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

*** SSILA BULLETIN ***

An Information Service for SSILA Members

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--Correspondence should be directed to the Editor--

Number 38: July 30, 1996

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38.1 CONTRIBUTORS WANTED FOR INUIT READER

From Tom Lowenstein (July 25, 1996):

I have been asked by the Smithsonian Institution Press to edit an Inuit Reader to be published in a new multi-volume series which will represent Native American oral and literary traditions in English translation. I am hoping to get in touch with writers and scholars who might contribute, and to solicit a short outline of any contribution they might be interested in making.

At this early stage it is difficult to know what the final shape an Inuit Reader might take. But the following will, I hope, provide potential contributors with a sense of the direction in which we might collectively move:

1. The volume should represent a balance of:
 - a) contemporary and historical native writing and song composition,
 - b) texts from the widest possible spread of Eskimo traditions to include Canadian, Greenlandic, Alaskan and Siberian cultures
 - c) recently recorded and translated traditional and post-traditional texts
 - d) reviews, revisions and/or re-translations of previously recorded texts
 - e) accounts of film, archaeology and cultural revival projects.
2. In the case of traditional categories, texts should be vital examples of the tradition represented. We might provide examples of some of the following genres: i. origin stories; ii. epic and hero sagas; iii. animal tales; iv. string figure stories and songs; v. magical and ritual songs; vi. festive and/or competitive songs; vii. shaman narratives including (a) stories of legendary shamans, (b) historical stories of shamanism, (c) shaman biographies/autobiographies, (d) shamanistic ritual narrative, (e) shamans in the contact and/modern period; viii. ancestor chronicles; ix. narratives of subsistence, land occupancy, social life, social change, warfare; and x. contact narratives.
3. Authors will be asked to provide an introduction and, where necessary, notes, to their contributions on the model provided by Coming to Light (Brian Swann, ed., Random House, 1994).

The complete manuscript as contracted by SIP will be up to 400 double spaced typewritten pages plus matching electronic files. The publishers' deadline is December 1998. The editorial deadline (hard copy + disk compatible with Microsoft Word) is July 1998.

I very much look forward to hearing from you. Please let me have your e-mail and fax numbers if available. At present I can send, but not receive, faxed material, but I hope to have the fax operating before long.

--Tom Lowenstein
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38.2 MISSING CAPTIONS

The legends to the maps in Nichols & Peterson, "The Amerind Personal Pronouns" (Language 72:2, 336-71, June 1996) were accidentally omitted by the typesetters. The 13 maps are on pp. 362-367. In all of them, circles represent sample languages and filled circles are languages exhibiting the feature in question. The legends that should have been

printed are:

- Map 1. m- in 1sg independent form
- Map 2. n- in 1sg independent form
- Map 3. m- in 2sg independent form
- Map 4. n- in 2sg independent form
- Map 5. -Vm in 2sg independent form
- Map 6. m- in 2sg, most frequent allomorph
- Map 7. m- or -Vm in 2sg (= Maps 3 and 5)
- Map 8. n- : m- paradigm (1sg n-, 2sg m-), independent form
- Map 9. n- : m- paradigm (1sg n-, 2sg m-), any combination of forms
- Map 10. n- : -Vm paradigm (1sg n-, 2sg -Vm), independent forms
- Map 11. n : m paradigm (1sg n- or -Vn, 2sg m- or -Vm), independent forms (= Maps 8 and 10 with two additional languages)
- Map 12. Languages with tones
- Map 13. Languages with numeral classifiers (based on incomplete survey)

38.3 A MYSTERY LULLABY FROM SOUTHERN CALIFORNIA

>From David Chambers (July 7, 1996):

I am still searching for information about a Native American lullaby that has been passed on for four generations in our family. I first contacted SSILA about it in early 1995, and a note was published in the SSILA Newsletter. However, I've received no response, so I'd like to repeat my query:

My grandfather, who was born in Los Angeles, California, in 1907, taught his grandchildren an "Indian lullaby," and I have always wanted to know where it came from.

