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The Documentation of Chedungun and the Pewenche Highlands: Phase One

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This article provides a descriptive guide to the documentation of Chedungun, the regional variant of Mapudungun (ISO 639-2 code *arn*) that is spoken by the Pewenche people. The 15-hour documentation is currently deposited in the Endangered Language Archive (ELAR) and corresponds to Phase One of a long-term initiative that is currently progressing to a post-doctoral project (Phase Two). Both phases are supported and funded by the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme. Since the objective of the project is to document the endangered migratory lifestyle and language of the Pewenche people, we will reflect on how the territorial inaccessibility imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic challenged the project's elemental strategy, which relied on several documentary journeys to the lands that are seasonally occupied by the Pewenche during the summer for transhumance purposes. We will show why the collaborative workflow sustained by self-documentation practices evolved from an auxiliary tool to a regular and essential element of the team's current and future projects.

1. Introduction[1]

This article provides a descriptive guide for the documentation of Chedungun conducted by the authors during the COVID-19 pandemic years.[2] The project was granted by the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme (ELDP)[3] and resulted in a 15-hour deposit in the Endangered Language Archive (ELAR).[4] Since the work corresponds to the first stage of a long-term documentation (currently linked to a post-doctoral project also granted by the ELDP),[5] this article is the first of two for our ongoing documentation. We will refer to the first concluded stage as Phase One.

Chedungun is a regional variant of Mapudungun (ISO 639-2 code *arn*). It is spoken by the Pewenche people, a distinct small subgroup of the Mapuche, the largest group of indigenous inhabitants in Chile. For centuries, the Pewenche have transited and occupied the Andean slopes of south-central Chile and adjacent areas of Argentina. Some Pewenche communities practice transhumance, the seasonal moving of livestock. This migratory practice requires a bipartite residential cycle with two distinct seasonal settlements: the lowlands for the winter and the highlands for the summer. Given their close link to traditional activities, such as the gathering and harvesting of *ngülliu* (the seed of the Araucaria araucana tree), the highlands bear a rich cultural significance for the Pewenche people. However, this territorial system has not been immune to the endangering factors of modern times, such as industrialization and commercial activities, motivating community members – especially the younger generations – to migrate to urban centers. This has led to the disruption of the traditional practices and the seasonal lifestyle in the highlands.

As we will show, the authors conceived a documentation plan that was both receptive to, and inquisitive about, the endangered migratory practices linked to the highlands. More concretely, since one of the authors of this article (SV) is a Pewenche linguist with strong bonds to the indigenous communities of the Alto Biobío, we aimed to implement a collaborative workflow that enabled us to document *in* and *about* the summer highlands as much as possible. This article describes how these challenges were partially met and re-accommodated due to the extraordinary circumstances that surrounded the project. We will explain how self-documentation practices evolved from an auxiliary methodological recourse (to cope with the territorial restrictions imposed by the COVID-19 pandemic) into a regular and essential element of our current and future work.

Ultimately, our experience in the Andes shows that leaving considerable space for fieldwork design in which at least part of the documentation process can be self-managed by the community members is not only feasible but highly recommendable. We argue that self-documentation practices not only provide a sensible solution to territorial inaccessibility but also create a natural flow of knowledge that can strengthen communal links and shared values. Thus, on a disciplinary level, this article concurs with the growing tendency to promote collaborative and community-based practices within the domain of language documentation (Czaykowska-Higgins 2009; Grenoble 2010; Leonard & Haynes 2010; Rice 2011; Fitzgerald & Hinson 2013). It also adds to recent innovative efforts, emerging from the pandemic, to not only facilitate the engagement of researchers working remotely (Griscom 2022; Grzech & Tisalema Shaca 2022) but also (and fundamentally) to put into practice language documentation fieldwork that truly enhances community agency (Quatra 2011; Olko 2018; Sou et al, 2023).

The article is organized as follows: §2 provides background information on the language and culture (§2.1); especially regarding the migratory practices associated with the Pewenche summer highlands (§2.2); which in turn determined our project's initial motivation and work plan (§2.3). §3 provides a detailed description of how the events actually unfolded (§3.1); the structure and content of the archived resources (§3.2); and the methodological lessons that we have extracted from the overall experience for our current and future work (§3.3). §4 provides conclusions.

[1] We would like to thank the editor and two anonymous reviewers of *Language Documentation & Conservation* for their insightful and constructive comments and suggestions. We are also very grateful to the Endangered Languages Documentation Programme and the Endangered Languages Archive. Special thanks to the ELAR team, Vera Ferreira and Stephanie Petit, for the committed support they provide in the archiving process. Our immense gratitude also extends to Mandana Seyfeddinipur, for the inspiring vision and spirit she puts into the discipline of language documentation. We thank Eva Schultze-Berndt from the University of Manchester, Marisol Henríquez from UCSC, and the late Óscar Aguilera (the Fuegian friend), for their support and shared knowledge. We are also very grateful to our sister and dear friend Mónica Vita Manquepi, without whom the self-documentation would not have been possible. Last, but not least, we express our gratitude to the people of Trapa Trapa and Butalelbun community that welcomed and contributed to our project: Pedro Vita, sisters Victorina and María Ester Manquepi, Luis Crespo, Pedro Tatalao Vita, and all the Pewenche men and women that have shared with us their owe and love for the summer highlands. This article is part of a research project funded by ANID Chile – SA77210114.

[2] Authors will be identified by their initials (PF and SV) hereafter.

[3] ELDP SG0574.

[4] https://www.elararchive.org/dk06310693

[5] ELDP IPF0393.

2. Background: Documenting the language and the land

2.1 The language and the people

Chedungun is the regional variant of Mapudungun spoken by the Pewenche people, a distinct indigenous subgroup within the Mapuche sphere. This section offers a general description of the Mapuche people and Mapudungun (§2.1.1), followed by a contextualized overview of the Pewenche people and Chedungun (§2.1.2). This will provide elemental background information to the unacquainted reader.

