
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-- <<--

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126.1 CORRESPONDENCE

On-line corpora?

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>From Bruce Nevin (bnevin@cisco.com) 9 Nov 2000:

For a two volume collection that I am editing, entitled *_Apropos of Zellig Harris_*, Frank Harary & Stephen Helmreich (mathematicians) are reporting on an application of graph theory to phoneme distribution, extending work first broached in Harary & Paper, "Toward a general calculus of phonemic distribution", *Language* 33:143-169 (1957).

I asked if they would like more data on a variety of languages. They answered that:

- > With the programs we have, it doesn't take too long to run them on
- > new language data, and if the paper is otherwise OK, we can add new
- > languages/data in fairly quickly at the end.

When I offered some of my Achumawi (Pit River) data, and asked in what form they required it, Helmreich said:

- > basic text data in phonetic or phonemic transcription -- ideally one
- > character per phoneme/phone. The greater the amount of data, the
- > better.

Can readers of the Bulletin point me to on-line phonemic corpora from Native American (or other less-well-known) languages whose custodians might be willing to lend them for this purpose? No glosses or analysis required.

--Bruce Nevin
Edgartown, Massachusetts
(bnevin@cisco.com)

Ordering Harrington microfilm
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>From Kathryn A. Klar (kkestrel@socrates.Berkeley.edu) 10 Nov 2000:

Many readers of the Bulletin will be familiar with the Papers of John Peabody Harrington. Harrington's often unsurpassed field notes on various North American languages, particularly California languages, have been available since the 1980s in a microfilm edition that runs to nearly 500 reels. A number of research libraries own at least part of the collection, and hundreds of scholars have made use of the material, sometimes intensively.

In the course of my work on a biography of Harrington I have had need to consult the 17 reels containing Harrington's correspondence on an almost daily basis. The awkwardness of having to check the film out of my university library for limited periods of time (and never all 17 reels at the same time) finally led me to consider buying this segment of the Harrington microfilm. Recently I closed the deal.

Although originally produced by Kraus Microfilm, the distribution rights to the Harrington collection are now owned by Norman Ross Publications

(330 West 58th Street, New York, NY 10019; tel: 212/765-8200; fax: 212/765-2393). They are easy to deal with. The telephone number gets you to the receptionist, and when you explain you want JPH microfilm, you are transferred to Chris Bowers, a pleasant and knowledgeable man. The list price for a reel is \$70, but since I ordered the entire correspondence segment, and it was only for personal use, they let me have them for \$65 each. Also included in the price was the print Guide to the correspondence segment of the microfilm -- an indispensable aid.

A small problem has arisen with billing. Yesterday, when I received my monthly credit card statement, I discovered that Ross had billed me for the order at the time I placed it. Since I still hadn't received the reels, I called and talked again to Chris Bowers. He now told me that it was their policy to bill when the order is first placed, regardless of the delivery date. However, it turns out that the reels haven't been shipped yet. They are still in the duplication lab, which is very backed up. (I get the feeling that their act is not too together.) Bowers was nice enough about it and agreed to do a charge-back. He will rebill me when the order is actually shipped.

--Kathryn Klar
Celtic Studies, UC Berkeley
(kkestrel@socrates.berkeley.edu)

Cassette tape shelf life?
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>From Brian Levy (xernaut@yahoo.com) 16 Nov 2000:

The query below is from a friend working with another Oklahoma tribe. Does anyone have answers to these questions about analog cassettes? I'll forward replies on to him. Thanks for the help.

--Brian Levy
Anadarko, Oklahoma
(xernaut@bigfoot.com)

- > Do you have any information on how long cassette tapes may survive
- > before becoming unplayable? or losing their fidelity? I'm sure that
- > storage conditions would make a great deal of difference, but do
- > you have any sense of this question?

