From Dust to Digital

Ten Years of the Endangered Archives Programme

EDITED BY MAJA KOMINKO

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Endangered Archives Programme

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Chapter 19

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19. The use of sound archives for the investigation, teaching and safeguarding of endangered languages in Russia

Tjeerd de Graaf and Victor Denisov

In Russia many old sound recordings remain hidden in archives and in private collections where the quality of preservation is not guaranteed. This chapter presents the results of two projects concerning the safeguarding and preservation of endangered-language sound recordings in Russia, and discusses several other endeavours relating to these historical materials. We focus on the activities and outcomes of our Endangered Archives Projects, EAP089: Reconstruction of sound materials of endangered languages in the Russian Federation for sound archives in Saint Petersburg, and EAP347: Vanishing voices from the Uralic world: sound recordings for archives in Russia (in particular Udmurtia), Estonia, Finland and Hungary.[1] We place these activities in the context of earlier initiatives, such as the research programme "Voices from Tundra and Taiga" (2002-2005), which facilitated the safeguarding of other sound recordings and made these materials available to indigenous communities, helping them preserve their native tongues. After reporting the results of the EAP089 and EAP347 projects, we illustrate the importance of this work for the study of historical events in Russia and the possible revitalisation of disappearing languages. Finally, our discussion emphasises the need to safeguard languages and to modernise the Russian Federation's archiving activities.

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1   See http://eap.bl.uk/database/overview_project.a4d?projID=EAP089 and http://eap.bl. uk/database/overview_project.a4d?projID=EAP347 respectively.

http://dx.doi.org/10.11647/OBP.0052.19

Language endangerment and the use of historical data

We are presently experiencing a dramatic loss of linguistic diversity around the globe. Linguists estimate that by the end of this century at least half of the 7,000 languages spoken today will have fallen silent. Speakers all over the world are giving up their languages and shifting to more prestigious dominant languages. A number of factors are responsible for this development, including globalisation, urbanisation and climate change. Migration, national unification and economic advantages — such as access to education and employment — lead speakers to adopt a dominant language and to relinquish their own. While language shifts and changes are normal, the modern developments of globalisation and urbanisation have sped up the process dramatically. In the same way that humanity is losing the Earth's biological diversity, its linguistic diversity is also diminishing. Estimates place the loss of bio-cultural diversity on the order of the mass extinction of the dinosaurs.[2]

There is a pressing need to document endangered languages before they disappear over the next few decades. Language loss leads to the irrevocable loss of our cultural heritage, against which we must safeguard the world's remaining cultural diversity as expressed in the continued existence and use of many different languages. Some linguists estimate that in most regions around 90% of local languages may be replaced by dominant languages by the end of the twenty-first century.[3] What makes this dramatic loss worse is that the majority of these dying languages have never been recorded or described: they are vanishing without a trace. Humankind is not only losing its diversity but also a record of the unique human ability for language.

Several vanishing languages were recorded in the twentieth century, but the recordings are buried in private collections, inaccessible archives or on forgotten shelves in universities. These are invaluable historical records of languages as they were once spoken. For languages of which all the speakers

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2   Jonathan Loh and David Harmon, "Biocultural Diversity: Threatened Species, Endangered Languages", report commissioned by WWF-Netherlands, Zeist, June 2014, http://d2ouvy59p0dg6k.cloudfront.net/downloads/biocultural_report__june_2014.pdf

3   For details of the problems relating to this loss of languages, see Peter Austin and Julia Sallabank, *The Cambridge Handbook of Endangered Languages* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2011); Nicholas Evans, *Dying Words: Endangered Languages and What They Have to Tell Us* (Oxford: Wiley-Blackwell, 2010); Lenore A. Grenoble and Lindsay J. Whaley, *Endangered Languages: Language Loss and Community Response* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 1998); and Mark Janse and Sijmen Tol, eds., *Language Death and Language Maintenance: Theoretical, Practical and Descriptive Approaches* (Amsterdam: Benjamins, 2003).

have died, or only few elderly speakers remain, these recordings provide our only window into the language. For speech communities, such records can provide a source of pride in their cultural heritage; for linguists, they help document and explain processes of language contact, shift and change. Finding, preserving and making these records digitally accessible is an important measure in stemming the tide of language loss.

