Field linguistics, and the whole project of language documentation, is committed to capturing and preserving, as far as possible, indigenous systems of cognition and knowledge. Many linguists, however, are reluctant to face the fact that indigenous perspectives cannot be faithfully portrayed using complex English-specific (often Latinate) vocabulary. In this talk, we try to show how the techniques of NSM semantics, based on lexical universals, can be applied in field situations to improve cross-linguistic understanding between linguists and native speaker consultants, and to enable conceptually authentic explications of "endangered concepts".