OLAC, EMELD, & “Us”

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LINGUIST List: http://linguistlist.org

LREC Symposium:
The Open Language Archives Community
29 May 2002

Who is “Us”?

- The community of academic linguists
  - who produce data & documentation on languages
  - who use language data & documentation in their research
- Includes most subscribers to The LINGUIST List

The LINGUIST List

- 15,600 subscribers
- 106 different countries
- 4 European mirror sites:

  Tübingen | Stockholm

  Edinburgh | Moscow
- Current project: EMELD . . .

What is E-MELD?

- “Electronic Metastructure for Endangered Languages Data”
- 5 year collaborative project, begun Sept. 2001
- Participants:
  - The LINGUIST List (Eastern Michigan University, Wayne State University, University of Arizona)
  - The Linguistic Data Consortium (University of Pennsylvania)
  - The Endangered Languages Fund (Yale University, Haskins Laboratories)
- Funded by NSF

E-MELD Objectives:

To aid in …

- …the preservation of Endangered Languages (EL) data and documentation
- …the development of infrastructure for linguistic archives

The Problem with ALL archives:

- Lack of interoperability < many different procedures and data formats
- Lack of permanence <
  - use of proprietary tools & standards
  - unstable institutional support
- Inadequate input from linguists into the standards-setting enterprise

Result:

Endangered Languages

plus

Endangered data

EMELD Components

- Catalog of language resources on the Internet
- Promotion of community consensus about best practice in:
  - Language identification
  - Resource description
  - Markup or annotation
- "Showroom of Best Practice"

"Showroom of Best Practice"

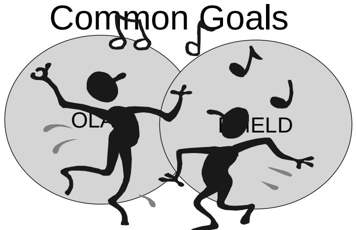
- Information on standards & software
- Query Room, where questions may be addressed to native speakers
- Texts and lexicons from 10 EL's marked up according to best practice

Languages

Mocovi (Guaicuruan) 7000 speakers **[EMU]**	**Biao Min (Mienic)** 21,000 speakers **[WSU]**
Ega (Kwa) 300 speakers **[LDC]**	**Cambap (Mambiloid)** 30 speakers **[LDC]**
Lakota (Macro-Siouan) [ELF]	**Tofa (Turkic) [ELF]**
■ Two from: **Alamblak, Dadibi, Mapos Buang, Takaulu Kalagan, Tuwali Ifugao** - [**SIL]**	
■Two from Post-Docs as yet to be determined.	

OLAC & EMELD:

Common Goals



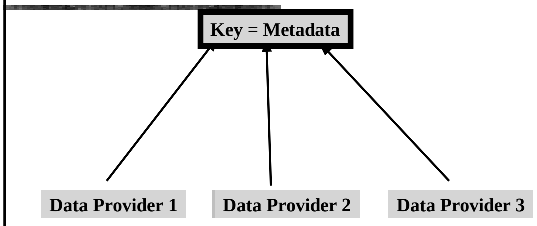
Needed: Collaboration!

OLAC-related Components

1. Catalog of resources → *OLAC Service Provider*
2. Promotion of community consensus about best practice in:
   1. Resource description → *OLAC metadata*
   2. Language identification

→ Ethnologue /LINGUIST *language codes proposed as OLAC best practice*

LINGUIST = OLAC Service Provider



What you need to know to …

Understand Metadata

- Is it really as simple as it sounds ? *Yes*
- Is it really important? *Yes*
- **Why ??**

a) Standardization is power

(for Computers)

b) Standardization is hard

(for People)

Metadata

- Data about data, e.g., cataloguing information
- Facilitates resource description, including summarization
- Enables search and retrieval

How LINGUIST will use Metadata

- Harvest metadata from OLAC archives
- Collect metadata from individual linguists
- Provide a searchable database of information (metadata) on
  - Language data & documentation
  - Software & tools
  - Standards & formats

An Example

```
<olac xmlns="http://www.language-archives.org/OLAC/0.3/" >
<creator>Derbyshire, Desmond C.</creator>
<date code="1986“></date>
<title>Topic continuity and OVS order in Hixkaryana</title>
<relation refine=“IsPartOf”>In Joel Sherzer and Greg Urban
   (eds.), Native South American discourse , 237-306. Berlin:
   Mouton.</relation>
<type code="Text" />
<type.linguistic code="description/grammatical" />
<subject>Word order</subject>
<subject.language code="x-sil-HIX"/>
</olac>
```

OLAC Metadata . . .

built on Dublin Core set of 15 elements:

- Contributor
- Coverage
- Creator
- Date
- Description
- Format
- Identifier

- Language
- Publisher
- Relation
- Rights
- Source
- Subject
- Title
- Type

Added for Language Resources :

- Subject.language
  - A language the resource is about
  - E.g. A Grammar of Russian written in English has Subject.language = Russian
- Type.linguistic
  - The nature of the content from a linguistic point of view
  - E.g. transcription, annotation, description, lexicon

Important for LL Searching

```
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<type code="Text" />
<type.linguistic code="description/grammatical" />
<subject>Word order</subject>
<subject.language code="x-sil-HIX"/>
</olac>
```

What’s been done so far:

- OLAC harvester on the LINGUIST site:
  - http://saussure.linguistlist.org/olac/
- OLAC metadata editor (ORE) on the LINGUIST site:
  - http://saussure.linguistlist.org/olac/ore/
- Language identification:
  - Code list for ancient languages, constructed languages, and language families to complement the Ethnologue code list
  - Everything on LINGUIST site (not just harvested metadata) categorized according to these codes: see Directory of Linguists

What needs to be added?
. . .to LINGUIST Gateway

- Advice about software, tools, formats
- User reviews of archives, software
- Look up for
  - Controlled vocabularies
  - OLAC best practice

What needs to be done?
. . .on Language Codes

- Mechanism ensuring community input into system
- Establishment of working group using OLAC process
- Promotion of code use among OLAC data providers

Outcome?

Improved

- Data Access
- Data Permanence
- Accuracy of language representation