A language is in danger when its speakers no longer use it, employ it in fewer communicative domains, or cease to pass it on from one generation to the next. The process of endangerment is determined by a number of factors, which have been described in a report by an expert group assembled by UNESCO.[4] According to the report, the major factors that affect whether a language survives include: 1) intergenerational language transmission; 2) absolute number of speakers; 3) proportion of speakers within the total population; 4) trends in existing language domains; 5) response to new domains and media; and 6) materials for language education and literacy. The last factor is key to the central theme of this article: languages should be well documented, and the documentation resulting from linguistic fieldwork of earlier times — which is often hidden in endangered archives — should be uncovered and preserved.[5]

At the time when the first sound recordings of language and folklore were made in Europe, it became obvious that central facilities were needed to preserve the valuable data which had been collected. Around the beginning of the twentieth century, this led to the establishment of sound archives (called phonogram archives), the earliest and the most important of which was founded in Vienna in 1899. Soon similar institutions started their own collections of sound recordings in Berlin (1900) and St Petersburg (1908). At the beginning of the twentieth century, the phonogram archives of three important European empires (Austria, Germany and Russia) were in regular contact with each other and with institutions elsewhere.[6] For example, during the Jesup North Pacific Expedition in 1900, data on the peoples of northeast Siberia were collected, and advanced equipment for speech recording was introduced to Russian researchers of northern languages and cultures. In the

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4 UNESCO, *Language Vitality and Endangerment*, a document adopted by the International Expert Meeting on the UNESCO programme "Safeguarding of Endangered Languages", Paris, 10-12 March 2003, http://www.unesco.org/new/en/culture/themes/endangered-languages/language-vitality

5 Jost Gippert, Nikolaus P. Himmelmann and Ulrike Mosel, eds., *Essentials of Language Documentation* (Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 2006); Eva A. Csató and David Nathan, "Multimedia and Documentation of Endangered Languages", in *Language Documentation and Description*, ed. by Peter K. Austin, 1 (London: SOAS, 2003), pp. 73-84.

6 Suzanne Ziegler, *Die Wachszylinder des Berliner Phonogramm-Archivs* (Berlin: Staatliche Museen zu Berlin, 2006).

course of this expedition, Waldemar Bogoraz, Waldemar Jochelson and other Russian scholars received guidance from western experts such as Franz Boas concerning methods of fieldwork. Copies of the recordings and fieldwork notes from this expedition are stored in St Petersburg. In the 1980s they provided the basis for a joint publication on the cultures of Siberia and Alaska by Russian and American scholars.[7]

This cooperation was one of the first international joint projects that involved Russian scholars following their half-century of isolation after the Revolution. Further instances include the participation of the Phonogrammarchiv of the Austrian Academy of Sciences in various joint European projects initiated jointly with St Petersburg University and the Russian Academy of Sciences.

Fig. 19.1 The Pushkinskii Dom in St Petersburg. Photo by V. Denisov, CC BY.

The sound archive of the Russian Academy of Sciences, located nowadays in the Institute of Russian Literature (the Pushkinskii Dom) in St Petersburg, contains more than 6,000 wax cylinders made for the Edison phonograph and 350 old wax discs (Fig. 19.1). In addition, it holds an extensive fund of gramophone records and one of the largest collections of tape-recorded

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7   William W. Fitzhugh and Aron Crowell, *Crossroads of Continents: Cultures of Siberia and Alaska* (Washington, DC: Smithsonian Institution Scholarly Press, 1988).

Russian folklore (Fig. 19.2). Collectively, these recordings represent the history of Russian ethnography and contain a wide range of materials gathered by well-known Russian ethnographers and linguists, such as W. I. Jochelson, S. M. Shirokogorov, L. Ya. Shternberg, V. K. Shteinitz, A. V. Anokhin, V. I. Anuchin, N. K. Karger, Z. V. Evald, Y. V. Gippius, S. D. Magid, B. M. Dobrovolsky and V. V. Korguzalov.[8] These materials preserve the folklore of the peoples of the north in Siberia and the far east of Russia. They were recorded on phonograph cylinders (1900-1940) and magnetic tapes (1950-1990). The sound archive is further supplemented by metadata and by dictionaries in Russian and the national languages. This material is particularly rich in the Finno-Ugric, Samoyed, Turkic, Tungus-Manchu and Paleo-Siberian languages of the Russian Federation.

