



“Kia ora. This is my earthquake story”. Multiple applications of a sociolinguistic corpus



Lynn Clark*, Helen MacGougan, Jennifer Hay, Liam Walsh

School of Language, Social and Political Sciences, Department of Linguistics, University of Canterbury, Private Bag 4800, Christchurch 8140, New Zealand

HIGHLIGHTS

- This paper demonstrates how a corpus of spoken data can have multiple applications outside of linguistics.
- The QuakeBox corpus has been used in:
- The construction of a set of teaching resources for the high school curriculum.
- A study of the experiences and emotional responses of teachers.
- A project which seeks to examine water and waste activities in the wake of damaged sanitation infrastructure.

ARTICLE INFO

Article history:

Received 6 May 2015

Received in revised form

14 January 2016

Accepted 24 January 2016

Available online 4 February 2016

Keywords:

Applied sociolinguistics

Corpus

Monologues

ABSTRACT

This paper demonstrates how spoken data, collected using sociolinguistic methods, can have multiple applications outside of its original intended use within sociolinguistics. It can be a resource for tackling real-world problems, it can be a platform for community engagement and it can function as a source of data for academic research (both linguistic and non-linguistic research). The spoken data we describe is a new corpus of monologues called the UC QuakeBox corpus. First, we introduce and demonstrate the QuakeBox corpus, and outline some of the rewards and challenges associated with collecting stories in a manner that was purposefully and saliently in the public eye. Next, we focus on applications of the QuakeBox corpus by exploring case studies which are utilising data from the corpus for non-linguistic work. We situate this work within the wider field of applied sociolinguistics.

© 2016 The Authors. Published by Elsevier Ltd. This is an open access article under the CC BY-NC-ND license (<http://creativecommons.org/licenses/by-nc-nd/4.0/>).

1. Introduction

The term ‘applied sociolinguistics’ was introduced to the linguistics community by Joshua Fishman (1970) and has come to be most commonly associated with establishing how research findings from sociolinguistics can be used by other fields, specifically with a view to tackling real-world problems (Trudgill, 1982:2). For instance, canonical work in applied sociolinguistics includes the sociolinguistics of second language acquisition (Schmidt, 1986), the social psychology of language (Giles, 1971a, 1971b; Giles and Powesland, 1975), language policy and planning (Haugen, 1966; Kloss, 1969; Fishman, 1974), discourse analysis (Labov and Fanshel, 1977; Tannen, 1982) and, increasingly, forensic linguistics (Nolan, 1983; for an overview of the connection between

sociolinguistics and forensic linguistics, see Brunner, 2009). Each of these sub-disciplines of applied sociolinguistics itself now has a long and rich history.

More recently, another type of applied sociolinguistics has become popular under the umbrella of “outreach”, “public engagement” or “impact”. This has been inspired in part by the *principle of debt incurred* (Labov, 1982) and the *principle of linguistic gratuity* (Wolfram, 1993), but also, no doubt, by the recent emphasis placed on this type of activity by research funding bodies around the world.¹ This type of applied sociolinguistics mostly connects sociolinguistic data and research directly with the public, rather than with academics in other disciplines. For example, the North Carolina Language and Life Project (hereafter NCLLP)² has been

* Corresponding author.

E-mail address: lynn.clark@canterbury.ac.nz (L. Clark).

¹ For example, see the emphasis placed on public engagement by the Research Councils UK: <http://www.rcuk.ac.uk/pe/>.

² <http://www.ncsu.edu/linguistics/ncllp/>.

collecting sociolinguistic recordings in North Carolina for more than two decades. The recordings have been the basis of valuable sociolinguistic work, but they have also been used for books and audio CDs written and constructed for the public (e.g., Wolfram et al., 2002), documentaries about dialectal diversity (e.g., Hutcheson, 2004; Rowe and Grimes, 2006), museum exhibits (e.g., Vaughn and Grimes, 2006) and in the production of school materials designed to raise awareness of dialect variation (Reaser and Wolfram, 2007).³ An online archive, the Sociolinguistic Archive and Analysis Project (hereafter SLAAP),⁴ was established as a web-based resource to store, catalogue and manage the increasingly large volume of recordings collected through the NCLLP (there are currently 1500 NCLLP interviews in SLAAP). Since then, other researchers have added their corpora to the website and it now houses over 4000 sociolinguistic interviews. Because of the web-based nature of this catalogue, it has a public presence. However, it was designed as a tool to aid sociolinguistic researchers, not for use by the general public. Access to the corpus is restricted and the access protocol on the website is clearly aimed at academic researchers: “Access to the SLAAP software and archive is password protected. Bona fide researchers can ask for and receive access to portions of the NCLLP’s collection, dependent on the specific needs of the researcher and the human subjects permissions for the requested materials.”⁵ So while resources contained in SLAAP were used in the creation of the NCLLP’s outreach materials, the catalogue itself is not intended for public exploration.

