

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

*** SSILA BULLETIN ***

An Information Service for SSILA Members

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203.0 SSILA Business

* Annual Business Meeting
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The annual Business Meeting of SSILA will be held on Saturday, January 10, at 12:15 pm in the Independence room of the Sheraton Boston Hotel, Boston, Massachusetts, during the 2003-04 winter meeting of the Society. All members of SSILA are invited to attend.

Members who would like to make an announcement or place an item of new business on the meeting agenda should notify the President, Pamela Munro, at the earliest opportunity. She can be e-mailed at <munro@ucla.edu>.

(LREC). (For information on LREC see: <http://www.lrec-conf.org/>; for SALTMIL see: <http://193.2.100.60/SALTMIL/>).

Titled "First Steps for Language Documentation of Minority Languages: Computational Linguistic Tools for Morphology, Lexicon and Corpus Compilation," the workshop is intended to continue the series of SALTMIL/LREC workshops on computational language resources for minority languages, held in Granada (1998), Athens (2000), and Las Palmas de Gran Canaria (2002). The Lisbon 2004 workshop aims to share information on tools and best practice, so that isolated researchers will not need to start from scratch. An important aspect will be the forming of personal contacts, which can minimize duplication of effort. Information on sources of funding for minority languages will also be presented, and there will be discussion on the strategic priorities that need to be addressed in this area. There will be a balance between presentations of existing language resources, and more general presentations designed to give background information needed by all researchers present.

The workshop will feature presentations of existing speech and text databases for minority languages, with particular emphasis on software tools that have been found useful in their development. Topics will include: Linguistic corpora, Automatic Speech Recognition, Acoustic modelling, Dictionary development, Language modelling, Natural Language Processing, Computational lexicography, Machine Translation, and Information retrieval.

The first session of the workshop will consist of invited talks focusing on current methodologies for language documentation and computational linguistic tools which are available for minority languages. These will include:

- Dafydd Gibbon (U Bielefeld), "First steps in corpus compilation"
- Xabier Artola (U of the Basque Country), "First steps in lexicon resources"
- Bojan Petek (U of Ljubljana, Slovenia), "Experiences defining a network of excellence on portability of human language technologies"
- Kenneth R. Beesley (Xerox [to be confirmed]), "First steps in morphology"

The second session will focus on programs and initiatives for supporting minority language documentation. The main aim of this session is to provide a forum for fostering new contacts among researchers working in this area.

Papers are invited that describe research and development in the area of Human Language Technology portability. All contributed papers will be presented in poster format. Each submission should include: title; author(s); affiliation(s); and contact author's e-mail address, postal address, telephone and fax numbers. Abstracts (maximum 500 words, plain-text format) should be sent via e-mail to Julie Berndsen (University College Dublin) at: <Julie.Berndsen@ucd.ie>. The deadline for abstract submission is 11th February 2004.

All contributions (including invited papers) will be printed in the workshop proceedings (CD). They also will be published on the SALTMIL website.

group intellectual property rights, dictionary-making, etc. It will be open to anyone studying the lexicon of any language, but I suspect some of the most active members will be from SSILA.

The list website is at URL:

<http://groups.yahoo.com/group/lexicographylist/>

from which anyone may join. Or one may join by sending a message to:

lexicographylist-subscribe@yahoogroups.com

--Wayne Leman
Cheyenne linguist
(wayne_leman@sil.org)

* Creek Language Archive

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From Jack Martin (jbmart@wm.edu) 22 Dec 2003:

Readers of the Bulletin may be interested in visiting the Creek Language Archive. This site is designed to make many of the published sources on Creek available to a wider audience as pdf files and html pages. It also provides basic information on Creek, including a short talking dictionary and sections from a textbook in progress. The URL is:

<http://www.wm.edu/linguistics/creek>

--Jack Martin
College of William & Mary
(jbmart@wm.edu)

* New address for Cheyenne Language page

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From Wayne Leman (wayne_leman@sil.org) 23 Dec 2003:

The URL for the Cheyenne Language page has changed to:

http://www.geocities.com/cheyenne_language

--Wayne Leman
Cheyenne linguist
(wayne_leman@sil.org)

* Paper in Nature, critique

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A provocative paper, "Language Tree Divergence Times Support the Anatolian Theory of Indo-European Origin," by Russell D. Gray and Quentin D. Atkinson, was published in the Nov. 27 issue of Nature. (For a summary see: <http://www.nature.com/nsu/031124/031124-6.html>). Using a method similar to (but, they argue, more sophisticated than)

glottochronology, based on the percentage of replacement of cognate lexical items, the authors construct a phylogenetic tree for Indo-European and calculate absolute dates for the divergences. They estimate that the initial divergence within the family took place about 8700 years ago, with Hittite as the first language to split off. This they take to support the theory that Indo-European originated in Anatolia and that Indo-European languages arrived in Europe with the spread of agriculture.

If valid, Gray and Atkinson's work would have important implications for all historical linguists, not least those working with North and South American language families. SSILA member Bill Poser has posted a critical review of Gray and Atkinson's paper at:

<http://itre.cis.upenn.edu/~myl/language/000208.html>

203.5 Correction

In Bulletin 202.3 (Dec. 17) we mistakenly identified the co-manager of the Wakashan Linguistics Page as Ben Braithwaite. He is Ben Barrett. His co-manager, Adam Werle, was correctly identified, but he is in fact at the U of Massachusetts-Amherst, not the U of Washington as we implied. Our apologies for the confusion.

203.6 E-Mail Address Updates

The following additions or changes have been made to the SSILA mailing list since the last Bulletin:

Barrett, Ben bjb5@u.washington.edu
Bird, Steven sb@cs.mu.oz.au
Bobaljik, Jonathan jonathan.bobaljik@uconn.edu
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Werle, Adam nrwan@linguist.umass.edu

When your e-mail address changes, please notify us (golla@ssila.org).

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