

**The Society for the Study of the
Indigenous Languages of the Americas**
SSILA BULLETIN

An Information Service for SSILA Members

Editor - Victor Golla
Associate Editor - Scott DeLancey

Correspondence should be directed to the Editor
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54.0 SSILA BUSINESS

Abstracts for Annual Meeting due Friday

Members are reminded that this Friday, September 5, is the last day on which abstracts for papers to be presented at the SSILA Annual Meeting, in New York City, January 8-11, 1998, can be received. Abstracts must be submitted on the form distributed with the July issue of the SSILA Newsletter (or, in a pinch, on the LSA Abstract Submittal form). In particular, the short abstract must be enclosed in the space provided, using the type size specified. Abstracts must be mailed (e-mail is not acceptable) to: Robert L. Rankin, SSILA, Dept. of Linguistics, Univ. of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045. (For further information contact rankin@lark.cc.ukans.edu).

For those making early travel arrangements, please note that we do not expect to schedule SSILA sessions before Friday morning, January 9, although the special LSA meeting rates are available at the New York Grand Hyatt beginning Wednesday, January 7. The preliminary schedule of the SSILA sessions will be posted on the SSILA Bulletin later this month.

The SSILA Travel Committee welcomes inquiries from members (especially those residing outside the US and Canada) who are in need of support for travel to the Annual Meeting. Although funds are limited this year, the Committee will review all applications with care. Contact:

Andrew Hofling
Chair, SSILA Travel Committee
Dept. of Anthropology
MC 4502, Southern Illinois Univ.
Carbondale, IL 62901-4502
(e-mail: ahofling@siu.edu).

Other members of the Committee are Kathryn Jossierand and Spike Gildea.

SSILA Website moves

The SSILA website, which has been residing since its inception last year on a temperamental server at UC Davis called "Cougar", now has a new home on more prosaically named but (we hope) more reliable server called "TRC2", at the UC Davis Teaching Resources Center. Our webmaster, Jon Cutting, is taking this opportunity to upgrade and redesign some of the site's files. Please (re-)visit our new home at:

<http://trc2.ucdavis.edu/ssila/>

If your site points to SSILA, or you have a bookmark for us, it would a good idea to update the address soon. For the next few months people using the old URL will find a message pointing them to the new location, but Cougar is likely to be taken out of service in the not-too-distant future.

54.1 CORRESPONDENCE

Indian languages in films

>From: Anthony Grant (a.p.grant@bradford.ac.uk) 26 August 1997:

Instead of the scheduled cricket match on BBC-2 yesterday afternoon, there was a showing of "Across the Wide Missouri" (1951), directed by William Wellman and starring Clark Gable, Adolphe Menjou and Maria Elena Marquez. A moderately stirring tale of trappers in the Montana-Idaho country, ca. 1829 (Nez Perces, "Snakes" and Blackfeet were mentioned), it had French Canadian hunters and the occasional Scottish Highlander in the plot too (complete, of course, with bagpipes) -- none of these ingredients were particularly implausible for the time and the place.

What was interesting was that about 20% of the dialogue of the film, including Gable's conversations with his screen wife Marquez (relayed through Menjou as interpreter), and also a lullaby, were in Chinook Jargon. I'd say at least ten minutes of the movie was in Wawa. (My father was amazed when he saw I could understand what the Indians were saying.) The pronunciation was a bit iffy at times, as if the dialogue coach hadn't read the pronunciation key in his copy of Thomas 1935 properly [*FN], but the use of the language was idiomatic enough.

Unfortunately there was no information given on possible behind-the-scenes advisers. I don't recall any other film with as much Chinook Jargon dialogue (I think I heard a few words in an episode of Northern Exposure). If there are readers of the SSILA Bulletin who know more about this film, I'd be delighted to hear from them.