2.1.1 The Mapuche people and Mapudungun

The Mapuche people live predominantly in south-central Chile, between the Biobío River and Lake Llanquihue. Migration to urban sites, especially to Santiago, has had a notable effect on the distribution of Mapuche people. Population and housing censuses have been regularly conducted by the Chilean government. However, the fluctuation in the reported numbers of the Mapuche population has resulted in a fair degree of uncertainty about the total number of Mapuche people (cf. Zúñiga 2006: 33–44, for discussion).[6] Somewhat informally, estimates in recent linguistic literature fluctuate between 200,000 and 800,000.[7] The Araucanía Region has the largest concentration of Mapuche people. Its name derives from the colonial terms *Arauco* (for the region) and *Araucanos* (for its indigenous inhabitants). Currently, this latter denomination is unwelcomed by many Mapuche people; activists; and scholars, including, of course, linguists. The preferred endonym is Mapuche.

The Mapuche nation has a long history of resistance, not only against the Incas (in precolonial times) and the Spanish forces (for nearly three centuries), but also against the modern Chilean state (for the last two centuries). The Mapuche territory, which was the base of small-scale agriculture and gathering activities, has been systematically reduced throughout the 210 years of the Chilean republic. The mechanisms responsible for these reductions range from bare usurpation to deceitful state policies and transactions (cf. Correa 2021 for a systematic study). Recent attempts to reach a compensation agreement with the Mapuche people have not gone smoothly, and it is difficult to predict whether an overall "new deal" will be reached.

There are various Mapuche subgroups. Their names derive from the language's deictic terminology: *williche* 'people from the south,' *pikunche* 'people from the north,' *puelche* 'people from the east,' or *lafkenche* 'people from the sea.' It is a matter of debate as to which of these are endonyms and which are exonyms. From a cultural and ethnographic viewpoint, it is arguably the case that *Mapuche* is a generic endonym welcomed by virtually all members of these subgroups. For example, the vast majority of the Pewenche consider themselves Mapuche. Notwithstanding, Mapuche can be used by some speakers and on particular occasions to refer to the indigenous people from central valleys beyond the Pewenche territories.

Mapudungun is a well-studied indigenous language, although some aspects of its grammar remain underexplored. The descriptive literature written in Spanish is vast (see Salas 1992b for a complete bibliographic guide), with grammars dating back to colonial times (Valdivia 1606; Febrés 1765; and Havestadt 1777) and extending into and beyond the 20th century (Augusta 1903; Salas 1992a; Zúñiga 2006). Smeets (2008) presents a recent dedicated grammar written in English, providing a contribution of enormous value. The publication of an extensive Mapudungun–Spanish dictionary (Augusta 1916; see Molineaux 2016) is also worth noting, as well as María Catrileo's (2017) trilingual dictionary.

Mapudungun is a language isolate and is both polysynthetic and agglutinative. It exhibits a complex verbal system due to very productive suffixation and a much simpler nominal domain. Compounding is productive, and the word order relatively flexible, although SVO ordering is predominant. The language does not possess a uniform established writing system, although in academic circles the "Alfabeto Mapuche Unificado," proposed by the Sociedad Chilena de Lingüística (1989), seems to have preference. Other orthographic systems, such as Azümchefe (CONADI 1999) and Raguileo, also have cultural and institutional adherence.

2.1.2 The Pewenche people and Chedungun

Virtually all Pewenche speakers of Chedungun (including one of the authors of this article) will agree that they speak (a regional variation of) Mapudungun. The word *Chedungun* means 'the language of the people' (*che* 'people,' *dungun* 'language'), while "Pewenche" means 'people of the *pewen*' (the *Araucaria araucana* tree). In the linguistic literature, the language is usually referred to as *Pehuenche*, the Spanish denomination for the Pewenche people. We have not adhered to this denomination and use the term Chedungun instead.

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[6] While the 1992, 2002 and 2017 censuses vary considerably with respect to the Mapuche population (928,060; 602,677; and 1,745,147 respectively), the 2012 census was considered unreliable by a commission of experts from the Chilean Instituto Nacional de Estadísticas.

[7] It is worth noting that in the adjacent areas of Argentina, there is a significant congregation of the Mapuche, roughly 300,000 according to Smeets (2008). An Argentinian census give the more conservative number of 76,423 (INDEC 2005).

It is estimated that the Pewenche population in the twelve communities of the Alto Biobío (see Figure 1 below) is roughly 5,000 (Azócar et al. 2005; Henríquez-Barahona 2014). The percentage of fluent speakers of Chedungun within those communities has not been estimated with precision, although it is evident that the number is severely decreasing due to the migration of younger generations to urban settings. The surrounding landscape of the region is comprised of river terraces, semi-populated mountainsides, Araucaria forests, and occasional Andean plateaus, all of which the Pewenche travel between regularly by horseback. Since economic pressure has forced the diversification of activities beyond the traditional lifestyle, some Pewenche families possess and use motorized vehicles for work and transportation.

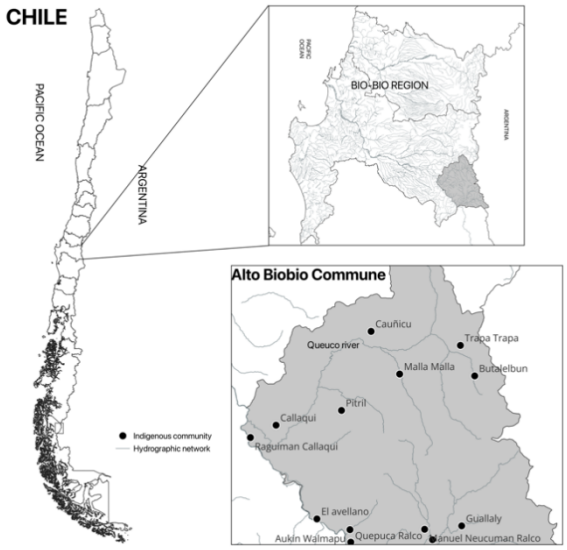

Figure 1. Map of the Alto Biobío Region and the Pewenche communities. Source: Cristian Alister.

