

Guido Mensching  
(Free University of Berlin)

## The internet as a Rescue Tool of Endangered Languages: Sardinian

In this paper, I will briefly describe our experience with the use of Sardinian on the Internet. The project *Limba e Curtura de sa Sardigna* started rather as an experiment in 1994. I was then working as a research assistant at the Department of Linguistic Data Processing at the University of Cologne, and my first experiments with HTML and the World Wide Web were some pages about the Sardinian language. Surprisingly, I soon got such a great number of E-mail responses, particularly from speakers of Sardinian, that I decided to make a project of it. At present, the project is running as a co-operation between the Free University of Berlin and the University of Cologne.<sup>1</sup> For earlier documentation of the project, see the articles by Mensching (1999) and Remberger (1999). The Internet site that I will present in this paper is the biggest one dealing with Sardinian and it has been mentioned in Sardinian regional newspapers.<sup>2</sup>

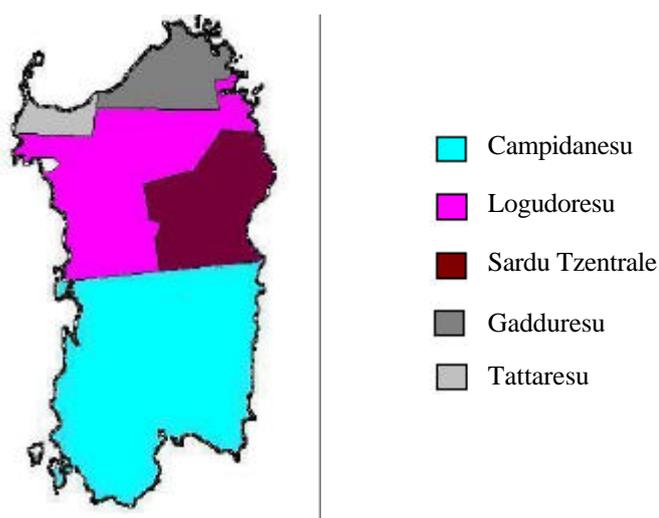
The paper is organised as follows: In section 1, I will introduce Sardinian and some of the problems that it faces as a European minority language. In section 2, I will then describe our Internet-based approach to support the Sardinian language. Finally, In section 3, I will provide a very brief evaluation of our efforts, making some comments from a linguistic point of view.

### 1. Sardinian: A European Minority Language

Sardinian is spoken on the island of Sardinia in the western Mediterranean Sea. Sardinia was one of the first Roman colonies, and, as in other parts of the empire, the spoken Latin of the region gave rise to a Romance language, the first written documentation of which we find in the eleventh century. During the second millennium, Sardinia was first strongly influenced by the presence of Pisa and Genoa and then belonged to Aragon and Spain from the fourteenth to the seventeenth century. In the eighteenth century, it passed to Piemonte and, later, to Italy.<sup>3</sup>

The main problem about Sardinian is the relatively strong dialectal diversity. Basically, as is shown in figure (1) below, we can distinguish between two main groups of varieties, Campidanian in the South and Logudorian in the north. Logudorian also comprises the conservative or archaic central region around the city of Nùgoro (Ital. Nuoro). In the extreme north, we find some varieties that can be characterised as semi-Sardinian, due to the strong linguistic influences of Italian during the Middle Ages. Finally, there are two clearly non-Sardinian varieties: Catalan, in the city of L'Alguer (Sardinian *S'Alighera*, Italian *Alghero*) on the north-western coast, and Ligurian on some small islands in the south.

(1) Diatopic diversity of Sardinian



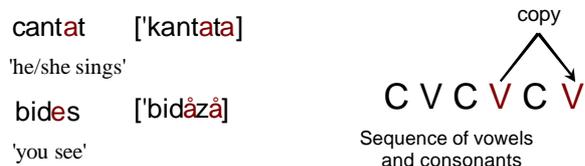
I shall now turn to some linguistic properties, first from a historical perspective. It is a longstanding tradition within Romance Philology to characterise Sardinian as the most archaic Romance language, that is to say, the language that has best conserved some Latin elements. I shall briefly mention some of these characteristics. Consider the following examples:

(2) Some of the so-called archaic elements of Sardinian

DOMVS	>	<b>domo</b>	<i>not:</i> casa	'house'
MAGNVS	>	<b>mannu</b>	<i>not:</i> grande	'big'
PILVM	>	<b>pilu</b>	<i>not:</i> pelo	'hair'
CANTAT	>	<b>cantat</b>	<i>not:</i> canta_	'he/she sings'

First, there is the conservation of some words that have been lost in all other Romance languages, like the noun *domus* or the adjective *magnus*. The words *pilu* and *cantat* show the preservation of the short Latin vowels I and U and the third person singular ending -T. Sardinian is interesting, too, from a synchronic, structural perspective. For example, in phonology, there is a peculiar copying-rule, which takes the last vowel of a word and copies it to the end into an empty segment (or pause):<sup>4</sup>

