

# Abstract

The current models of ethical linguistic research in Australia have reached a crossroads, with Indigenous communities beginning to reject linguistic research and documentation of their languages in some areas around Australia, and many Indigenous organisations becoming anti-linguist entirely. In this book, I investigate what has gone wrong and what can be done to bring linguistic practice and research into line with Indigenous peoples' desires and expectations in the field. The notion that non-Indigenous linguists and Indigenous people and communities share the same goals to save their highly endangered languages is not valid if 'saving' the language, to the non-Indigenous linguist, means writing a grammar or producing a dictionary before the last speakers die. Indigenous people are saying they want their languages to be passed on 'breath to breath' from parent to child or speaker to language learner, so they do not 'go to sleep' and they want their sleeping languages back on their tongues. They want their languages to be a part of their future, not their past. They want control over their languages and cultural knowledge. The search for new knowledge and the 'publish or perish' mentality of academia and copyright laws serve to take Indigenous peoples' language and knowledge away from Indigenous people and communities and pass it over to the global scientific community. Indigenous people want to be in control of knowledge production that concerns us, or is about us, and we have begun to participate in producing our own knowledge about ourselves for ourselves and the global scientific community. What we are seeing is Indigenous people pushing back against being the 'subjects of scientific research' and therefore we are now at a crossroads. This research examines the issues and seeks to find practical solutions, from both Indigenous and non-Indigenous perspectives, to the ethical dilemmas in developing linguistic research practice that meets the needs of Indigenous people and communities, and non-Indigenous linguists. It fleshes out and redefines the concept of genuinely collaborative and ethical linguistic research and work with Indigenous people and communities and has applications beyond linguistics.

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