

## **Language Documentation and Revitalisation – developments in the 21<sup>st</sup> century**

The end of the 20<sup>th</sup> century saw the emergence of a new sub-field of linguistics that has been termed ‘language documentation’ or ‘documentary linguistics’ (Austin 2010, Himmelmann 1998, 2002, 2006, Lehmann 2001, Grenoble 2010, Woodbury 2003, 2011a). Its major goal is the ‘creation, annotation, preservation and dissemination of transparent records of a language’ (Woodbury 2011a) or of linguistic practices, through audio and video recording of speakers and signers, and annotation, translation, preservation and distribution of the resulting materials. According to the foundational documents by Himmelmann and Woodbury, it is concerned with analysing instances of language use in their social and cultural context, along with understanding the conscious and unconscious knowledge, ideas and beliefs that speakers have about their languages. It is by its nature multi-disciplinary and should draw on theoretical concepts and methods from linguistics, ethnography, folklore studies, psychology, information and library science, archiving and museum studies, digital humanities, media and recording arts, pedagogy, ethics, and other research areas. It has been particularly concerned with the documentation of endangered languages and cultures.

The theory and practice of language documentation has shifted in the past 5 years with the increasing recognition of diversity (of projects, goals, participants and outcomes), multi-code contexts and the changing role of technology. We have also seen the development of applied documentary linguistics, which deals with the theory, practice and outcomes for supporting language communities, especially through language management, including language revitalisation and maintenance (Czaykowska-Higgins. 2009, Guerin and Lecrampe 2010, Glenn 2009, Thieberger and Musgrave 2006), and the applications of technology for community activism.

This presentation identifies and discusses a number of contemporary issues and challenges: defining language documentation, objectification and commodification, the lure of science and ‘big data’, metadata and meta-documentation (Austin 2013), social approaches to archiving (Nathan 2010, Woodbury 2011b), and mobilization of documentation materials for community use and language revitalisation (Nathan 2006, Holton 2011), including moving into a world of apps (Birch 2012).

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