

Why Another Program, from 30k ft

Some methodologies (Kutsch Lojenga 1996) guide people through the discovery of the facts of their own language. These provide greater access to a variety of data, particularly from the emic perspective. Unfortunately, resulting documentation is notoriously weak.

Other methodologies require the processing of large amounts of data transcribed by a formally trained linguist (Snider 2018, Marlo 2013). These provide better documentation, but limit the kind and number of people who can be involved, particularly if the language community lacks trained linguists.

To capitalize on the strengths of each of these approaches, $A \rightarrow Z + T$ is being developed to model pen and paper participatory methods on a computer, resulting in a checked lexical database with organized sound files to back up transcriptions. The tool constrains data collection by grammatical category and syllable profile (Snider 2014), while facilitating more cyclical and community based language development.