About three weeks earlier BBC-2 showed "A Distant Trumpet" (1963), with Troy Donahue and Suzanne Pleshette. It dealt with disputes between the US military-industrial complex and the Chiricahua Apaches, and some of the dialogue was in Apache. At least it sounded like Apache; it could have been Navajo (it certainly wasn't Lakhota or Ojibwa or Yupik). I thought I picked up on tones, though I didn't recognise any of the small stock of General Apachean morphs I know (the first few numerals and the words for 'horse' and 'bear'). This was one of the first films in which Indian language dialogue was subtitled, a fact pointed out in the movie review. (What the review didn't point out was that the film was shown in letterbox format, so that the subtitles were cut off and couldn't be read). As such movies go, it was better than "Across the Wide Missouri", in that the Native Americans were Native Americans, and not Mexicans with braids.

~Anthony P. Grant
University of St. Andrews

[* Edward H. Thomas, Chinook: A History and Dictionary of the Northwest Coast Trade Jargon. Portland: Metropolitan Press, 1935. --Ed.]

Report available

>From Heather Blair (heather.blair@ualberta.ca) 25 August 1997:

SSILA readers may be interested in a recently published research report, Indian Languages Policy and Planning in Saskatchewan, which looks at policy and planning for Aboriginal Canadian languages in four communities. It includes case studies of the communities as well as recommendations for language retention and retrieval based on 70 interviews with Aboriginal language teachers, bilingual teachers and school administrators. The research was based on the language planning conceptual framework as discussed by Fishman (1991), Haugen (1985), Ruiz (1984, 1988) and others, and the work carried out in 1996. The report is available upon request from Saskatchewan Education, Indian and Metis Education Curriculum Unit, 6th Floor, 2220 College Ave. Regina, Sask. S4P 3V7 Canada.

~Heather Blair
Faculty of Education, University of Alberta
Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2G5, Canada

54.2 SUNY BUFFALO SEEKS PHONOLOGIST WITH INDIAN LANGUAGE INTERESTS

>From Robert Van Valin (vanvalin@acsu.buffalo.edu) 2 Sept 97:

The Dept. of Linguistics at SUNY Buffalo seeks to fill a tenure-track position at the Assistant Professor or beginning Associate Professor level (subject to final budgetary approval); the position will begin September 1, 1998. We are looking for someone engaged in substantial and ongoing field research in one or more non-Indo-European languages (preferably one from the Americas) and demonstrated research expertise in phonology. The successful applicant will be expected to contribute to Cognitive Science at UB. S/he will be expected to teach introductory and advanced courses at the undergraduate and graduate levels.

Review of applications will begin October 15, 1997. Applicants should send CV, letter of application, names of three references, and samples of their work to:

Search Committee
Department of Linguistics
685 Baldy Hall
SUNY at Buffalo
Buffalo NY 14260-1030 USA.

Ph.D. must be completed by September 1, 1998. AA/EOE

54.3 WEBSITES OF INTEREST

Correspondence on the “site visibility” issue

>From Virginia Giglio (virginia.giglio@worldnet.att.net) 25 August 1997:

I was surprised that anyone who has the ability to develop a website would not already know that the web is open to view -- there are no hiding places any more for tentative academics! I think the WWW is the best thing ever to happen to academe -- for too many obvious reasons, but in this case, for this one: the accountability demanded by this medium will keep all of us a lot more honest.

~Virginia Giglio

>From Peter Cole (pcole@udel.edu) 25 August 1997:

A simple solution is to password-protect the website until it is ready for general release.

~Peter Cole
University of Delaware

>From John E. Koontz (koontz@boulder.nist.gov) 25 August 1997:

It's possible to browse pages for testing purposes without disseminating them publicly. But there are some tricks to the trade. The important thing is to be aware what directories are public on your web server. If you run your own site you know already, of course. If you use a site maintained by someone else, ask them. Anything in a public directory is readable anywhere on the Web, whatever your view of its state of readiness!

All browsers will let you look at a draft page in a private directory by loading it as a file from an arbitrary directory. The main problem with this approach is the very real one of not being able to test your final links if you have multiple pages or into-page links. And you can't put a link on the Web into such a file, of course.

To get around this, commercial Web page development packages are now available that allow you to work on your pages in a private environment and later upload them to your server as a suite. An example is MS Front Page, which has a number of competitors.