Rather than go into family history (dating back to Spanish times -- our family lives in Casa de Los Encinos, the oldest standing house in Los Angeles), I will simply try to transliterate the song, without the tune. (The orthography is Spanish--or Spanishesque--with capitalized vowels for emphasis):

[slowly]

I-a, I-a, awI-chI
I-a, I-a, awI-chI

ma-kI-I-ya
ma-kI-I-ya

hA-tu-lu-lu, awI-chI
hA-tu-lu-lu, awI-chI

[quickly]

hA-ma-ma-cha-ka-la-Wi-chI
hA-ma-ma-cha-ka-la-Wi-chI
hA-ma-ma-cha-ka-la-Wi-chI
hA tu-u lu-u luu
hA tu-u lu-u luu

I look forward to hearing from anyone who might help me identify the language of this song.

---David Chambers
chambers@emirates.net.ae

38.4 UPDATE (#6) ON ENGLISH-ONLY LEGISLATION IN THE U.S.

From our Washington correspondent, James Crawford (July 25, 1996):

A modified English-Only bill, approved yesterday by the House Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee, appears to be on a legislative fast track. After months of inaction, H.R.123 (the "Language of Government Act") is suddenly a priority for House Republican leaders. The measure is expected to come to a vote late next week, before Congress leaves for its August recess. With nearly 200 cosponsors and a clear display of party discipline in committee, the English-Only bill seems likely to pass in the House, although Senate support remains uncertain.

If enacted, H.R.123 would designate English as the official -- and sole permissible -- language of U.S. government business, with only a few exceptions. The use of other languages would be permitted for purposes of national security, international trade and diplomacy, public safety, and criminal proceedings.

To mollify critics of the bill's restrictiveness, Rep. Randy Cunningham (R-Calif.) proposed an amended version of H.R.123 that would also waive the English-Only mandate in the case of language education -- including programs funded under the Bilingual Education Act and the Native American Languages Act -- public health, census activities, and civil lawsuits brought by the U.S. government. It would also exempt oral communications with the public by federal employees, officials, and members of Congress. Federal publications -- that is, virtually all written materials -- in languages other than English would still be banned. The House committee passed the Cunningham substitute on a vote of 19 Republicans in favor and 17 Democrats against. The committee's day-long session was remarkable for its rancor and partisanship, even by the standards of the 104th Congress. Democrats accused the Republican majority of desperately seeking to exploit anti-immigrant feeling in an election year, even if that meant violating constitutional principles of free speech and equal rights. "What about people who think in another language?" asked ranking Democrat Bill Clay (Mo.). "Would your bill prohibit that?" Republicans labeled such attacks as "demagoguery," insisting they merely want to unite the country through a common language and help newcomers learn English.

Rep. Matthew Martinez (D-Calif.) argued that the bill would deprive limited English speakers of essential rights and services while doing nothing to address the acute shortage of adult English classes in cities like New York and Los Angeles. (In the past two years, Congressional budget cutters have substantially reduced federal support for such

classes.) "The idea that people who come to this country don't want to speak English is the sickest thing I've ever heard," Martinez said, accusing the bill's proponents of "promoting fear of language minorities. I'm sorry that people on the other side of the aisle are so insecure that they feel they need to do this," he said.

Cunningham responded to Martinez: "You want to keep people in the barrio" by discouraging them from learning English. "We want to empower them." Rep. Cass Ballenger (R-N.C.) added that "the purpose of this bill isn't just to make people speak English; it's to help them reach the American dream." As a small business owner, Ballenger said he had personally sponsored language classes for his foreign-born employees. "My Vietnamese are the best workers in the world because they can speak English," he said.

Citing the majority's refusal to discuss constitutional objections or to justify any need for the legislation, Rep. Pat Williams (D-Mont.) called the session "the most maddening debate I've sat through in my 18 years in Congress." Rep. Chaka Fattah (D-Pa.) observed that even though everyone was speaking English, there was little communication taking place between the two sides.

