

**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

Number 42: November 16, 1996

## 42.1 LAST-MINUTE CAIL PROGRAM CHANGES

Two papers have been withdrawn from the CAIL sessions.

- Christel Stolz will not be able to present her paper on Yucatec couplets in the “Text and Discourse” session Thursday morning. Her dissertation was recently awarded a prestigious prize in Germany, and the award ceremony is scheduled for the same day as the CAIL session.
- Robert Howren, whose paper on Yucatec clitics was scheduled for the Thursday afternoon session, will be unable to attend the meeting for reasons of health.

A reminder: All CAIL sessions will be held in the San Francisco Hilton, 333 O’Farrell St, between asin & Taylor. The overall schedule is:

### **Thursday 11/21**

- 8:00 - 11:45 am (Union Square Room 15-16, 4th floor): TEXTS & DISCOURSE
- 4:00 - 5:45 pm (Union Square Room 21, 4th floor): MAYAN AND OTHER MESOAMERICAN LANGUAGES

### **Friday 11/22**

- 8:00 - 11:45 am (Anza/Franciscan Room): TOPICS IN PHONOLOGY & GRAMMAR
- 1:45 - 3:30 pm (Imperial Ballroom B): GENERAL & HISTORICAL PERSPECTIVES
- 6:15 - 7:30 pm (Continental Ballroom 3): SSILA BUSINESS MEETING

### **Saturday 11/23**

- 10:15 am - 12 noon (Cabrillo/Franciscan Room): SOUTH AMERICAN LANGUAGES
- 12:15 - 1:30 pm (Continental Ballroom 8): UNSPOKEN ASPECTS OF LINGUISTIC FIELDWORK (roundtable discussion, focusing on the the involvement of the fieldworker with the community in which he or she works)
- 1:45 - 3:00 pm (Cabrillo/Franciscan Room): LANGUAGES OF CALIFORNIA & THE SOUTHWEST
- 6:15 - 7:30 pm (Union Square Room 14, 4th floor): THE NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGE CENTER AT UC-DAVIS

## 42.2 OTHER SESSIONS OF INTEREST AT THE AAA MEETING

In addition to the CAIL sessions, there are several other sessions at the AAA meeting which should interest many SSILA members, although some are scheduled in conflict with CAIL sessions. One session in particular should be noted:

Wednesday 11/20, 4:00 - 5:45 pm:

### **The Cultures of Language in the Native American Southeast**

Jason Jackson, "The Work of Tradition in Yuchi Oratory"

[ethnography of ritual speaking after the switch to English from Yuchi]

Mary Linn, "Yuchi and Non-Yuchi: A Living Classification"

[grammar and culture in the division of the Yuchi animate class into Yuchi and non-Yuchi]

Pamela Innes, "Defining One's Place within Two Communities Through Codeswitching in Creek Political Discourse"

[ethnographic study of sociopolitical dynamics manifest in codeswitching]

Jack Martin, "The Effects of Nation Building on the Creek Language"

[results of sociopolitical change evident from lexical work on 19th century texts]

Victoria Levine, "Style, Text, and Context in Choctaw Social Dance Songs"

[ethnomusicological study of song texts through time]

Discussant: David Dinwoodie.

Other sessions of interest:

### **Wednesday 11/20**

- 12 noon - 3:45 pm: *Issues of Authenticity and Identity in Indigenous Language Revitalization*. Organizer/Chair: Rosemary C. Henze. Papers by: Leanne Hinton & Jocelyn Ahlers, Edna A. MacLean & Roy D. Iutzi-Mitchell, Nancy H. Hornberger & Kendall A. King, K. Laiana Wong, Waldeen Kahulu Palmeira, Sam L. Warner, and Leisy Thornton. Discussants: Kathryn Anne Davis, Mary Louise Pratt, David W. Gegeo.

