

Low-tech "sound booth" for field audio recordings

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I am going to present a low-tech solution that allows making field audio recordings suitable for further acoustic analysis and description of speech peculiarities. When linguists are working in the field, it is not always possible to have access to the studio environment and hi-tech equipment. However, the research project may require high quality recordings, if what the researchers are interested in is in fine phonetic details that can come clear only through instrumental analysis.

Our team found ourselves in such a situation when we were in need of child speech. We cooperated with schools and received permission to work on the school premises. It is clear that the school premise cannot be void of additional noises, yet we wanted to make not impressionistic, but instrumental analysis, and therefore the recordings had to be "clean". I came up with the solution of a portable "recording booth" that accommodated our needs and allowed the recordings of adequate quality, without the need to resort to the assistance of professional technicians, whose presence often distracts participants. The booth is portable and can be assembled and disassembled in 20 minutes, material cost is 80 Euro.

Such "portable sound booth" can be used for the field recordings as well. We piloted its use here, and we will take it to the Basque country for the field recordings this September. One can, if need arises, use it to control the environment to pilot perception studies.