

## **Critical Lexicography: Exploring the Role of Dictionaries in Language Revitalization**

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The goal of this paper is to engage a diverse group of people who have, are currently, or plan to undertake the creation of a dictionary for a non-dominant language. Any dictionary project for, of or in an endangered, Indigenous, historically-marginalized or under-resourced language involves taking stock of, and theorizing, the ways in which a dictionary is substantially more than just a corpus of words.

We propose that in dictionary work with speakers of endangered, Indigenous, historically-marginalized or under-resourced languages, there is an urgent need for language workers to become more self-aware of how they undertake projects and create reference texts. Informed by and built on long-standing traditions of theory in lexicography, this emerging self-consciousness behooves researchers—no matter their background—to reflect on the ways in which their dictionary work aligns with, or diverges from, established practices in lexicography, language documentation and language revitalization.

We propose that such an approach be termed *Critical Lexicography* and that it be understood as an ethical and theoretical orientation towards dictionary work with non-dominant languages rather than as a specific, singular way to ‘do’ lexicography. In doing this, we situate our proposal in the wider context of emerging discussions in critical Indigenous studies, in language reclamation and revitalization as well as within the field of lexicography.

We propose 7 indicators that Indigenous and minority language stakeholders can use to determine whether they are, have or should, engage in Critical Lexicography. These indicators are: (1) centering partnerships and honoring collaboration; (2) authorship and authority; (3) corpora size; (4) number of speakers; (5) role of archives; (6) specificity of

grammar and structure; and (7) creative outputs. In this paper, we briefly outline, and provide examples of, each of these indicators. We also address how by identifying and being mindful of these indicators in all stages of a dictionary project—from inception, through to planning, execution, and maintenance—Indigenous and minority language stakeholders can better ensure they are engaging in more equitable and more collaborative partnerships, the products of which will also better serve the goals of the language community and the interests of other stakeholders.