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TOMSK PROJECTS ON DOCUMENTATION OF ENDANGERED LANGUAGES OF SIBERIA

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The presentation concerns a set of recent and ongoing projects within the ELDP program: «Comprehensive Documentation and Comparative Analysis of the endangered Eastern Khanty and Southern Selkup: legacy data archival and fieldwork with the last speakers», «Documentation and Analysis of the Endangered Teleut Language of south-west Siberia», and «Comprehensive documentation and archiving of Teleut, Eushta-Chat, and Melets Chulym: areally adjacent critically endangered Turkic languages of Siberia».

The cooperative projects administered and co-administered in Tomsk build on the research team's extended experience with the respective languages, pursuing documentation and analysis of the endangered languages of Western Siberia. All languages of the project (i) are severely endangered, each numbers less than 1000 and often less than 100 last proficient speakers; (ii) have existing legacy data in Tomsk with limited access, which is to be improved as a result of the projects; (iii) are characterized by areal contact contiguity; (iv) are ethnographically comparable.

All languages of the projects remain among the most neglected of the Turkic and Uralic languages of Siberia while the adjacent ones, such as Shor, Khakas, Chulym-Turkic, Tofa have already been subjects of both Russian and international scholarly projects, while the languages/dialects of the project Teleut, Eushta-Chat, Melets Chulym, Eastern Khanty, and Southern Selkup areas highly endangered and lesser documented. Urbanization and the destruction of the traditional land-use practices, the outflow of youth from villages to the cities, the lack of a clear policy in the field of language education – all lead to a constant narrowing of the scope and function of the three languages of the project as the languages of daily communication. The communities live in the Russian type settled villages, usually not traditional in outlook. The domestic life is also rather common throughout Siberia. The traditional practices occur but rarely, and the groups seem to be quite assimilated due to the overall economic and social situation, as well as due to mixed marriages with other people groups (other Turkic ethnic groups, some local Uralic ethnic groups, Russians, Ukrainians, Belorussians, etc.). Based on previous experience and recent contacts there is a local demand and readiness to cooperate in the documentation and preservation of these endangered languages and cultures, establishing electronic resources, particularly in modern multimedia data formats, preservation and analysis of natural discourse, and communication patterns.

The projects contain a strong interdisciplinary research component and build on previous cooperation with the members of academic and indigenous communities. The analytical component of the project encompasses a range of questions and approaches within the wide but interconnected disciplinary field of linguistic anthropology and linguistic typology of western Siberia. Special attention is paid to the issues of local contact, variation and change in describing the specifics of the organization of the studied language systems.

The central intellectual merit of the projects is that they survey a large and linguistically diverse area of Western Siberia, with the languages and cultures on the verge of extinction. The projects also maintain a robust research group, who have worked in the area and have knowledge of the local communities. The projects also build on a long research tradition in Tomsk, going back to the 1940s, of fieldwork and analysis of indigenous languages of Siberia, the legacy of which is also preserved in Tomsk field-data archive. The projects utilize expertise in language archiving technology and best practices of language documentation accumulated in the previous projects when aiming to produce analytical results in comparative and typological linguistics based on conventional functional theoretical and methodological basis, contributing to a number of ongoing debates in linguistics and broader humanities.

The broader impacts of these projects are expected to be felt in the local communities in Western Siberia, receiving materials on their native languages and cultures, in durable and easily accessible



formats. Linguists and anthropologists throughout will benefit from a new archived language data and the theoretical analysis made possible by the empirical basis of the project.

New methodological infrastructure developed by the projects makes language documentation work more efficient and creates new possibilities for semantic annotation of language data.

The project is aimed at field documentation, creation of an electronic lexicon and interlinearized and annotated corpora of the under-described and critically endangered Turkic and Uralic languages native to South-Western Siberia in Russia: Teleut, Eushta-Chat Tatar, Melets Chulym, Eastern Khanty, and Southern Selkup. Most of the few remaining speakers of the languages of the projects are over 50 years old. The projects in many cases, are the last chance that these languages will likely be documented. Among the objectives of these projects is performing precise survey of the number of proficient and semi-speakers remaining in the respective communities, as well assessing the degree of language endangerment, the languages' functional spheres and the sociolinguistic makeup of the communities, and making preliminary analysis of the data with a view to develop pedagogical materials for the communities, in addition to descriptive, comparative, typological and areal studies.

The primary archiving output of the projects is language data as media products - best contributing to the contemporary demand of language documentation. The collections of media files consist of video, audio and appropriate metadata. Approximately 50 hours of multimedia materials (video and audio) are recorded for each language during the projects. Video recordings are prioritized as more representative mode of the culturally specific communication patterns, containing not only traditional linguistic modality, but also documenting possibly wide multimodal aspects of communication (speech situations, speaker positioning, gesture, mimicry, etc).

This major goals of the projects are: (i) collection of a diverse and possibly representative range of high-quality language documentation materials by making video / audio recording of speech events and providing them with appropriate metadata (including photographs, maps, notes etc.); (ii) structuring the collected materials in a uniform corpus of annotated texts, accompanied and cross-referenced with high-quality video and audio record.

By the end of the projects, the recorded data (narrations, tales, songs etc.) receive full interlinearization and free-translation using conventional formats such as FLEX, and are integrated with the multimedia formats using such as ELAN. The outputs of the multi-lingual corpora consist of approximately 12000 words for each language, representing authentic spontaneous interlinearized texts with culturally appropriate content, which are cross-referenced with the respective video and/or audio records (where available). Each recorded speech event is provided with appropriate metadata detailing the participants, events, locations and technical specifics (date, place, speaker: name, date of birth, brief relevant sociolinguistic background, collector, titles, keywords, etc. describing the recorded event). Metadata are collected and archived operationally in the form of texts within uniform tables (MS.xls) and then integrated with the language data into the archive framework using Arbil. When available, photographs, pictures, maps etc. will complement the textual metadata.

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«ТАРИХ-

Ш. Уәлиханов

Шығыстың ортағалатын жазба ескерткіші XVI ғасырлардағы Орта Азия арасында өте жоғары болды. Т.б. әлем тілдеріне аударылып, пайдалана отырып, Телугу тілінің «Тарих-и Рашиди» еңбегінің моғұлдың дуғлат (дуғлат) Мұхаммед Хайдар. Шығарма Мухаммед Хусейн гуран (1, 2) (дуғлат) қосыла жазылды.

Әдебиетте Мырза Хайдардың қаласында дүниеге келген мұқият зерделесек, оның деген жорамал айтуы шешесі Хуб Нигар ханымның отырған. Осыдан кейін баласы мен әпкесінің Ұратөбеде билеп отырғандық казакстандық әдебиетінің шындыққа жанаспайтындығын шығармаға деректің етті. Осы шығарма «Тарих-и Қашғар» атты.

«Тарих-и Рашиди» шығыс әлеміне танытып, маңыздылығын мойындады. Зерттеушілер белгілі. Әрине, шығыстанушы ғалымдар қолжазбалар шығарды. Гаффар Фард «Тарих-и Рашиди» қолжазбалардың басын ашты.

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