Making Dictionaries: 21st Century Tools for Indigenous Communities

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Lexicon > Lexical Database > Dictionaries

- Documenting and preserving as much as possible of the LEXICON of its language should be the goal of every indigenous community.

- In the 21st Century, a language community can create a database containing the LEXICON, from which many DICTIONARIES can quickly be produced.

- Technologies exist to make this possible today

To know a language you must know:

- **The Lexicon** [= Lexical inventory + Semantics + Pragmatics]
  - Concepts
  - Words
  - Phrases
  - Expressions

- **The rules for constructing utterances** [= Grammar]
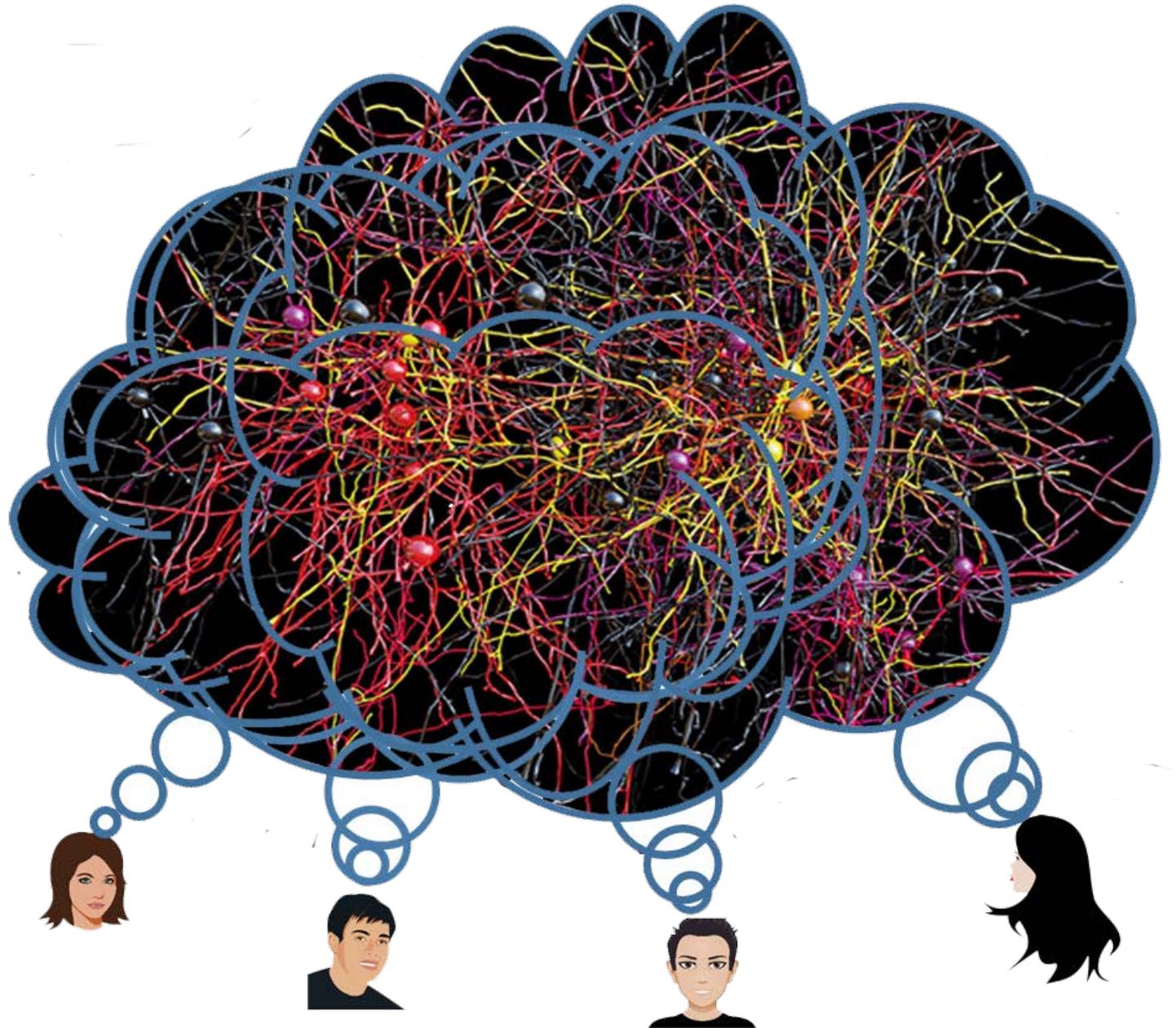 - Words
  - Phrases
  - Clauses
  - Sentences
  - Paragraph
  - Speeches
  - Conversations

