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

*** SSILA BULLETIN ***

An Information Service for SSILA Members

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-->> --Correspondence should be directed to the Editor-- <<--

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226.0 SSILA Business
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* Address for Hale Prize inquiries
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During August, inquiries about nominations for the 2005 Ken Hale Prize
should be sent to Nora England at (nengland@mail.utexas.edu). The chair
of the committee, Pam Bunte, who would ordinarily handle correspondence
about the Prize, will be out of e-mail contact for most of the month.

* Two colleagues pass away
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Two of our SSILA colleagues have passed away during the past few days:
Sheldon Klein, of the University of Wisconsin, a computer scientist who

also carried out field work on Kawaiisu for the Survey of California
Indian Languages, and Ross Saunders, of Simon Fraser University, who
published extensively on Bella Coola. Obituary notices will appear in
the October SSILA Newsletter.

226.1 Correspondence
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* Tracking down Horatio Hale's notebooks
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From Victor Golla (golla@ssila.org) 1 August 2005:

Horatio Hale, America's first great anthropological linguist, collected
important data on both Polynesian and American Indian languages during
his four-year stint as "philologist" for the Wilkes Expedition (1838-42).
He published much of his material in the expedition's report (volume 6,
"Ethnography and Philology", 1846), but there is certainly more that
could be learned from his original notes and journals. This is par-
ticularly true of his pioneering field work in the Pacific Northwest
in 1841, where we are unsure even of his itinerary.

These manuscripts have long been unlocatable. It was at one time
believed that they were destroyed in a fire that swept through Hale's
house in Ontario after his death in 1896. Clear evidence has emerged,
however, that they survived to be sold at auction in Philadelphia in
May 1911, together with much of Hale's personal library.

The sale was conducted by Freeman's auction house for the bookseller
Stan. V. Henkels, and the items on auction are listed in Henkels'
catalogue #1033. Among these are (item 570) "Original Manuscript Essay
on the Language of the Oregon Indians, about 100 pp. 8vo, sheep," and
(item 593) "Original Manuscript Note Books, containing his Essays on
the Philology of the Various Countries Visited by the Commodore Wilkes
Expedition. 18 vols. 4to and 12mo. An interesting lot, containing much
material on the Languages of the Natives of the Sandwich Islands, China,
American Indians, &c."

One of us (Krauss) tried to follow this up in 2001, only to learn that
the pertinent Henkels records had recently been destroyed. He was able,
however, to locate an annotated copy of the sale catalogue at the
American Antiquarian Society. In this copy, item 570 is noted as "La.
bya", and "[$]8.00 Kay", and item 593 as "Dalton ua" and "[$]5.00 Jones."
Krauss has tried to track down "Kay" and "Jones," the apparent purchasers,
but with no real success.

The manuscripts are presumably out there somewhere. We would be grateful
for any suggestions or leads, and would be delighted to hear from anyone
who would like to join us in this scholarly detective work. Krauss has
a thick correspondence file he would be willing to share with fellow
sleuths.

                                    --Victor Golla (golla@ssila.org)
                                      Michael Krauss (ffmek@uaf.edu)

* Representing the encounter between English and Native American languages
  ^^^
From Lawrence A. Rosenwald (lrosenwald@wellesley.edu) June 14, 2005:

I've been working for some time on a study of how American literature,
both in English and in other languages, represents language encounters.
One piece of that study (published a while ago in College English) is
an account of how James Fenimore Cooper represents the encounter between
English and Native American languages (and between English and French)
in "Last of the Mohicans." I'm now coming back to that account, thinking
to make a book of what I've written and plan to write on this large
subject, and on reading the Cooper essay I'm vividly aware that what
I'm talking about is how the encounter between English and Native American
languages is understood by speakers of English (not just Cooper, but also
John Heckewelder, Peter DuPonceau, some novelist contemporaries of
Cooper's).

That leads me to wonder whether any Native American works more or less
contemporary with Cooper represent this same linguistic encounter from
the other side.   ("Last of the Mohicans" was published in 1826, but
I'd be happy to go significantly earlier or later than that if there were
works in Native American languages on this subject.)