(3) The paragodic vowel and the underlying copy-rule



In syntax, we have similarly interesting movement rules that cannot be discussed here.<sup>5</sup>

The sociolinguistic status is that of a minority language before any legal establishment as a regional language. Sardinian is mainly spoken in the villages, in private life (both in the family or for non-official contact within the village community). Italian is the main language in the cities, whereas in the villages it is used for communication with strangers. In this respect, it is notable that Italian is also used to communicate with speakers of distant dialects of Sardinian. Italian is almost the only language used for official purposes. According to data presented by EUROMOSAIC, there is a serious decline of language ability from one generation to the next:<sup>6</sup>

(4) Ability in Sardinian according to EUROMOSAIC

	Very good	Quite good	Little	None	NA
Father	228,00	44,00	11,00	10,00	3,00
Mother	224,00	44,00	13,00	14,00	1,00
Brother	124,00	54	57	23	38
Sister	108	43	51	24	70
Mat GPs	248	16	3	18	11
Pat GPs	246	18	4	12	16

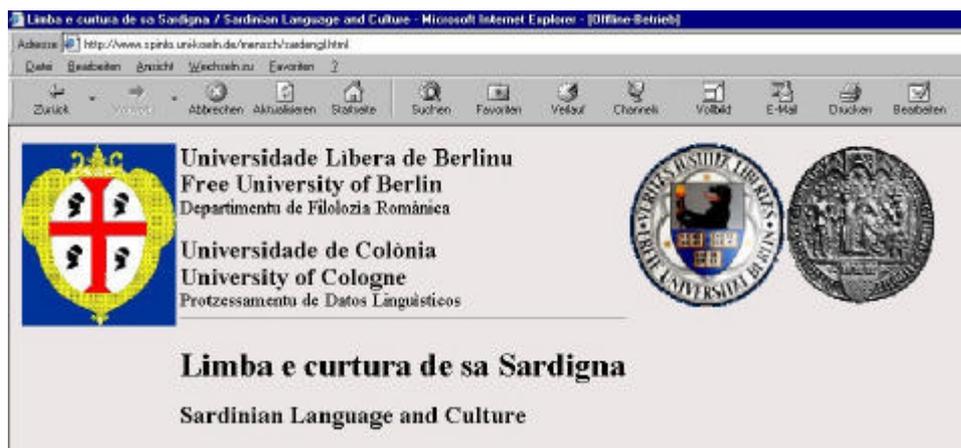
The authors describe this as follows: "Ability [...] has declined from about 80% as 'very good' in the parental generation to less than 50% recording the same level of ability for their siblings. The change is far more pronounced than for the preceding generation. It is clear that Sardinian is seriously endangered." For the status of Sardinian as an endangered language, see also the UNESCO Red Book on Endangered Languages (Salminen 1993).

As for the legal status, the Italian government, for a long time, did not recognise Sardinian as a language. This situation has changed only recently, with the regional law of 1997 and, more crucially, the national law for the protection of historical linguistic minorities. This law also mentions Sardinian.<sup>7</sup> As far as the standardisation of Sardinian is concerned, it is evident that the dialectal diversity makes it extremely difficult to find a common standard. There is a commission working on the subject, whose success is, however, unclear at the moment. Lastly, it should be mentioned that Sardinian is spoken by about 1,300,000 people and is thus among the fifteen European minority languages with more than one million speakers.<sup>8</sup>

## 2. Applying Internet Technology to Sardinian

The website we have been constructing is called "Limba e Curtura de sa Sardigna", or, by its English title, Sardinian Language and Culture.

(5) Extract from the project homepage



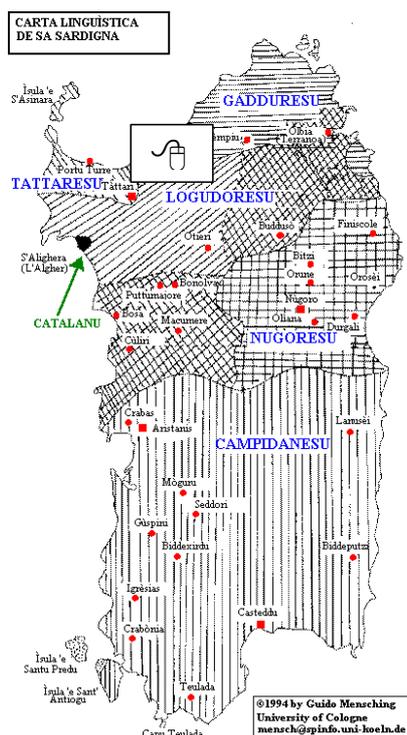
The aims of the project are

- to provide **information** about the Sardinian language
- to serve as an international forum for **discussing** issues concerning the language
- to **collect linguistic data** with the aid of the Sardinian speaking Internet community
- to **document** the language and its texts
- to **archive** and to **analyse** the linguistic data retrieved

Ultimately, the Internet site serves to **reinforce the linguistic consciousness** of speakers and learners of the language. This goal is achieved, among others, by making Sardinian the language of the website itself and of the discussion forum.