Fig. 19.2 The phonogram collection in St Petersburg. Photo by V. Denisov, CC BY.

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8   See Tjeerd de Graaf, "The Use of Sound Archives in the Study of Endangered Languages", in *Music Archiving in the World: Papers Presented at the Conference on the Occasion of the 100th Anniversary of the Berlin Phonogramm-Archiv* (Berlin: VWB, 2002), pp. 101-07; and idem, "Voices from Tundra and Taiga: Endangered Languages of Russia on the Internet", in *Lectures on Endangered Languages 5: Endangered Languages of the Pacific Rim C005*, ed. by Osamu Sakiyama and Fubito Endo (Osaka: Osaka Gakuin University, 2004), pp. 143-69.

New sound collections for the Pushkinskii Dom

Between 1995 and 2005, we participated in a series of collaborative projects to explore, digitise and publish online the collections of the Pushkinskii Dom (Pushkin House).[9] During this period we realised that there are many important private collections which are even more endangered than the material stored in official archives. Our first project, EAP089: Reconstruction of sound materials of endangered languages in the Russian Federation for sound archives in Saint Petersburg (2006-2008), aimed at addressing this urgent problem. We have digitised seven collections of endangered-language recordings made between the 1960s and 1980s.[10] These include three collections of endangered Siberian languages: Udeghe, Samoyed and Kerek.[11] We have also digitised a collection of recorded Russian Siberian folklore, resulting from research work done in the 1970s and 1980s by students of linguistics and ethnology at Krasnoyarsk State Pedagogical University.[12] In addition to the Siberian collections, we have digitised Yevsei I. Peisakh's collection of the folklore of his native Krymchak people in Crimea,[13] a collection of the Tajik and Wakhi

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9   The projects "The Use of Acoustic Databases in the Study of Language Change" (1995-1998) and "St Petersburg Sound Archives on the World Wide Web" (1998-2001) were financially supported by the International Association for the Promotion of Cooperation with Scientists from the Independent States of the Former Soviet Union (INTAS). A third project, "Voices form Tundra and Taiga" (2002-2005), was supported by The Netherlands Organisation for Scientific Research (NWO). This last project resulted in the publication of a catalogue: Aleksei Burykin, Albina Girfanova, Aleksandr Kastrov, Yuri Marchenko and Natalia Svetozarova, *Kollektsii Narodov Severa v Fonogrammarkhive Pushkinskogo Doma* [*Collections on the Peoples of the North in the Phonogram Archive of the Pushkinskii Dom*] (St Petersburg: University of St Petersburg, 2005). For more information on these projects, see De Graaf, "Voices from Tundra and Taiga".

10 For a complete list of materials, see http://eap.bl.uk/database/results.a4d?projID=EAP089

11 These are the collections of 1) Albina Kh. Girfanova, who between 1983-1984 recorded eighteen speakers of Udeghe; her collection includes fairy-tales, folk-tales, legends, life stories and songs (improvisations, "personal" songs, imitations of "personal" songs by other individuals as well as shamanistic incantations, and also phonetics and syntax questionnaires); 2) Marina D. Lyublinskaya's collection of recordings made between 1985 and 2000, most of them in northern Russia; and 3) Peter Y. Skorik's collection entitled *Fairy Tale of the Kereks*, which contains unique 1960s sound recordings of the Kerek people in the Bering region of the Chukotka Autonomous District of the Russian Federation.

12 This collection includes unique sound recordings from 35 Russian villagers of East Siberia, living in areas together with the native peoples. They consist of stories, personal memories and songs in local Russian dialects, in which the code switching and interference with other languages are notable.