Your server staff may also maintain a private server not accessible off site. Material on this server will be browsable within your site, but not off. Such a server may be inside a firewall, or require knowledge of a special port number added to the servername.

You can put a password on pages in certain directories using the HT Access password mechanism. Your site maintenance staff will have to set this up for you. The same basic scheme can also be used to limit access to particular users, or to exclude certain users, without using passwords. However, you must have the assistance of the server staff to use this feature. Note that the HT Access password scheme is not perfectly secure. It's vulnerable to hacker snooping in the same way telnet and ftp are. It would be perfectly adequate for protecting most drafts!

~John E. Koontz
Boulder, CO
john.koontz@nist.gov

[I've found that the easiest way to keep an under-construction Web page out of sight is to add a file to your site which tells all search robots to ignore certain files or directories. Info can be found at:

<http://info.webcrawler.com/mak/projects/robots/exclusion.html>

The lazy or quick&dirty crowd can find a sample exclusion file at:

<http://www.altavista.digital.com/av/content/addurl.htm>

~Scott DeLancey]

Mayan site

>From Fernando Peñalosa (yaxte@earthlink.net) 30 August 1997:

The Yax Te' Foundation, a nonprofit publisher and importer of books about the contemporary Maya of Guatemala (with emphasis on Mayan languages and literatures) has established a joint web site with the Maya Educational Foundation, which provides scholarships for Maya students. We would appreciate your visiting us (URL: www.yaxte.org), and if you like what you see, mentioning us in the online SSILA Bulletin.

~Fernando Peñalosa
Yax Te' Foundation
Rancho Palos Verdes, CA

54.4 UPCOMING CONFERENCES

Many Languages, One Goal: Speak Indian (Preston, Oklahoma, Oct 2-4)

“Many Languages, One Goal,” a conference on Oklahoma Indian language revival, will be held in Preston, OK, October 2-4. The purpose of this Conference is to allow language workers to share their experiences and to aid other programs by discussing the practical problems and solutions facing individuals working with their native language.

In addition to concurrent sessions focusing on language programs, two extended workshops will provide specialized tools to both teachers and students of Indian languages. One workshop -- presented by Nancy Richardson, a Karuk tribal member and language facilitator from northern California -- will offer training in Master/Apprenticeships. The other will be an Introduction to Linguistics for Native Americans, presented by Prof. Akira Yamamoto of the U of Kansas, assisted by graduate students Mary Linn and Marcellino Berardo. Both Richardson and Yamamoto have worked in the field of Indian language revival for over two decades.

Other speakers and languages will include: Billy Daniels (Forest County Potawatomi); Durbin Feeling (Cherokee); Leroy Sealy (Choctaw); Margaret Mauldin (Muskogee, and dictionary work in general); and presentations on Comanche and Kickapoo.

Richardson, Yamamoto, and the other presenters will be available throughout the Conference for additional informal sessions. Participants are encouraged to camp or stay in the bunk facilities in order to take advantage of informal discussions with other participants.

The Conference will be held about five minutes north of Okmulgee OK, at the Northeast District Center of the O.I.M.C. of the United Methodist Church, which is located about 1/4 mile north and one mile east of Preston, OK off Highway 75. Camping and dorm facilities are available. Conference registration of Thirty Dollars (\$30), payable to the Center for Tribal Studies, includes all workshops, meals and use of bunkhouses or camping area. Bunkhouses are limited, so early registration is encouraged. Meals will be provided as part of the registration fee by women of the Northeast District Center of the Oklahoma Indian Missionary Conference.

For Information or registration contact: Carol Young, Center for Tribal Studies, Northeastern State University, Tahlequah, Oklahoma 74464-2399 (tel: 918/456-5511, ex. 4350). E-mail inquiries: <gdbigler@gorilla.net>.

54.5 UPDATE ON ENGLISH-ONLY ACTIVITY #10

>From James W. Crawford (jwcrawford@compuserve.com) 25 August 1997:

Anti-Bilingual Education Initiative in California

“End bilingual education in California by June 1998.” That’s the slogan of a new ballot initiative entitled “English for the Children.” It could become a reality unless an effective opposition can be mounted.