Of all the indigenous subgroups associated with the Mapuche, the Pewenche are the only ones that may have originated independently (allegedly by a split-off from either the Tehuelche or Huarpe), only being "araucanized" as late as the 17th century. This thesis is based on weak empirical evidence. More widely accepted is that the Pewenche have lived for centuries on both sides of the Andean slopes, whereas other subgroups have arrived because of pressure from military campaigns (Bengoa 1992: 15-16). Some historiographic studies have even suggested that the Pewenche had their own language as late as the 16th century, although the empirical evidence is far from conclusive and rather speculative in this respect. As Silva and Tellez state, "It has never been possible to recover the grammatical or phonetic elements that would allow us to have the slightest idea of its linguistic structure" (Silva & Téllez 1993:17, authors' translation from Spanish).

2.2 Pewenche migratory practices: the summer highlands

What seems more firmly established is that the ancestral Pewenche inhabitants were hunter-gatherers that transited the paths and trails that connected the eastern and western slopes of the Andes (Silva & Téllez 1993). Crucially, this migratory element is still characteristic of the lifestyle of many modern Pewenche families and makes a salient fact for any documentation initiative in this ethnographic sphere. Namely, of all the groups that comprise the Mapuche people, the Pewenche are the only ones that lived (and still live) a fairly nomadic lifestyle. More concretely, migratory practices linked to animal husbandry and gathering can still be attested to today in what seems to constitute a bipartite annual cycle, each of the two intervals occurring at a different seasonal residence (winter lowlands and summer highlands).

The highlands are closely linked to the traditional activities of the Pewenche. Aside from the mobility and grazing of relatively small-scale livestock, these settlements host the gathering and harvesting of the *ngülliu*. The *ngülliu* is the base of different meals and drinks and has been fundamental to the Pewenche diet for centuries. Due to its geographical locations, the summer highlands preserve an abundance of the millenary *pewen* forests, hence the importance of the land for basic subsistence. Furthermore, the altitude of these summer highlands makes the landscape more impermeable to modern elements, such as roads, electricity, internet, etc. This results in a dual seasonal residence with a relatively clear division of lifestyle; while the winter lowlands are rooted in locations that

are connected by a main road to more urbanized locations (with all its implications for language and culture maintenance[8]), the summer highlands typically constitute a more isolated high valley in which the Pewenche families can carry out their traditional activities in a more untouched form.
Despite the crucial nature of the Pewenche migratory lifestyle, it has not been immune to the multiple endangering factors of modern times. On the contrary, the cultural value and significance of the Pewenche territorial system have been repeatedly undermined by state policies and socio-economic circumstances. In fact, several studies have shown the detrimental effects of Chilean state policies over the last two centuries specifically on the Pewenche ancestral territorial system (Azócar et al. 2005; Huiliñir-Curío 2015). In recent decades, these conflicts have been revived by private investment projects such as international hydroelectric companies. As is well documented (Azócar et al. 2005), the flooding of riverbeds caused by the construction of dams has affected the seasonal livestock circuits that the Pewenche used for accessing the highlands. Moreover, the companies' compensation strategy has consisted in offering communities a sedentary settlement on other stretches of land, intervening in the Pewenche's natural migratory cycle.

2.3 The project (as it was planned)

It goes without saying that the threat to the Pewenche migratory lifestyle and values justifies the urgent need for documentary endeavours. Since the authors of this article share the belief that cultural knowledge is (at least partly) encoded in language, it was clear to us that documenting the language necessitated documenting the cultural knowledge of the language users. Having a Pewenche woman as part of our team facilitated a more culturally-oriented documentation project than initially anticipated. This project aimed to record the Pewenche people's perspectives on the cultural value of the summer highlands; their cherished activities in the highlands; the land's history; their ancestral connections; and the untold story of conflicts related to these highlands.
Conceived this way, the natural option was to document *in* and *about* the Pewenche highlands as much as possible. Given SV's strong ties to the Pewenche community of Butalelbun (the most eastern community of the Queuco Valley), we identified a specific area for our project: the summer highland of Kochiko. Regarding technical knowledge on language documentation techniques, PF received guidance and advice on the first drafts of the project from Dr. Eva Shultze-Berndt while completing his Ph.D. at the University of Manchester. The project was designed, submitted, and received funding from ELDP under the title *The Pehuenche Summerlands: Documenting Chedungun in a Semi-nomadic Journey* (SG0574), marking it as the first ELDP-funded documentation project in Chile. The principal investigator was PF, and the national host institution was the Universidad Católica de Temuco. As part of the grant, PF attended an ELDP documentation techniques seminar at SOAS, London, in September 2019.
The project was set to start in January 2020, with plans for three ascents to and stays in the Kochiko Highland; one per month during the first quarter of 2020. The targeted outcomes included 20 hours of audio-visual recordings (in both MP4 and WAV formats) and 7 hours of annotated EAF files (featuring transcriptions in Chedungun and translations into English and Spanish). Initially, the documentation team comprised solely the authors, though SV's connections to the Butalelbun community suggested the potential for the inclusion of new members. This would naturally lead to the development of a robust community-based documentation workflow.
With a solid plan and foundational training, the project was poised for success. However, as we will discuss, unforeseen events can turn any fieldwork plan, no matter how well-conceived, into a significant challenge. In October 2019, just months before the project's start, we could not have predicted an imminent global pandemic. In retrospect, undertaking documentation under such extraordinary circumstances proved to be a challenging yet invaluable learning experience, enriching us both as linguists and individuals. The lessons learned from this endeavour are explored in the following section.

