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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)
Associate Editor - Scott DeLancey (delancey@darkwing.uoregon.edu)

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23.0 RE: SAN DIEGO MEETING PROGRAM

The Program Committee for the SSILA Annual Meeting (San Diego, Jan. 4-7, 1996) has submitted a preliminary program to the LSA Secretariat. Some adjustments to the schedule may have to be made to avoid conflicts with LSA sessions, but we hope to be able to distribute the program next

week in a special *SSILA Bulletin*. Nearly all of the abstracts that were submitted were found acceptable, and the LSA was able to accommodate eight SSILA sessions, with nearly 70 papers. --VG

23.1 MIXE-ZOQUEAN/ZAPOTECAN DOCUMENTATION PROJECT SEEKS LINGUISTS

The Project for the Documentation of the Mixe-Zoquean and Zapotecan Languages (Terry Kaufman and John Justeson, Principal Investigators) was established three years ago with funding from the National Geographic Society. It is now supported by the National Science Foundation, and is scheduled to continue through Spring 1998. The immediate goals of the Project are to expand the quality and coverage of the documentation of the Mixe-Zoquean and Zapotecan languages, to make progress with the reconstruction of Proto Mixe-Zoquean and Proto Zapotecan, and to foster the development of a group of scholars with shared knowledge and resources. Further goals include applying the results of reconstruction to expanding and refining the decipherment of epi-Olmec hieroglyphic writing and the decipherment of Zapotec (or Oaxacan) hieroglyphic writing. By the end of the Project all of the Mixe-Zoquean languages will have been worked on, as well as the eleven Zapotecan languages that provide the most straightforward evidence for phonological and morphosyntactic reconstruction. All linguistic materials collected by the Project will be databased for correction and eventual distribution to interested parties during and immediately after the term of the project.

In preparation for its two final field seasons, the Project is seeking ten linguists to work on the documentation of two Mixe-Zoquean languages and eight Zapotecan languages in the summer of 1996 and/or the summer of 1997 (a 2-month commitment each summer). At least six other linguists will be continuing work on languages they have worked on in previous seasons. The Americanist linguists currently on the team include Terry Kaufman, Roberto Zavala, Rich Rhodes, Thom Smith-Stark, and Jim Fox.

The Project seeks linguists who have doctorates or whose graduate training is in an advanced stage. Participating linguists will need a background in descriptive linguistics, especially articulatory phonetics, phonemic analysis, and morphology. A strong interest in theoretical and formal linguistics neither contributes to nor detracts from the aims of the Project, but cannot substitute for competence in phonetic transcription and morphological analysis. Certain theoretical issues may be focused on in the second field session, by mutual agreement.

These languages are phonologically difficult. The Zapotecan languages have tonal systems with three or four contrasts, and sometimes have complex syllable codas and onsets. Mixe can have syllables packed with features such as palatalization, vowel length, glottal stop, and pre-consonantal [h]. Potential participants must be fully prepared to deal with such phonetic complexities.

Participating linguists must have an ability to work in Spanish. While their speed of delivery and vocabulary size can be below fluency level, they must be able to speak clearly and accurately, and be able to formulate complex sentences for grammatical elicitation with a minimum of preparation. An independent evaluation of the Spanish competence of prospective participants will be needed.

All expenses of the work of the linguists will be covered by the Project: travel, room & board, as well as compensation for consultants. None of

the linguists (including the PIs) will receive a salary. All results of the research will belong to the Project, although participating linguists may retain a complete copy of the work they have produced, and may also release their material to other participating linguists.

Work will be conducted from a single research center, either in Catemaco, Veracruz (the site of the 1995 work), or in a small town in the Valley of Oaxaca. The Project will occupy a block of rooms in a hotel, or rent a house and hire a cook. The work will begin on June 8 and continue through August 5. Returning linguists need not begin work precisely on June 8, but beginners with the Project will need to be on site by that date. The first few days of the season will be devoted to orienting the participating linguists toward working on Mixe-Zoquean or Zapotecan languages, as relevant.

Participants will be chosen on the basis of their qualifications for accomplishing the work that needs to be done, and on the PIs' evaluation of the likelihood that they will do the work. Linguists from outside the US and Mexico are invited to apply, but the Project cannot cover the expenses of foreign nationals in obtaining or renewing Mexican visas.

The make-up of the 1996 field team will be decided by the end of the second week of January, 1996. Interested linguists should communicate with the Project as soon as possible. If needed, prospective participants can be interviewed during the LSA/SSILA meetings in San Diego, January 4-7.

The Project is also seeking a Field Administrator. Competence in linguistics and (ideally) computing is required, as well as fluency in Spanish. The administrator's job involves keeping accounts, paying salaries, handling consultants' personal and medical issues, arranging for photocopying and supplies, printing out data files, making plane reservations, selecting and training local keyboarders and supervising their work, assisting linguists with database problems. Familiarity with computer databases (especially SIL's ShoeBox) is required, as is the ability to write simple programs to manipulate databases. All expenses will be paid, as well as a weekly salary of \$700. There will be an average of 50 hours of work per week, some days longer than others. A written contract will be negotiated.

