

Language documentation and its impact on linguistic research

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Drawing on her experience of 30 years linguistic research in three South Pacific cultures, Prof. Mosel discusses the impact of documentary linguistics on field methods, corpus compilation and corpus exploitation in previously unresearched languages, and consequently, on the development of new linguistic research areas. The documentation of the Teop Language of Papua New Guinea, for example, provides data on how linguistically untrained natives speakers transcribe audio recordings and how they transform transcriptions into edited versions that can be used as reading materials in schools. While the comparison of written and spoken European languages is based on different genres and registers, the Teop corpus provides a new type of data that shows what speakers actually do when they put spoken language into writing and thus gives evidence for the speakers' more or less unconscious metalinguistic knowledge.