3. The documentation: As it happened

We will now describe the basic events and results that derived from our documentation. In §3.1, we provide a brief description of both the Chilean socio-political context and the institutional set-up at the start of our project, followed by a reconstruction of the fieldtrips during the pandemic. §3.2 summarizes the structure and content of the resources that resulted from our documentation. Finally, §3.3 offers a panoramic view of our current and future work, reflecting on what we have learned from this particular experience.

3.1 Facing the unpredictable

[8] Commerce, grocery supplies, institutionalized education, Spanish as a dominant language, etc.

It is one thing to design a documentation fieldwork plan, but it is a completely different thing to implement that plan into reality. The first news about the pandemic reached the local media by December 2019, while we were testing the equipment and preparing for the ethics committee. As a preamble, PF was invited by SV's family (the Vita Manquepi) to join a Pewenche *ngüllatun* religious ceremony on December 27. The three-day ceremony took place in Trapa Trapa (a Pewenche community virtually adjacent to Butalelbun) and involved dances, meals, prayers, and getting to know the local authorities. This meeting did not involve recordings of any kind. This invitation was and still is an essential ingredient of our work process since it is very important for the Pewenche people to get to know the person with which they will work. This ceremony was key to gather the *newen*, 'strength' or 'vitality,' needed for the events to come.

The Vita Manquepi family displays an open non-conflictive bigamous structure consisting of a Pewenche man (Pedro Vita) married to two Pewenche sisters (Victorina and María Ester Manquepi), with groups of eight and five siblings for each branch, respectively.[9] The only members of the Vita Manquepi family that permanently live in the Butalelbun community are Pedro Vita, his two wives, and Mónica Vita (daughter of Pedro Vita and Victorina Manquepi, and sister of author SV). All are native speakers of Chedungun and can speak Spanish, although the wives do so with much less fluency. The primary language of communication among the eldest family members is Chedungun, although Spanish is used when younger relatives visit. There is a rough total of twenty grandchildren that have jobs or careers in urban places like Santiago or Los Ángeles, meeting during the summer on their grandparents' land. Most do not speak Chedungun.

The first of our fieldtrips took place between February 10 and February 22, 2020. The pandemic was already a topic in the media, but the authors do not recall having considered it an issue during this initial fieldtrip. Public transport was used with no setbacks for the journey from Santiago to Butalalebun. As a policy, we used the minimum required and most non-intrusive audiovisual equipment possible. This choice was entirely practical since the project would involve trekking between the lower and higher Andean valleys. Large and intrusive equipment would also have inhibited work with community members who are not used to being filmed and that would be intimidated while being recorded. We were indeed happy to know by the end of our first fieldtrip that the recorder with the white hairy windshield had received a name by the community members: *kudé,* which kindly refers to an old woman. It was a clear sign that the equipment was not creating discomfort.

The day SV and PF arrived to Butalelbun, Mónica Vita was on her way down from the highland of Kochiko, where her parents Pedro Vita and Victorina Manquepi had been staying. Mónica Vita immediately took on a very active role in the field. It was tacitly agreed that she would be part of the team as the Chedungun interviewer. We stayed in the lowland for three days, when the first recording was taken – a fifteen-minute interview of some neighbours and friends piling and stocking hay bales.

The first ascent to the summer highland of Kochiko occurred on Friday, February 14, 2020. The trip consisted of three hours of cautious horseback riding through deep cliffs and extensive silent plateaus with Araucaria forests and Andean streams. We made one stop under the shade of a big Araucaria tree and took the opportunity to film a short clip on the cultural value of this tree for the Pewenche people. Upon arrival to the Kochiko Highland (see Figure 2), Victorina Manquepi was making cheese with the milk of the family cows. The Vita sisters immediately suggested recording a conversation. Only half an hour after our arrival, we set up the tripod and recorded a twenty-five-minute interview on cheese making in the highlands. Over the next eight days, we recorded a total of nineteen interviews, which amounted to more than seven hours of audiovisual recordings on topics that varied from animal care, medicinal herbs, and the preparation of meals to encounters with pumas.[10] The material was edited and deposited in ELAR on March 9, 2022.

When PF completed the first seven-hour deposit in ELAR, the COVID-19 pandemic was already a topic in the national and international press. The decision to conduct a second fieldtrip was discussed, and since only a few COVID cases had been reported nationally, work was to proceed as planned, with all the well-known preventive measures taken.

The fieldtrip extended from March 16 to April 2, 2020. Pedro Vita and Victorina Manquepi were settled in the highlands, while Maria Ester Manquepi, Mónica Vita, and PF spent a few days in the lowland of Butalelbun. On Sunday, March 22, 2020, Mónica Vita, María Ester Manquepi, and PF departed to the Kochiko Highland, where they

[9] Polygamy was a common practice in traditional Mapuche society but is seen less frequently in modern times.
[10] *Puma concolor.*

would stay for ten days. With no electricity, television, and mobiles phones, the group remained uninformed about the pandemic's progression in the country and globally. Isolated and confident in what they were doing, the group organized two recorded trips to Andean plateaus where the Manquepi sisters would gather Araucaria seeds for the later preparation of meals and drinks

Figure 2. The Kochiko Highland.

During this second ascent, 18 communicative events were recorded, which added another seven hours of audiovisual material to our catalogue. The interviews included some travel through the Pewenche Highlands to gather *ngülliu*, landscape views, and domestic events (e.g., the preparation of *chavid*, a fermented drink made of Araucaria seeds). Pedro Vita participated in two long interviews (50 minutes each). He talked about his younger years searching for new highlands and about his travels through several unknown Andean paths on both sides of the border. One afternoon, seated by the bank of a stream, Pedro Vita and his wives discussed a time of conflict between the Pewenche of Trapa Trapa and some Chilean landowners that resulted in the killings of three Pewenche men. As far as we know, it is the first time that the events have been told and recorded from the point of view of the Pewenche people in Chedungun.