### **Thursday 11/21**

- 8:00 - 9:45 am: *Language, Ethnicity, and Nationalism: Case Studies in Minority Language Rights*. Papers by: T. L. McCarty, Richard Ruiz, H. Russell Bernard, and Jesus Salinas. Discussants: Shirley B. Heath & Nancy H. Hornberger.
- 8:00 - 11:45 am: *The 150th Year of Smithsonian Anthropology (Presidential Symposium)*. Papers by: William C. Sturtevant, Douglas H. Ubelaker, Dennis J. Stanford, Bruce D. Smith, Wilcomb E. Washburn, William L. Merrill, JoAllyn Archambault, William Fitzhugh, Richard Kurin, Mary Jo Arnoldi, and Adrienne Kaeppler. Discussant: Curtis M. Hinsley.

## Friday 11/22

- 8:00 - 11:45 am: *Metaphor in Mesoamerican Language and Symbolism*.  
Papers by: Nicholas A. Hopkins, T. J. Knab, Jill L. Furst, Sharisse McCafferty & Geoffrey McCafferty, Dorie Reents-Budet, Mark B. King, Byron E. Hamann & John Monaghan & Mark B. King, Dana Liebsohn, Susan Milbrath, and Andrea Stone. Discussants: Gary H. Gossen & Geoffrey McCafferty.
- 10:15 am - 12 noon: *A Retrospective of Columbia's Legacy in Anthropology*.  
Discussants: Elliott P. Skinner, Rose Solecki, Marvin Harris, Joseph H. Greenberg, Lambros Comitas, Sidney Mintz, and Ernestine Friedl.
- 12:15 - 1:30 pm: *Society for Linguistic Anthropology Business Meeting*.

## Saturday 11/23

- 1:45 - 5:30 pm: *Language, Archaeology, and Culture History*.  
Papers by: John H. Moore, Tope Omoniyi & Rick Silverman, Pamela Willoughby, Scott A. MacEachern, Robert Dewar, Richard Lindstrom, Martin P. Evison, John Hines, Patrick McConvell, Jeff Marck, and John E. Terrell. Discussant: Bruce Mannheim.
- 1:45 - 5:30 pm: *Politics, the Individual, and Imagination: A Tribute to Paul Friedrich*.  
Papers by: Judith N. Friedlander, John Attinasi, Louanna Furbee, Robert A. Bourgeois, Bruce Mannheim, John Leavitt, Dennis Tedlock, Jean DeBernardi, and Steven Caton.  
Discussants: Deborah Tannen & Bonnie Urciuoli.

The full program of the San Francisco meeting is available at the AAA's new website:  
<http://www.ameranthassn.org>

## 42.3 CORRESPONDENCE

### Spivack's Query and Helmbrecht's Reply

From Danielle Cyr (decyr@quebecotel.com) 10 Nov 1996:

Regarding Dr. George Spivack's query on first person pronouns in North American Indian Languages and Johannes Helmbrecht's reply, I think that finding out which languages have or lack an "I" pronoun is only a first step in trying to understand the perception of Self and Other in North American Indian Cultures.

In my view, there is something more important that might have escaped researchers' attention so far, namely the question of knowing if "I" is universally the first person. Finding "I" to be a universal category is one thing. Whether "I" is universally the first person is another, and has rarely been investigated.

In this line, Helmbrecht's statement that "There have never been serious doubts about the 1st person as a universal category" somehow runs into the same kind of tautology encountered by Greenberg when he stated that the second person holds an intermediate position between the first and the third person. He went on to add that in the Western grammatical tradition, pronominal hierarchy indicates an intuitive understanding of the second person's intermediate position (in Wiesemann, *Pronominal Systems* [1986] pp. xvii-xxi). Everyone can of course agree that 2 is between 1 and 3. What we need to know is who stands behind these numbers.

In the past two years I have reviewed the literature on pronouns (from Aristotle and Bertrand Russell through Muehlhauser and Harre) trying to understand the foundations of "I" as a first person. What I discovered was an ideologically conditioned statement: "I" comes first because "I" is at the center of the speech universe. It looked pretty much to be a Judeo-Christian construct, echoing another statement: God placed me, his creature, at the center of the world to rule it. This ideologically conditioned statement evolved into a postulate, i.e., something so "naturally true" that one cannot demonstrate it. From then on, philosophical reasoning about "I" as a universal first person produced only a strain of hereditary tautologies.