Let us look at these individual points one by one. First is the aspect of **information**. The site offers various starting points for getting acquainted with Sardinian and its properties. For example, there is a brief outline of the most important data from historical linguistics. There is also a detailed linguistic map, which is a clickable map (see figure 6): on clicking on a specific dialect area, the user gets information from the UNESCO Red Book on Endangered languages and other online manuals, like e.g. Ethnologue.

## (6) Clickable linguistic map of Sardinia



### Logudorese Sardinian

1. Variant(s)
2. Geographical location: Italy: central Sardinia
3. Relationships: /Sardinian/Romance/Indo-European
4. Present state of the language: **ENDANGERED**
  - (a) children speakers: many children learn the language, but some of them cease to use it throughout the school years
  - (b) mean age of youngest speakers:
  - (c) distribution by sex:
  - (d) total number of speakers, members of the ethnic group: possibly approx. 500,000; the total number of Sardinian speakers is over one million (one figure gives as many as 1,530,000 speakers), though many of them use Italian more often
  - (e) degree of speakers' competence: generally fully competent
5. Sources:
  - (i) information (about the language): Eduardo Blasco Ferrer: *Storia linguistica della Sardegna*. Tübingen 1984. | Eduardo Blasco Ferrer: *La lingua sarda contemporanea*. Cagliari 1986. | Rostta Rindler Schjerve: *Sprachkontakt auf Sardinien*. Tübingen 1987.
  - (ii) published and unpublished material (of the language): a lot
  - (iii) competent scholar(s) and institution(s): Maria T. Atzori, Eduardo Blasco Ferrer, Rostta Rindler Schjerve
6. Remarks:
7. Compiler: Tapani Salminen, Helsinki, 31 Dec 1993

This example demonstrates our endeavour to use the information provided by other sites. Thus, another function not mentioned so far is to serve as a **central node** for accessing online information about the Sardinian language and the culture of the island. The links are continuously updated, and up to now we have collected about two hundred links. Although, at present, there is quite an amount of information about Sardinian on the Internet, it must be said that much of it has been stimulated by our site, as we could confirm by monitoring the web during the past years. A lot of information has been gathered in collaboration with us.<sup>9</sup>

The next aim I would like to present is the **discussion** of Sardinian topics. This goal is achieved by the mailing list *sa-limba* ('the language'). The list was founded in January 1999, and there are about 2500 messages up to now, so there is an average of 35 messages per week. At this moment, there are about 150 subscribers to the list. Around 90 percent of the participants are Sardinian, and most of them are located on the island itself. Of course, there are also Sardinian emigrants living all over the world. The most striking fact about this list is that the discussion is almost exclusively held in Sardinian. Note that nobody told the participants to do so. It rather seems a natural consequence of the use of E-mail; I will return to this point in section 3. Even more notably, there is a small number of foreigners who participate in the list and have learned Sardinian by means of their participation. Thus, the list definitely has a didactic effect. But whereas foreign learners are rather an exception, the didactic value applies particularly to the Sardinians themselves; because usually, in "non-virtual reality", hardly anybody writes in Sardinian. A typical situation is that a speaker presents himself to the list saying that this is the first time he is using Sardinian in a written form, adding some questions on how to spell certain sounds or words. Generally, the older members of the list (including some linguists) offer their help, and normally this gives rise to some discussion about Sardinian orthography. Another effect is that the mailing list clearly contributes to the documentation of the Sardinian language, because all messages are archived; they can thus be considered a huge corpus of rather spontaneously produced written Sardinian, the first corpus of its kind. Recently, my research group at Berlin has begun to evaluate the messages with respect to the various levels of the language system and its pragmatic use.

In addition, the participants themselves started various interesting initiatives, for example, the translation of extracts from world literature into Sardinian. In (7) there is an example of a translation of Borges; but the members of our mailing list have also provided, for the first time, translations of works by Shakespeare or T.S. Eliot. Usually, the translations are reviewed by several other participants before they are archived on our website. Figure (8) shows an extract of the work done up to now.

(7) Translation of a poem by Borges, written by Nanni Falconi, one of the participants of *sa-limba*

SA CIFRA	LA CIFRA
<p>T'accumpazat muda sa luna  (Lu mentovo male a Virgilio)  finzas dae cando, induna notte perdita  in su tempus, leados sos ojos tuos  la idein de una 'ia  indunu giardinu o colte de pioresdu.  Pro sempre?  Eo isco chi una die calecunu  t'at a narrere in veridade:  A bider pius non l'as custa luna cana,  As finidu sa misura de su tempus  ti t'at dadu su destinu  D'ebadas chilchendela aberis  tottu sas ventanas de su mundu.  Est taldu. Non l'as agatare.  Campamus iscobelzende e ismentighende  su caldu serenu de sa notte.  Bene la debes isperiare.  Non siat s'ultima ch'ides.</p>	<p><i>La amistad silenciosa de la luna  (cito mal a Virgilio) te acompaña  desde aquella perdida hoy en el tiempo  noche o atardecer en que tus vagos  ojos la descifraron para siempre  en un jardín o un patio que so polvo.  Para siempre?  Yo sé que alguien, un día,  podrá decirte verdaderamente:  No volverás a ver la clara luna.  Has agotado ya la inalterable  suma de veces que te da el destino.  Inútil abrir todas las ventanas  del mundo.  Es tarde. No darás con ella.  Vivimos descubriendo y olvidando  esa dulce costumbre de la noche.  Hay que mirarla bien.  Puede ser última.</i></p>