13 Fifteen people were recorded in Crimea and Abkhazia between 1963 and 1974; through lyrical songs, wedding performances, comic songs and folk tunes they provide specimens of their language (belonging to the Turkic language family) and culture (based on Judaism).

languages,[14] and a collection of languages and dialects from Afghanistan.[15] Importantly, our EAP project was the first initiative in the Russian Federation to take into account the recommendations of the International Association of Sound Archives, made in the reports IASA-TC 03 and IASA-TC 04.[16] In addition to the copies deposited with the EAP, we have provided digital materials to the phonogram archive of the Pushkinskii Dom, the St Petersburg Institute for Linguistic Studies and the Austrian Phonogrammarchiv. These collections, amounting to around 111 hours of sound, provide invaluable documentation of the earlier life of endangered languages.[17]

Sound archives of Udmurt and other Finno-Ugric languages

Our engagement with Russian archives made us aware that the phonogram archive of the Pushkinskii Dom held a number of historical recordings of the Finno-Ugric languages of the Russian Federation, most of which are now severely endangered.[18]

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14 Recordings made by Ivan M. Steblin-Kamensky during his archeological and ethnolinguistic expeditions in Tajikistan, in Pamir and in the south of the Ural Mountains. The 25 recordings on open reel tapes contain stories and songs in Tajik and Vakhan (Wakhi), recorded between 1966 and 1970.

15 Recordings of Dari, Pashto, Vakhi, Balochi, Mendzon, Shughni, Tadjik, Parachi, Vaygali, Pashtai, Kati, Colonial German and Russian made by Alexander L. Grünberg between 1966 and 1992. The collection also includes sound recordings of traditional Afghan and Indian music, and fragments of scientific seminars and conferences. The materials in this collection were used by the collector in scientific publications: A. Grünberg and I. M. Steblin-Kamensky, *The Languages of East-Hindukush* (Moscow: Nauka, 1976); and A. Grünberg, *A Sketch of the Afghan Language (Pashto)* (Leningrad: Nauka, 1987).

16 Dietrich Schüller, "The Safeguarding of the Audio Heritage: Ethics, Principles and Preservation Strategy", IASA Technical Committee, IASA-TC 03, 3 December 2005.

17 See the catalogue resulting from EAP089: Victor Denisov, Tjeerd de Graaf and Natalia Svetozarova, *New Sound Collections in the Phonogram Archive of the Institute of Russian Literature (Pushkinskii Dom) in Saint Petersburg* (St Petersburg: Institute for Linguistic Studies, Russian Academy of Sciences, 2009).

18 See Victor Denisov, "K voprosu o sozdanii edinoi fonoteki Udmurtskikh arkhivnykh zapisei: printsipi, metody i tekhnologii [On the Creation of a United Record Library of Udmurt Archival Records: Principles, Methods and Technologies]", *Yearbook of Finno-Ugric Studies*, ed. by N. I. Leonov, 1 (Izhevsk: Udmurt University, 2010), pp. 109-17; Tjeerd de Graaf and Victor Denisov, "Sokhranenie zvukovogo naslediia narodov Udmurtskoi Respubliki: opyt vedushchikh zvukovykh arkhivov mira [Preservation of the Sound Heritage of the Peoples of the Udmurt Republic: The Experience of the World's Leading Archives]", in *Rossiia i Udmurtiia: istoriia i sovremennost* [*Russia and Udmurtia: Past and Present*] (Izhevsk: Udmurt University, 2008), pp. 866-78; and György Nanovfszky, ed., *The Finno-Ugric World* (Budapest: Teleki László Foundation, 2004).

Fig. 19.3 The catalogue of sound recordings in the Pushkinskii Dom.

As a result, in 2010, we began EAP347: Vanishing voices from the Uralic world: sound recordings for archives in Russia (in particular Udmurtia), Estonia, Finland and Hungary. Within the framework of this project, we prepared a preliminary description of all other Udmurt sound collections kept in the Pushkinskii Dom,[19] in the Folklore Archive of the Estonian Literary Museum (Tartu) and in the Berlin and Vienna phonogram archives.[20] We have also

