## **Aims and Objectives**

The ISCA Special Interest Group on Speech and Language Technology for Minority Languages has the overall aim of promoting research and development in the field of speech and language technology for lesser-used languages, particularly those of Europe. It has the following specific objectives:

- Promoting conferences and workshops.
- Promoting electronic discussion through the Internet (Web site, discussion list, etc).
- Maintaining a database of active researchers.
- Providing a channel of communication between minority language researchers and those active in speech and language technology in general.

The proposal for the SIG is available.

## Motivation

By definition, a minority language has a smaller resource base than the major languages. For some minority languages (those that are fighting for survival), there are not sufficient resources to support research and development in speech and language means that, in time, the language will fall even further behind technology. This the major languages and will be viewed as second-class and pre-technological, since all interaction with computers will need to take place in a major language. This is a critical factor in the survival of some languages. If minority languages die, then a valuable part of the world's cultural diversity will have been lost.

Therefore support is necessary for research in speech and language technology for minority languages. It is probable that advances can be made by acting together that could not be made by any one language acting alone. In the case of certain minority languages, the state Government is not particularly sympathetic to their existence, and support must be found from outside or private agencies.

To begin with, all that can be achieved is the sharing of information and the forming of a network of researchers. But it is hoped that this networking will form the seed-bed out of which will grow more substantial projects. The adoption of common standards and procedures (as proposed by the EAGLES project) will help to minimise costs and workload in research, and this can be promoted through a SIG network of the kind proposed.