(8) Literary activities of *sa-limba*

<p><b>Tramunos:</b>  <a href="#">J.L.Borges: <i>El desierto</i> (Nanni Falconi)</a>  <a href="#">J.L.Borges: <i>La cifra</i> (Nanni Falconi)</a>  <a href="#">J.L.Borges: <i>La cifra</i> (Giampaolo Frongia)</a>  <a href="#">J.L.Borges: <i>Il sogno</i> (Giampaolo Frongia)</a>  <a href="#">A. Rimbaud: <i>A una ragione</i> (Giampaolo Frongia)</a>  <a href="#">T.S.Eliot: <i>Four quartets</i> (Nanni Falconi)</a>  <a href="#">E. Fried: <i>Soltanto non sarebbe</i> (Giampaolo Frongia)</a>  <a href="#">J.L.Borges: <i>La nostalgia del presente</i> (Giampaolo Frongia)</a>  <a href="#">J.L.Borges: <i>Finale per un racconto fantastico</i> (Giampaolo Frongia)</a>  <a href="#">J.L.Borges: <i>Arte poetica</i> (Giampaolo Frongia)</a>  <a href="#">Fabrizio de André: <i>Hotel Supramonte</i> (Giampaolo Frongia)</a>  <a href="#">Ivano Fossati: <i>Il canto dei mestieri</i> (Giampaolo Frongia)</a>  <a href="#">Remundu Piras: <i>Misteriu</i> (Giampaolo Frongia)</a>  <a href="#">Remundu Piras: <i>Poberu irrichidu e torradu poberu</i> (Giampaolo Frongia)</a>  <a href="#">Antiocu Casula: <i>Tribagliu 'e poete</i> (Lone Elisabeth Olesen)</a>  <a href="#">J.L.Borges: <i>Dimenticando un sogno</i> (Giampaolo Frongia)</a></p>	<p><b>Modos de narrer:</b>  <a href="#">Cullettezione cumentzada dae Graziano Cortes</a></p> <p><b>Litteratura:</b>  <a href="#">Maria Elene Sini: <i>Poesia pro sa morte de unu frade</i></a>  <a href="#">Fabio Coronas: <i>No irmentikes</i></a>  <a href="#">Nanni Falconi: <i>Su furisteri</i></a>  <a href="#">L. Matteo Pirisi: <i>SOS NOVANTASES ANNOS DE MANNOI PORCU</i></a>  <a href="#">L. Matteo Pirisi: <i>SA GHERRA E SA MUSA</i></a>  <a href="#">L. Matteo Pirisi: <i>SFOGO - OUTBURST - ISFOGU</i></a>  <a href="#">L. Matteo Pirisi: <i>S' in FAUSTA rabbia</i></a>  <a href="#">L. Matteo Pirisi: <i>A S'AMIGU LONTANU</i></a>  <a href="#">L. Matteo Pirisi: <i>ANNIVERSARIU</i></a>  <a href="#">L. Matteo Pirisi: <i>MARCO</i></a></p>
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With this, we have arrived at another aim of our website, namely the **documentation** of Sardinian. What we really have here is *linguistic data retrieval*, that is that we usually do not use pre-existing documents but rather let the speakers themselves provide the documentation of their language. In this respect, the main part of our project is the *Sardinian Text Database* (STD). Figure (9) shows a small extract of our collection. All texts are classified according to the

linguistic varieties and are listed together with the names of the depositors. In (10) there is an example of a short Campidanian text (popular poetry from an oral source) in an HTML version, together with the standard indications according to the norms of the *Sardinian Text Database*. Up to now, we have collected more than one hundred texts, some of them being whole books. For the future, we plan to use linguistic XML tagging, taking into account the TEI recommendations.<sup>10</sup>