Organizers are now circulating petitions to qualify the measure for the June 2 primary election. They need to collect 433,269 signatures from registered voters by November 15 -- a formidable task. But the campaign has formidable resources. It is led by Ron Unz, a Republican candidate for governor in 1994 and a multimillionaire software developer, who plans to dig deep into his own pockets and spend whatever it takes to bring the measure before the voters.

In that event, the results could prove disastrous for California’s 1.3 million students with limited English skills. Though confusing and poorly drafted, the Unz initiative will benefit from public misunderstanding of bilingual education -- its rationale, methods, goals, and results -- and from a climate of xenophobia that has dominated the state’s politics in recent years.

Yet Ron Unz is not just another immigrant-basher. To the contrary, he made a name for himself as a conservative opponent of Proposition 187. His Only-English campaign is targeting California’s Latino communities, capitalizing on discontent with the public schools and seeking to make bilingual education the scapegoat. Expensive ads promoting the initiative are appearing in Spanish-language media. Some alleged advocates for immigrant rights, along with a few Asian and Latino politicians, have already signed on.

Co-chair of the initiative is Gloria Matta Tuchman, a 1st grade teacher from Santa Ana and another would-be politician -- she finished 5th in the 1994 race for state superintendent of public instruction. While eager to advertise her Mexican American roots, Tuchman has been less forthcoming about her ties to the English Only movement. She joined the U.S. English board of directors in 1989 -- shortly after the scandal over its founder’s racist memo about Latinos -- and served until 1992.

So far, however, this campaign remains independent of the established English Only groups. Its agenda is even more extreme than their attacks on bilingual education over the years. At minimum, the initiative would:

- outlaw the use of languages other than English to instruct any student in California public schools, except under limited circumstances -- a restriction that harkens back to Meyer v. Nebraska (the landmark 1923 decision in which the U.S. Supreme Court struck down restrictions on foreign-language teaching);
- dismantle successful programs that not only teach English but also keep children from falling behind in other subjects while they acquire valuable bilingual skills;

- impose an unproven pedagogical approach -- “sheltered English immersion ... not normally intended to exceed one year” --without regard for the expertise of educators or the wishes of local school boards;
- violate children’s civil rights, as guaranteed by Lau v. Nichols, to receive effective help in overcoming language barriers that impede their access to the curriculum;
- deny parental choice by restricting waivers to the English-only rule to older or “special needs” students, and even then failing to guarantee that native-language instruction would be available;
- limit options for English-speaking students to learn another language, by requiring them to score above grade level in English to receive a waiver;
- destroy what is widely hailed as the most effective language-learning model for English- and non-English-speaking students alike -- two-way bilingual education;
- invite civil lawsuits to enforce the English Only mandate and hold teachers and administrators personally liable for such “crimes” as using another language in class; and
- stimulate yet another round of ethnic conflict in California, already polarized by anti-immigrant and anti-affirmative action Propositions 187 and 209.

Opponents of the Unz initiative are getting organized. In late August one group -- Language, Literacy, and Cultural Tolerance for All Children-- opened a new web site to share information:
<http://www.smartnation.org/>

To follow proponents’ activities, see the English for the Children site:
<http://www.onenation.org/>

And for further updates, analysis, and commentary on this and related issues, I invite you to check in frequently with my own Language Policy Web Site:
<http://ourworld.compuserve.com/homepages/jwcrawford>

Comments welcome.

~Jim Crawford
jwcrawford@compuserve.com

54.6 E-MAIL ADDRESS UPDATES

Awakuni-Swetland, Markmswetland@ou.edu
Benedicto, Elenabenedict@omni.cc.purdue.edu
Cumberland, Linda A.lcumberl@indiana.edu
Fitzgerald, Colleen M.cfitz@email.sjsu.edu
Michelson, Karinkmich@acsu.buffalo.edu
Nakayama, Toshihidenakayamat@alpha.montclair.edu
Ruhlen, Merrittancar@leland.stanford.edu