While looking more closely at Algonquian languages during the past ten years, I came to doubt this Western postulate about "I" as a universal first person. The Algonquian personal hierarchy, for example, is known for the prevalence of "you" over "I", not only in discourse but also in grammar. One bit of grammatical evidence (from Montagnais, a member of the Cree-Montagnais-Naskapi continuum) is that one can easily use what is called the "direct form" :

tshi-ua:pam-in 'you-see-me'

while to say 'I see you' requires a more sophisticated form (in terms of information bits), i.e. the insertion of an affix -it-, as in:

tshi-ua:pam-it-in

which indicates that the direction of the transitive process is reversed, "I" being considered as the

first actant . This is called the “inverse form.” We can read the meaning of tshi-ua:pam-it-in as ‘you are in a process of vision where I am circumstantially the first actant’. There is no direct form carrying the meaning ‘I see you’.

Another hint from Algonquian languages is in the fact that speakers (at leasty speakers of Ojibway, Atikamekw, Maliseet and Mi’gmaq, to my knowledge) often request that linguists who prepare descriptive grammars place YOU forms at the head of verbal paradigms and that they skip the notion of ‘first’, ‘second’ and ‘third’ when listing verb forms. When asked what is more natural to them when listing verbal forms, my informants say that if they have to start with “I”, their tongue “trips” because it feels stupid. Along this line, Jose Mailhot’s work ([Au pays des Innus: Les gens de Sheshatshit](#)) on the social rules for using given names and nicknames among the Innu people of Labrador is very insightful. Mailhot states that before a speaker uses a name or a nickname, s/he must know the identity of all the addressees in term of their relationship with the person s/he speaks of, “you” being the entry point to anything one can say.

Further investigation is necessary, particularly carrying out textual analyses to see which forms are more frequently used and in what contexts. But if the hypothesis that “you” is the “first” person in some languages is correct, it implies that when we teach Algonquian school children that “I” comes first we somehow pervert one of the social functions their language is supposed to perform. By imposing our notion of truth, we increase the assimilation pressure on endangered cultures. There are also implications for such issues as Aboriginal justice systems, land claims, trade and economy, etc. If this holds for Algonquian languages, it might also hold for other non-Western languages.

I have an article in press on this topic (to appear in [Recherches Amerindiennes au Quebec](#), Winter 1997). The paper is written in French. Anyone interested in reading it may contact me at <decyr@quebectel.com>.

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## **Lakhota Language Survey**

From William Brescia (brescia@indiana.edu):

I am working to develop a computer program that will be an instructional aid in teaching Lakhota in a classroom setting. In order to make the program as useful in instruction as possible, I am gathering information about different methods of instruction, the quality of this instruction, and background knowledge of possible students and other interested persons. A Lakhota language survey on the internet is one way I am gathering information. By filling the survey out you will be helping me gather the resources I need to design a program that will be used.

You can find the survey at:

<http://ezinfo.ucs.indiana.edu/~krbradle/lakhotalanguagesurvey.html>

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## **Tonkawa, Zuni & Vocabulary Comparison**

From Lloyd Anderson (ecoling@aol.com) 13 Nov 1996:

Alexis Manaster Ramer's (AMR's) recent IJAL article "Tonkawa and Zuni: Two test cases for the Greenberg classification" (vol.62 #3 July, pp.264-288) marks a major step forward from the fruitless debates of the recent decade.

AMR understands what the issues are and what they are not, and succeeds almost completely in using terminology which will help others understand how to make progress. His conclusion is exactly right, that "the work on larger linguistic groupings cannot and need not wait for the last \*i\* to be dotted and the last \*t\* to be crossed in the work on these reconstructions. Both kinds of endeavor can and should proceed side by side."

