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

*** SSILA BULLETIN ***

An Information Service for SSILA Members

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128.0 SSILA BUSINESS

* New website manager

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Many thanks to all the people who replied to our announcement (in the Bulletin for November 7) that SSILA needs a new website manager. We are pleased to announce the selection of Ardis Eschenberg, an SSILA member at SUNY Buffalo, who also manages the Role and Reference Grammar site. Ardis will soon begin to update the data files at the SSILA site -- a housekeeping chore that is long overdue. After that is done, we'll start thinking about making some additions and changes to the site structure. If you have suggestions for improvements please don't hesitate to e-mail Ardis at <are2@acsu.buffalo.edu>.

* 2001 meetings (both in California)

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SSILA will be holding two meetings during the coming year, both of them (by fortuitous accident) in California.

We will be have a summer meeting at UC Santa Barbara, July 6-8, in conjunction with the 2001 Linguistic Institute. The meeting will be co-sponsored by the Workshop on American Indian Languages (WAIL), the student group at UCSB, and will also be coordinated with the 2001 meeting of the Friends of Uto-Aztecan, which will take place in Santa Barbara following the SSILA meeting.

The call for papers for the summer meeting (together with information about the Uto-Aztecan meeting) will be posted in the next Bulletin, in early January, and also enclosed with the January issue of the SSILA Newsletter.

Our regular winter meeting will be held jointly with the LSA, in San Francisco (again!), in early January 2002. The first call for papers for the winter meeting will be sent out with the April 2001 Newsletter, with a September deadline for abstracts. Since this will be the 20th annual meeting of SSILA, we plan to schedule an appropriate celebratory event in addition to the usual sessions and business meeting.

128.1 CORRESPONDENCE

Melungeons?

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>From Curtis Christy (friend9@pacbell.net) 20 Nov 2000:

I'm trying to find some information about the Appalachian people known as the "Melungeons" -- a mixed-race group whose ancestry includes Southern whites, Portuguese and Spanish, Africans, and American Indians.

No one seems to know where the name came from. I doubt that it is an indigenous word. Some say it is from French "melange", and may have originally been "Melangien."

I wonder if any readers of the SSILA Bulletin might have come across early uses of the term or early descriptions of the people who came to be known as Melungeons.

Thanks in advance for any help.

--Curtis Christy, Ed.D.
(friend9@pacbell.net)

Teacher certification
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>From Armelle Denis (denisa@ucs.orst.edu) 10 Dec 2000:

I am a grad student at Oregon State University working with the Warm Springs Confederated Tribes of Oregon on language maintenance.

The Warm Springs have three languages: Wasco (the last remaining Chinookan language, described by, among others, Boas and Sapir), Sahaptin (a Penutian language), and Northern Paiute (the northernmost language of the Uto-Aztecan family). All three are greatly endangered, especially Wasco and Paiute, which can claim only 5 to 10 native speakers on the reservation, all of them old or getting old.

The Warm Springs Tribe has made the decision to preserve all three languages by teaching them in the local elementary school. So far they have operated on tribal funds and done without formal certification. However, if they want to pursue teaching their languages in middle and high schools, which are off the reservation, they are going to have to get some kind of certification from the state of Oregon.

Our current approach relies on the status of Native American tribes as sovereign nations. We want to argue in front of state officials that community recognition of individuals' linguistic abilities and talents for teaching constitutes sufficient certification, and that by virtue of their sovereignty the tribes do not need state control over the education of their children.

I have not been able to find much on the topic of certification for teachers of indigenous languages, but I'd be interested to know the approaches other tribes confronted with that issue have adopted. Has anybody else argued along the lines of sovereignty, and if so how did that work? What other solutions have been devised?

--Armelle Denis
(denisa@ucs.orst.edu)

Some new Harrington notes discovered

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>From Kathryn A. Klar (kkestrel@socrates.Berkeley.edu) 13 Dec 2000:

I have recently come across a small cache of previously undescribed linguistic notes of J. P. Harrington's. They are among the papers of Ina Cassidy, in the Bancroft Library at Berkeley. In 1912-13, Cassidy and her husband, Gerald -- a well-known artist -- spent some time with Fernando Librado, one of the last speakers of Ventureño Chumash. Cassidy learned how to weave Chumash baskets and collected notes on the basket-making process, as well as specimens of the plants used. The Harrington material consists in large part of his annotations to Cassidy's notes. There are also fair-copy manuscripts of three unpublished articles by Harrington, "The Prototype of the Navaho Blanket," "Primitive Indian Basketry," and "Pueblo Indian Pottery Making," together with his detailed specifications for the illustrations. Also among Cassidy's notes are a number of pages on childbirth, obtained from another Chumash speaker with whom Harrington worked, Candelaria Valenzuela.

I made copies of 78 pages of this material (much of it on the yellow and white foolscap so characteristically associated with this period of Harrington's work). There may be more scattered through the collection.

The Bancroft collection in which these materials are to be found is the Cassidy Family Papers (MSS 67/1 p), specifically carton 7, folders on "Indian basketry" (1) and "Indians" (2). The archival details can also be found in the Bancroft on-line catalog and finding aid, at:

<http://library.berkeley.edu/BANC>

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

AAA actions on controversy over Yanomami book

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>From Louise Lamphere (lamphere@unm.edu) 14 Dec 2000:

This is to report on actions taken by AAA's Executive Board, during its meetings at the 2000 AAA Annual Meeting, concerning Patrick Tierney's book, *Darkness in El Dorado*, and the surrounding controversy.

