

Title

Language Documentation Collections: Assessment and Recognition

Description

In reaction to the rapid decline in linguistic diversity around the world, there has been a broad call for the increased allocation of resources and efforts to support the documentation of endangered languages and linguistic practices, and furthermore the active participation of speech communities in the documentation process (Himmelman, 1998; Rice, 2011). This is reflected in the emergence of journals, conferences and workshops, as well as funding agencies and programs dedicated to supporting the discipline of language documentation.

Despite these encouraging developments, the lack of “guidelines and metrics for evaluating data creation, curation, sharing, and re-use” (Berez-Kroeker et al., 2018) poses a significant challenge for practitioners of language documentation, who often struggle to earn recognition from the academic community for the documentary records that they produce (Riesberg, 2018), reflecting a discipline-specific manifestation of broader lack of recognition of the merit of open scholarship for review and hiring (Alperin et al. 2019). There is an expressed need specifically for peer-review of documentary outputs, but no established standards for doing so (Thieberger et al., 2016; LSA Executive Committee, 2018; Woodbury, 2014; Haspelmath and Michaelis, 2014).

The aim of this Special Collection of the Journal of Open Humanities Data (JOHD) is to develop a detailed outline of what an effective peer-review process for documentary materials might look like, and how such a system would foster better recognition for these materials in academic evaluation systems such as in hiring, promotion, and tenure. We welcome contributions that explore assessment criteria and procedures, as well as peer-authored reviews and curator-authored case studies of documentary materials.

Submissions on the following topics and related areas are encouraged:

- Articles discussing models of assessment for:
 - Applications of levels of access (e.g. Open Access, restricted access, sensitive materials, community access) and associated intellectual property information and reusability
 - Data organization, quality of collection description, and artifact metadata
 - Quantity, quality, and modality of the artifacts included in the collection
 - File formats and software dependencies
 - Comprehensiveness of the documentary record (e.g. diversity of speakers, speech genres, and speaker interactivity)
 - Provenance of the collection, lifecycle and evolution of the data, version control and history, long-term preservation.
 - Capacity for reuse of language documentation data for cross-disciplinary endeavors
- Articles discussing assessment procedures and recognition, such as:

- Contextual assessment which takes social, technological, and linguistic factors into account
- The roles of individual reviewers and/or authoritative bodies in conducting assessment and promoting recognition and reuse of materials
- Assessment by community members and other non-academic peers
- Internal assessment procedures in use by language archives
- Assessment at multiple developmental stages of the documentary record
- Labor issues and reward systems for performing assessments
- The role of assessment in improving recognition of documentary materials or contributing to the further development of the materials (i.e. users as curators)
- Variation in regional or national assessment standards
- Peer-authored reviews or curator-authored case studies of documentary materials that illustrate or engage with one or more of the above points.

Submission Instructions

All submissions should be 3,000-6,000 words in length (references not included), and will be considered full length research papers in the JOHD submission system. The deadline for submissions to this special collection is **October 1st, 2021**. Manuscripts will be sent for single-blind peer review after editorial consideration, and accepted papers will be published online in the journal's special collection. Please follow the [submission guidelines](#) to submit your manuscript and please indicate that you are submitting to the special collection on Language Documentation in your cover letter.

Please note that there are [Publication Fees](#) for accepted papers. If you have any questions about fees, contact Anastasia Sakellariadi at a.sakellariadi@ubiquitypress.com. If you have any questions about the special collection, feel free to contact the editors at johd.language.documentation@gmail.com.

About the Journal

The [Journal of Open Humanities Data \(JOHD\)](#) is an academic journal specifically dedicated to publications describing humanities research objects, software, and methods with high potential for reuse. JOHD provides immediate open access to its content on the principle that making research freely available to the public supports a greater global exchange of knowledge. Potential authors are encouraged to review [JOHD's policies](#) regarding author-retained copyright, Creative Commons licenses, data publication, and ethics. Authors retain copyright and grant third parties the right to use, reproduce, and share the article according to the [Creative Commons](#)-Attribution license agreement. Authors are encouraged to publish their data in recommended repositories.

About the Guest Editors

Richard Griscom is a researcher at Leiden University Centre for Linguistics. His research focuses on the documentation and description of endangered languages, with an emphasis on the languages of East Africa, and the development of digital data collection and processing methods for researchers working in resource-constrained environments.

Lauren B. Collister is a faculty librarian and the Director of the Office of Scholarly Communication and Publishing for the University of Pittsburgh Library System. Her research background in sociolinguistics focuses on language change, identity, and online communication. Her current work focuses on reproducibility, open scholarship, data management, and intellectual property in linguistics research.

Hugh J. Paterson III is an unaffiliated collaborative researcher with a background in language documentation in Nigeria and Mexico. He has worked in accessions and digitization at a language archive, and as a user interaction designer for digital experiences. He is interested in leveraging language technology for the benefit of language communities and in the ways they desire to see their language used.

References:

- Berez-Kroeker, Andrea L., Lauren Gawne, Susan Smythe Kung, Barbara F. Kelly, Tyler Heston, Gary Holton, Peter Pulsifer, et al. 2018. Reproducible research in linguistics: A position statement on data citation and attribution in our field. *Linguistics* 56(1). 1–18. <https://doi.org/10.1515/ling-2017-0032>.
- Haspelmath, Martin & Susana Maria Michaelis. 2014. Annotated corpora of small languages as refereed publications: A vision. *Diversity Linguistics Comment*. <https://dlc.hypotheses.org/691>.
- Himmelman, Nikolaus P. 1998. Documentary and descriptive linguistics. *Linguistics* 36. 161–195.
- LSA Executive Committee. 2018. Statement on Evaluation of Language Documentation for Hiring, Tenure, and Promotion. https://www.linguisticsociety.org/sites/default/files/Evaluation_Lg_Documentation.pdf (29 November, 2020).
- Mazzitelli, Lidia Federica. 2020. Documentation of Lakurumau: Making the case for one more language in Papua New Guinea. *Language Documentation & Conservation* 14. 215–237.
- Rice, Keren. 2011. Documentary Linguistics and Community Relations. *Language Documentation & Conservation* 5. 187–207.
- Riesberg, Sonja. 2018. Reflections on descriptive and documentary adequacy. In McDonnell, Bradley, Andrea L. Berez-Kroeker, and Gary Holton. (Eds.) *Reflections on Language Documentation 20 Years after Himmelmann 1998*. *Language Documentation & Conservation Special Publication no. 15*. [PP 151-156] Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. <https://scholarspace.manoa.hawaii.edu/handle/10125/24816>
- Salffner, Sophie. 2015. A guide to the Ikaan language and culture documentation. *Language Documentation & Conservation* 9. 237–267.
- Sullivant, Ryan. 2020. Archival description for language documentation collections. *Language Documentation & Conservation* 14. 520–578.
- Thieberger, Nick, Anna Margetts, Stephen Morey & Simon Musgrave. 2016. Assessing Annotated Corpora as Research Output. *Australian Journal of Linguistics* 36(1). 1–21. <https://doi.org/10.1080/07268602.2016.1109428>.
- Woodbury, Anthony C. 2014. Archives and audiences: Toward making endangered language documentations people can read, use, understand, and admire. *Language Documentation and Description* 12(Special Issue on Language Documentation and Archiving). 19–36.

