

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

SSILA BULLETIN

An Information Service for SSILA Members

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60.1 IN MEMORIAM

We note with sadness the recent passing of two distinguished senior members of SSILA. Longer obituaries of both will appear in the April 1998 issue of the SSILA Newsletter. --
VG

Viola G. Waterhouse (1918-1997)

Viola Waterhouse, one of the most important figures in the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the Wycliffe Bible Translators in the 1950s and 1960s, died recently at her family home in Independence, Missouri. She had been in frail health for a number of years, but kept actively involved in linguistic work, co-authoring a paper as recently as 1996.

Between 1942 and 1956, Waterhouse worked as a missionary linguist among the Chontal (or Tequistlateco) of Oaxaca, and wrote a grammar of Lowland (or Coastal) Chontal as her doctoral dissertation at the University of Michigan in 1958. This study was one of the first full grammatical descriptions in the Tagmemic model developed by Kenneth L. Pike, and Waterhouse went on to become one of SIL's leading proponents of Tagmemic theory. She served for several years as SIL's bibliographer-librarian and compiled the Twenty-fifth Anniversary Bibliography of SIL in 1960. She also published several historical and comparative studies of Chontal, a language isolate she firmly believed to be a southern outlier of Hokan.

She was one of the founding members of SSILA in 1981, and for the remainder of her life was a faithful and supportive member of our Society. A sweet and lovely woman, she is mourned by many.

Frank T. Siebert, Jr. (1912-1998)

Dr. Frank T. Siebert, Jr. died on Friday, January 23, aged 85, after a long struggle with cancer. A physician who was also widely recognized as the dean of Algonquian studies, Siebert was one of the most dedicated fieldworkers in American Indian linguistics.

According to a story that he often told, Siebert decided on his life's work when he was only 19, during a summer visit to the Penobscot Indian reservation in Old Town, Maine. Although at his father's insistence he went to medical school and pursued a career as a pathologist, his commitment to American Indian linguistics in general, and to the study of Penobscot in particular, became the dominant passion of his life. He spent his vacations doing fieldwork on Indian languages, published extensively in scholarly journals, and earned the respect of nearly all the influential Americanist linguists of his time, including Franz Boas, Leonard Bloomfield, and Edward Sapir. He developed a particularly close relationship with the anthropologist Frank Speck (1881-1950), whose

earlier work on Penobscot and other Algonquian languages foreshadowed his own.

After leaving medicine in the 1960s, Siebert settled in Old Town in order to devote his remaining years to the uninterrupted study of Penobscot. In the end, his single-minded dedication outlasted the language -- the last native speaker, Madeline Tomer Shay, died in 1993. As Ives Goddard has put it, Frank Siebert was “clearly the most brilliant and most competent avocational linguist working on Native American languages that there ever has been, hands down.”

60.2 CORRESPONDENCE

Ecuador and Tarasca

>From Bernard Comrie (comrie@rcf.usc.edu) 22 Jan 1998:

An article in the November-December 1997 issue of the popular-scientific magazine Archaeology (“Traders of the Ecuadorian littoral”, by Patricia Rieff Anawalt) discusses evidence for trading relations between the Ecuadorian coast (Manabi province) and western Mexico, more especially the Tarascan-speaking area, about 1500 years ago, including possible Ecuadorian influences on Tarascan dress and artifacts. Does anyone know if there are any linguistic reflexes of such commercial relations, e.g. in the form of loans into Tarascan? Is this a topic worth investigating?

~Bernard Comrie
University of Southern California
(comrie@bcf.usc.edu)

A “drift” from OV to VO?

>From Frederick Newmeyer (fjn@u.washington.edu) 24 Jan 1998:

[This is a copy of a query originally posted on FUNKNET. SSILA readers who might want to respond should send their replies directly to Fritz. The Bulletin will post his summary.]

Matthew Dryer has shown that, once we correct for areal and genetic bias, the “preference” for OV order is greater than that for VO order in the world’s languages. But interestingly, I have seen it claimed in a variety of places that attested (or uncontroversially reconstructed) word order changes from OV to VO are far more common than those from VO to OV.

My first question is how widely accepted is such a claim among historical linguists and typologists? Is there much support for such an idea and its implication of an overall general “drift” from OV to VO?

If this claim seems well motivated, the conjunction of the “preference” for OV and the “drift” to VO is very curious, no? One might even conclude that the OV preference is a remnant of a “proto-world” OV (caused by what?), which functional forces (but what functional forces?) are skewing gradually to VO. And, indeed, linguists coming from a variety of directions (Venneman, Givon, Bichakjian, and others) have concluded something very much along those lines.

I'm curious what thoughts readers might have on this question. I'll summarize if there is enough interest.

~Fritz Newmeyer
University of Washington
(fjn@u.washington.edu)

Some Indian numerals?

>From Sandy Haugen (shaugen@swbell.net) 28 Jan 1998:

My great-grandmother taught one of my cousins how to count to ten in what she said was "Indian." She told him that she was part "Indian" through her mother. The only other clue that I have is my grandmother had written in one of her journals that her grandmother was from Louisiana. We are not even sure if the words are from a Native American language. I have written them below just as my cousin said them:

- | | |
|-----------|---------------|
| 1. een | 6. ee |
| 2. teen | 7. watta |
| 3. fetta | 8. do |
| 4. meta | 9. watta-dee |
| 5. fip(t) | 10. watta-dit |

I would appreciate any help the members of SSILA could give me in identifying the source of these words. Thanks in advance.

