

I plan to use this FLAS fellowship to complete a five week intensive course in Paraguayan Guarani, Paraguay's largest indigenous language and one of its two co-official languages (the other being Spanish). This course will take place in Asuncion, Paraguay during the summer of 2019, and it will equip me with basic Guarani skills, which I need to complete my fieldwork. As a first step toward learning Guarani, I began to study the language independently during the 2018-2019 school year. I have chosen to continue my study in Paraguay, which will allow me to practice the language in my daily life while also attending classes. My program will include 30 hours a week of classes (20 hours in a group and 10 individual tutoring hours) as well as housing with a Guarani-speaking host family for five weeks.

My research focus within the field of linguistics is descriptive linguistics, which emphasizes documenting and describing languages for which little descriptive material exists. Though South America is highly linguistically diverse, the majority of these languages are not well-studied. Around 20 languages are spoken in the Chaco region in Paraguay alone, but little documentary work exists. This lack of material stymies linguists and other scholars interested various topics, including: 1) languages of the South American Gran Chaco region, 2) typological work, and 3) language contact and regional prehistory.

My focus is on Angaite, a language in the Enlhet-Enenlhet family in the Chaco region of Paraguay. Angaite is spoken by around 1,000 people in western Paraguay. This work contributes to an ongoing documentation effort for the Enlhet-Enenlhet language family. While the entire family is under-documented, projects are ongoing for related languages but not Angaite.

The majority of Angaite speakers live in La Patria, a community in the Presidente Hayes department. Most Angaite are bilingual in Guarani and Angaite, but almost no Angaite speakers speak Spanish. Though my ultimate goal is to learn Angaite and to conduct my work in that language, working and living with the Angaite will initially require communication in Guarani. Furthermore, during my pilot trip to La Patria in the summer of 2018, I found that some Angaite people who did not regularly speak the Angaite language could still understand it. These semi-speakers of the language could be helpful collaborators in transcribing and translating texts in Angaite. To work fruitfully with this demographic I will need to be comfortable communicating in Guarani, which is now their primary language.

In addition to aiding with data collection, my research outputs rely on competence in Guarani. One of the goals of documentary linguistics is to work with speakers to create resources that the community finds helpful or interesting. Because Angaite speakers don't speak Spanish, texts in Spanish will not serve this goal. Translations into Guarani will allow the community to use the materials I produce. In this way, I will return the data to the Angaite rather than producing work in Spanish or English that is inaccessible to them.

Furthermore, translations in Guarani could, where appropriate, serve wider purposes. For example, school in La Patria is taught in Guarani, so Angaite texts translated into Guarani could be used for educational purposes. Additionally, many ethnically Angaite people have shifted to Guarani and no longer speak their heritage language at all. Texts in Guarani will allow these community members to read texts spoken in Angaite and in this way connect to their cultural history, even if they do not speak Angaite.

Guarani will lay the groundwork for future work in Paraguay beyond work on Angaité. Knowledge of Guarani will allow me to pursue research on language contact in the Chaco, which will require being able to identify structural and lexical borrowings between Guarani and other indigenous languages in the region. Furthermore, knowing Guarani will allow me to interact more naturally, and in a more informed way, with groups that speak it, fostering a deeper understanding of the social factors that affect language use.

Guarani will also open professional opportunities to me. I will be able to discuss research in both Paraguay's official languages, allowing me to participate in conferences and workshops about Paraguayan linguistics and anthropology with other Paraguayan scholars and indigenous communities.