

Language Survey: Objectives

By the end of the track, the participants are able to:

- Explain what a language survey is and why we need to do them
- Define key terms such as 'language' and 'dialect', as the terms are used by SIL, while understanding the variety of meanings these terms have in common usage
- Explain the conditions under which literature use may be extended across linguistic barriers
- Select the appropriate kind of survey for a proposed language survey
- Describe the entire process of conducting a language survey, including the roles played by various administrators, the surveyor and the decision-making philosophy
- Describe the methods used to gather data in a dialect survey and explain what each is used for
- Give an example of the kinds of data collected in a typical dialect survey and use appropriate analytical techniques to group the dialects into languages
- Describe the methods used to test second language proficiency in a multilingualism survey and explain the strengths and weaknesses of each
- Describe methods for questioning and observing that can be used to gather data in a multilingualism survey and to explain the strengths and weaknesses of each
- Explain how the various factors and indicators, that are typically studied in a multilingualism survey, contribute to the final determination about whether literature in the language of wider communication will extend to the vernacular community
- Explain the criteria used in selecting a reference dialect and some of the basic principles of language standardisation that lie behind developing a reference dialect as a written language
- Demonstrate how to conduct a background interview
- Complete a People Profile Report that is suitable for submission to the People Profile System
- Write a survey proposal
- Write an outline of a survey report
- Weigh options for sampling design, and choose those that are feasible and appropriate for a given language survey