On March 31, 2020, we began our descent with the satisfaction that a second batch of audiovisual recordings was accomplished. At our first stop, a few kilometres uphill from the Butalelbun Valley, we switched on our phones to check emails and catch up on the news and events. The world had changed dramatically. Lockdowns were now mandated by authorities. In practical terms, the imposed lockdown meant that PF had to leave as he was not a permanent resident in Alto Biobío. No prospects of a new visit were on the horizon. As the increasing confinement all along the country during the following months made clear, there would be no territorial access anymore, and for a project that revolves around language, land, and migration practices, territorial access is critical.

As far as the material documentation was concerned (i.e., interviewing, visiting the valleys, getting people to talk about the land), this phase would have appeared to be prematurely terminated. *Unless* the community could do its own documentation. This idea was appealing as it provided the possibility to continue documentation. The challenge was how exactly to implement it. Amid the pressure of resolving practical issues the best way we could, we came up with something not too elaborate but rather intuitive. PF gave Mónica Vita a three-hour tutorial on the use of audiovisual equipment and left the camera, audio recorder, and tripod in her possession. The goal was clear; from then on, the community would document themselves.

The immediate results were not abundant, but are worth pointing out. On July 21, 2020, at the worst peak of the pandemic, Mónica Vita interviewed her mother about the Pewenche namesakes (*laku*, the tradition of naming someone after another). She did all the recording and interviewing without any oversight from the authors. She

decided on the topics and settings of the conversations. On November 6, 2020, she took a walk to a nearby meadow with her sister Blanca Vita and recorded a relaxed conversation about family issues. Then, on December 9, she visited and interviewed her uncle Horacio Manquepi, who talked for half an hour about the Pewenche Highlands. These recordings were conducted entirely by a non-linguist community member, while SV and PF were at their homes more than 500 kilometres away.

When we met with Mónica Vita again in January 2022, we observed that she had a more active and confident attitude than just playing the role of the interviewer. When preparing a new set of recordings, she had opinions on the settings of the recording sessions, on how to place the camera, and where to locate the recorder for a better audio. She was also aware of the mistakes that needed to be avoided. Our last recording together consisted of an interview of the two sisters Victorina and Maria Ester Manquepi explaining how the Araucaria seeds were stored underground in the old days. The scene below (Figure 3) shows five Pewenche women at work: linguist SV, her sisters Mónica Vita and Blanca Vita, and the two sisters and mothers Victorina and María Ester Manquepi.

Figure 3. Pewenche women at work: sisters Sonia, Mónica and Blanca, interviewing sisters and mothers Victorina and María Ester Manquepi in January 2022

Once the pandemic ended, the natural question arose as to what methodology to adopt. One obvious option was to re-establish an expert-centred model with some occasional collaborative practices. But that seemed an unreflective attempt to regain our roles of experts and relapse into a well-attested obstacle to real collaborative practice: "confusing expertise with control" (Whaley 2011). What would be the benefit of doing this? The pandemic had shown that it is highly counterproductive to rely on a fieldwork design in which the in-the-field production of audiovisual material is controlled and managed by a single (typically external) researcher. If the outside researcher cannot access the territory, documentation halts. From a purely practical point of view, then, reverting to an expert-centred model seemed ineffective.

But there were other reasons beyond efficacy to embrace self-documentation as a regular practice. Self-documentation brought about positive changes on more subtle levels. We came to understand that self-documentation has the potential to naturalize the flow of knowledge between native speakers and documenters. By seeing Mónica Vita installing devices, organising the setting, and making decisions on every element of the recording sessions, participants seemed to have gained a different perspective of what their contribution to the project was. They were not merely providing valuable information to an expert that would retrospectively benefit the community somehow. Instead, they were sharing knowledge with a community member who is an esteemed language user conducting cultural documentation among peers. This exchange of knowledge among community members (which occurs instantly, *in virtue of* the documentation), seems to strengthen communal bonds and to revitalize shared memories.

A natural working hypothesis to explore in subsequent phases of our ongoing documentation is that the ecological flow of knowledge described above also increases communal engagement and the sharing of values and ideals. Insofar as members of a community recognize that their own peers are involved in documentation activities, they will most likely feel more inclined to collaborate than if the project was conducted by an outsider. Similarly, when members of the community explain what they do and how their work contributes to, say, the preservation of cultural and linguistic diversity, it is likely that those ideals become more comprehensible to other members of the community than if explained by an expert. In other words, a direct way to enhance the sharing and understanding of ideals is by showcasing what peers do to achieve them.

3.2 The archived collection.

In this section, we discuss the structure and content of the resources derived from our documentation. As anyone doing fieldwork on an endangered language would know, a catalogue is not a static snapshot with some valuable resources to look at. Rather, it is the tangible result of a process that involves institutional support, dynamic information flows, an agreed-upon team workflow, and, ultimately, a long-term vision of how to sustain documentation over time. In the following sections, we describe how these elements were brought together into an organized whole.

3.2.1 Division of labour and institutional support

For Phase One of our documentation, the three team members had the following division of labour:

(a) **Pablo Fuentes**: fieldworker, depositor, editor, annotator, translator into English, project manager.
(b) **Sonia Vita**: fieldworker, annotator, transcriber, translator into Spanish, project manager.
(c) **Mónica Vita**: fieldworker, interviewer, intercultural facilitator.

As for skills and language use, both PF and SV hold postgraduate degrees in linguistics. Only SV and Mónica Vita are native speakers of Chedungun, which they use to regularly converse. PF is proficient in English. All team members can speak Spanish, the language used in work meetings. As a permanent, but alternate, resident in Butalelbun and the Kochiko Highland, Mónica Vita holds the relevant cultural knowledge necessary for the proper development of fieldwork.