(9) Extract from the *Sardinian Text Database*



Titulu Title	Bariedade Variety	Depositore Depositor
<a href="#">Poesia pro sa morte de unu frade (nobu!)</a>	Logudoresu	Graziano Cortes
<a href="#">Sos apostolos (nobu!)</a>	Sardu Tzentrale	Mario Sanna
<a href="#">Sa contascia de su basolu (nobu!)</a>	Sardu Tzentrale	Mario Sanna
<a href="#">Unu contu de mannai mia (nobu!)</a>	Sardu Tzentrale	Mario Sanna
<a href="#">S'istoria de su prade e de sa perra de s'ava (nobu!)</a>	Sardu Tzentrale	Mario Sanna
<a href="#">Sa printzipessa e Sant'Anna (nobu!)</a>	Sardu Tzentrale	Mario Sanna
<a href="#">Su gravegliu de oro (nobu!)</a>	Sardu Tzentrale	Mario Sanna
<a href="#">S'orcu (nobu!)</a>	Nugoresu	Mario Sanna
<a href="#">Lu tempu</a>	Gadduresu	Raffaele Ladu
<a href="#">Acabada</a>	Logudoresu	Michele Pio Ledda
<a href="#">Carrasegare</a>	Logudoresu	Giovanni Falconi
<a href="#">Cathone Sarda de sa preistoria e I storia de Sarule</a>	Logudoresu	Raffaele Ladu
<a href="#">Dae su trigu a su tzichi</a>	Logudoresu	Gianfranco Unali
<a href="#">Deus ti salvet Maria</a>	Logudoresu	Raffaele Ladu
<a href="#">Francesco Ignazio Mannu: Su Patriottu Sardu a sos Feudatarios</a>	Logudoresu	Raffaele Ladu
<a href="#">Francesco Ignazio Mannu: Una Biografia</a>	Logudoresu	Raffaele Ladu
<a href="#">Gianfranco Coizza: Chentza titulu</a>	Logudoresu	Gianfranco Coizza
<a href="#">Gianfranco Coizza: Macchighine</a>	Logudoresu	Gianfranco Unali
<a href="#">Gosos pro Santa Rita</a>	Logudoresu	Raffaele Ladu
<a href="#">Melchiorre Murenu: Sas Ispurchizias de Bosa</a>	Logudoresu	Raffaele Ladu
<a href="#">Melchiorre Murenu: Una Biografia</a>	Logudoresu	Raffaele Ladu

(10) Example of a short single text of the database

Title	Fillas
Depositor	Andria Salis <a href="mailto:asalis@vaxca1.unica.it">asalis@vaxca1.unica.it</a>
Dialect	Campidanese ( Ceraxus - (CA))
Source	Anninnia Campidanesea intendia cantai in sa bidda de Ceraxus
Copyright	
Comments	
HTML-Version	Eva-Maria Remberger

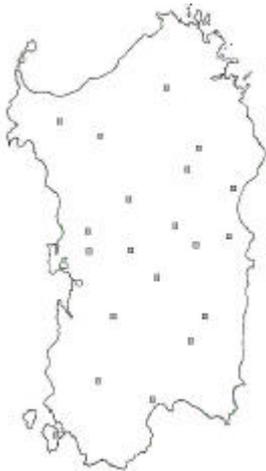
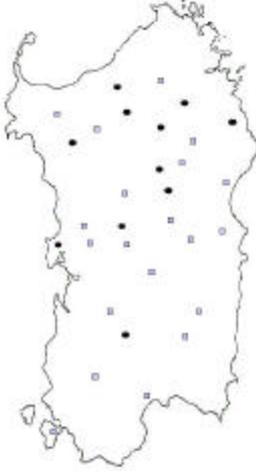
Duru duru (anninnia)

E du duru duru e du duru dai  
 chi custa pippia no si morjat mai  
 mellus chi si morjat una vitelleda  
 ca sa vitelleda si dd'eus a pappai  
 e a chini a chini dd'eus a donai  
 a unu a unu chi tenit dinai  
 a unu a unu chi tenit muneda  
 ca dd'at a bestiri de oru e de seda  
 ca dd'at a portai a su baddu a baddai  
 e du duru duru e du duru dai.

The next step is the **evaluation** of the linguistic data, that is the linguistic analysis and the description of Sardinian. What we are ultimately planning is to proceed from a purely manual processing to the automatic processing of linguistic data. At the moment, we use both manual and semi-automatic methods. I will give an example of each of them.

An example of the manual analysis is a study we made about the particles of assertion in Sardinian.<sup>11</sup> Already known was the fact that you can say *emmo*, *eja* and *si*. However, the geographical distribution of these forms was poorly understood. This is so, partly, because the Italian Linguistic Atlas (AIS) has too few points to get an idea about the distribution of a linguistic phenomenon (see figure 11a). So we used our mailing list to do an online inquiry of the speakers (11b). As a result, for the words at issue, the number of villages increased considerably, as shown in (11c), where the black dots indicate the villages explored by means of the mailing list. On the basis of the higher density of points, we were then able to establish a hypothesis about the distribution of the words we are examining, at least in the northern part of the island. As can be seen by comparing the map in (11d) to the one in (1) above, the areas correspond more or less, but not exactly, to dialect boundaries.