I'd be most grateful for any references or suggestions!

                                           --Larry Rosenwald
                                           Wellesley College
                                       (lrosenwald@wellesley.edu)

* The use of hyphens in writing American Indian languages
  ^^^
(Replies to the posting by Emmon Bach in Bulletin #225.)

From William Bright (william.bright@colorado.edu) July 20, 2005:

Hyphens have been used in a variety of ways by people attempting to
write Native American languages. Apart from their use to separate
morphemes, hyphens were often used in the 19th century as an indirect
way of conveying vowel quality, following the famous McGuffey readers.
The usage can be summed up as follows: "The vowels a e i o u, when
followed by a consonant, have their English 'short' values, as in pat,
pet, pit, pot, putt. When followed by a hyphen or space, they have
their English 'long' values, as in bait beet bite boat butte."

This principle was often used by Lewis and Clark in their journals
(though not with complete consistency, to be sure). For instance,
referring to a Lower Chinookan group in Washington state, they used
the hyphenated spelling <Wack-ki-a-cum> to represent Cathlamet Chinookan
/wáqayqam/. Here the sequence <ki-> accurately represents the vowel
quality of the Chinookan /qay/. Note that Lewis and Clark's spelling is
mirrored in the modern English spelling of the placename Wahkiakum
County; but without the hyphen, the pronunciation of this name becomes

harder to guess.

The Board on Geographic Names of the US Geological Survey, which
establishes standard spellings of names to be used on topographic maps,
has the policy that no hyphens will be used in names derived from
Indian languages. However, some hyphenated names have slipped past
their vigilance. For instance, Colorado has the placename O-Wi-Yu-Kuts
Plateau (Moffat Co.), from a Ute personal name /uwáayɨkaci/ 'he's not
coming'; here again, use of the hyphen in the spelling <wi-> correctly
reflects Ute /waay/.

My reaction on first seeing such hyphenated spellings, in 19th century
transcriptions of California Indian languages, was the same as Emmon's:
I wanted to take out the hyphens. But since I've been working on
placenames across the US, I've realized that those hyphens may carry
some information; if we delete them, we lose that information. Long
live the humble hyphen!

<div align="right">
--William Bright
Boulder, Colorado
(william.bright@colorado.edu)
</div>

From Carl Masthay (cmasthay@juno.com) July 24, 2005

Nice comment from Emmon Bach in SSILA Bulletin 225. Here is what I wrote
a year and a half ago (23 Jan. 2004):.

I dislike hyphenated or spaced-out Amerindian words because they are
visually difficult to comprehend. They should always be closed up,
especially for the persons adept in the language. However, there is a
much better way: avoid syllabification but hyphenate per root (morphemes),
and then things become quite clear. As below, let us use it as an example
by root forms instead:

(hyph-en-at-ed by root): I do a-gree with you a-bout us-ing the se-par-
at-ion-s of syl-lable-s to help child-ren learn. It is use-ful learn-ing
Engl-ish too. How-ever, it can be just as con-fus-ing when the words
blend to-gether. See how this para-graph looks in Engl-ish when the same
techn-ique is ap-pli-ed.

However, a real problem arises: it destroys suprasegmental intonation
or stress boundaries. That is the reason in English we syllabify
differently from the way Continental languages do. English follows
complicated syllable-splitting rules at the ends of lines, and one must
use a little book of syllabification to help, and the rules have changed
over the years too! Such as "ischemic" is not the former syllabic "is-
che-mic" /iss-KEE-mic/ but the sense-element "isch-e-mic" /isk-EE-mic/
('stop-blood-ic': said of a body part in which the blood is no longer
reaching). So with "children" above, English rules require "chil-dren"
/CHIL-jren/ because "dr" is a phonemic consonant cluster in English but
not "jr" a phonetic consonant cluster, and so one cannot split by the
morphemes (child + plural suffix). This is further reason for closing
up all words as soon as the learner assimilates the new forms.

