Creating Future Legacy

the documentation of five endangered Saami languages

Joshua Wilbur and Kristina Kotcheva

Nordeuropa-Institut • Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin

Hans-Raising Endangered Languages Project
and
Dokumentation bedrohter Sprachen

Workshop on Saami Language Legacy - Uppsala - 7th April 2011
Plan for this talk

- overview of the projects
- documentary linguistics
- project workflows
- archiving
- practical challenges
the Kola Saami Documentation Project

- funded by the Volkswagen Foundation and *Dokumentation bedrohter Sprachen* (DoBeS) at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen
- May 2005 – January 2011
- goals:
  - to provide linguistic and ethnographic documentation and create a language corpus for the Kola Saami languages (i.e.: Akkala, Kildin, Ter and Skolt Saami)
  - to describe the contemporary sociolinguistic situation of the Kola Saami
  - to create sketch grammars, dictionaries and teaching materials
the Pite Saami Documentation Project

- funded by the Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project at the School of Oriental and African Studies, London
- June 2008 – July 2011
- goals:
  - to create and archive a linguistic corpus/documentation of current Pite Saami language practices
  - to create a sketch grammar for Pite Saami in English
  - to (help) produce Pite-Swedish-English word lists
fundamental question

What is being done to ensure that the results of these projects become quality legacy materials in the future?
Documentary Linguistics

What is documentary linguistics?

“a language documentation is a *lasting, multipurpose record* of a language”

(Himmelmann 2006: 6)

implication: language *documentation* requires (much) more than simply archiving audio recordings
at a *minimum*, recordings of linguistic events should be accompanied by

- a transcription
- a translation (into some stable lingua franca)
- metadata

*to try to ensure accessibility to linguistic data, even in the distant future*
Creating Future Legacy
project workflows

**general workflow**

1. recording of linguistic event
2. creating basic metadata
3. transfer audio/video data to computer
4. transcribe/translate (ELAN)
5. supplement annotations, metadata
6. get access permissions
7. archive documentation materials

- **edit video**
- **further annotations (Toolbox)**
- **update annotations**

**legend:**
- **essential step**
- **recommended**
- **as needed**
Creating Future Legacy
project workflows

annotation in ELAN
archive - KSDP

- DoBeS archive at the Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics, Nijmegen, NL
online access to Kola Saami materials (DoBeS)

DoBeS archive for KSDP:

http://corpus1.mpi.nl/ds/imdi_browser/?openpath=MPI363060%23
archives - PSDP

for the international scientific/linguistics community:

• Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR), School of Oriental and African Studies, London
online access to Pite Saami materials (ELAR)

ELAR archive for PSDP:

http://elar.soas.ac.uk/deposit/wilbur2009pitesaami
archives - PSDP

for the international scientific/linguistics community:

• Endangered Languages Archive (ELAR), School of Oriental and African Studies, London

for the regional scientific/linguistics community:

• Dialekt-, ortnamn och folkminnes arkivet i Umeå (DAUM), Umeå, Sweden

for the local language community:

• Silvermuseet, Arjeplog, Sweden
• Ájtte Swedish Mountain and Saami Museum, Jokkmokk, Sweden
portal for archives, technology and tools

Archives, Technology & Tools for Saami Languages

Arkiv, teknologi & verktyg för samiska språk - Архивы, технологии & программы для саамских языков

This is a common portal for the Pite (PSDP) and Kola Saami Documentation Projects (KSDP). It provides direct and easy access to Kola Saami and Pite Saami language archives as well as to different on-line tools under creation by these projects in collaboration with the Sámi Language Technology Project (Giellatekno).

You open the tools and archives in new tabs or, if you prefer to keep the portals' navigation bar, in frames inside this webpage.

Localizations in Norwegian/Swedish and Russian are in preparation.

Archives, Technology and Tools for Saami Languages:
http://saami.uni-freiburg.de/
some practical challenges for documentation

- transcribing takes a *looooong* time, particularly for non-native-speakers
- annotation takes even longer!
- working with other, local archives with different infrastructures, access protocols and ideas about archiving
- keeping orthographic transcriptions consistent for languages without orthographic standards
- dealing with dialect variations in orthography when no accepted standard exists
- funding for such projects
- ensuring maintenance of archives
some advantages of digital technology

- easy to distribute (given access to the internet)
- easy to produce multiple copies
- high potential even for complicated searches
- ...

some disadvantages of digital technology

- no guarantee of future access to today’s electronic formats
- no guarantee that today’s digital media will be preserved
- ...

contact info

Joshua Wilbur
Nordeuropainstitut
Humboldt-Universität zu Berlin
Pite Saami Documentation Project
www2.hu-berlin.de/psdp
joshwilbur@gmx.net

Kristina Kotcheva
Kola Saami Documentation Project
www2.hu-berlin.de/ksdp
kristina.kotcheva@rz.hu-berlin.de
BIBLIOGRAPHY