~Sandy Haugen
(shaugen@swbell.net)

60.3 MAP FROM HNAI VOL.17 TO BE REPRINTED SEPARATELY

>From Ives Goddard (goddard.ives@nmnh.si.edu) 29 Jan 1998:

Ives Goddard reports that plans are underway to make the color map in *Handbook of North American Indians*, vol. 17 *Languages*, available separately in two sizes. One size would be the same as the current map, the other larger. The preparation of the larger, poster size version will give an opportunity to make some changes, notably the inclusion of all languages in areas that have only the family or sub-family marked at present. Please inform Ives if there are any flagrant errors in boundaries and the like that you would like to see fixed (bearing in mind the inherent chronological skewing, as explained in the "Introduction"). Contact him at: MNH, MRC100, Smithsonian Institution, Washington DC 20560; e-mail: goddard.ives@nmnh.si.edu; fax: 202-357-2208)

60.4 UPCOMING MEETINGS

Workshop on American Indigenous Languages (Santa Barbara, May 9-10)

>From Gary Holton (holton@humanitas.ucsb.edu) 23 Jan 1998:

The Linguistics Department at the University of California, Santa Barbara is issuing a call for papers for its first annual Workshop on American Indigenous Languages (WAIL), Saturday and Sunday May 9-10, 1998. WAIL is co-sponsored by the UCSB Linguistics Department and the Department's Native American Indian Languages (NAIL) study group, which has been meeting regularly in Santa Barbara since 1990 to discuss issues relating to Native American language and culture. The May workshop will be a forum for the discussion of theoretical and descriptive linguistic studies of indigenous languages of the Americas. Invited speakers will be Nicola Bessel, Wallace Chafe, and Marianne Mithun.

Anonymous abstracts are invited for talks on any topic in linguistics. Talks will be 20 minutes, followed by 10 minutes for discussion. Individuals may submit abstracts for one single and one co-authored paper. Abstracts should be one page with a 500 word limit. A separate page for data and references may be included, if necessary. Abstracts may be submitted in hardcopy or by email. Please send four copies of a one-page abstract with a 3x5 card including name, affiliation, mailing address, phone number, e-mail address, and the title of your paper. E-mail submissions are encouraged (the information that would be included on the 3x5 card should be in the body of the email message, with the abstract sent as an attachment).

Hardcopy abstracts should be mailed to:

Workshop on American Indigenous Languages
Dept. of Linguistics, UCSB
Santa Barbara, CA 93106.

E-mail abstracts should be sent to: <wail@humanitas.ucsb.edu>. The deadline for receipt of abstracts is February 22, 1998. Notification of acceptance will be by e-mail in mid-March.

Shuttle buses run from LAX to Santa Barbara several times each day. Information about hotel accommodations will be provided on request, and crash space for participants may be available with graduate students in the UCSB linguistics department for those who arrange early. For further information contact the conference coordinator (tel: 805/893-3776; e-mail: wail@humanitas.ucsb.edu).

Symposium on Indigenous Languages (Chihuahua, Mexico, May 21-23)

>From Carla Paciotta (cp3@dana.ucc.nau.edu) 22 Jan 1998:

An International Symposium on Indigenous Languages and Intercultural Communication (Encuentro Internacional Sobre Lenguas Indigenas e Interculturalidad) will be held May 21-23, 1998, at Casa Escuela DIF, Creel, Chihuahua, Mexico. It will be co-sponsored by: Coordinacion Estatal de la Tarahumara; Direccion General de Educacion Indigena; Escuela Nacional de Antropologia; Unidad Chihuahua; the Ford Foundation; Northern Arizona University; Servicios Educativos del Estado de Chihuahua; and Universidad Autonoma de Chihuahua.

Proposals are invited on the following topics: Bilingual Education; Language Maintenance and Revitalization; Indigenous Rights; Language, Culture and the Environment; and Diasporas and Migration. Researchers, community workers and educators from all relevant fields are encouraged to participate as presenters.

Send abstract of 200 words (maximum), in either English or Spanish, to:

Prof. Manuel Suarez
Coordinacion Estatal de la Tarahumara
Calle Allende 1912, Colonia Centro
Chihuahua, Chih., 31000, MEXICO.

Submissions are preferred by fax ([52] [14] 29-34-66) or e-mail (enah@infosel.net.mx).

The organizing committee requests that abstracts be sent by February 28, 1998. Presentations should be no longer than 20 minutes, allowing 10 minutes for questions and discussion. If possible, written versions should be submitted at the symposium, and be no longer than 20 pages (minimum 15), double spaced, with a copy on 3.5 diskette (MS-DOS).

The registration fee will be US \$25 or 200 Mexican pesos.

For more information tel: (14) 16-82-22 (Mexico) or 520/523-8915 (US);
or e-mail: enah@infosel.net.mx (Mexico) or norbert.francis@nau.edu (US).

Stabilizing Indigenous Languages Conference: deadline extended

>From Robert N. St. Clair (rnstclr@earthlink.net) 19 Jan 1998:

The deadline has been extended for the 5th Symposium on Stabilizing Indigenous Languages (May 14-16, 1998 at Galt House East, Louisville, Kentucky). The new deadline is March 15th, 1998. The organizers need papers, panel sessions, workshops, and demonstrations.

Co-chairs for the symposium are Robert N. St. Clair (University of Louisville) and Evangeline Parsons-Yazzie (University of Northern Arizona). Topics will include: Language Renewal; Bilingual Education Programs for Indigenous Languages;

Developing Grammars, Dictionaries, and Textbooks for the Classroom; Teaching Indigenous Languages in Tribal Colleges; Teaching Language through Indian Story Telling; Tribal Art and Humor; Narratives and Text Development; Teaching the Symbolism of Indian Art; Teaching the Meanings of Indian Dance; The Roles of the Tribe in Language Development; Community Based Language Restoration Programs; and the Use of Indigenous Epistemologies or Philosophies in the Classroom.

For further information contact:

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