

LANGUAGE DOCUMENTATION AND CONSERVATION SPECIAL PUBLICATION NO. 29

**Participatory linguistics:
Methods and case studies from around the world**

Timothy Stirtz, Michael Cahill and Philip Davison (eds.)

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Participatory linguistics: Methods and case studies from around the world

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Pictures on front cover:

Top: Kagayanen speakers in the Philippines creating their own culturally-specific semantic domains in a Rapid Word Collection workshop (see Chapter 27). Picture by Jacqueline Huggins.

Middle: Rock Maino of the Mekeo language community presenting his discovery of object markers in the 2015 Discover Your Language Course in Papua New Guinea (see Chapter 23), used with permission. Picture by Pacific Institute of Languages, Arts and Translation in Ukarumpa, Eastern Highlands, Papua New Guinea.

Bottom left: Humla Tibetan speakers in Nepal arranging places of language varieties in the Dialect Mapping Tool (see Chapter 6). Picture by Klaas de Vries.

Bottom right: Ngbugu speakers Tychique and Jessé-Joël in the Central African Republic sorting words on cards in the 2015 Participatory Research in Linguistics workshop (see Chapter 10), used with permission. Picture by Ruth Huntley.

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The timing of this rich collection that discusses and proposes practical methods of community involvement both during and after linguistic research endeavors is perfect. The book pulls together a wealth of experience from contributors working in a variety of communities, and in diverse linguistic, cultural, and geographic contexts worldwide. Without doubt, this collection makes useful reading for anyone interested or engaged in community-based language work.

Pius W. Akumbu

Senior Researcher in African Linguistics at Langage, Langues et Cultures d'Afrique Noire (LLACAN) (Languages and Cultures of Africa), affiliated with the French National Centre for Scientific Research (CNRS)

This volume summarizes decades of progress in participatory linguistics in the work of scholars affiliated with SIL International and other institutions. It includes three framing overviews which discuss the key role of community participation in language documentation and development of materials for languages. The rest of the volume outlines various new tools for phonological analysis and orthography design, sociolinguistic surveys, morphosyntax, lexicography and discourse analysis. Numerous case studies from around the world illustrate the implementation of these tools.

The case studies are particularly extensive for languages of Africa, represented in nearly half of the chapters; this area is often under-represented in other overview volumes, which tend to focus on other areas. Various languages of Oceania, Asia and the Americas are also included.

The crucial importance of community participation is often neglected in academic linguistic studies; this volume provides an excellent and valuable counterexample. The community and its priorities and needs should be central in the design and implementation of linguistic research; here, we have practical tools for achieving this goal.

David Bradley

*Emeritus Professor of Linguistics, La Trobe University, Australia
President, Comité International Permanent des Linguistes*

This ground-breaking volume delves into the world of participatory linguistics presenting a guide for researchers, linguists, educators, and language communities seeking to understand and engage in these fields of study.

Bridging the gap between theory and practice, it combines theoretical frameworks, practical methodologies, and engaging case studies to provide a comprehensive understanding of the subject matter. Drawing upon real-life experiences from diverse non-dominant language communities, predominantly in Africa and Asia, this book showcases the power of involving local communities in the documentation, description, and preservation of their languages and guides readers through strategies for fostering meaningful collaboration between linguists, educators, and community members.

By fostering collaboration, ownership, and empowerment, this book serves as a catalyst for the preservation and revitalization of endangered languages, while promoting cultural diversity and linguistic rights. With its comprehensive coverage, insightful analysis, and compelling case studies, this volume promises to make a significant contribution to the field of participatory linguistics and orthography.

SIL International is committed to local leadership, participation and cross-organisation collaboration in linguistic research, translation, and language development and is delighted that this volume is now accessible to scholars, practitioners, and language communities around the world. I have no doubt that this book will be highly regarded within the academic community and serve as a guiding light for anyone passionate about language documentation, linguistic diversity, and community empowerment.

Ian Hollman

Associate Executive Director, SIL International

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