

# Reflections on a Community-based Approach to Writing Grammars of Endangered Languages

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Increasingly, there have been proposals for grammar writers to take the realities and needs of the community into account in order to produce grammars that can serve the interest of the native speakers (e.g. Kadanya 2006, Rehg 2014). Obviously, a grammar of an endangered language should, among other things, lead to the maintenance and/or revitalization of the language. For revitalization initiatives to be considered successful, they should be sustainable (Fitzgerald 2018). However, grammars that are comprehensive and clear (Rice 2006, Noonan 2007, Payne 2014), yet focus on and meet the needs of the target community are still rare. This paper is a reflection, from a community linguist's perspective, on how a community-based grammar could be conceived and written in the African context. It is based on an exploration of existing grammars by native and non-native speakers, feedback from native speakers, and the opinions of some grammar writers. The paper points out some practical challenges involved, e.g., with data collection, actual use of the grammars, etc., and upholds the idea that a 'good' grammar that could also cater for the needs of native speakers should be based on sensitization, training and involvement of community members throughout the process.

## References

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