To AMR's admirable work in clarifying terminology and avoiding the pitfalls of useless argument and assertion (not demonstration) of particular points of view, I wish to add three points:

1. Greenberg's method can, by definition, never lump languages. All it can do is separate them. This method takes a set of languages GIVEN IN ADVANCE and proceeds to discover which of of the languages ALREADY IN THE SET are probably relatively more closely related or probably relatively less closely related. This method can do nothing if the set has in it a language which has no other relatives within the set.
2. The usefulness of the method of vocabulary comparison will depend to a great degree on the sophistication of the judgements of "similarity" in sound and meaning. It is my opinion that a major lack in Greenberg's 1987 treatment is to not explain more extensively what he meant

by reasonable similarity.

3. (3) We are ideally not concerned with “similarity” so much as with “historical derivability”. A real need in our field is an EXPLICIT formulation of what constitute better candidates for closeness of sound and meaning derivabilities, explicit so that they can be debated, corrected when there is overwhelming statistical evidence, and limits of validity established.

Those wishing to discuss this topic during the AAA meetings in San Francisco, please leave messages at the AAA message desk or board. A longer version of this letter has been posted on the LINGUIST list.

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## 42.4 THE BOOK EXCHANGE

Robert Laughlin has copies of his The Great Tzotzil Dictionary of San Lorenzo Zinacantán (1975) for sale at \$50. Proceeds will go to the Sn'atibaxom Writers' Cooperative in Chiapas. Write him at: Dept. of Anthropology, Smithsonian Institution, Washington, DC 20560.

Meanwhile, copies of Laughlin & Haviland's The Great Tzotzil Dictionary of Santo Domingo Zinacantán (Smithsonian Contributions to Anthropology 31, 1988; 3 volumes, 1119 pp.) are still available FREE from: Series Section, Smithsonian Institution Press, Washington, DC 20560.

For those unacquainted with these monumental works of Mayan lexicography and philology, here is what we said of the latter in the Newsletter in June 1989:

*Move over Johnson and Webster! These magnificent volumes, the product of nine years' work by Laughlin, are more than just a dictionary. They are also, variously: philology (being the edited version of a lexicon compiled by an anonymous Dominican friar in the late 16th century and known only from a copy made around 1906); history (L. sets out, in 75 pages, to "recreate the times and the individuals who most likely contributed to the creation and preservation of the dictionary," and achieves a cameo of Mexican colonial experience); grammar (John Haviland contributes "A Comparative Grammatical Sketch of Colonial Tzotzil"); cultural analysis (the contents of the dictionary are regrouped in a thesaurus under 36 cultural categories, such as world, movement, life cycle, emotions, etc.); and a treasure of erudition and gentle wit.*

## 42.5 WORKING CONFERENCE ON ENDANGERMENT AT BERKELEY

An interdisciplinary working conference on “Endangered Languages, Endangered Knowledge, Endangered Environments” was held in Berkeley, California, on the weekend of October 25-27. The meeting brought together linguists, anthropologists, ethnobiologists, cognitive psychologists, cultural geographers, economists, biologists, ecologists, natural resource conservationists and managers, and indigenous rights advocates to discuss the interrelated threats faced by the linguistic/cultural and biological diversity of the planet. A special focus was on the role of traditional environmental knowledge, and of the languages in which it is encoded, in the conservation of the world’s ecosystems and in the maintenance of sustainable human-environment interactions. The conference was organized by Luisa Maffi, Institute of Cognitive Studies at UC-Berkeley, who is also one of the founders of Terralingua.