- **The sounds of the language** [= Phonetics and Phonology]
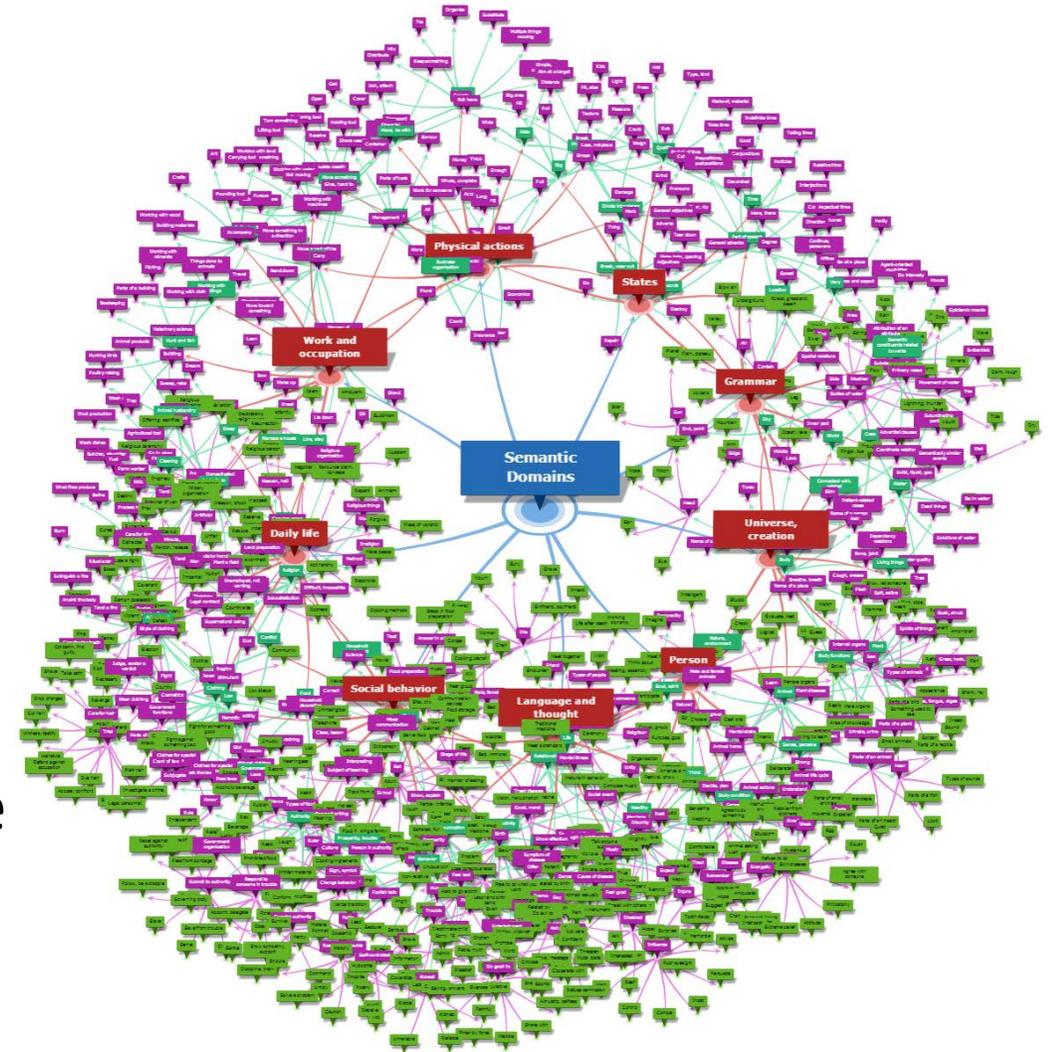 - How to listen and hear
  - How to say

