The Digital Museum project for the documentation of Ikema Ryukyuan

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Goals of the Project

• To design a prototype of the web based museum for an endangered language that is easily updatable, and serves as a basis of collaborative research.

• To provide a forum in which the local people can exhibit their language products.

• To encourage the local people to have a wider access to language resources and to preserve the language and culture of the local community.
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1. Overview of the language and the community

• Ikema is a subdialect of Miyako Ryukyuan, one of the five major dialects of Ryukyuan. Ryukyuan is the only language that has been proven to be genetically related to Japanese.

• Most of the dialects of Ryukyuan are endangered. Ikema is not an exception.
Ikema Ryukyuan

- Spoken in Ikema Island, Sarahama in Irabu Island and Nishihara/Nishibe in Miyako Island

- Approx. 2000 speakers (Fluent speakers are in their 50's or older)
2.1 About our research group

A two-year project (April 2008-March 2010) by a group of linguists and the Contents Production Team, the Department of Digital Content Research, Kyoto University.

First year: Basic design of a proto-type of the exhibition space with rich interfaces

Second year: Construction of an updating system, and a display of a full exhibition.
2.2 About our research group: Fieldwork

Members: Department of Linguistics (Kyoto University), Iwasaki, Shoichi (UCLA), Ono, Tsuyoshi (University of Alberta), Kubo, Tomoyuki (Kyushu University), Kurumada, Chigusa (Stanford University).

- Fieldwork on Ikema, and on other dialects of Miyako Islands since January 2006.
- Over 400 hours of recordings: natural discourse, interviews, elicitation sessions.
2.3 About the Contents Production Team

The Contents Production Team:

• Specialties: Video shooting and editing, Illustration, web design and contents direction

• Activities: Providing support for multimedia contents production for universities in Japan
  – Teaching Materials
  – Information Materials
    Web, Video, 3DCGI, Poster etc
3. Design features of the Museum

A four-layered web-based museum

Open access spaces:
1) The exhibition space
   Permanent and special exhibition room
2) Library and references

Closed access spaces:
3) Closed library and archives
4) Data storage space
3.1 Closed access space

Closed library and archives:

Access allowed only by registered members.
Store past exhibits with transcriptions, updated archiving information and other annotations.

Data Storage Space:

Access allowed only by the research group members.
Store raw data files with basic metadata.
3.2 Open access spaces

Exhibit Space:
– Special exhibition room
– Permanent exhibition room

• Design for the permanent room
  Indexing by location
  Indexing by time line
Examples (1)

Indexing by location

Activities

Map of Neshihara village

Preparing meals, Searching for food
- Saitai (Shrimp-fishing)
- nngi ru pa-pa-zyuu (Potato leaves dressed with vinegar and miso)

Cash income
- Tamuruu (gathering firewood)

Children’s play
- Opening a stall (at the village festivals)
Examples (2)

Indexing by time line (Life history)

Click!
Examples (3)

Indexing by time cycle (e.g., A year in Nishihara)

**Myaakuzicl**

Myaakuzicl is a festival in Nishihara to pray for rich harvest, conducted mostly by men. It is held for four days around August or September on the **무한 (Mise Umeido Hi)**, i.e. the 31st day in the sexagenary (60-day) cycle of the Chinese Lunar calendar.

The festival is conducted by Nankanu, a group formed for conducting ceremonies. The first day is called Atsumi, the second, Nnakaruih, and the last Buitui. On Nnakaruih, a ritual called Masaumu is conducted to write in the names of the newly born babies on the notebook of the Deities. There are parades, Kiiya dances and Sumo wrestling dedicated to the Deities.
Why 'museum'?

• Why use the metaphor of a 'museum'?
• Or more specifically, 'Why do we need an exhibition space of a museum?'
3.3 The purpose of the exhibition space

The purpose of creating the exhibition space is two fold:

• To provide a forum for the local people.
• To make a new and more insightful interpretation of raw data files for display.
3.3.1 To provide a forum for local people:

- To preserve audio/video recordings of the important events in the community (i.e. the recordings can be used by future generations as “implementation manuals” of the events).

- The local people can display their works and performances, e.g. story books for children, vernacular musicals, or songs.
3.3.2 Meta-data updating through exhibition

- More detailed meta-data and annotations are added to sound/movie files as they are transferred from data storage space to exhibit space.
- The annotated data can be shared and used for another exhibition by researchers with different interests.

-> Resolution of conflicts referred to by Prof. Himmelmann
3.2.3 Design features of the Museum

- A four layered web-based museum

**Open access**
- The exhibit space
- Contents with various interfaces
- Library and references
- Contents with updated meta-data

**Closed access**
- Closed library and archives
- Data, meta-data, information
- Data storage space
- Files with meta-data

- Making contents out of raw-data for exhibition: Transcription, Translation, movie edition, adding comments
- Exhibition of the same contents for other purposes
- Storing used contents with meta-data, annotations added
4. Some special features of the Museum

• Easy updating

• Use of links
4.1 Updating

- Researchers can directly update the website through the internet by filling in the template.

- The display is not based on any particular program.

The standards set by W3C (World Wide Web Consortium) are followed in principle to construct the web.
Updating

• Previous methods: manual rewriting of action scripts.
Updating
The method to be adopted for the Digital Museum:
Pages can be updated by filling in the form
Updating

• The updated page looks the same as the one made by previous methods.
4.2 Use of links

• One file can be used for various exhibits. Links to the same file are made from various places.
  See demo.

• One and the same file can be shown in different ways in different spaces.
  See demo.
4.3 Other characteristics

• The system, once completed, can easily be used to create similar websites for other languages and cultures.
5. Demonstration
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