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19 Victor Denisov, "Zapisi Udmurtskogo iazyka i folklora v Fonogrammarkhive Instituta Russkoi Literatury (Pushkinskii Dom) [Recordings of the Udmurt Language and Folklore in the Phonogram Archive of the Institute of Russian literature (Pushkinskii Dom)]", in *Rossiia i Udmurtiia: istoriia i sovremennost* [*Russia and Udmurtia: Past and Present*] (Izhevsk: 2008), pp. 879-84. It is worth mentioning the Udmurt collections recorded between 1929 and 1940 during a series of linguistic and ethnological expeditions by well-known researchers such as Kuzebai Gerd, J. A. Eshpai, M. P. Petrov, V. A. Pchelnikov, Z. V. Evald, V. Y. Vladykin and L. S. Khristolybova: V. Y. Vladykin and L. S. Khristolybova, *Istoriia etnografii Udmurtov: kratkii istoriograficheskii ocherk bibliografiei* [*History of Ethnography of the Udmurts:* A *Short Historiographic Sketch with Bibliography*] (Izhevsk: Udmurtiia, 1984); V. S. Churakov, "Obzor folklorno-lingvisticheskikh i arkheologo-etnograficheskikh ekspeditsii, rabotavshikh sredi Udmurtov v 20-30-e gody XX veka [Review of the Folklore, Linguistic, Archeological and Ethnographic Expeditions among the Udmurts in the 1920s and 1930s]", in *Yearbook of Finno-Ugric Studies*, ed. by N. I. Leonov, 2 (Izhevsk: Udmurt University, 2010), pp. 102-15.

20 The Udmurt recordings in the Phonogramarchiv in Berlin were made in 1917 by German

digitised important recordings of the Udmurt language and folklore held in Izhevsk, the capital of the Republic of Udmurtia (Fig. 19.4).[21] As a result, the sound recordings in the Udmurt archives are now accessible for research and teaching. Specimens on CD or DVD are available to scholars; they can also be used for educational purposes, which might stimulate the revitalisation of the Udmurt language.

Fig. 19.4 The sound laboratory in Izhevsk. Photo by V. Denisov, CC BY.

researchers who worked with prisoners of war from Russia. See Robert Lach, *Gesänge russischer Kriegsgefangener* (Vienna: Akademie der Wissenschaften, 1926).

21 These collections are mainly located in two leading scientific and educational institutions: the Udmurt State University and the Udmurt Institute for History, Language and Literature of the Russian Academy of Sciences (Ural Branch). During this project, 657 sound collections in the Udmurt Institute were digitised. The total volume of digitised recordings amounts to 600 hours, 20 minutes and 53 seconds. They include songs, narrations, prayers and incantations. In total they feature 2,560 performers representing nine regions of the Russian Federation: the Udmurt Republic, the Republic of Tatarstan (formerly the Tatar Republic), the Republic of Bashkortostan (formerly the Bashkir Republic), the Republic of Mari-El (formerly the Mari Republic), the Kirovsky Region, Permsky Krai (formerly the Permsky Region), Krasnoyarsky Krai, the Tomsky Region and the Tyumensky Region. 143 collectors, mainly from the Udmurt Institute and the Udmurt State University, participated in the expeditions.

One of the most important conditions for this preservation and revitalisation of the Udmurt language has been the attitude of the Udmurt people towards their native culture. From our experience, the availability of numerous publications and the widespread public accessibility of historical recordings (via radio and television) inspire great interest and even pride.[22] We hope that the revitalisation of the Udmurt language will contribute to the safeguarding of the broader cultural heritage of the Russian Federation.

Wolfgang Steinitz's historical sound recordings of Khanty

While working in the Pushkinskii Dom, we discovered recordings of an endangered Siberian language that provide insight into some historical events of the Soviet period. This collection was made by Wolfgang Steinitz, a German scholar who in 1935 was working at the Institute for the Peoples of the North in Leningrad. In that year he undertook a field trip to Siberia in order to investigate the language and folklore of the Khanty (Ostyak) people. Their language belongs to the Ugric branch of the Finno-Ugric family and is related to Hungarian.[23] The scientific results of this expedition were published in Steinitz's report *Bericht an das Institut für Nordvölker (INS) über eine Studienreise in den Kreis der Ostjaken und Wogulen im Jahre 1935*, and in his diary.[24] In these documents, Steinitz describes his use of a phonograph and the material he recorded, including the number of wax cylinders, the location of the recordings and their contents.[25]

