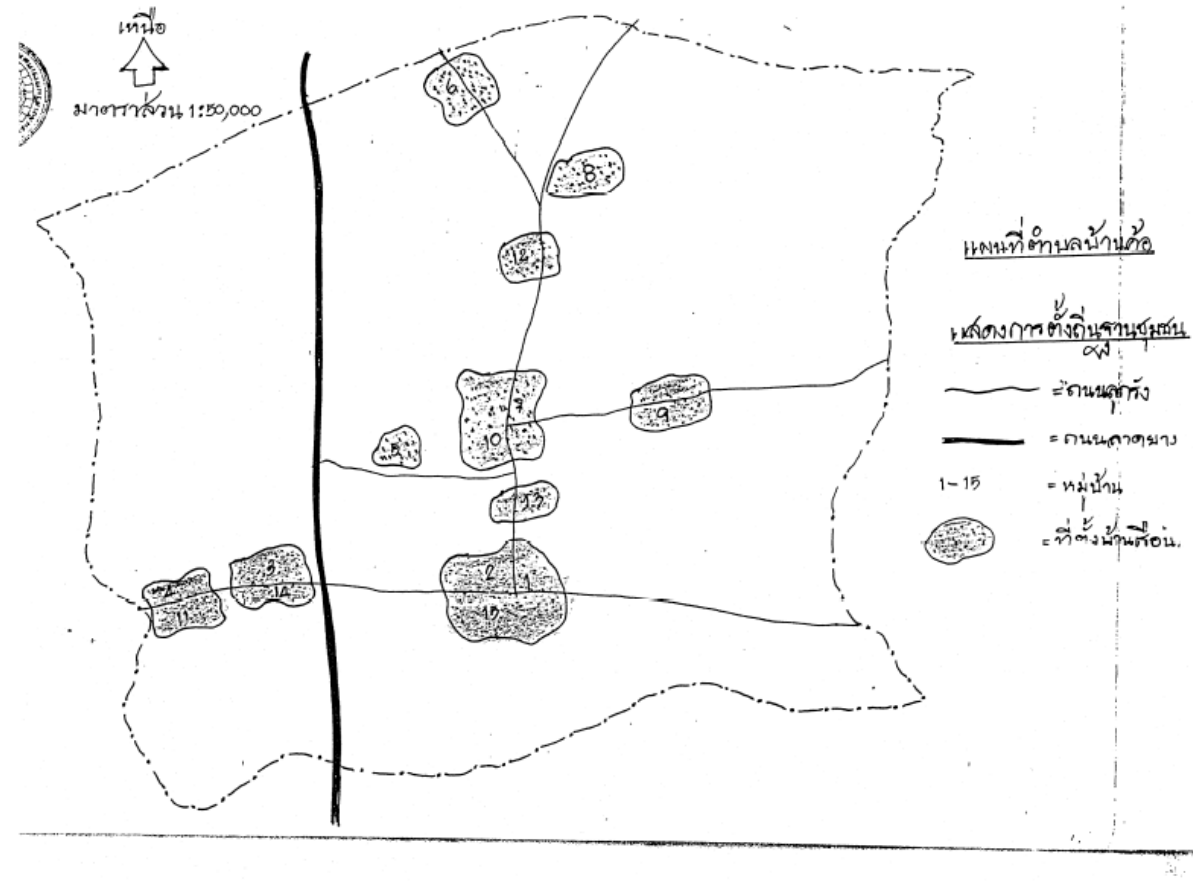
- Holistic approach to language *in situ*
 - Complementary methodology
 - Establishing sociolinguistic context
- Topics of interest include:
 - Local constructions & explanations of “deafness”
 - Local language ideologies about sign language
 - Domains of local language use
 - Factors impacting language vitality or endangerment
 - First-pass estimate of speech/sign community



Anthropology in a deaf village

- First-pass estimate of speech/sign community
 - Size
 - Scope
 - Membership
- Metric
 - Mapping
 - Demographic analysis
 - Surname analysis
 - Kinship diagramming
 - Medical genetic pedigrees
 - Social network analysis