### **Presentations included:**

#### **Introductory papers**

- **Brent Mishler (UC-Berkeley)** “Biodiversity and the Loss of Lineages”;
- **David Harmon (The George Wright Society)**, “Biological and Cultural Diversity: The Converging Extinction Crisis”;
- **Johanna Nichols (UC- Berkeley)**, “Linguistic Diversity and Language Origins”;
- **Greville Corbett (U of Surrey, UK)**, “Why Linguists Need Languages”;
- **Jane Hill (U of Arizona)**, “Dimensions of Attrition in Language Death”;
- **Leanne Hinton (UC-Berkeley)**, “Language Revitalization”;
- **Gary Paul Nabhan (Arizona-Sonora Desert Museum, Tucson, Arizona)**, “Indigenous Knowledge and Management of Plant/Animal Interactions in Aridoamerica”;
- **Eugene Hunn (U of Washington)**, “The Importance of Endemism for Biological and Ethnobiological Diversity”;
- **Douglas Medin (North- western U)**, “Evolution and Devolution of Folkbiological Knowledge”; **Scott Atran (U of Michigan/CNRS)**, “The Commons Breakdown”;
- **Willett Kempton (U of Delaware)**, “Americans’ Models of Environmental Interactions and Environmental Values”;
- **Alejandro Argumedo (Cultural Survival Canada and Indigenous Peoples’ Biodiversity Network)**, “Indigenous Knowledge Conservation and International Processes.”
- *Concluding comments:* **Eric Smith (U of Washington at Seattle)**, “On Explaining the Links Between Cultural and Biological Diversity.”

#### **Special topics and case studies**

- **Herman Batibo (U of Botswana)**, “Patterns of Language Shift and Maintenance in Botswana: The Critical Dilemma”;
- **Margaret Florey (LaTrobe U, Australia)**, “Ethnoecological Knowledge in a Context of Language Shift: A Case Study from Eastern Indonesia”;
- **Andrew Pawley (Australian National U)**, “On Problems of Describing Linguistic and

Ecological Knowledge”;

- **Ian Saem Majnep (Papua New Guinea)**, “On the Importance of Conserving Traditional Knowledge of Plants, Wildlife and Hunting: A Kalam View”;
- **Manuel Lizarralde (UC- Berkeley)**, “South American Indigenous Languages and the Biodiversity Areas”;
- **Denny Moore (Museu Goeldi, Brazil)**, “Project for the Audio-Video Documentation of the Indigenous Languages of Brazil”;
- **Katharine Milton (UC-Berkeley)**, “Cultural and Ecological Diversity of Forest-Based Amazonian Societies”;
- **Christine Padoch (New York Botanical Gardens)**, “Unappreciated Technologies and Threatened Knowledge: An Example from Amazonia” (paper by C. Padoch and M. Pinedo-Vasquez);
- **William Balee (Tulane U)**, “Environment, Culture, and Siriono Plant Names: Some Implications for Ethnobiological Knowledge”;
- **Dominique Irvine (Stanford U)**, “Co-existence of Biological and Cultural Diversity in Napo Province, Ecuador”;
- **Stanford Zent (Venezuelan Institute of Scientific Investigations)**, “Acculturation and Ethnobotanical Knowledge Loss Among the Piaroa of Venezuela”;
- **L. Frank Manriquez (Native California Network)**, “Silent No More: California Indians Reclaim Their Culture”;
- **Felipe Molina (Native Seed/SEARCH)**, “Wa Huya Ania Ama Vutti Yo’oriwa, The Wilderness World is Respected Greatly: The Yoeme (Yaqui) Truth from the Yoeme Communities of Arizona and Sonora, Mexico”;
- **Benjamin Blount (U of Georgia)**, “Indigenous People and the Uses and Abuses of Eco-Tourism.”