Translations needed

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>From Marco Massignan (insubres@tiscalinet.it) 20 Nov 2000:

I'm an Italian mother-tongue translator and interpreter, involved in a volunteer project focusing on the poem "The Canticle of the Creatures" (ca. 1250 AD) by St. Francis. The organizers of the project are trying to assemble as many translations as they can of this famous poem. The translations will be printed and bound in a book that will be exhibited in Macerata (Italy) in 2002. Following the exhibition the translations will be distributed to public libraries around the world (the book will not be for sale). Last year they did the same thing with the poem "L'infinito" by the 18th century poet Giacomo Leopardi. Some further information on these projects can be found on the web at:

<http://www.consulman.com>

The organizers recently asked if I had any contacts with people who could translate the "The Canticle of the Creatures" into Native American languages and other "rare" languages, and that's why I'm writing to you. The translators will not be paid (it's a volunteer work), but their names will appear on the books with the translation. The Native American languages from which I'm especially interested in getting translations are: Blackfoot, Cherokee, Cheyenne, Cree, Creek, Hopi, Lakota-Dakota-Nakota, Mapuche, Mohawk, and Navajo.

If you want to help me in this, I will send you the poem text (about 250 words) in the original Italian (and/or English/French/German/Spanish).

Any comments and ideas are welcome, including suggestions of other languages (Native American or others) from which we might try to get translations of the poem.

--Dr. Marco Massignan
(insubres@tiscalinet.it)

Contacts in Guyana?

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>From Doug Whalen (whalen@alvin.haskins.yale.edu) 20 Nov 2000:

For a friend who will be traveling to Guyana, Suriname, and French Guiana, I would appreciate obtaining contact information on anyone in those countries working on one or more endangered languages.

--Doug Whalen

Endangered Language Fund
whalen@haskins.yale.edu

126.2 POSITIONS OPEN

* Functional/Cognitive linguistics at U of Oregon
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>From Scott DeLancey (delancey@darkwing.uoregon.edu) 7 Nov 2000:

The Department of linguistics at the University of Oregon seeks applicants for an Assistant Professor position in functional/cognitive linguistics, beginning September 15, 2001. The successful candidate will have an established commitment to research in functional/cognitive/typological linguistics, involving work with primary/empirical data. Evidence of excellence in teaching will weigh heavily in consideration of applicants for the position. We are especially interested in applicants with research and/or teaching strengths in one or more of the following: phonology, psycholinguistics, discourse and cognition, sociolinguistics, or anthropological linguistics.

Completed applications will be reviewed beginning December 15, 2000. Preliminary interviews will be held at the LSA meeting in January. A complete application requires a letter of application, Curriculum Vitae, sample publications, evidence of teaching, and three letters of recommendation. Materials should be sent to: Spike Gildea, Chair, Department of Linguistics, 1290 University of Oregon, Eugene, OR 97403. The University of Oregon is an equal opportunity, affirmative action institution, committed to cultural diversity and compliance with the American Disabilities Act.

126.3 ENDANGERED LANGUAGE FUND AWARDS FOR 2000

>From Doug Whalen (whalen@alvin.haskins.yale.edu) 19 Nov 2000:

The Endangered Language Fund, a private non-profit organization dedicated to the preservation of endangered languages, is pleased to announce its grant awardees for the year 2000. Eleven projects were funded to provide help with languages across the globe, and with techniques ranging from traditional dictionary work to the videotaping of interactions of native speakers and their audiences.

The Endangered Language Fund is able to provide this support thanks to

the generosity of its members. We would like to thank in particular the Kerr Foundation of Oklahoma for making it possible to provide additional support for work done in Oklahoma.

Eight of the awards went to projects on Native American languages:

Alice J. Anderton (Intertribal Wordpath Society): "Ponca Culture in Our Own Words" -- IWS will produce five videotaped texts describing Ponca culture in the Ponca language. These video projects will be aired on its television show Wordpath, a public access cable program it produces on Cox Cable about Oklahoma Indian languages and those who preserve them.

Mark J. Awakuni-Swetland: "ELF Omaha Language Curriculum Development Project" -- The grant will support the development of language and culture lesson plans, immersion situations, and language exercises, drawing upon existing materials.

Melissa Axelrod, Jule Gomez de Garcia & Jordan Lachler: "Plains Apache Language Documentation" -- Plains Apache tribal leaders formed a committee in 1993 to help preserve their cultural and linguistic heritage. The primary aim of the project was to produce an interactive CD ROM dictionary. Axelrod, Garcia, and Lachler will act as consultants in completing this dictionary.