Throughout the day the partisan split was consistent in votes on several proposed amendments, with not a single defection from either the Democratic or Republican side.

The committee rejected an amendment by Del. Carlos Romero-Barcelo (D-Puerto Rico) that would have allowed federal agencies to communicate in other languages to promote government efficiency. Rep. Jan Meyers (R-Kans.) argued that such an exemption would "totally gut the bill. What we're saying is that agencies must communicate in English.... If I was in China, I wouldn't expect their government to print everything in my language."

The lawmakers then approved a proposal by Rep. Lindsey Graham (R-S.C.) to extend English-only restrictions to all "publications, informational materials, income-tax forms, and the contents of franked [i.e., Congressional and other U.S. government] mail." Under questioning, Graham conceded that his amendment would forbid virtually any written communication by a federal agency in another language, including the tourist-oriented pamphlets of the National Park Service. Graham insisted, however, that "common sense" would eliminate any need to remove "E Pluribus Unum" from U.S. currency and coins.

Rep. Patsy Mink (D-Hi.) offered an amendment to keep the bill from infringing the freedom of speech, due process, and equal protection of the law. But Republicans objected to including what Graham called a "laundry list" of constitutional rights. Instead, they inserted an assurance that H.R.123 was not intended to conflict with the U.S. Constitution.

Finally, the committee rejected an English Plus substitute proposed by Rep. Xavier Becerra (D-Calif.). It would have removed the bill's restrictive features and advocated a policy of encouraging the acquisition of English, plus other languages, to promote international competitiveness and preserve cultural resources. Before voting against the Becerra amendment, Cunningham conceded that "we're fools if we don't learn other languages in this country." But he insisted that language restrictions are necessary because of "a propensity for more and more Americans not to speak English" — citing anecdotal evidence from his own Congressional district in south San Diego.

Until this week, H.R.123 had appeared to be going nowhere. Its chief sponsor, Rep. Bill Emerson (R-Mo.), recently died after a long bout with cancer. House Speaker Newt Gingrich, a longtime backer of English-only legislation, apparently decided the measure could boost Republicans prospects in the 1996 election. As recently as May, Committee chairman Bill Goodling (R-Pa.) had assured the Joint National Committee for Languages that he would block the bill from reaching the House floor. But Goodling did an unexplained about-face yesterday, along with Rep. Steve Gunderson (R-Wisc.) and other members of the majority side who had expressed reservations about H.R.123 during committee hearings.

In the Senate, Republicans have postponed three scheduled votes on a companion measure, S.356, where support is weaker than on the House side of the Capitol. Meanwhile, the Justice and Education departments have spoken out in opposition. But President Clinton, who once signed a similar measure as governor of Arkansas, has yet to commit himself publicly on federal English-Only legislation.

—Jim Crawford
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38.5 INDIGENOUS LANGUAGE SYMPOSIUM AT NORTHERN ARIZONA UNIV.

The 4th annual Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Symposium: Sharing Effective Language Renewal Practices, will be held at Northern Arizona University, Flagstaff, Arizona, May 2-3, 1997. Jointly sponsored by NAU's Bilingual Multicultural Education Program and Navajo Language Program, the Symposium is designed to allow preschool, K-12, college, and university American Indian language educators and activists to share ideas and materials for teaching American Indian languages. The results of the conference will be shared with a wider audience through a monograph.

The first Symposium, held at NAU in November 1994, featured some of the leading figures in the field of minority language preservation. The 2nd symposium, held at NAU in May 1995, also included many tribal educators from throughout Arizona. The 3rd symposium, held in Anchorage, Alaska, last February, brought together mostly Alaskan Native educators.

For further information, contact Dr. Jon Reyhner, Center for Excellence in Education, NAU Box 5774, Flagstaff, AZ 86011 520/523-0580; email: <Jon.Reyhner@nau.edu>.

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

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