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THE SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF THE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES OF THE AMERICAS

\*\*\* SSILA BULLETIN \*\*\*

An Information Service for SSILA Members

Editor - Victor Golla (gollav@axe.humboldt.edu)  
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--Correspondence should be directed to the Editor--

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30.0 SSILA BUSINESS

Call for Papers for the San Francisco Meeting (November 1996)

Enclosed with the January issue of the SSILA Newsletter, which should be reaching most of you very shortly if you haven't already received it, you will find the Call for Papers for the 35th Conference on American Indian Languages. The sessions of the 1996 CAIL -- which will be part of the 1996 Annual Meeting of the American Anthropological Association in San Francisco, November 20-24 -- will constitute SSILA's 1996 winter meeting. In 1997 (actually, early January 1998) we will meet again with the LSA, in New York City.

As in previous years, SSILA will organize multiple sessions of CAIL papers around topics reflected in individual submissions. Members who wish to have a paper considered for inclusion in a CAIL session must submit an abstract and the correct advance registration fee (on the appropriate AAA forms, copies of which were enclosed with the January Newsletter) to the 1996 SSILA Program Committee by Friday, March 15. Any topic dealing with American Indian languages and linguistics is acceptable.

If you need further information, or forms, contact Victor Golla at: Native American Studies, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA 95521 (tel: 707/826-4324; fax: 707/826-4418; e-mail: gollav@axe.humboldt.edu).

1996 Membership Directory Available

The 1996 SSILA Membership Directory is now being distributed to members who have ordered a copy. It will be available throughout the year, and to purchase a copy all you need to do is send an e-mail message to the Editor (gollav@axe.humboldt.edu). If you have already paid your dues for 1996, the \$3 fee for the Directory (= \$4 Canadian) will be added to your 1997 dues statement.

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30.1 CORRESPONDENCE

Delivery Rate in Presenting Papers

>From: Rudy Troike, 23 January 1996:

Like many, I was impressed with the quality and variety of papers at the SSILA/LSA meeting this year, but I was dismayed by what may be an alarming trend in the delivery of papers (perhaps occasioned by contagion from LSA?), namely a speed-reading attempt to compress ALL of a 45-minute paper into 18 minutes. In the past, at slower-moving (less cognitively demanding?) AAA conclaves, points and examples were either carefully elucidated within the 15-20 minute confine, with time for hearers/readers to savor the data along with the presentation (and even for outsiders to formulate interesting questions), or else only 1/3 of a 45-minute paper was thus meticulously presented, and the remaining 2/3 briefly summarized in the final minute.

While some papers notably did adhere to this traditional mode of presentation, and were a typical delight, others sped by so fast that while the hearer/reader was left to fend alone to figure out the structure of

crucial examples in the handout, the argument they were meant to illustrate had to be ignored as input, or else the (usually complex) argument had to be followed intently with no time to decode the examples it relied on. As a result, only a few cognoscenti already closely familiar with the language or with the argument were able to ask questions, though they sometimes seemed arcane (if indeed there were any questions at all). This tendency has become rather common in "pure" linguistics conferences, from which SSILA-folk fled to associate with the AAA some years ago in order to be able to appreciate the data-rich papers then rejected by the theoreticians.

While I applaud the increase in theoretically-oriented papers as more people once again recognize American Indian languages as the great testing-ground for the adequacy of linguistic theories, I would plead for some formal constraint on the presentation of papers, which would require that they be short enough for the analysis of examples and the construction of the argument to be fully perspicuous to non-specialist linguists (i.e., non-specialists in either the language/family or analytical model involved), or alternatively that the oral presentation focus on only as much of a paper as can be given coherently and intelligibly in the prescribed time (and the rest incorporated by summary).

Least it be thought that I am just an outmoded dataphile, I should add that I am reasonably au courant with post-GB Minimalist theory and associated issues, and indeed relish interesting theoretical insights. It is just that I strongly believe that if SSILA sessions are to have a viable future, papers must continue to be comprehensible to a majority of participants.