(11) Manual evaluation of linguistic online information (linguistic geography)

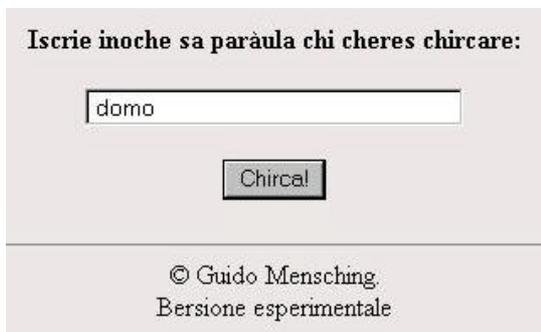
<p>a. Villages explored by AIS</p> 	<p>b. Online inquiry of Sardinian speakers (extract)</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Deu emmu a nai: "immoi mi narais ca <b>ej</b> immoi de nou" o mellus "a candu narais ca <b>ej</b> i a candu narais ca nou".</li> <li>• "Ottora mi nades chi <b>emmo</b>, ottora mi nades chi nono" e in atteras maneras puru; "<b>emmo</b>...nono" pero' gia' est cussu ebbia.</li> <li>• In domo si faeddada un ammesturu de campidanesu e kabassusesu e narranta: immoin mi narasa ka <b>eia</b>, immoin ka no.</li> <li>• Salutos a tottu sor de sa lista, in Bitzi s'ausat "<b>embo</b>" e vinzas "<b>eja</b>".</li> <li>• In Oroteddi nan: "como mi nades <b>eya</b> e appustis nono" e in Seddori nan: "mui mi narais ch'<b>eya</b> e ago' ca no".</li> </ul>
<p>c. Villages added with the aid of <i>sa-limba</i></p> 	<p>d. Hypothesis about the distribution</p> 

Evidently, this procedure could be automated, so as to establish an electronic linguistic Atlas of Sardinia.

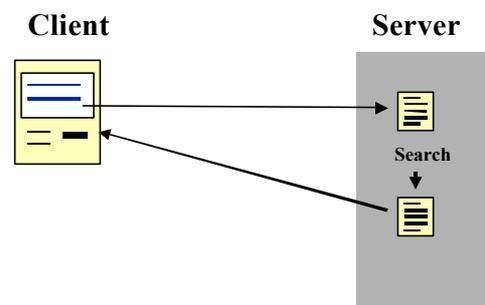
Before coming to the brief final section of this paper, I shall give one example of the semi-automatic processing of our data. A simple but effective tool is a program that generates online concordances from the material contained in the *Sardinian Text Database*. This tool is at the disposal of all users. The input is a word or substring, as the Sardinian word for 'house' in figure (12a). The query is sent to our server at the Free University of Berlin, where a Perl Program generates an HTML-document and returns it to the user (12b). The result is a key-word in context concordance of the word at issue, as shown in (12c).