### **Indigenous knowledge, indigenous rights, and biocultural preservation**

- **Darrell Posey (Oxford Centre for the Environment, Ethics, and Society)**, “Biological and Cultural Diversity--The Inextricable, Linked by Language”;
- **Alejandro de Avila (UC-Berkeley)**, “Developing Alliances Between Indigenous Communities and Environmental/Cultural Activists in Oaxaca”;
- **Gary Martin (UNESCO/WWF-I/Kew Gardens’ People and Plants Initiative)**, “The Dilemmas of Returning Benefits from Ethnobiological Studies”;
- **James Nations (Conservation International)**, “Cultural and Environmental Conservation in the Maya Tropical Forest”;
- **Mark Poffenberger (UC-Berkeley, and Asia Sustainable Forest Management Network)**, “Role of Forest-Dependent Communities in the Management of the Global Forest Estate: Implications for the Inter-governmental Panel on Forests and International Forest Policy Discussions”;
- **Dennis (Mike) Warren (Iowa State U)**, “The Role of the Global Network of Indigenous Knowledge Resource Centers in the Conservation of Cultural and Biological Diversity”;
- **Stephen Brush (UC- Davis)**, “Indigenous Peoples’ Rights and Resources: Contested Agendas for Crop Germplasm”;
- **Ignacio Chapela (UC-Berkeley)**, “Richness Unseen? Use for Conservation of Microbial Genetic Resources in Oaxaca, Mexico”;

- **Richard Norgaard (UC-Berkeley)**, “Possibilities After Progress.”
- Panel discussion introduced by Alejandro Argumedo, Herman Batibo, Saem Majnep, L. Frank Manriquez, and Felipe Molina, and followed by workgroups and drafting of recommendations for white paper.

Further information on the conference, including abstracts of presentations and biographies of the participants, is available at the conference website:

[http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/Endangered\\_Lang\\_Conf/Endangered\\_Lang.html](http://ucjeps.berkeley.edu/Endangered_Lang_Conf/Endangered_Lang.html)

## 42.6 MORE ON THE POLYGLOT LORD’S PRAYER BOOK

From: Marie-Lucie Tarpent (marie-lucie.tarpent@msvu.ca) 13 Nov 1996:

[The message I posted on the last SSILA Bulletin on a polyglot Catholic Lord’s Prayer book has attracted some inquiries from SSILA members, so here is some more information on the book.]

This work was originally published by the Vatican in 1870 and the copy I have seems to be a reprint from the original plates, done in 1974 on the occasion of the 1975 Holy Year. It seems to have been intended as much as a showcase of typographical expertise as of the breadth of the linguistic work done in the Catholic church. With the book came a small brochure in Italian and French and a small recording with the Lord’s Prayer intoned by the Pope on one side, and chanted on the other side. Both the brochure and the record are dated 1975.

The copy I was given was among books sold as discards by the library of Mount Saint Vincent University, formerly an all-Catholic institution, although it seems that the book was never put on the shelves. According to a librarian, it may have come from a private donor, which could have been the Catholic order that used to run the university. It seems then that the work may have been intended as a gift from the Vatican to Catholic institutions, rather than for sale. Linguists working for Catholic institutions may be able to find it in their libraries.

For others, if you tell me the languages you are interested in, I could send you copies of the relevant pages. If you only want a few pages I will send them to you free. If there is a substantial number I may ask you for reimbursement of postage and copying charges.

**The title of the book is:** ORATIO DOMINICA IN CCL LINGUAS VERSA.

**The full title page has:** ORATIO DOMINICA IN CCL LINGUAS VERSA ET CLXXX CHARACTERUM FORMIS VEL NOSTRATIBUS VEL PEREGRINIS EXPRESSA, CURANTE PETRO MARIETTI, EQUITE TYPOGRAPHO PONTIFICIO, SOCIO ADMINISTRO, TYPOGRAPHEIS. CONSILII DE PROPAGANDA FIDE. ROMAE ANNO M.DCCC.XX.

The publisher or printer of the 1974/1975 version is MARIETTI EDITORI, TORINO.

## 42.7 BRIEF ANNOUNCEMENTS

### **1997 Algonquian Conference**

The 1997 (29th) Algonquian conference will be held on October 24-26 at Lakehead University. The organizer is John O'Meara, Education, Lakehead Univ., Thunder Bay, Ontario P7B 5E1 Canada (tel: 807/343-8054; e-mail: John.Omeara@lakeheadu.ca; fax: 807/346-7746). A World Wide Web site has been opened for the conference at: <http://www.lakeheadu.ca/~AlgConf97>

## The Society for the Study of the Indigenous Languages of the Americas

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