---Rudy Troike  
Dept. of English, University of Arizona  
(rtroike@ccit.arizona.edu)

#### Help With a Name?

>From Sue Merrett, 5 February 1996:

I have recently purchased a narrowboat for pleasure use on the extensive canal system in England. The name of the boat is Kerolik, and when I asked the previous owner the meaning of the name, he could only repeat what he had been told when he bought the boat: that Kerolik was Eskimo for sleeping swan. As you can imagine, the name causes some enquiry, and I am frustrated that I have no definite answer to give, apart from which I should be most interested to verify the information I have been given. Would someone in SSILA be able to check this for me and let me know if the name does indeed mean "sleeping swan" in one of the American languages?

---Sue Merrett  
Flat 7, 33 Myddleton Square  
London EC1R 1YB, ENGLAND

[If you would like to respond by e-mail, send the message to me at either <vkgo11a@ucdavis.edu> or <gollav@axe.humboldt.edu> and I will forward a hard-copy to Ms. Merrett. -- V.G.]

#### Consultant Compensation

>From Robin Sabino, 17 February 1996:

I'm preparing a grant to do descriptive work on an endangered (not yet moribund) Native American language and would like some input on what others are paying native language consultants.

---Robin Sabino  
Auburn University  
(sabinro@mail.auburn.edu)

#### Co-participants Needed for Special Event at AAA

>From Nilson Gabas, Jr., 7 February 1996:

I am a grad student at UC-Santa Barbara (from Brazil), and I work on Brazilian Indian languages. I recently went to Brazil for fieldwork in the Amazon region, and while there I was asked to help the Brazilian Bureau of Indian Affairs (FUNAI) identify the language of two groups of Indians that had been living in nearly total isolation. (You may recall the description of this situation that I published in the January issue of this Bulletin.)

I have presented some slides and talked about the whole process of contacting these Indians, as well as the identification of their language, in a recent meeting here in Santa Barbara. Given the unusual situation (of identification and work in pretty wild conditions), it has been suggested that I should think about presenting the whole thing as a special talk at the AAA meeting. I am currently negotiating with SSILA and with the Program Chair of the Society for Linguistic Anthropology for space on the program for such a talk. I would like to know if there are other linguists who have worked in similar situations who might want to talk about their experiences and might want to join me in a roundtable discussion.

I should make it clear that what I am trying to arrange is not a regular session of (15-minute) papers but rather what the AAA calls a "Special Event", usually scheduled during the lunch hour or at the end of the afternoon. No format restrictions apply to such events, and participants are not precluded from giving another paper in one of the regular sessions.

Interested linguists can e-mail me or write me at the addresses below. I need to hear from people by the middle of March if we are to submit a proposal before the deadline.

---Nilson Gabas, Jr.  
Department of Linguistics, UCSB  
Santa Barbara, CA 93106  
(gabas@humanitas.ucsb.edu)

#### 30.2 BRAZIL HONORS DENNY MOORE, MUSEU GOELDI

On December 21, the Brazilian National Council for Scientific and Technological Development awarded a Medal of Merit to SSILA member Denny Moore for his work in developing the Linguistics Division of the Museu Goeldi in Belem. Since its establishment in 1986, the Division has evolved into one of the world's leading centers for the study of Amazonian languages. Linguists associated with the Museu Goeldi are currently conducting intensive research on approximately 16 Amazonian languages, as well as carrying out six native language literacy projects. An audio-video language documentation project is in preparation. Fourteen students from

the Museu Goeldi have gone on to graduate school in linguistics; eight of them are now studying abroad. Next month the Museu Goeldi will host a general conference on the indigenous languages of Amazonia, organized by Francisco Queixalos, with participants from all the Amazonian countries.

For further information about the Museu Goeldi and its programs contact Denny Moore at Museu Goeldi-DCH, Av. Magalhães Barata 376, CP 399, 66.040 Belem, Para, BRAZIL (moore@marajo.ufpa.br).