Frank Bechter & Stephen Hibbard: "Apsaalooke Textual And Gestural Form: Videorecording Crow and Plains Sign Talk Narratives" -- Bechter and Hibbard will collect traditional and non-traditional narratives in Crow and Plains Sign Talk, recorded in front of Crow-speaking audiences. Crow consultants will aid in producing Crow transcriptions and English translations of narratives.

Barry F. Carlson & Suzanne Cook: "Lacandon Text Collection" -- Carlson and Cook will record traditional narratives, songs, and ceremonies in the northern Lacandon community of Naja in Mexico, adding the new dimension of audio/video analysis to the study of Lacandon oral performance.

Linda A. Cumberland: "A Grammar of Assiniboine" -- Cumberland plans to develop a descriptive grammar of Assiniboine, a Siouan language of the northern plains, now only spoken by a few elders in Saskatchewan and Montana. The goal of the project is to provide a broad description of the major grammatical processes of Assiniboine that will serve as a resource for language revitalization programs.

Theodore Isham (Mvskoke Language Institute): "Language-Immersion Camps in Mvskoke (Creek)" -- Isham used an earlier ELF grant for workshops

involving language learners at all levels and ages. It is hoped that the immersion camps will create a better environment for the use of the language by a larger number of casual users, and eventually the acquisition of the language by young children.

Linda Jordan & Leslie D. Hannah: "Cherokee Storytelling Project" -- There is pressure on Cherokee-speaking children to acquire primary fluency in English. Jordan and Hannah will address the need for sophisticated, text-based materials through the recording of storytelling in Cherokee.

The three other projects are:

G. Tucker Childs & M Djibril Batchily: "Fieldwork on Mmani (Atlantic, Niger-Congo), a dying language of coastal Guinea-Conakry".

Terry Crowley: "Moribund languages of northern Malakula (Vanuatu)".

Eva Toulouze & Kaur Maegi: "Recording and Analyzing Forest Nenets Language Materials".

For further information on the Endangered Language Fund, contact Doug Whalen (whalen@haskins.yale.edu) or visit the ELF website:

<http://sapir.ling.yale.edu/~elf/>

126.4 WEBSITES OF INTEREST

* Indigenous language research in Brazil
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>From Aryon Rodrigues (aryon@unb.br) 16 Nov 2000:

The Grupo de Trabalho Linguas Indigenas (GTLI) of the Associao Nacional de Programas de Pos-Graduao em Letras e Linguistica (ANPOLL) has just opened a website:

<http://www.gtli.locaweb.com.br>

The site has a lot of information on linguists and linguistic activities in Brazil having the indigenous languages as focus: roster of linguists with institutional affiliations, addresses, main interests, and research projects; new books, new papers, etc.; and links to other sources of

information, in Brazil and abroad.

GTLI also has new coordinators: Ana Suelly A. C. Cabral and Carmen Lucia Reis Rodrigues (both Federal University of Para). They replace Leopoldina Araujo and Marcus Maia, whose terms have expired. The e-mail address is <asacc@amazon.com.br>.

--Aryon D. Rodrigues
University of Brasilia
(aryon@unb.br)

* FreeTranslation.com
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Transparent Language, Inc, maintains a general translation site at:

<http://www.freetranslation.com>

You can have small to medium-sized chunks of text (up to ca.1300 words) translated FROM English to French, German, Spanish, Italian, Portuguese and Norwegian, or TO English from French, German and Spanish. The service is free and without obligation.

Particularly useful is the web page translator. When you provide the URL, a translation of the text on any given web page is immediately produced for the language pairs above.

Translations are a bit rough and ready ("gisted" in MT jargon), but more than simple dictionary lookup. Transparent Language says that the MT technology in use at FreeTranslation.com -- TranscendRT -- is a world-class translation engine that analyzes sentences and construes words and phrases in context. If so, MT still has a long way to go. Meanwhile, if you need a smoother translation, Transparent Language offers a range of more sophisticated services at another site:

<http://www.plustranslation.com>

Here the job is not free but costs anywhere from 1 cent per word to 38 cents per word, depending upon how perfect a product you need and what languages are involved.

126.5 E-MAIL ADDRESS UPDATES

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