

Abstract

Doing it the Papuan way: language documentation at the CELD in Manokwari

The challenge is widely known: approximately 250 speech communities exist alone in Papua; many of these languages and cultures presently undergo a rapid reduction. The linguistic competence of speakers under twenty is increasingly passive. Over the next generations, several languages - i.e. a part of the worldwide cultural heritage – will disappear. Missionaries, international linguists and Indonesian government activities highlighted in the past on some stones in the Papuan mosaic, however until 2009 neither a comprehensive archive of languages in Papua nor a scientific team systematically concerned with their documentation has been set up in a local university, training next generation Papuan linguists in documentation theory and practices.

The current Wooi and Iha projects illustrate, how the Center for Endangered Languages documentation (www.celd-papua.org) at the UNIPA in Manokwari works: we cooperate (so far) with speech communities on Yapen island and around Fakfak to document endangered languages and cultures according the DoBeS standards; we train local students in state of the art documentation technology, invite international experts for local capacity building and support teachers, government agencies, artists, activists to develop and use multimedia materials in local languages. Finally, we are committed to establish at the State University of Papua (UNIPA) sustainable structures in order to access ethno-linguistic data from all over the world. Yes, we can.

Key words: The center for Endangered Languages Documentation, Language Documentation, Ethno-linguistic data.

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