



# **Collaborative podcasting as a participatory research method in linguistics**

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# Outline

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- Research context
- Two mini-projects working towards participatory podcasting as a research method (without quite getting there):
  - (1) The Moving Project (September 2020 - present)
  - (2) Talking About Voices (January 2021 - present)
- Podcasting for Power (hopefully 2021-2022): a bigger project with a more fully-realised methodology



# Participatory methods, social justice and linguistics

- ‘We should work towards models that more explicitly aim to empower (not just describe and value) voices’ (Charity Hudley et al 2018)
- Are participatory methods incompatible with (some aspects of) linguistic theory? e.g. The Observer’s Paradox (Labov 1972)
- Participatory methods in linguistics (e.g. Rymes and Leone 2014; Svendsen 2018; Matras and Robertson 2017; Filipović 2019; Moore and Spencer 2021)

# Podcasting as a research method

- Most people will know podcasting as a form of entertainment, education or research communication...
- ...but collaborative podcasting has also been used as a participatory research method (e.g. Day et al 2017; Kincaid et al 2020; Smith et al 2021). In these studies, it becomes both a research method *and* a form of research communication
- Collaborative podcasting has the potential 'to move beyond the limitations and privileging of written text in academia, allowing listeners to encounter the subtle dynamics and texture of the speaker's voice through intonation, emphasis, narrative rhythm, and timing' (Day et al. 2017: 216)  
...a particularly suitable medium for explorations of spoken language?

# The Moving Project (Accentricity)

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- Making *Accentricity* before the pandemic: focus on research communication
- Making *Accentricity* during the pandemic: experimenting with collaborative podcasting via The Moving Project

# Talking About Voices (Manchester Voices)



The image shows a screenshot of a website for a podcasting project. The main content area features the title 'TALKING ABOUT VOICES' in large, bold, black letters, with 'TALKING' and 'VOICES' in yellow speech bubbles and 'ABOUT' in a black speech bubble. Below the title is a play button icon and the text 'A podcasting project for secondary schools in Greater Manchester'. At the bottom of the main content area are two buttons: a dark grey one with yellow text 'PUPILS CLICK HERE TO BEGIN' and a yellow one with dark grey text 'TEACHERS CLICK HERE TO BEGIN'.

On the right side, there is a vertical navigation menu with the following items: 'Home', 'About the project', 'Contact', 'Teachers' area', 'Information for parents and carers', and 'Consent forms'. Below this menu is a yellow section titled 'Course content for pupils' which contains three sub-sections: 'Language tutorial', 'What to record' (with sub-items 'Language and place' and 'Language and age'), and 'Being multilingual'.

Talking About Voices is a new project for

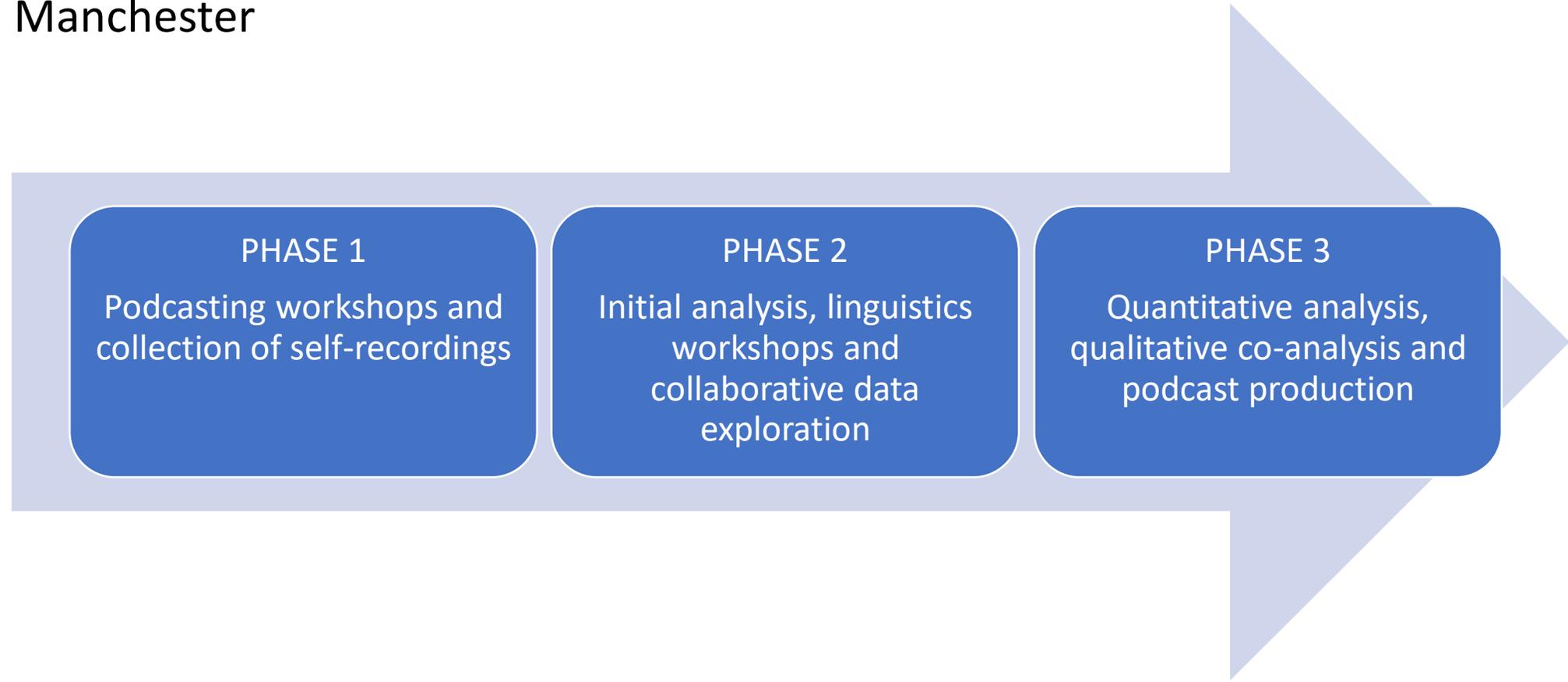
# Talking About Voices

What worked and what didn't work:

- Ethics (institutional v actual)
- Lack of control from the research team

# Podcasting for Power

Collaboratively researching style-shifting amongst Working Class adolescents in Manchester



‘Pockets of participation’ (Franks 2011)

# Concluding points

Participatory methods are challenging and often messy, but...

- They have the potential to enrich the discipline, by introducing knowledge that would otherwise be hidden
- They have the potential to empower speakers and create more equitable research practices: Linguistics shouldn't just be for linguists
- They have the potential to combine research and research communication / knowledge exchange
- They have the potential to be really fun (for the participants and for us) – tangible and immediate benefits

# References

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