In 1937, during the Stalinist repression, Steinitz was forced to leave the Soviet Union and move to Sweden. Although he was allowed to take most

22 De Graaf and Denisov, "Sokhranenie Zvukovogo"; Victor Denisov, "Istoricheskie zvukovie kollektsii fonogrammarkhivov Evropy kak istochnik dlia issledovaniia iazyka i folklora Finno-Ugorskikh narodov [Historical Sound Collections in the European Phonogram Archives as a Resource for the Study of the Language and Folklore of Finno-Ugric Peoples]", in *Language and Language Behavior 2010-2011*, 11 (St Petersburg: St Petersburg University, 2011), pp. 78-80.

23 See Andrew Wiget and Olga Balalaeva, *Khanty, People of the Taiga: Surviving the Twentieth Century* (Fairbanks, AK: University of Alaska Press, 2011).

24 Wolfgang Steinitz, *Ostjakologische Arbeiten, Band 4: Beiträge zur Sprachwissenschaft und Ethnographie* (Den Haag: Mouthon, 1980), pp. 397-435.

25 Natalia D. Swetosarowa, "Verschollen geglaubt Feldforschungsaufnahmen: Zur Sammlung Wolfgang Steinitz im Phonogrammarchiv St. Petersburg", in *Die Entdeckung des Sozialkritischen Liedes*, ed. by John Eckhard (Münster: Waxmann, 2006), pp. 49-60.

of his fieldwork data and other scientific material with him, he had to leave the phonographic cylinders.[26] Until recently, western scholars studying the Finno-Ugric languages assumed that these early recordings of the Khanty language had been lost, possibly destroyed in Leningrad during the war.[27] However, over the course of our project, we learnt that Steinitz's recordings were kept as a separate collection within the archive at the Pushkinskii Dom.

There are thirty wax cylinders in this collection, though Steinitz mentions 31 items in his written account of the expedition. These recordings were documented and copied onto analogue tapes, but somehow the collection slided into oblivion. This can be explained by the fact that, since its establishment, very little information about the rich collections of the St Petersburg phonogram archive has been accessible.[28] The only complete inventory of the archive was published by Sophia Magid in 1936.[29] Magid's inventory, however, does not mention Steinitz's collection, probably because these materials were initially stored at the Institute for the Peoples of the North and later in the Folklore Section of the Institute for Anthropology and Ethnography.[30]

In 2005, within the framework of the international research programme "Voices from Tundra and Taiga", the complete catalogue of the recorded materials was finally published (Fig. 19.3).[31] Here, the Steinitz recordings are described under number 127 as "phonographic cylinders with sound material from the Khanty (Ostyaks) in Siberia, which were made in 1935 by Wolfgang Steinitz (1905-1967) and obtained from the Institute of the Peoples of the North in Leningrad". These thirty wax cylinders contain 44 sound recordings altogether, mostly of songs, such as bear songs, but also of two fairy tales and four shaman performances.

A document from the collection of manuscripts in the phonogram archive provides a description of the material from the expedition. This list, which was probably produced by Steinitz himself, allows a more precise identification

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26 Steinitz, *Ostjakologische Arbeiten*; and Swetosarowa, "Verschollen geglaubte Feldforschungsaufnahmen".

27 Ibid.

28 Burykin et al., *Kollektsii Narodov Severa*; and Swetosarowa, "Verschollen geglaubte Feldforschungsaufnahmen".

29 Sofia Magid, "Spisok sobranii Fonogramarkhiva Folklornoi sektsii IAE Akademii Nauk SSSR [List of the Collections in the Phonogram Archive of the Folklore Section of the Institute for Anthropology and Ethnographics, Academy of Sciences of the USSR]", *Sovetskii folklor*, 4-5 (1936), 415-28.

