

A New Mass Elicitation Technique: The Dictionary Development Program

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In a normal field work situation, lexical elicitation is typically a slow and time-consuming process, generating only a limited section of the total vocabulary of a language. The Dictionary Development Program (DDP), a new elicitation tool developed by Ron Moe (SIL) in East Africa, addresses this issue by employing the technique of rapid mass elicitation based on lists of questions arranged by semantic domain. These lists (the domain templates) are exhaustive and universal, and when used in an efficiently organized workshop can result in the collection of 10,000 words in two weeks.

The paper explains the background and techniques of the DDP (as well as its limitations), and its application to Austronesian (and maybe Papuan) languages, based on feedback from several SIL field workers.