Lexicon

- The catalogue of concepts about the world, the culture, and language known collectively by the speakers of a language.
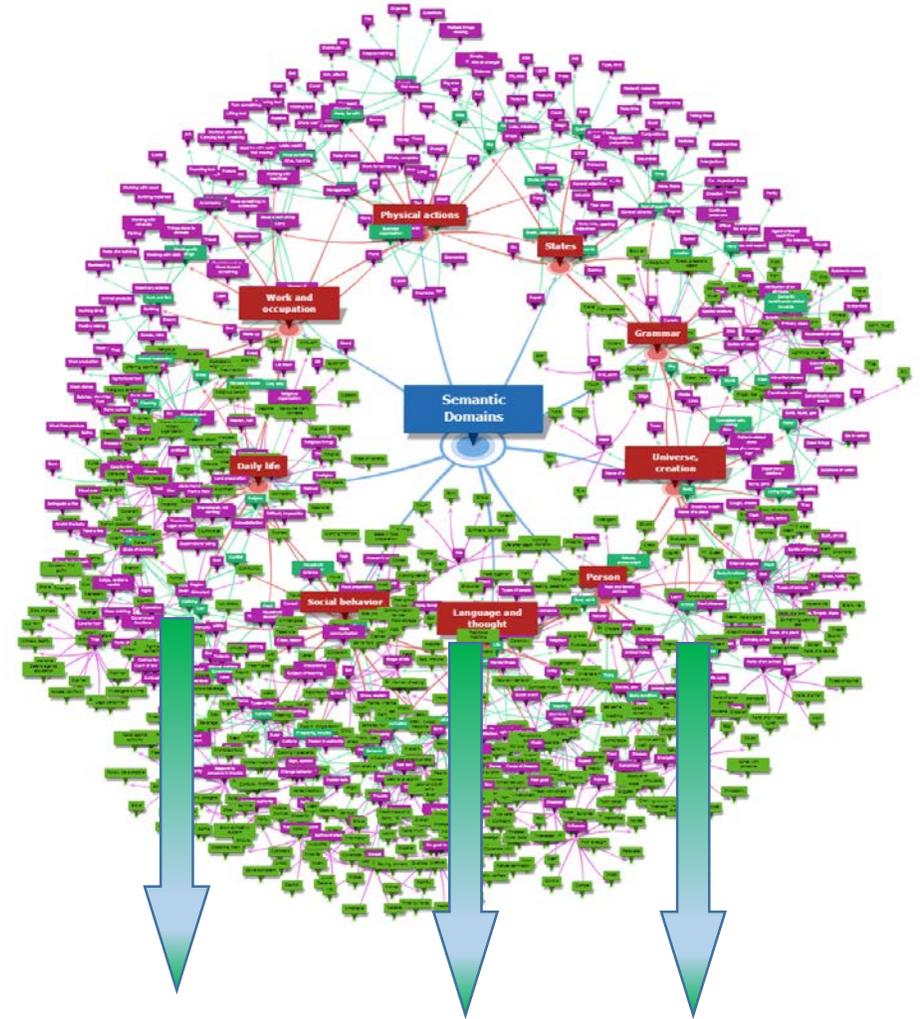- No individual speaker knows all of them.

Lexical Database

- An organized digital collection of information about the Lexicon of a language.
- It can include text, audio recordings, photographs, illustrations, an videos
- It is dynamic:
  - Easy to add information
  - Multiple people can contribute, at the same time
- It preserves a permanent record of the Lexicon, to pass on to future generations

Dictionary

- A distributable collection of some of the information in a Lexical Database:
    - For a particular audience
    - For a particular purpose
    - In a form that is accessible and useful to the audience
- A single Lexical Database can be the source for many Dictionaries.

- **Bilingual Dictionary**
- **School Dictionary**
- **Dictionary of Plants**
- **Printed book**
- **Internet**
- **Smart phone**

Dictionary Project

Creating the elements of a Lexical Database and then repurposing them for use in a Dictionary requires:

- a Product Idea
- a Plan
- a Team
- the right Processes
- the right Tools

… a Plan

The Right Tools

Rapid Word Collection
For quickly capturing
thousands of words
rapidwords.net
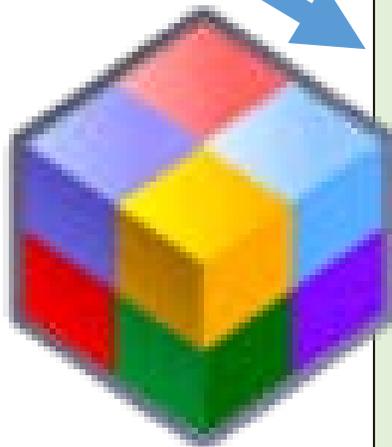
WeSay
Simple editor for entering words
software.sil.org/wesay

Language Forge
For online collaboration in capturing words
youtu.be/wzQMsxOYauM

Keyman
Computer keyboards for
typing indigenous languages
keyman.com

**Language Data
Management System**
Fieldworks Language
Explorer [FLEx]

Dictionary App Builder
For Smart Phone
Dictionaries
software.sil.org/dictiona
ryappbuilder

Lexique Pro
For publishing Dictionaries in Print
and online
software.sil.org/lexiquepro

Field Linguist's Toolbox
Managing lexical data and texts
Formatting dictionaries
software.sil.org/toolbox

Webonary
For online dictionary publishing
www.webonary.org

SIL Americas Language Development Services can help you to design and do Dictionary Development projects.

All our software and tools are free, and can be downloaded here;

software.sil.org/products

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