30 Swetosarowa, "Verschollen geglaubte Feldforschungsaufnahmen".

31 Burykin et al., *Kollektsii Narodov Severa.*

of the sound recordings and their contents. One of the tasks of "Voices from Tundra and Taiga" has been the addition of metadata such as descriptions of the title, kind, size, place and time of recordings, as well as the tone quality and duration of the separate sound documents. In this way, the catalogue was completed with a database on CD-ROM containing copies of the original recordings together with all the relevant data.[32]

From the available data we were able to reconstruct some of Steinitz's experiences during his fieldwork in the Soviet Union. He started recording on the day after his arrival in the Khanty village of Lokhtotkurt in July 1935. He made the following note in his diary:

> *Abends kommt Matvej Kitvurov, Musikant […] Er bringt sein Instrument […] Spielt "Programmusik" […] ich will Aufnahme machen: Wir schicken die Kinder raus, ich stelle den Phonographen genau ein (100 Drehungen).* [In the evening Matvej Kitvurov arrives, a musician …he brings his instrument and … plays "programme music". … I want to make recordings: We send the children outside, I switch on the phonograph at exactly (100 rotations)].[33]

The expedition to the Khanty people was originally planned to last for a period of six months but, probably as a result of the political situation in the Soviet Union, it was shortened to fewer than three. At the end of his stay, Steinitz had to hurry to catch the last boat:

> *Kann leider Arbeit nicht beenden […] Bis ¾ 8 Uhr gearbeitet, dann alles liegen lassen, zu einer Sitzung im Pedtechnikum gelaufen […] Los, über den Berg nach Samarov, zum letzten Dampfer.* [Unfortunately I cannot finish the job … Until 7:45 I was working, then I left everything behind, hurried to a session of the pedagogical technical college … Then, over the mountain to Samarov, to the last steamboat].[34]

The results of our reconstruction work will allow further comparisons of the acoustic database with the text of his diary. They will allow us to learn more about the way Steinitz worked with Khanty informants in that difficult period of Soviet history, and to understand the significance of his contributions to the field of Finno-Ugric studies.[35] At present there are few speakers of Khanty left and the historical data of the Steinitz collection are important for the reconstruction of the language in its earlier form and for its chances of being passed on.

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32 Ibid.
33 In collection 127, this recording of 31 July 1935 has the cylinder number 4080.
34 Steinitz, *Ostjakologische Arbeiten,* 431, quoted after Swetozarova, 52.
35 Swetosarowa, "Verschollen geglaubte Feldforschungsaufnahmen".

The use of data from sound archives and fieldwork for language revitalisation

In recent years, the relationship between the documentation of endangered languages, pedagogy and revitalisation has become an important issue.[36] A good illustration of the connection between historical collections and language revitalisation is provided by the historical recordings of Nivkh, a critically endangered language native to the island of Sakhalin (eastern Russia). One of the collections digitised by the EAP089 project is Lev Yakovlevich Sternberg's 1910 recordings of Nivkh, Nanai, Negidal and Evenki in eastern Russia, preserved in the Pushkinskii Dom.[37] Sternberg collected his material at a time when most speakers of Nivkh spoke only their own language; it exhibits the language in its original form without interference from Russian.

Since then, the Nivkh language has been drastically diminished, as illustrated by a historical population shift. In the first all-Russian census in 1897, the total number of people belonging to the Nivkh ethnic group on Sakhalin was listed as 1,969, all of whom named Nivkh as their mother tongue — most of them were probably monolingual.[38] In the second census of 1926, which was the first organised in the Soviet Union, the total number of Nivkh people shrank due to the fact that the inhabitants of the Japanese south of Sakhalin — which was not a part of the Soviet Union — were not counted. Practically all of them still identified Nivkh as their mother tongue.[39] Since that year, however, there has been a decrease in the percentage of Nivkh speakers, even while the total number of Nivkh people on Sakhalin has remained more or less stable. In 1989, more than 80% of Nivkh people named Russian as their first language.[40] The most recent census, in 2010, shows that many minority groups have moved from being monolingual

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36 Mari C. Jones and Sarah Ogilvie, *Keeping Languages Alive: Documentation, Pedagogy and Revitalisation* (Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2013).

37 Lev Sternberg was an important Russian figure in the field of anthropology. With the help of Vladimir Bogoraz, he established the first Russian ethnographic centre at St Petersburg State University after the Russian Revolution of 1917. See "Pamjati L'va Jakovlevicha Sternberga [In Memory of Lev Yakovlevich Sternberg]", in *Sbornik Museja Antropologii i Etnografii*, ed. Y. F. Karsky. Band 7 (Leningrad: Nauka, 1928) pp. 1-70.

