

SPRINGER BRIEFS IN LINGUISTICS

Shobhana L. Chelliah

Why Language Documentation Matters

 Springer

SpringerBriefs in Linguistics

A platform for peer-reviewed short research monographs on all topics in the study of language, including syntax, semantics, philosophy of language, sociolinguistics, psycholinguistics, cognitive linguistics, translation studies, languages and literature, computational linguistics, as well as cross- and interdisciplinary studies in linguistics, and across all schools of thought and all methodologies. Volumes offer concise summaries of cutting-edge research and practical applications across a wide spectrum of fields within linguistics. Compact volumes of 50 to 125 pages cover a range of content from theoretical to experimental and applied research in linguistics. Typical topics might include: • A timely report of state-of-the art analytical techniques • A bridge between new research results published in journal articles and a contextual literature review • A snapshot of a hot or emerging topic • An in-depth case study or fieldwork results • A presentation of core concepts that students must understand in order to make independent contributions The publishing editor, Christopher Coughlin, welcomes your proposals and ideas for monographs that fit in this series.

For more information on how to submit your proposal, please contact the assistant editor, Anita Rachmat, E-mail: Anita.Rachmat@springer.com

More information about this series at <http://www.springer.com/series/11940>

Shobhana L. Chelliah

Why Language Documentation Matters

 Springer

Shobhana L. Chelliah
Linguistics
University of North Texas
Denton, TX, USA

ISSN 2197-0009

ISSN 2197-0017 (electronic)

SpringerBriefs in Linguistics

ISBN 978-3-030-66189-2

ISBN 978-3-030-66190-8 (eBook)

<https://doi.org/10.1007/978-3-030-66190-8>

© The Author(s), under exclusive licence to Springer Nature Switzerland AG 2021

This work is subject to copyright. All rights are reserved by the Publisher, whether the whole or part of the material is concerned, specifically the rights of translation, reprinting, reuse of illustrations, recitation, broadcasting, reproduction on microfilms or in any other physical way, and transmission or information storage and retrieval, electronic adaptation, computer software, or by similar or dissimilar methodology now known or hereafter developed.

The use of general descriptive names, registered names, trademarks, service marks, etc. in this publication does not imply, even in the absence of a specific statement, that such names are exempt from the relevant protective laws and regulations and therefore free for general use.

The publisher, the authors and the editors are safe to assume that the advice and information in this book are believed to be true and accurate at the date of publication. Neither the publisher nor the authors or the editors give a warranty, expressed or implied, with respect to the material contained herein or for any errors or omissions that may have been made. The publisher remains neutral with regard to jurisdictional claims in published maps and institutional affiliations.

This Springer imprint is published by the registered company Springer Nature Switzerland AG
The registered company address is: Gewerbestrasse 11, 6330 Cham, Switzerland

Contents

1 Introduction	1
Questions for Discussion	4
References	5
2 Languages Heal	7
2.1 Access and Preservation of Oral Literature	7
2.2 Access and Preservation of Legacy Materials	10
2.3 Documentation to Support Language Learning	14
2.4 Documentation to Support Literacy	18
2.5 Documentation of Traditional Knowledge	20
2.5.1 Documenting Ethnobotany	20
2.5.2 Documenting Agricultural Practices	21
2.5.3 Documenting Ethnozoology	23
2.6 Documentation of Music and Verbal Art	24
2.7 Documentation for Healthcare	25
2.8 Documentation for Wellness	27
2.9 Why Language Documentation Matters	27
Questions for Discussion	28
References	28
3 Languages Inform	33
3.1 Language and Cognition	34
3.2 Language History	36
3.3 Verbal Art	37
3.4 Conclusion	38
Questions for Discussion	39
References	39
4 Reasons for Endangerment	41
4.1 Natural Disasters	42
4.2 Genocide, Disease, Resettlement	42
4.3 Political Instability	43

4.4	World Languages, Lingua Francas	45
4.5	Minority Status, Language Policy	45
4.6	Conclusion	47
	Questions for Discussion	47
	References	47
5	Supporting Linguistic Vitality	51
5.1	Language Surveys	51
5.2	Language Catalogs and Databases	53
5.2.1	Ethnologue	53
5.2.2	Glottolog	55
5.2.3	ELCat	56
5.2.4	Conclusion	56
5.3	Digital Language Archives	57
5.4	Funding Research and Training	59
5.5	Language Revitalization	61
5.5.1	Revitalization Programs	61
5.5.2	New Media and Technologies for Revitalization	62
5.5.3	Revitalization Through Activism	63
5.6	Conclusion	64
	Questions for Discussion	64
	References	64
6	Methods in Language Documentation and Description	69
6.1	What to Document	69
6.2	How to Add Value to Documentation	71
6.2.1	Recording	71
6.2.2	Transcription	73
6.2.3	Translation	76
6.3	Products of Language Documentation and Description	79
6.3.1	Dictionaries and Wordlists in Paper, Online, and Phone App Formats	79
6.3.2	Interlinear Gloss Texts in Paper and Online Formats	80
6.3.3	Curated Songs, Performances, and Traditional Celebrations	80
6.3.4	Legacy Materials	82
6.3.5	Photographs	82
6.4	Conclusion	82
	Questions for Discussion	83
	References	83
7	Linguistic Fieldwork Contributing to Documentation	85
7.1	Foundational Fieldwork in North America	85
7.2	Fieldwork by Christian Missionaries	88
7.3	Personal Motivation for Doing Fieldwork	88
7.4	Conclusion	89

Questions for Discussion	89
References	90
8 Impact of Language Documentation	91
Questions for Discussion	94
References	94