Address all inquiries to:

Terrence Kaufman
Department of Anthropology
University of Pittsburgh
Pittsburgh, PA 15260

Tel: 412/242-7366 (home: 9am-10pm)
412/648-7500 (Anthropology: TuTh 10-4)
412/624-5914 (Linguistics: Wed 10-4)

Fax: 412/624-6130 (Linguistics), 412/648-5911 (Anthropology)

E-mail: topkat@vms.cis.pitt.edu

(The first communication will be most effective if sent by fax. Be sure to let Terry know of all the ways you can be reached.)

23.2 ENGLISH-ONLY LEGISLATION THREATENS INDIAN LANGUAGE FUNDING

[The following report (another version of which was posted recently on the Endangered Languages List) is from James Crawford, an independent writer who lives in Washington, DC. Jim, who was formerly Washington editor of Education Week, has been writing about bilingual education and the politics of language for about 10 years. His most recent books, Hold Your Tongue (Addison-Wesley) and Language Loyalties: A Source Book on the Official English Controversy (University of Chicago Press), both published in 1992, deal in detail with the English-only phenomenon and related issues. He is currently working on endangered Native American languages and efforts to preserve them, and last year joined SSILA.]

* * *

I am sorry to report that several, if perhaps not all, versions of English-only legislation now pending in Congress would prohibit any federal funding to preserve Native American languages. Programs in jeopardy include those supported by the Native American Languages Act, the National Science Foundation, the National Endowment for the Humanities, the National Park Service, and of course, the Bilingual Education Act.

Unlike all but one of the 20 state laws making English official (Arizona's is the exception; fortunately it has been ruled unconstitutional), the federal "Language of Government" bills have very sharp teeth. They would impose a strict English-only policy, with only narrow exceptions. The most liberal proposal, H.R.123, once exempted federal actions, documents, or policies that are purely informational or educational. But in the hardline 104th Congress, this loophole has narrowed to include merely "teaching of foreign languages." The only other exemptions are for international trade, public health, criminal proceedings, and "terms of art" borrowed from languages other than English. The bill also invites lawsuits by "any person alleging injury arising from a violation" of the English-only restrictions -- i.e., any taxpayer who objected to funds going to minority language programs.

The more draconian bills, H.R.739 and H.R.1005, have fewer exemptions and explicitly repeal the Bilingual Education Act, bilingual voting rights, and similar programs. To me it is unclear, however, whether their effects would be significantly harsher than H.R.123. The major difference would be that the latter would require more interpretation (and perhaps litigation) to determine which programs, policies, services, documents, actions, and statutes would be affected. Bear in mind that I'm not a lawyer, but to me the prohibitions look extremely broad. If enacted, H.R.123 would undoubtedly supersede older laws already on the books, potentially including the Native American Languages Act.

To be sure, Native American languages are not a major target of the English-only advocates. *U.S.English*, the main lobbying group behind H.R.123, continues to direct its fire mostly against immigrants. Back in the mid-1980s, Michael Krauss convinced them that Native American languages are not a threat to English. U.S.English adopted a position paper saying Indians don't have to assimilate as long as they stay on reservations (though if they left, they'd be subject to the same strictures as immigrants). It's not clear whether U.S.English still holds this position or whether its current leadership is even aware of it. Those who negotiated with Mike are long gone.

English First, the smaller and more rightist lobby that backs H.R.739 and H.R.1005, has made a point of attacking the Native American Languages Act and greatly exaggerating its cost (as I learned when debating one of

their leaders on the radio not long ago). So it's unlikely that Native American language programs will continue to operate much longer in obscurity, as the English-only bills start to move.

That will happen soon in the House, where the Economic and Educational Opportunities Committee has scheduled hearings on this legislation for October 18 and November 1. No word yet on the witness list. I would hope that numerous people working to preserve endangered languages -- linguists, educators, tribal officials, Indian activists, etc. -- will seek to testify. I'm told that the LSA is very interested in testifying, but whether that will be allowed remains to be seen. I'll keep SSILA posted as I learn more.

No Senate hearings have been scheduled thus far. But with Senator Dole hopping on the bandwagon, they're a lot more likely to occur. If there's any hope of stopping English-only legislation, it will be there, since several influential Republicans from the West (Sens. Hatch, McCain, and Domenici in particular) have strongly opposed it in the past. The House may already be a lost cause, now that H.R. 123 has 182 co-sponsors and strong support from Newt Gingrich and his allies. As for the President, we must remember that Clinton once signed an official English bill into law when he was governor of Arkansas. During the 1992 campaign, he conceded to Hispanic supporters that that might have been a "mistake" and he pledged not to repeat it. But with Clinton, you never know.