Mapping Ban Khor: Sub-district & Village

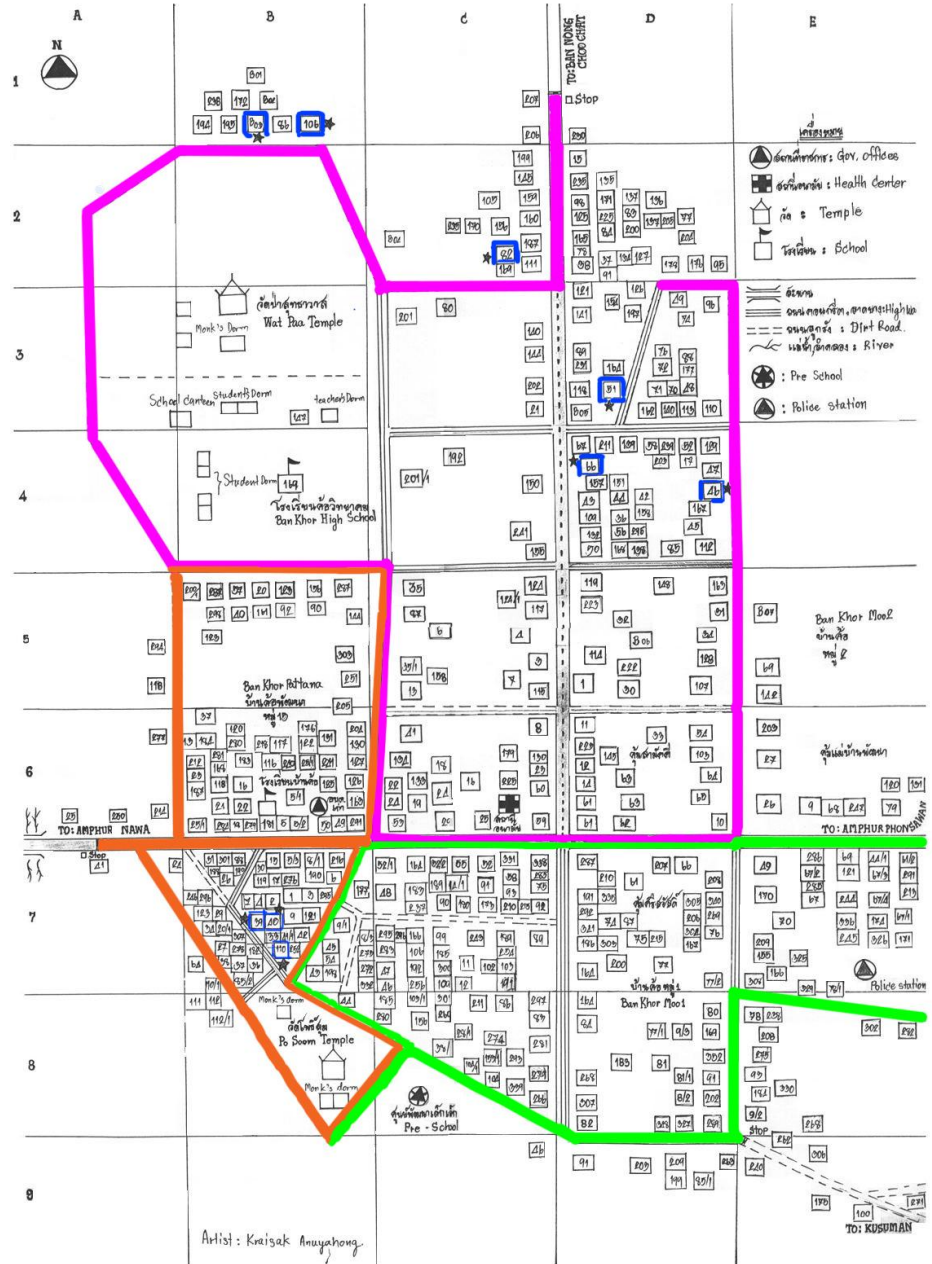


Ban Khor Residential Map

- Ban Khor = 3 *moo*
- 1.8 square miles or
4, 663, 596 square meters
466.20 hectares