Many non-Iroquoian Indians (Algonquians, for example) fight for their

syllabification, not realizing that they violate the genius of their
language. It takes a lot of explaining to show how much easier it is
to use morphemic syllabification rather than simple syllabification, but
the person who must do the syllabifying must know the deep structure of
his or her language well enough to split right. It also has to do with
the long, hard transitional road from resistive ignorance to knowledge
of the craft of grammar and syntax and just sounding right in accord
with the intonation over a word and a sentence for flow.

                                              --Carl Masthay
                                          St. Louis, Missouri
                                         (cmasthay@juno.com)

* Those (Welsh and not Algonquian) sheep-shearing numerals again
  ^^
From Harald Prins (prins@ksu.edu) July 23, 2005:

Thanks to Carl Masthay for his follow up on the query from my colleague
Robert Corum, about the enigmatic numbers list. His response intrigued
me, because it answered an old query by New England lawyer and history
buff named Rufus K. Sewall of Wiscasset, Maine.

In a communication made to the Maine Historical Society some time in the
1860s, Sewall has an inquiry "relative to the lost tribe of the Wawenoc
Indians in Maine" and gave the following list of "their 'Numerals,' as
handed down through the agency of a deeply graven tradition." These were
as follows, from 1-20:

                         1. Een
                         2. Teen
                         3. Tother
                         4. Fither
                         5. Pimp
                         6. Een-pimp
                         7. Teen-pimp
                         8. Tother-pimp
                         9. Fither-pimp
                         10. Glee-get
                         11. Een-gleeget
                         12. Teenpgleeget
                         13. Tother-gleeget
                         14. Fither-gleeget
                         15. Bum-fra
                         16. Een-bunfra
                         17. Teen-bunfra
                         18. Tother bum-fra
                         19. Fither-bumfra
                         20. Frith-en-y

This corresponds to what Masthay referred to as the "the so-called
sheep-shearing Welsh numeral sets."

In his inquiry, Sewall asked, "Whence did they come? Did [the Welsh
Prince] Madoc bring them here in his semi-true, semi-fabulous voyage?
Or did the North-men leave them on this coast? Perhaps some readers of
your pages can tell, after reading them as they here [are presented]."

The answer comes far too late for Rufus King Sewall (he died almost 90 years old in 1903).

                                                          --Harald Prins
                                                          (prins@ksu.edu)

From Ives Goddard (Goddard.Ives@NMNH.SI.EDU) July 25, 2005:

J. Hammond Trumbull, of course, discussed Sewall's alleged Wawenoc numbers in the Proceedings of the American Philological Association for 1871 (published 1872), pp. 13-15. Pilling gives additional information in his Algonquian Bibliography, BAE-B 13:495.

They're still out there. In the late 1950's someone sent a set to Vernam Hull, Professor of Celtic Languages at Harvard, who had learned Old Irish from James A. Geary (pronounced Gary, like Mary), who was, of course, also a serious student of Algonquian languages, especially Meskwaki. Hull sent them to Frank Siebert, who confirmed that they were unknown to the Indians of Maine.

                                                          --Ives Goddard
                                                    Smithsonian Institution
                                               (Goddard.Ives@nmnh.si.edu)

* Learning an Indian language in an urban area
  ^^
From Mathew (kituhwa79@yahoo.com) 16 July 2005:

My name is Mat Barkhausen. I live in Denver, Colorado, where I recently graduated with a BA in Interactive Media Design.

I've been interested in languages and linguistics for a long time, but never pursued it seriously. Since my mother's family is Cherokee, I have been especially interested in learning Cherokee. I also became interested in Lakota. But although I have been studying both languages for over ten years, I am nowhere near conversant in either one. I have come to understand that the prospect of "teaching yourself" a language is pretty absurd.

We had a Cherokee speaker come up from Oklahoma for a one-week "crash-course" but most of what he shared with us I was already familiar with. A linguist I know said that native speakers are typically not that good at teaching their language because they've had no linguistic training and don't understand how different it is for someone learning it as a second language. So I thought, "Perhaps I should become a linguist." Yet others whom I spoke to said, "The academic process is too slow. Just move to a community of native speakers and immerse yourself in it." But I am unable to relocate right now to Oklahoma or North Carolina. I can't even begin to tell you how depressing that is.