(12) Using client-server technology for building online-concordances

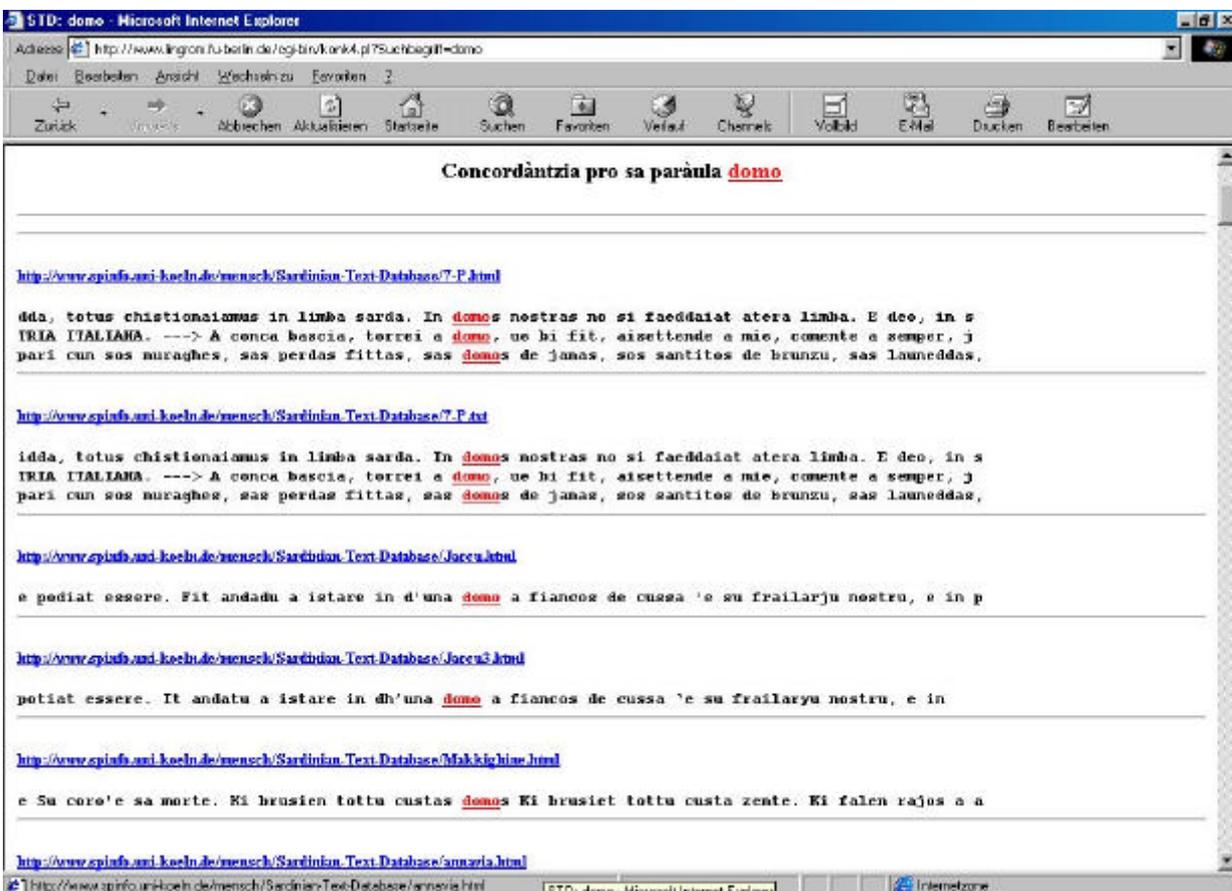
a. INPUT



b. PROCESSING



c. OUTPUT

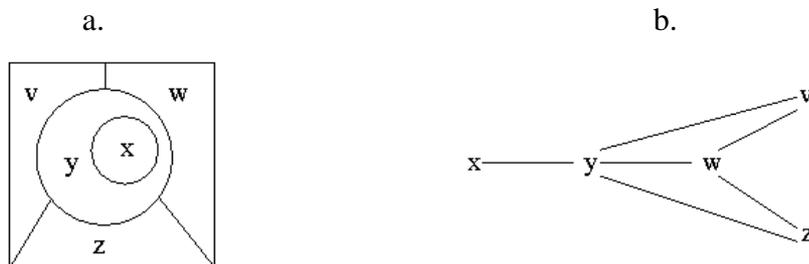


I will now conclude with some brief linguistic comments and an informal evaluation of our Internet experience with Sardinian.

### 3. Linguistic Background and Evaluation

Why is the Internet an appropriate means for minority languages? Let me start with the following model devised by the Catalan scholar of sociolinguistics, Lluís Aracil (see figure 13): *x* is the minority language, whereas *v*, *w*, and *z* are other languages outside the domain of the language at issue, like English, French or German. Usually, the information about the minority language is not passed directly to those languages, but rather by the mediation of a dominant language *y* (cf. Aracil (1983:181ff.)<sup>12</sup>

(13) The concept of *interposició* by Lluís Aracil



The dominant language *y* is interposed between *x* and the other languages, and therefore Aracil calls this effect **interposició**. Now, the special point about the Internet is that everyone can communicate with everyone, so we can have a direct connection from everywhere with our minority language. Thus, in figure (13b), direct lines can be drawn between *x* and *v*, *w*, *z*, respectively. We can therefore say that the effect of interposition is unknown to the Internet. See Mensching (1999) for further discussion of this idea and other arguments related to the characteristics of the Internet.

Another point that makes the Internet an appropriate means for minority languages is the well known **orality effect**:<sup>13</sup> E-mail communication is more similar to spoken language than to written language. Thus, Sardinian is usually not employed as a written language, but nevertheless it is widely used in the Internet. Instead of further analysis, I shall just quote a message sent to our mailing list by a Sardinian living in France:

I have written to you before, but this is the first time I am trying to communicate in the Sardinian language. I am a bit ashamed because I have almost never spoken it. For me, it is difficult because it does not come to me naturally. Therefore I will try to begin to write it in the way my ear has always heard it (or the way I think to understand it); it surely will be with many Italianisms or other "prestiti" (?). Maybe with time I will make progress in understanding what you say and what they say in Sardinia. You will surely help me more than I can help you. But what I can do and have already begun to do is to make other people in various places sensible (here in France and in Sardinia).<sup>14</sup>

This is an extreme case of a speaker who did not even speak Sardinian before and now begins to write it.

Other aspects come to mind if we look again at the traditional areas of use of Sardinian and Italian (see section 1), some of which are summarised in the following table:

(14) Some traditional areas of language usage

Sardinian	Italian
<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• mainly in the villages</li><li>• between family and friends</li><li>• in the village community</li><li>• in private life</li></ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• in the cities</li><li>• with strangers</li> <li>• in official life</li></ul>

In the Internet, there is a notable shift in the use of Sardinian as compared to non-virtual communication. Note that none of the traditional uses of the language apply in our case. In particular, a very interesting point is the use of Sardinian for communication with people from outside: notably, on the Internet, the language is also used among speakers from very distant dialects, who seem to understand themselves perfectly, at least in writing. This contradicts the widespread opinion that Campidanian and Logudorian are mutually incomprehensible. Note that written inter-dialect-communication is demonstrated, on a large scale, for the first time in our mailing list. It would be interesting to investigate what this means for standardising the language and for common language-planning theories. The mixture of different orthographies does not seem to play any role for understanding in the internet environment.

