Overview

- Reasons for the creation of the catalogue
- Project participants
- A brief history
- Phase I
- Phase II (now)
- Conclusion
Tevfik Esenç

- 1901-1992
- Speaker of Ubykh
- Raised by his grandparents
- Worked with Georges Dumézil

“This is the grave of Tevfik Esenç. He was the last person able to speak the language they called Ubykh.”
Jopi Mabinda

- Last speaker of ||Xegwi (Batwa), South Africa
- Worked with linguist Anthony Traill
- Murdered in 1988
Big Bill Neidjie

- Last native speaker of Gaagadju, Northern Australia
- Kakadu National Park
- *Kakadu Man*
- Shared traditional information
- May 23rd, 2002
Need for the Catalogue

- The endangered languages crisis is one of the most important problems facing humanity today.

- Previously no single reliable source on the endangered languages of the world
  - Kinds of information
  - Sources
  - Features
  - New information

Photo of Laura Fish Somersal, last speaker of Wappo
ELCat: Motivations

- To inform users about the challenges facing endangered languages
- Encourage efforts to slow language loss
- Gather all possible information on endangered languages into one easily accessible location
- Provide documentation and endangerment indexes so researchers can target their efforts
Goals of the Project

- To provide a definitive and authoritative resource on the endangered languages of the world
- Provide resources for communities whose languages are in danger
- Supply information not in other databases/websites
- Produce new knowledge
- Provide Degree of endangerment scale, and Documentation index
- Provide all this information in an easily accessible, updatable, sustainable form
ELP vs. ELCat

- **ELCat:**
  - Database of all the information on the endangered languages
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<tr>
<th>Codes</th>
<th>Primary Names</th>
<th>Ethnologue</th>
<th>WOLP</th>
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</table>
ELP vs. ELCat

- **ELP:**
  - Website interface which makes the catalogue information public
Participants

- Funded by the National Science Foundation
- University of Hawai‘i at Mānoa
- LINGUIST List at Eastern Michigan University (ELP/ELCat)
- Regional Directors
- Google.org (ELP)
- First Peoples’ Cultural Council (ELP)
- Alliance for Linguistic Diversity (ELP)
EMU team:

- Dr. Anthony Aristar
- Dr. Helen Aristar-Dry
- Anna Belew (Project Manager)
- Lwin Moe
- Kristen Dunkinson
- Jacob Collard
- Uliana Kazagasheva
- Amy Brunett (2011-2012)
- Brent Woo (2011-2012)

UHM team:

- Dr. Lyle Campbell
- Sean Simpson (Project coordinator 2012-present)
- John VanWay (Project coordinator 2011-2012)
- Raina Heaton
- Paula Kiesling
- Eve Okura
- Huiying Nala Lee
- Dr. Kaori Ueki
Regional Directors:

Willem F. H. Adelaar – South America
Greg Anderson – South Asia
I Wayan Arka – Indonesia
Habib Bjorian – Near East
Clair Bowern – Australia
David Bradley – East Asia (pending)
Matthias Brenzinger – Africa
Lyle Campbell – the Americas, Central America
Charles Häberl – Near East
Alice C. Harris – the Caucasus
Brian B. Joseph – Europe
Juha Janhunen – Northern and Central Eurasia
Martin Maiden – Romance languages
Bill Palmer – Pacific
Keren Rice -- North America
David Solnit – Mainland Southeast Asia
George Van Driem – Himalayas & adjacent (pending)
James Woodward – Sign languages
A Brief History

- **ELIIP** (Endangered Languages Information and Infrastructure Project) Workshop, Nov. 12-15, 2009, NSF supported; over 50 international specialists designed the ELCat project
  - Also to be a valuable resource for communities

Phase I

- Creation of a PRELIMINARY database
- Constructed between Aug. 2011 and May 2012
- Mass input of known, general and accessible data into the catalogue
- Some difficult decisions had to be made
- ELP site construction
- Go-live on June 20, 2012
- Google turns site over to the Governance Committee
Answering the tough questions

- How does something get decided upon as a ‘language’?
- Who counts as a speaker?
- What about “extinct” languages?
- What about revitalized languages?
- What about attempts to multiply languages for political or other purposes where by scientific criteria we see only a single language?
- What do we do when sources contradict each other?
- On whose authority? Who decides disputed issues?

- We designed the system to be able to represent the range of opinion.
## Language Endangerment Index (LEI)

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Level of Endangerment</th>
<th>5 Critically Endangered</th>
<th>4 Severely Endangered</th>
<th>3 Endangered</th>
<th>2 Threatened</th>
<th>1 Vulnerable</th>
<th>0 Safe</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td><strong>Intergenerational Transmission</strong></td>
<td>5 Few speakers, all elderly.</td>
<td>4 Many of the grandparent generation speaks the language.</td>
<td>3 Some of child-bearing age know the language, but do not speak it to children.</td>
<td>2 Most adults of child-bearing age speak the language.</td>
<td>1 Most adults and some children are speakers.</td>
<td>0 All members of community/ethnic group speak the language.</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Absolute Number of Speakers</strong></td>
<td>5 1-9 speakers</td>
<td>4 10-99 speakers</td>
<td>3 100-999 speakers</td>
<td>2 1000-9999 speakers</td>
<td>1 10,000-99,999 speakers</td>
<td>0 &gt;100,000 speakers</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Speaker Number Trends</strong></td>
<td>5 A small percentage of members of community/ethnic group speaks the language; the rate of language shift is very high.</td>
<td>4 Fewer than half of members of community/ethnic group speak the language; the rate of language shift is accelerated</td>
<td>3 About half of members of community/ethnic group speak the language; the rate of language shift, is frequent but not rapidly accelerating</td>
<td>2 A majority of members of community/ethnic group speak the language; the numbers of speakers is gradually diminishing</td>
<td>1 Most members of community/ethnic group are speakers; speaker numbers are diminishing, but at a slow rate</td>
<td>0 Almost all members of community/ethnic group speak the language; speaker numbers are stable or increasing</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td><strong>Domains of Use of the Language</strong></td>
<td>5 Used only in very few domains, (e.g., restricted to ceremonies).</td>
<td>4 Language is being replaced even in the home.</td>
<td>3 Used mainly just in the home; no literacy or education programs in the language.</td>
<td>2 Used in non-official domains; shares usage in social domains with other languages.</td>
<td>1 Used in all domains except official ones (i.e., government and workplace).</td>
<td>0 Used in all domains (e.g. government, media, education and the workplace).</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
ELCat now: Phase II

- To fill in missing information and correct what was previously entered
- To add information from more sources, closer examination of the sources available
- To vet user feedback, and enter appropriate information into the catalogue
- RD’s review all the languages in their region, get updated information from the field
This is just the beginning.

- Work in progress
- 2 more years under the NSF grant
- Long term sustainability
- User comments and suggestions
- Catalogue will need continued maintenance to stay up-to-date
Thank you.

www.endangeredlanguages.com