ELPR and other initiatives in Japan

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ELPR
(Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim Project)

- Funded by Japanese Ministry of Education, Culture, Sports, Science, and Technology (MEXT)
- Funded under the ‘Scientific Research on Priority Areas’ program
  Grant period: 1999-2003
- Grant amount: approx. 670 million yen (US$ 5.8 million)
- Involved over 200 researchers (including about 40 graduate students)
ELPR: Activities

Main goal:
- fieldwork-based documentation of endangered languages of the Pacific Rim area
- particular emphasis on severely endangered languages

Types of work supported:
- Fieldwork
- Publication of research results
- Development of supporting tools
ELPR: Results

—in the form of traditional (paper) publication
- Collection of texts
- Grammatical descriptions
- Dictionaries and word lists
- Collection of research papers

—about half are in Japanese; the other half in English; some in Russian and other languages
ELPR Experience: Issues

- **Academic system:**
  - Short-sighted, product-oriented evaluation

- **Public relations:**
  - Limited impact on public awareness and sympathy

- **Project administration:**
  - Administrative burden was not well distributed
  - Productivity of the sub-units varied dramatically

- **Strategic planning:**
  - The grant activities were not followed up
  - The publications are becoming endangered
ELPR Experience: Wishes

- Better research strategies
  - Better data processing and utilization strategy
  - Better archiving and publication strategy

- Long-term strategy and infrastructure-building
  - More coordination in research activities

- Community building
  - Better sharing of information and wisdom
  - Stronger sense of community among researchers
  - Recruiting and support for younger researchers

- Better public relations
Beyond ELPR: What now?

- Better infrastructure for supporting and promoting EL work
  - Build more solid methodological base
  - Build stronger collaborative research culture and community
Global COE (Center of Excellence)

- Government-funded program to strengthen graduate training and research
- 5 years from 2007
- Annual budget: approx. 100 million yen (US$ 0.7 million)
- Supports field research and descriptive work by TUFS graduate students and post-doctoral fellows
ILCAA Project

- Expected to start in 2008; first phrase for 5 years
- Aims to build international collaboration in research on linguistic diversity (documentary linguistics and typology)
- Hopes to help EL-related work in Japan better coordinated with work in other initiatives