38 N. B. Vakhtin, *Iazyki narodov severa v XX veke: ocherki iazykovogo sdviga* [*Languages of the Northern Peoples in the Twentieth Century: Outline of a Language Shift*] (St Petersburg: Dmitrii Bulanin, 2001).

39 Ibid.

40 Tjeerd de Graaf, "The Languages of Sakhalin", *International Journal on the Sociology of Languages*, 94 (1992), 185-200.

in their local language to monolingual in Russian.[41] This has led to several northern languages becoming extinct.

The transition from Sakhalin Nivkh to Russian can be explained in a number of ways. After the capitulation of Japan in 1945, the southern half of Sakhalin was conquered by the Red Army and the whole island became Soviet territory. This had enormous consequences for its ethnographic and linguistic situation: practically every Japanese inhabitant left Sakhalin for Japan, together with many of the Sakhalin Ainu and Nivkh.[42] At the same time, many new immigrants arrived from all parts of the Soviet Union in order to exploit the natural resources (oil, coal, wood, fish, caviar). These people were not only Russians, but also sprang from other ethnic groups — such as Ukrainians, Estonians and Tatars — and most of the time spoke Russian.[43] Previously, the Nivkh people had lived as fishermen and hunters in their small villages, but from that time onwards they increasingly came into contact with the immigrants, who also started an active policy of Russification of the aboriginal inhabitants of the eastern parts of the Soviet Union.[44]

More recently, since 1990 in particular, efforts have been made to protect and preserve the native languages and cultures of small minorities in the Russian Federation such as the Nivkh.[45] There have been several attempts to revive the Nivkh language, for example by introducing Nivkh language classes in the villages of Chir-Unvd, Nekrasovka and Nogliki. Sounds recordings are very useful for the preparation of the necessary learning methods and materials, in particular when — as in the case of Nivkh — very few native speakers are left.[46] The historical recordings of Nivkh which present the

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41 Preliminary data of the 2010 census in the Russian Federation, http://www.gks.ru/free_doc/new_site/perepis2010/croc/perepis_itogi1612.htm

42 John J. Stephan, *Sakhalin: A History* (Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1971).

43 Tjeerd de Graaf, "The Languages of Sakhalin".

44 Tjeerd de Graaf, "The Status of Endangered Languages in the Border Areas of Japan and Russia", in *On the Margins of Nations: Endangered Languages and Linguistic Rights*, ed. by Joan A. Argenter and R. McKenna Brown (Bath: Foundation for Endangered Languages, 2008), pp. 153-59.

45 Tjeerd de Graaf and Hidetoshi Shiraishi, "Capacity Building for Some Endangered Languages of Russia: Voices from Tundra and Taiga", in *Language Documentation and Description*, ed. by Peter K. Austin, 2 (London: Hans Rausing Endangered Languages Project, 2004), pp. 15-26.

46 Tjeerd de Graaf, "Data on the Languages of Russia from Historical Documents, Sound Archives and Fieldwork Expeditions", in *Recording and Restoration of Minority Languages, Sakhalin Ainu and Nivkh*, ed. by Kyoko Murasaki (Kyoto: ELPR, 2001), pp. 13-37.

language in its original form, without interference from Russian, provide important data for this revitalisation process.

The support of the EAP has been of great importance for our work with sound archives and with the documentation and revitalisation of endangered languages in the Russian Federation. We hope to continue this work and apply our results to teaching methods and to further efforts of safeguarding these languages. At present, the main problems for most Russian sound archives stem from a lack of financial support and technical specialists for preserving and describing the collections. Moreover, there are neither good local standards for this work, nor sufficient levels of international exchange and support. Access to the collections still needs to be improved, and it is vital to develop a national programme for supporting these important archives. Finally, to ensure compatibility with other archives worldwide the work in Russian archives should take into consideration IASA requirements and UNESCO recommendations.[47]

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47 Schüller, "The Safeguarding of the Audio Heritage". UNESCO, *Language Vitality and Endangerment*.

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