The Executive Board took the following three actions:

I. Established a Special Ad Hoc Task Force of seven members to: (A) examine assertions and allegations contained in the book as well as others related to the controversy; (B) review AAA's statements on ethics and human rights; (C) consult other sources (documents and individuals) and coordinate with other organizations potentially pursuing investigations, including those in Venezuela and Brazil; (D) come to a conclusion as to which specific issues, if any, are deserving of an in-depth investigation by AAA, and can realistically be investigated by the AAA; (E) suggest what kinds of evidence might be obtained or individuals interviewed on each issue; (F) propose any budget that might need to be committed to conduct such an investigation; (G) recommend by whom such an investigation should be conducted; and (H) report its findings, conclusions and recommendations to the Executive Board no later than its February 2001 scheduled meeting.

On December 4, I appointed the following members to the Ad Hoc Task Force: James Peacock (Chair), Janet Chernela, Linda Green, Ellen Gruenbaum, Philip Walker, Joe Watkins, and Linda Whiteford.

II. Charged the AAA Committee on Ethics to: (A) consider developing additional draft guidelines for potential inclusion in the AAA Code of Ethics and/or the development of other materials; and (B) report such draft guidelines and/or other materials to the AAA Executive Board.

III. Established an Ad Hoc Task Force to: (A) summarize current knowledge of the precarious health conditions among native populations in South America; (B) conduct a review of existing national and international regulations, standards and guidelines intended to protect such native populations and to guide contact by researchers and other with such populations; (C) make recommendations on how such regulations, standards and guidelines can be further strengthened and how the AAA can contribute to such efforts; (D) make recommendations on how the AAA can educate its members about the health condition of native South American populations; and (E) report its findings, conclusions and recommendations to the AAA Executive Board.

Both the members of the Executive Board and I feel that these three actions should enable the association to deal responsibly with the issues raised by this volume. We will keep the membership informed on these matters as the Board acts on findings, conclusions and recommendations developed by these Task Forces and Committee.

--Louise Lamphere
President, American Anthropological Association

lamphere@unm.edu)

Help with aspect?
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>From Ludmila Bolsunovskaya (san58@hotmail.com) 26 Dec 2000:

I am engaged in the study of aspect in Selkup, one of the endangered languages of Siberia, and am in need of information about the literature on aspectual systems in American Indian languages, for comparison. I began my research in the Laboratory of languages of Siberian people in Tomsk Pedagogical University, and currently work in the same institution as head of the department of English language and intercultural communication, while continuing my scientific work. I hope that you may be able to help me or can suggest additional scholars (with addresses or e-mails) who are working on aspect.

--Ludmila Bolsunovskaya
Tomsk Pedagogical University, Russia
(san58@hotmail.com)

128.2 UPCOMING MEETINGS

* Languages of the Arctic at CLS 37 (Chicago, April 19-21)
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>From Sylvain Neuvel (sneuvel@uchicago.edu) 13 Dec 2000:

The call for papers has gone out for the 37th meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society (CLS 37), April 19-21, 2001, at the University of Chicago.

There will be a General Session and three Parasessions (concurrent with the General Session). The April 20th Parasession will be on "Languages of the Arctic," and is designed to be a forum for current issues in linguistics of the Arctic region. The organizers welcome papers from all areas of linguistics, including descriptive, theoretical, and sociolinguistic work on languages of this region.

Invited speakers for this Parasession will be SHANLEY ALLEN (Boston U), MICHAEL FORTESCUE (U of Copenhagen) and JERROLD M. SADOCK (U of Chicago).

The other Parasessions will focus on "Functionalism and Formalism in Linguistic Theory" (April 19th), for which the invited speakers are

information contact Lawrence Kaplan (ffldk@uaf.edu).

2. Languages and Oral Traditions in the Arctic

Faced with the combined effects of settlement, christianization, forced education and the constant assault of mass media on their ancestral language, many Aboriginal People today have no choice but to answer a very difficult question: Is it possible to preserve and bequeath Oral Traditions to posterity in a different language than the one used by a given community to create them in the first place? The problems raised by this question are complex and any hint of an answer will naturally be tinged by the ethnic heritage or the research field of the participant. The goal of this session is to present and analyze some leads on how to tackle this question in a multidisciplinary context. This session is open to everyone that has to work with Oral Traditions: Aboriginal people, researchers in Social Sciences, linguists or poets. -- For additional information contact Andre Bourcier (aae631@agora.ulaval.ca).

3. Teaching of Aboriginal Languages

The past several decades have seen an ever-increasing growth of Aboriginal immersion and First Language programs in an effort to meet the challenge faced by communities in which the Aboriginal language is either no longer spoken, or else spoken only by the older generation. The language programs that have been designed are based on a wide variety of teaching methodologies that depend on the learner age, the goals of the program, the availability of Native teachers and teaching assistants, the development of appropriate teaching materials, as well as other factors. However, the effectiveness of such programs also reveals a variability that often reflects individual situations. In this session we will bring together program developers, teachers, and researchers, both national and international, who will present research findings based on the programs developed in their communities. -- For further information contact Irene Mazurkewich (imaz@morgan.ucs.mun.ca).

Titles and abstracts must be submitted to the ICASS IV Organizing committee by February 10, 2001.

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