

Language Documentation and Archives in South America

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This paper reports on recent developments in the establishing of Language Documentation in South America. Three language archive centres are being set up in Buenos Aires (at CONICET), Rio de Janeiro (at Museu do Índio) and Iquitos (at IIAP), backed by formal cooperation agreements with the MPI Nijmegen as the central archive of the DOBES program. They will store DOBES data on Latin American languages as well as data by other local research. These centres allow, also for the speech communities, fast access to large media files using Spanish and Portuguese interfaces. They respond to many Latin American researchers' preference to deposit data in local institutions rather than abroad. More generally, they stimulate documentation work in these three countries. Local archive managers and linguists have been trained in language documentation and archiving. So, Language Documentation is established in accordance with the specific historical, insitutional and academic conditions in each country, encouraging local researchers to archive data in a sustainable way using Language Archiving Technolgy, instead of creating data cementaries in their personal drawers. The three centers are the nucleus of a Latin American archiving network, at the same time being part of the emerging international language resources network.