

First Steps to Endangered Language Documentation: The Kalasha Language, a Case Study

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ABSTRACT

The present paper based on extensive fieldwork¹ D conducted on Kalasha, an endangered language spoken in the three small valleys in Chitral District of Northwestern Pakistan, exposes a spontaneous dialogue-based elicitation of linguistic material used for the description and documentation of the language. After a brief display of the basic typology of elicitation techniques (Himmelmann 2006) and a thorough discussion of my fieldwork on a language threatened by extinction, I have shown with my natural data recordings (audio-visual) how most essential documentation is for the revitalization of a language pressurized by outside forces.

Keywords: Language documentation, endangered language, Kalasha language

1. THE PRESENT RESEARCH

1.1. *Methodology of documentation: A documentary linguistic approach*

Following Himmelmann (2006a: 14), I applied the issues below:

1. Focus on primary data: Make primary data available for a broad group of users.
2. Explicit concern for accountability: Primary data recordings and processing documentations make evaluation of analysis possible.
3. Concern for long-term storage and preservation of primary data: Documentary materials are made available to users into distant future. The quality of the recordings is of paramount importance for long term storage.
4. Work in interdisciplinary teams: Language documentation needs both linguistic expertise as well as other disciplines, such as anthropology, ethnomusicology, oral history and literature
5. Close cooperation with and direct involvement of speech community: Language documentation encourages active cooperative work of