The team received key financial support from the Endangered Language Documentation Programme (ELDP), through a Small Grant program (SG0574). PF was the applicant and main researcher. The Núcleo de Estudios Inter-étnicos e Interculturales, from the Universidad Católica de Temuco, played an important role in hosting the grant in Chile. The universities that are currently associated with our project are the Universidad Católica de la Santísima Concepción (where PF holds a full-time researcher position) and the Universidad de Playa Ancha (where SV teaches Mapudungun). In parallel, with her contribution to the SG project, SV was the researcher responsible for a nationally funded project titled *La piñonada en la veranada Pehuenche: documentación en lengua originaria* (or, 'The *piñon* harvest during the Pehuenche summer season: documentation in an indigenous language') (Fondart 575900). The project added new audiovisual material to our catalogue.

Over time, we have developed a clear model of how our work will develop beyond current projects and institutional commitments. We think it is important to have a clear plan for sustaining documentation over time. A long-term vision of a documentation is different from a specific work plan for a short-term project. Figure 4 shows the interaction between some of the basic elements that can concur in a long-term initiative. Funding support, institutional sponsorship, an archive or repository to deposit the produced material, links to the community, and a dynamic flow of information are factors that need to be considered for the successful development of a long-term documentation plan.

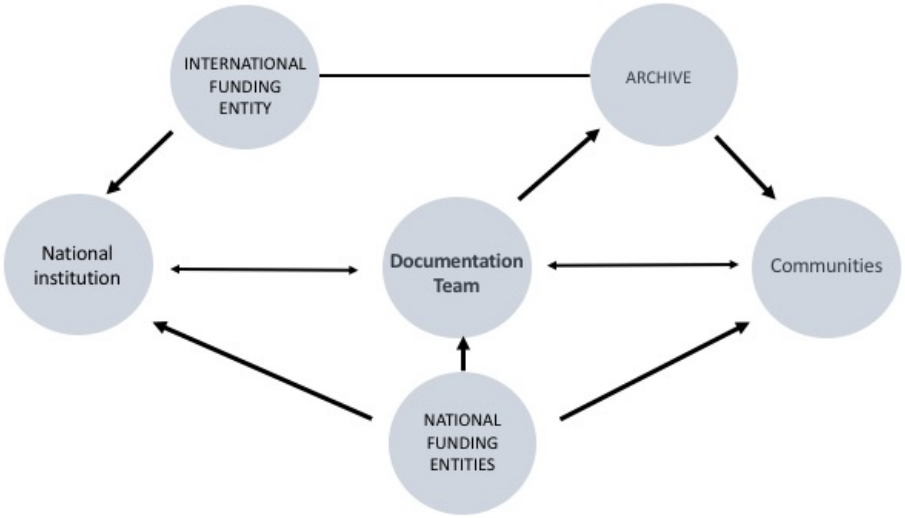

Figure 4. Institutional flow for Phase One.

The upper third of Figure 4 contains the international funding entity and the archive depository. These two entities can (but need not) be linked. In our case, the funding entity was the Arcadia Fund through ELDP, which is linked to ELAR. International funding usually comes with the requirement of a national educational institution being a sponsor. This most often means that a team member is affiliated to a degree with the educational institution. This is represented in the middle third of Figure 4.
Once a documentation project has started, most of the workflow is between the documentation team and the archive. This has been a valuable learning experience on the process of data preservation for the authors and the ELAR team has been greatly supportive.
Finally, our development plan also considers the support of national entities. Chilean funding entities such as ANID, Fondart, or the Servicio Nacional de Patrimonio Cultural can support initiatives linked to the preservation of endangered and minoritized languages and cultures. Some of these programs require university affiliation, certified indigenous descent (Fondart, Pueblos Originarios programme), or attested links with the community (Servicio Nacional del Patrimonio Cultural). As already mentioned, SV conducted a Fondart project that contributed new material to our catalogue, and PF has completed an ANID research project that involves, among other things, peer-reviewed publications and talks.[11] We did not receive support from the Servicio Nacional del Patrimonio Cultural.

3.2.2 The structure of the resources
In this section, we describe how the catalogue was built. For clarity, a "session" refers to any communicative event that was recorded as a unit, no matter how brief (like a man telling a joke) or lengthy (like a 50-minute interview on the history of a nation). Sessions did not need to be continuous recordings and typically had at least one pair of associated audio and video files, plus photographs and annotation outputs processed in ELAN, such as EAF and PSFX files. All the files related to one session made up a bundle with associated metadata. Virtually every session in our catalogue was recorded using independent and specific audio and video devices.[12] Photographs were taken by PF with at least three different cameras, depending on the fieldtrip and the occasion. The metadata of all the resources was first registered in a fieldtrip notebook by PF and then registered in Lameta v0.9.6 (Hatton et al. 2021), which is the standard current procedure required by ELAR.
Phase One of our documentation was committed to produce 7 hours of annotated material, which included transcriptions and translations into English and Spanish. ELAN (Wittenburg et al. 2006) was used for annotations.

[11] ANID SA77210114.
[12] Audio was recorded on a Zoom H4n Pro audio recorder in 48 kHz and 16-bit stereo and exported in WAV format. Video was recorded on a micro four thirds camera, in 1920 x 1080 (1080p) at 30p and 20 Mbps and exported in MP4 format. Only the edited material was archived in ELAR, but a copy of the raw material is kept by PF and SV.

An elemental template was created for current and future purposes. Glossed outputs are expected to result from Phase Two of our documentation, when a robust catalogue of at least 50 hours has been built.
The basic workflow and division of labour for annotation tasks consisted of five stages. First, PF would create a bundle with the relevant media files. Then, he would segment the entire communicative event. SV would subsequently transcribe the material into Chedungun and make a free translation into Spanish using ELAN transcription mode. When the Spanish translations were completed, PF would then add a free English translation. Finally, PF would complete the cycle by depositing the files in a named folder using the Preservica platform.
To summarize, the collection is comprised of more than 200 files which render more than 15 hours of audiovisual recordings, 7 hours of annotated material, and 25 photographs. There are 50 WAV files and almost the same number of MP4 files, containing about 50 recorded communicative events. Of these bundles, 14 have been annotated with the specifications laid out above.