Finally, let us return to the title of my paper: *The Internet as a Rescue Tool of Endangered Languages*. This should rather have been formulated with a question mark. Nevertheless, it seems to us that our project on Sardinian Language and Culture offers some interesting perspectives for the future.

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[See also <http://www.lingrom.fu-berlin.de/sardu/articolo.html>].
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[See also <http://www.lingrom.fu-berlin.de/sardu/articEva.html>].
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## Notes

1. Free University of Berlin, Department of Romance Philology / University of Cologne, Department of Linguistic Data Processing. I would like to express my thanks to Eva Maria Remberger (Cologne), who from 1997 to 2000 spent much of her spare time keeping the project alive while I was occupied with other

tasks. I also thank her for planning my participation at the Multilinguae Congress. The URL of the project's homepage is <http://www.lingrom.fu-berlin.de/sardu>.

2. For some recent references to our Internet site see the following newspaper articles:

Sanna, Ignazio: "Da Colonia (Germania) lingua sarda online" in *Avvenimenti*, May, 14<sup>th</sup> 2000;

"La lingua sarda protetta dai tedeschi" in *L'Unione Sarda*, October 9<sup>th</sup>, 2000;

Puddu, Renata: "Francoforte: est arribau su ditzionariu nostu" in *L'Obiettivo* (Quartu), October 25<sup>th</sup>, 2000.

3. A brief sketch of the history of the Sardinian language, based upon the introduction of Mensching (1994), can be found at <http://www.lingrom.fu-berlin.de/sardu/auessere.html>.

4. For the phonology of Sardinian, see Bolognesi (1998). The rule is reflected quite well in Sardinian E-mail texts; see the example mentioned in note 14, e.g. *este, enidi, ada, nadese* from *est, (b)enit, at, nades*.

5. See Jones (1993) and Mensching/Remberger (forthcoming).

6. See <http://www.uoc.es/euromosaic/web/homect/index2.html>.

7. Legge Regionale 15 ottobre 1997, n. 26: *Promozione e valorizzazione della cultura e della lingua della Sardegna* [[http://www.regione.sardegna.it/ital/lg\\_biling.htm](http://www.regione.sardegna.it/ital/lg_biling.htm)]. / Legge 15 dicembre 1999, n. 482: *Norme in materia di tutela delle minoranze linguistiche storiche* [<http://www.senato.it/parlam/leggi/994821.htm>].

See article 2: "In attuazione dell'articolo 6 della Costituzione e in armonia con i principi generali stabiliti dagli organismi europei e internazionali, la Repubblica tutela la lingua e la cultura delle popolazioni albanesi, catalane, germaniche, greche, slovene e croate e di quelle parlanti il francese, il franco-provenzale, il friulano, il ladino, l'occitano e il sardo."

8. See *The Written Languages of the World: A Survey of the Degree and Modes of Use, Volume 3: Western Europe*. Direction: Heinz Kloss and Grant D. McConnell.

[[http://www.ciral.ulaval.ca/geo/LEM3\\_IntroA1.html](http://www.ciral.ulaval.ca/geo/LEM3_IntroA1.html)]

9. An example are the data provided by a site called *Geonative* [<http://www.geocities.com/geonative/>], located in the Basque country. It is a collection of placenames of different minority languages. The Sardinian part was made in cooperation with us.

10. TEI: *Text Encoding Initiative*, see <http://www-tei.uic.edu/orgs/tei/>.

11. The study was made by Lucia Grimaldi (Berlin). See Grimaldi/Mensching (forthcoming).

12. Aracil, Lluís (1983): *Dir la realitat*. Barcellona: Edicions Països Catalans. See also Calaforra,

Guillem (1999): "La sociolingüística segons Lluís V. Aracil" in Kailuweit, R./Radatz, H.-I. (eds.): *Katalanisch: Sprachwissenschaft und Sprachkultur. Akten des 14. Deutschen Katalanistentags im Rahmen von "Romania I"*. Jena, 28.9.-2.10.1997, Frankfurt: Vervuert, 73-99.

13. See Mensching (1999) and the references mentioned there.

14. Original text: "Bos appo già icrittu ma custa este sa prima olta ki proo a comunicare in limba salda, so unu pagu ilgonzosa ka no l'appo mancu mai faeddadu; pro a mie este diffizile ka non mi enidi naturalmente. Tando appo a proare cominzende a iscriere comente l'ada sempre intesu s'orija mia (ocomente pesso de lu cumprudere), i de siguru chin meda italianismos o atteros "prestiti" (?). Fossi a pianu a pianu appo a progredire e a cumprudere sempre menzus su chi nadese e su chi narran in Saldigna da ghi b'ando . De siguru m'azis a ajuare de piusu chi non eo a boisi, pero su chi potto faghene e chi appo cominzadu, este sensibilizzare atteras personas in divescios logos (inoghe in Franza e in Saldigna)." Message mailed to [sa-limba@uni-koeln.de](mailto:sa-limba@uni-koeln.de) on February 8th, 1999.