Unfortunately there is today no well-organized opposition to English-only activity, such as existed 5 to 10 years ago. There are a number of local coalitions, but the Washington representatives of Hispanic, Asian, Jewish, language education, and civil libertarian groups no longer meet formally to plot strategy.

Still, there have been some cooperative efforts around a counter-measure known as the *English Plus* resolution (H. Con. Res. 83), sponsored by Rep. Jose Serrano (D-N.Y.) and about 30 others. This non-binding "sense of Congress" bill argues that language diversity is a good thing for the country and that Congress should promote rather than repress it, but the measure stops short of any programmatic suggestions. The English Plus proponents are meeting next week to assemble a list of witnesses for the House hearings.

---Jim Crawford
JMCRAWFORD@delphi.com
73261.1120@compuserve.com

23.3 BLS-22 SESSION ON HISTORICAL ISSUES IN NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES

The 22nd annual meeting of the Berkeley Linguistics Society will be held February 17-19, 1996. The conference will consist of a General Session covering all areas of linguistic interest, and a Parasession on the Role of Learnability in Grammatical Theory. On the day preceding the regular meeting--Friday, February 16--there will also be a Special Session on Historical Issues in Native American Languages. Invited speakers for this session include SCOTT DELANCEY (U of Oregon), MARGARET LANGDON (UC-San Diego), and LAUREL WATKINS (Colorado College).

Abstracts are invited for all three sessions. Papers presented at the conference will be published in the Society's Proceedings, and authors who present papers agree to provide camera-ready copy of their papers (not to exceed approximately 12 pages) by May 15, 1996. Speakers will be allotted 20 minutes with 10 minutes for questions. BLS asks that the

abstract as specific as possible, including a statement of the topic or problem, the approach, and the conclusions.

To submit an abstract, send 10 copies of an anonymous one-page (8 1/2" x 11", unreduced) abstract. (A second page, or reverse side of the single page, may be used for data and references only.) Along with the abstract send a 3" x 5" card listing: (1) paper title; (2) session submitted to (general session, parasession, or special session); (3) for general session abstracts only, subject matter area, viz., Discourse Analysis, Historical Linguistics, Morphology, Philosophy and Methodology of Linguistics, Phonetics/Phonology, Pragmatics, Sociolinguistics, Psycholinguistics, or Syntax/Semantics; (4) author's name; (5) author's affiliation; (6) address where notification of acceptance or rejection should be mailed (in late December 1995); (7) author's office and home phone numbers; and (8) author's e-mail address, if available. In case of joint authorship, one address should be designated for communication with BLS.

Send abstracts to: BLS 22 Abstract Committees, 2337 Dwinelle Hall, UC-Berkeley, Berkeley, CA 94720.

Abstracts for the general session and parasession must be received by 5:00 p.m., November 10, 1995. Special session abstracts must be received by November 17, 1995. Inquiries of a general nature may be sent by e-mail (bls@garnet.berkeley.edu); however, BLS cannot accept e-mailed or faxed submission of abstracts.

Registration Fees: before February 7, 1996 - \$10 students, \$15 non-students; after February 7, 1996 - \$20 students, \$25 non-students.

23.4 CORRESPONDENCE

Computer Words

>From Chuck Coker (indlangprj@aol.com) Sept. 15, 1995:

Computers have become a fact of life in most places (at least, most of the places I'm familiar with). I have become curious about how different languages deal with computer words. Have new "native" words been created in these languages, or are loanwords used?

I'm currently living on the Hualapai Indian Reservation in Arizona. In Hualbay (Hualapai, Walapai), there are two native words for computer:

qambaybu:jo
place to store brains [qambay (= brain) + bu:(k) (= to store) + j (= plural suffix) + o (= locative suffix)]
qambayjigwa:jo
place to put away brains [qambay (= brain) + jigwa(k) (= to put away) + j (= plural suffix) + o (= locative suffix)]

Can anyone provide the word computer from other languages, along with literal meanings and etymologies if possible? Any other computer-related words would be welcome, too.

---Chuck Coker
Indigenous Languages Project
P. O. Box 693, Peach Springs, AZ 86434-0693

"Iroquois Longhouse"

>From Sharon Steinberg (ssteinberg@rc.com) Sept. 19, 1995:

Does anyone have access to a translation and/or a transcription of
"Iroquois Longhouse" from "How the West Was Lost," Vol 2, sung by Joanne
Shenandoah? I can't get the song out of my head, but I don't know what
it means. Thanks!

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

Victor Golla
Secretary-Treasurer &
Editor, SSILA Newsletter

Dept. of Ethnic Studies
Humboldt State University
Arcata, California 95521
USA

707/826-4324 - fax: 707/826-4418 - e-mail: gollav@axe.humboldt.edu