3.2.3 The content of the resources

As mentioned in §2.3, our initial aim was to build a culturally oriented documentation on Chedungun, with a special focus on the endangered significance of the Pewenche summer highlands. Despite unpredictable difficulties, this goal has been largely accomplished. People from the community shared their memories, rebuilt many past events, and expressed fears and hopes related to these cherished highlands. In so doing, other related topics emerged in conversations, the most frequent being activities associated with the highlands (e.g., gathering of Araucaria seeds and medicinal herbs and laborious animal care), as well as discussion of landscapes and sites other than the highlands.
In the following pages, we showcase the type of content found in our catalogue. We group some of the interviews under a dominant topic (in bold) and give the title of the bundles as they appear in the collection (in italics), with the associated file name (in parentheses). Then we offer a brief description of the recorded communicative event. An asterisk (*) preceding the title indicates that that bundle has been transcribed and translated into English and Spanish in an independently stored EAF file. The list provides a representative example and is not exhaustive. For references, please cite our collection as follows: Fuentes, Pablo & Sonia Vita Manquepi. 2019. *The Pewenche Summerlands: Documenting Chedungun*. Endangered Languages Archive.
Handle: http://hdl.handle.net/2196/e026920b-f65e-4a1e-bc5e-e7ab3bd8968a. Accessed on [insert date here].

Summer Highlands

A story about a summer highland (sg0574_fwt2_d01_2): María Ester Manquepi tells a story about the Pürobile Highland, a land that the Vita Manquepi family used for work and residence in the past.
* *A visit from Uncle Horacio* (sg0574_fwt3_d03_1): Uncle Horacio pays a visit to his sisters Victorina and María Ester Manquepi. His niece Mónica Vita interviews him. They talk about the summer highlands and migratory practices. The conversation was recorded by Mónica Vita Manquepi (the interviewer and permanent resident), during the pandemic.
* *Summer rain in the summer highland: How we took our land back* (sg0574_fwt1_d06_1): During a summer rain shower, the family gathers for an indoor breakfast in the *ruka.* They talk about the time the Kochiko Valley was taken by the Pewenche people twenty years ago.
* *Summer Highlands* (sg0574_fwt2_d07_1): In company of his wife María Ester Manquepi, Pedro Vita tells us about the highlands where the Vita-Manquepi family has lived. The interview is done by Mónica Vita Manquepi, daughter of Pedro Vita and Victorina Manquepi, and hence niece of María Ester.

Landscape and places

Landscape: a view of the Death Pass from Liai (sg0574_fwt2_d04_2): After a two-hour horseback ride from the Kochiko summer highland, we arrived at the north end of the Liai Valley. This summer highland belongs to the El Barco Pewenche community. We are facing east, with the Liai Plateau to our backs. The site in view has a mysterious Spanish name, “Paso de la Muerte” for reasons explained to us by Pedro Vita.
A visit to an old cave (sg0574_fwt4_d01_2): After a laborious hike east of Butalelbun, we arrived at an old cave known as Menukochenke. The cave was used as a seasonal shelter by the Vita sisters’ grandparents (Segundo Vita and Margarita Vivanco, Pedro Vita’s parents). Allegedly, the cave has served as shelter for many Pewenche ancestors. On the top of the cave, there is a plateau with Araucaria groves. Sisters Mónica, Sonia and Blanca Vita revisit some of their childhood memories.

Food and meals

** A talk about stocking the ngülliu* (sg0574_fwt4_d01_1): Mónica Vita talks with mothers and sisters Victorina and María Ester Manquepi about the stocking and use of *ngülliu*.
Grinding the ngülliu (sg0574_fwt2_d03_2): Victorina Manquepi talks about her life while grinding *ngülliu*. The preparation of *chabid* (a traditional fermented drink made of *ngülliu*) usually takes an entire afternoon grinding the seeds against stone, which is the traditional way of preparation.
** Toasting the ngülliu: kulen* (sg0574_fwt1_d10_1): Victorina Manquepi shows us how to prepare *kulen*, a toasted version of *ngülliu*.

Animals
** A talk about the puma* (sg0574_fwt1_d03_3): The Vita Manquepi family gathers around a table for an evening of mate drinking (a traditional South American herb infusion). Natural conversation revolves around encounters with pumas in the mountains around the Kochiko Valley.
** Milking the cows* (sg0574_fwt1_d04_1): Victorina Manquepi milks her cows in the early morning and carries out this interview with her daughter, Monica Vita. They go through different issues related to animal care.

Storytelling
A folk story about a summer highland (sg0574_fwt2_d01_2): María Ester Manquepi tells a folk story about a highland the Vita Manquepi family used for work and residence in the past called *Pürobile*.
A folk tale (epew) (sg0574_fwt2_d01_1): María Ester Manquepi narrates an *epew* (a traditional Mapuche folk tale). The story is about the wanderings of a fox and a condor.
A campfire talk (and a folk tale) (sg0574_fwt1_d04_4): Mother Victorina Manquepi has a conversation with her daughters Mónica and SV around a campfire. They enjoy melting cheese and drinking mate. A folk tale is narrated.

Medicinal herbs
** A talk about medicinal herbs* (sg0574_fwt1_d07_1): A pleasant afternoon talk about medicinal herbs. The trays were collected by the team in an expedition to a plateau the day before. They are made of the trunk bark of the *pewen*.