In the UK, the Diachronic Electronic Corpus of Tyneside English (hereafter DECTE)⁶ is a similar web-based research platform to SLAAP which houses a large collection of sociolinguistic interviews from the Tyneside region. However, this project also has an accompanying public interface website called ‘Talk of the Toon’⁷ aimed at sharing a proportion of the DECTE recordings with the general public, with a specific target audience of those in education. Indeed, the Talk of the Toon website was designed with input from teachers and examiners in order to provide students and educators from primary to higher education with relevant materials (Corrigan, pc).

The examples of outreach work cited above from both the USA and the UK are mainly of sharing sociolinguistic interviews, collected for linguistic analyses, back with the community, and building training resources around these recordings. Indeed, this type of outreach work in which sociolinguistic interviews and dialect data are shared back with the community via the internet has become so popular that there is an edited book currently in preparation which describes the methods by which data have been created, digitized and exploited for similar outreach projects around the world (Corrigan & Mearns, forthcoming).

In this paper, we demonstrate how spoken data, collected using sociolinguistic methods, can have multiple applications. It can be a resource for tackling real-world problems (i.e. in the original use of the term ‘applied sociolinguistics’ described above); it can be a platform for community engagement (as in more recent examples of applied sociolinguistics or outreach) and it can function as a source of data for academic research (both linguistic and, increasingly, non-linguistic research). The spoken data we discuss is a new corpus of monologues called the UC QuakeBox corpus which is a collection of earthquake stories. In Section 2, we introduce and

demonstrate the QuakeBox corpus, and outline some of the rewards and challenges associated with collecting stories in a manner that was purposefully and saliently in the public eye. In Section 3, we focus on applications of the QuakeBox corpus by exploring case studies which are utilising data from the corpus for non-linguistic work. Specifically, the QuakeBox has been used:

1. In the construction of a set of teaching resources for the high school curriculum which directly connects lessons across the Arts and Social Science curriculum to the devastating events which these pupils lived through and experienced first-hand (Clark and MacGougan, 2014)
2. In a study of the experiences and emotional responses of teachers, in their role as leaders and guardians in the wake of the earthquakes. One of the goals of this study is to explore opportunities for enhancing training and support mechanisms for teachers in high-stress environments (O’Toole and MacDonald, 2013)
3. In a project which seeks to examine water and waste activities in the wake of damaged sanitation infrastructure, and to explore the role of digital infrastructure in research activities (Butler, 2014).

The QuakeBox corpus has only recently been completed and released to the public, so the work discussed in this paper is primarily still ongoing.

2. Background to the UC QuakeBox corpus

2.1. The 2010–2011 canterbury earthquakes

A magnitude 7.1 earthquake struck the city of Christchurch and surrounding districts of North Canterbury, New Zealand, in the early hours of the 4th of September 2010. The city escaped without fatalities, though there was substantial damage to many buildings and infrastructure. Aftershocks continued to shake Christchurch and on the 22nd of February 2011, a hidden fault was jarred out of dormancy, resulting in a magnitude 6.3 earthquake that tore through the city at around lunchtime, causing 185 fatalities, some 7000 injuries, and the destruction of countless buildings, including much of Christchurch’s city centre. Although the February earthquake was smaller in magnitude, it struck far closer to the urban area (only ~ 6 km from the city, compared with September’s quake which was ~44 km from central Christchurch),⁸ and it was shallower than September’s seismic event had been. Also, ground acceleration readings measured more than twice the force of gravity – one of the highest such readings ever recorded.⁹ The fault generated a great deal of vertical movement in addition to horizontal shaking, something few buildings (even those designed to be earthquake-resistant) are capable of withstanding. The result was the immediate destruction of many homes and buildings, including Christchurch’s iconic cathedral, and extensive damage to a great many more, rendering much of the city’s remaining infrastructure irreparable.

In the aftermath of these events, everyone who had experienced the quakes had a story to tell. These stories were diverse, and often dramatic, and people would tell their ‘earthquake story’ often. Several researchers at the University of Canterbury wanted to create a collection of these stories for three reasons. First, many

³ For a more detailed summary of the NCLLP project and its outreach strategies, see Kendal & Wolfram (forthcoming).

⁴ SLAAP: <http://ncslaap.lib.ncsu.edu/index.php>.

⁵ <http://ncslaap.lib.ncsu.edu/faq.php>.

⁶ <http://research.ncl.ac.uk/decte/index.htm>.

⁷ Talk of the Toon: <http://research.ncl.ac.uk/decte/toon/index.html>.

⁸ <http://www.royalsociety.org.nz/media/Information-paper-The-Canterbury-Earthquakes-Scientific-answers-to-critical-questions3.pdf>.

⁹ <http://www.gns.cri.nz/Home/News-and-Events/Media-Releases/Multiple-factors>.

Download English Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/en/article/1100454>

Download Persian Version:

<https://daneshyari.com/article/1100454>

[Daneshyari.com](https://daneshyari.com)