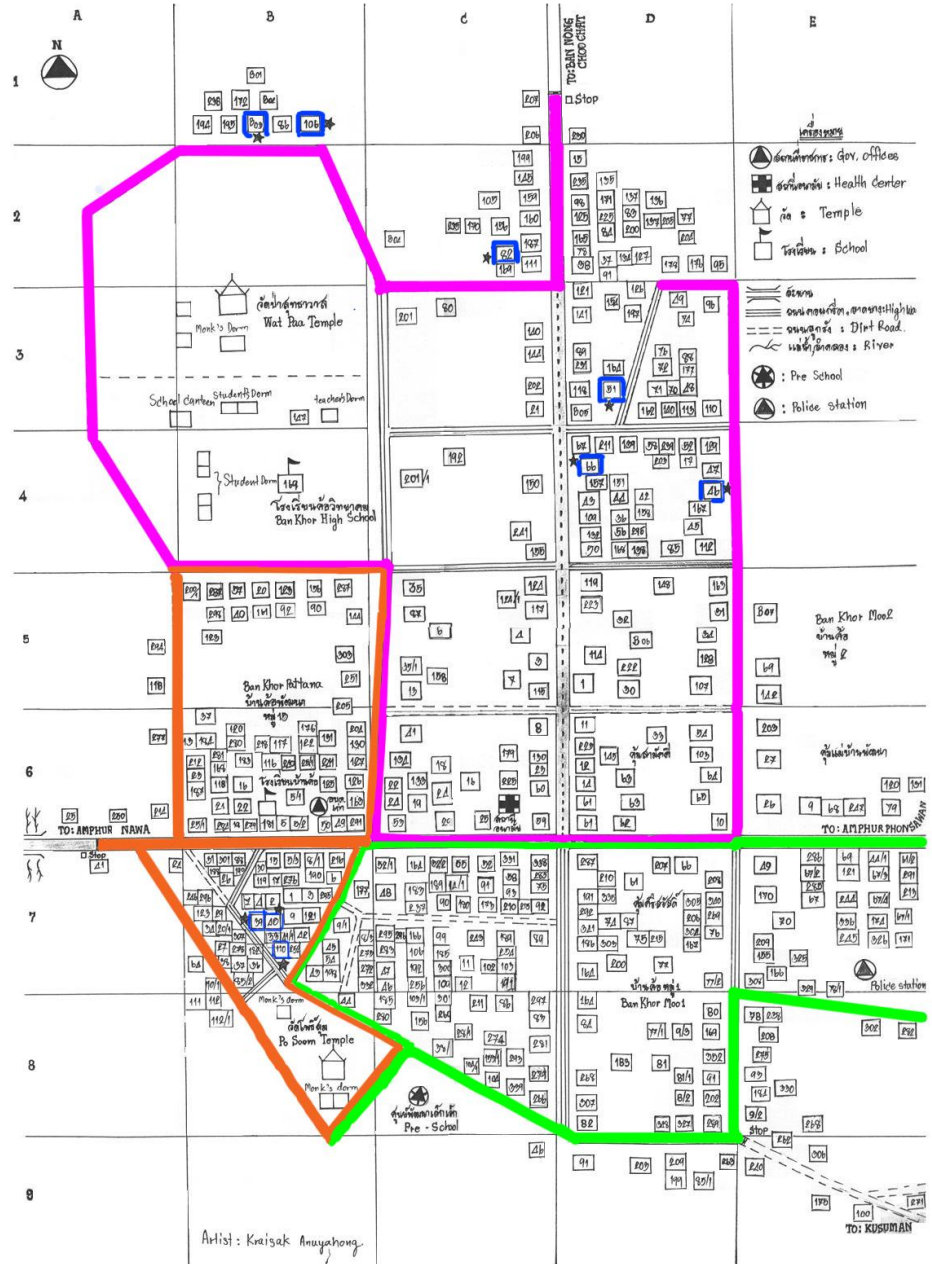
KEY:

- Moo* 1 = orange
- Moo* 2 = pink
- Moo* 15 = green
- deaf home = blue



Ban Khor Residential Map

- 16 deaf/ total pop. 2,741
- 4 generations of signers
- Belong to 3 kin groups
- Hereditary deafness
- Dominant transmission
- Clustering of deaf people in sub-villages #2 & 15





BKSL Speech/Sign Community

Social Network Analysis Results

- 400+ signers = conservative estimate
- BKSL speech/sign community size:
 - 15% of all villagers
 - 26% of sub-village (*Moo*) #2



Research process



Research protocols and support strands

Features of interest for each field site

Common themes and comparative analysis



Possible areas of overlap with other EuroBabel projects

- Grammatical domains, e.g.:
 - Spatial reference
 - Number
 - Word classes
 - Person marking
- Ethics/community involvement, e.g. training for language communities
- Methodologies and practical considerations, e.g. video corpora



Contact

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