3.3 Self-documentation, meta-documentation, and future work
An unstated aim of Phase One was to learn the real process of documenting both the language and culture of the Pewenche people. The global pandemic (with all its practical implications) vividly illustrated how challenging such a situation can be for fieldworkers. Coping with such extreme difficulties gave us a realistic sense of the craft of documentation beyond theoretical knowledge. With this practical awareness, Phase Two of our documentation intends to strengthen our capacities as a documentation team, improve several technical aspects of our previous work, and enhance our catalogue to a substantial degree. In this section we will show how current and future activities will contribute to achieving these goals.
As already mentioned, the long-term vision of a documentation should have at least a rough idea of how to sustain the process over time. Typically, national and international funding is a valuable means to cover the costs of a robust and consistent documentation plan. For Phase Two, we have obtained two funding projects: the Individual Postdoctoral Fellowship by the ELDP (IPF0393) and a national project funded by the Agencia Nacional de Investigación y Desarrollo (Chile, ANID SA77210114).[13] Both projects are complementary; the ELDP-IPF is more focused on the materialization of documentation in the field, and the ANID-SA more academically oriented to dissemination/outreach and writing academic articles. In a future publication, we intend to report the processes and results of our current activities. The following paragraphs will give an idea of how current and forthcoming activities are shaping up.
Currently, the annotation process is being improved through a more robust design than Phase One. Present work is partially focused on installing an ELAN-FLEx-ELAN workflow in which all the transcriptions in ELAN will be processed through a database in FieldWorks (FLEx, https://software.sil.org/fieldworks/), for which a training on advanced documentation techniques was undertaken by PF at the ELDP headquarters. This will allow a more productive workflow and more complete set of glossed outputs.
The more innovative goal in Phase Two will be to strengthen the self-documentation practices that were unintentionally installed in Phase One. To achieve this goal, we aim to incorporate two new members into the documentation team: Luis Crespo and Rodrigo Manquepi, both native speakers of Chedungun. Luis Crespo is a

[13] The ELDP-IPF0393 Project started in May 2023. The ANID-SA77210114 begun in January 2022. PF is the applicant and responsible of both projects.

member of the Butalelbun community but lives in Ralco, an urbanized location near the junction of the two river valleys of the Alto Biobío. He is completing undergraduate studies in veterinary medicine and supports several communities with issues related to animal care. Rodrigo Manquepi is a young man from Infiernillo, a more rural locality near the Trapa Trapa community, to which Rodrigo Manquepi is closely related. He is the grandson of an old *longko* (community chief) who played a crucial role in the recuperation of communal land, especially the highlands. Both Luis Crespo and Rodrigo Manquepi have been tutored by PF on the use of audiovisual equipment and will deliver audiovisual material in each annual cycle of the ELDP-IPF project. As in Phase One, the material will be then processed, edited, and annotated by PF and SV. By January 2026, we expect to have 32 hours of new material added to our catalogue, thus reaching a catalogue of more than 50 hours of interviews and natural conversing.

Of course, self-documentation is not just about recording sessions in the field. As any fieldwork process, it raises its own challenges, such as reaching quality thresholds (the recording outputs, for example, need to reach a proper level of speech intelligibility); obtaining regular feedback from the researcher to improve future work; dealing with the frustration of data loss; and being precise and systematic in the collection of metadata. These elements need to be constantly addressed and negotiated. We believe that a crucial role of scholars can be to assess and report on how self-documentation can be made more efficient. Academic production about this issue is crucial. This type of contribution can of course take written form, as in an article. However, there are other possibilities, such as documenting the self-documentation process itself. In effect, the self-documentation practices that are carried out by community members are spatiotemporal events as any other and can be recorded, surveyed, and enquired about as an object of study. Parallel recordings and research can be conducted by linguists interested in the emergence of new methodologies within the growing and evolving discipline of language documentation. The material outcome (a *meta-documentation* of the *self-documentation*) would surely enrich in innovative ways the main body of a documentation. The overall workflow would be one in which a mixed documentation team will have an in-the-field module with the highest possible degree of self-management, and a more academic-oriented capsule that observes (in a collaborative non-intrusive way) the process of self-documentation. Both the ELDP-IPF and ANID-SA projects that we are conducting were designed with this rationale in mind. The results of this initiative will be reported in publications following Phase One.

4. Conclusions

The COVID-19 pandemic posed serious obstacles to the labour of many language documenters across the world. The tools and methodologies that were created during this period were responsive to two major challenges: (i) how to facilitate the remote engagement of linguists and outside specialists without decreasing the efficacy of on-site fieldwork (Griscom 2022; Grzech & Tisalema Shaca 2022); and (ii) how to increase the participation and agency of community members in the various phases of a documentation (Olko 2018; Sou et al 2023). Both types of efforts share the view that language documentation is best conceived as a collaborative process – a standard that was recommended as best practice long before the arrival of the pandemic and that became essential to the discipline ever since (Czaykowska-Higgins 2009; Grenoble 2010; Leonard & Haynes 2010; Rice 2011; Fitzgerald & Hinson 2013; Olko 2018; Sou et al 2023).

This paper concurs with the second type of motivation mentioned above, that is, to increase community participation and agency. By providing a detailed guide of the initial phase of our documentation of Chedungun, we described how self-documentation evolved from a circumstantial and auxiliary methodology into a regular and essential element of our current and future workflow. In this paper, we have argued that self-documentation has the potential to yield a sustainable documentation, with tangible results in terms of both efficacy and community engagement.

Two points deserve to be highlighted. First, the territorial inaccessibility brought about by the COVID-19 pandemic is not an unusual circumstance for fieldworkers in the Andean valleys of the Alto Biobío and elsewhere. Due to the weather, migratory cycles, or, typically, an academic schedule that leaves little or no space for extensive fieldwork, an external researcher will commonly find obstacles in their journey to the territories where the documentation takes place. Therefore, the difference between the “new normal” and the status quo is just one of degree. This makes evident the need for an alternative, self-managed process that can be implemented regularly and that guarantees the continuity of a documentation project.

Second, self-documentation practices are recommended not only to cope with problems of territorial accessibility. They are a learning process that brings about a substantially different workflow than the one generated by extractive, expert-centred, or top-down “cascade” models. Collaborative practices based on self-agency provide the appropriate context for a flow of knowledge that can strengthen self-awareness and the sharing of values and ideals. The in-the-field interaction between an active community member (the documenter) and the interviewees creates a communicative exchange that can revitalize the links between community members in a more direct, non-intrusive way.

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