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 technology. This   means that, in time, the language will fall even further behind   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.