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### 30.3 DATES SET FOR JPH, HOKAN-PENUTIAN, AND UTO-AZTECAN MEETINGS

\* The 1996 Working Conference on the Papers of John P. Harrington will be held at Berkeley, June 28-29, under the joint auspices of the Dept. of Linguistics, UC-Berkeley, and the Dept. of Native American Studies, UC-Davis. A prospectus will be sent out in early March. If you are interested, and are not yet on the JPH Conference mailing list, contact: Victor Golla, Dept. of Anthropology, UC-Davis, Davis, CA 95616 (vkgolla@ucdavis.edu).

\* The 1996 Hokan-Penutian Workshop will be held at UC-Berkeley on June 27-28, immediately preceding the Harrington Conference. To be added to the mailing list contact: Leanne Hinton, Linguistics, UC-Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94720 (hinton@violet.berkeley.edu).

\* The 1996 meeting of the Friends of Uto-Aztecan will be held 8-9 August in Salt Lake City, Utah. For more details, contact: John McLaughlin, Dept of English, UMC 3200, Utah State University, Logan UT 84322 (famclaug@writectr.usu.edu).

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### 30.4 LATEST ON "ENGLISH-ONLY"

[Jim Crawford, who is keeping track of the "Language of Government" legislation that is wending its way through the US Congress, sent us the following update late last week.]

\* \* \*

Critics of the English-only movement who have long suspected a "Nazi connection" may finally have found one in the person of Larry Pratt, co-chairman of the Pat Buchanan presidential campaign. Until February 15th Pratt was an obscure third-stringer for the New Right. That day, however, his face was on front pages across the country, thanks to his inopportune appearances with leaders of white supremacist organizations, including Aryan Nations and Christian Identity. Pratt reportedly addressed meetings sponsored by these groups to organize and promote armed militias. Interviewed on ABC's Nightline, he claimed not to have known about the Nazi sympathies of his fellow speakers, even though one identified himself as "a 100 percent bigot" and used Hitler's favorite salute.

Press accounts have identified Larry Pratt as the director of Gun Owners of America (GOA). But they have neglected to note that he is also the president of "English First", a group he founded in 1986 to combat bilingualism and advocate English as the nation's official language. English First and GOA currently share a suite of offices in Springfield, Virginia, along with other Pratt-created lobbies, including the Committee to Protect the Family and U.S. Border Control.

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In the 104th Congress, English First has worked closely with Reps. Toby Roth (R-Wisc.) and Pete King (R-N.Y.) in drafting federal English-only legislation. These bills -- H.R. 739 and H.R. 1005, respectively -- are the most explicit and restrictive "Language of Government Acts" now pending. Both would repeal the Bilingual Education Act and the bilingual provisions of the Voting Rights Act.

Pratt's group is not to be confused with the older and better-funded "U. S. English" lobby. The two organizations compete for direct-mail dollars and have never been on friendly terms. Unlike its rival, "English First" has never hesitated to associate itself with far right causes or to offend ethnic minorities with its innuendo-laden rhetoric.

I interviewed Pratt for Education Week back in 1987 and asked him about the charges of racism leveled against English-only proponents. He dismissed these as "strictly irrational paranoia" on the part of Hispanic leaders who "oppose their communities learning English [so as] to keep their political base." He added that his Panamanian-born wife fully approved of the activities of English First.

The "true racists," Pratt insisted, were those who reject English as the common U.S. language in favor of "linguistic separatism." He questioned the patriotism of many Hispanic advocates of bilingual programs, warning that they secretly hoped to reunite the Southwest with Mexico.

No doubt it takes a true racial conspirator to see racial conspiracies everywhere.

Jim Crawford  
(73261.1120@compuserve.com)

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### \*\*\*\*\* THE SOCIETY FOR THE STUDY OF THE INDIGENOUS LANGUAGES OF THE AMERICAS

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