I recently began working with Donna Langston, in the Ethnic Studies department at the University of Colorado at Denver, who has proposed

that we create an "Indigenous Languages Institute" at UCD (unaware that
an organization already existed with the same name) where one could go
and take classes in an Indigenous language just as you could take in
other languages. You can go to many colleges and universities in the
US and find courses in Korean or German, so why is the same not true
of Lakota, or Navajo, or Ojibwe?

Our attempt to create an Indigenous Languages Institute accessible to
the considerably large urban Indian community of Denver has not quite
worked out as we'd hoped. Locating grant funding for an Indian language
revitalization program that was not based on a reservation has proved
next to impossible. I suppose they assume that because we have moved to
the city we should not continue to be who we are? (As if there weren't
Spanish or Vietnamese speaking communities in many parts of the city!)

I would love to become fluent in an Indigenous language, and to help
others to do so, but I've no idea how to go about it under these
circumstances. If any of you have any advice, feel free to contact me,
and if you that have information about your own efforts to save
indigenous languages that you'd like to share, definitely send it my way.

                                        --Mathew Barkhausen
                           7031 Clayton St., Denver, CO 80229
                                    (kituhwa79@yahoo.com)

226.2 Dictionary Database Template Available as Shareware

From Monica Macaulay (mmacaula@wisc.edu) July 27, 2005:

A group of us at UW-Madison have developed a Menominee dictionary
database template (with funding from NSF) which we would be happy to
share with any interested parties. The database template was designed
for our work on a Menominee dictionary but could be adapted for use
with other languages without too much trouble. It uses Microsoft Access
as the front end and an SQL database as the back end. (Because of the
font required for Menominee, additional work was needed on the backend
to allow our Unicode font to display correctly.)

There are new database programs in other office suite installations,
and we believe you could easily use our template in those programs as
well, if you wish, but some functionality may be lost. We used MS
Access 2002 aka XP.

You would need a database, either locally (for a single user) or on
a server (for multiple users, or to allow use of the database from
multiple locations) in order to adapt it to your own use.

On the server side, any kind of SQL database can handle this type of
interaction; providing there is an ODBC driver for it. We used
PostgreSQL because of its simplicity, security, and in-house knowledge
and support. The database is run off of a server, in our case, to
provide interaction for multiple users over varying distances; however,
a local installation of a database for a single user could easily

accomplish the same feat. In addition to this, if you planned on
running this over an ODBC connection, you would have to work with your
server administrator to allow users to connect over firewall connections
to ODBC ports, to troubleshoot the connections, and to allow access to
the database from specific types of connections for specific users.
We recommend working closely with your server administrator to develop
a secure connection policy.

We would be happy to share this with anyone who's interested but must
stress that we would not be able to provide technical support. There
are still a few issues to be resolved and we are working to fix them,
so it is important to note that this would be distributed *as is* and
that you would need to customize it to fit your needs. We'd be happy
to share improvements we make, and we'd be thrilled to hear about what
changes you might make. Please keep in mind that this would be
distributed as a template for how to use Access with a server database
to create a dictionary, rather than as a program to create one.
Familiarity with MS Access (or a computer consultant who has such
familiarity) would help the end users familiarize themselves with the
template, and make necessary adjustments.

Keeping in mind our no-technical-support caveat, I would be happy to
answer any simple questions (or refer them to our computer consultant).

                                              --Monica Macaulay
             Department of Linguistics, University of Wisconsin-Madison
                                            (mmacaula@wisc.edu)

226.3 After Aramaic and Latin: Mel Gibson's Mayan Film

From Peter Bakker (linpb@hum.au.dk) July 27, 2005:

SSILA Bulletin readers might be interested in this Reuters story (picked
up from The Australian on July 27):

  LOS ANGELES: Actor-director Mel Gibson is well on his way to cornering
  a new niche market in Hollywood -- movies written in ancient languages.

  A year after breaking box-office records with The Passion of the Christ,
  which was shot in Aramaic, Latin and Hebrew, Gibson has struck a deal
  with the Walt Disney Co to release his next picture in a Mayan dialect.

  Gibson is due to begin shooting the film, titled Apocalypto, in Mexico
  in October and is aiming for a northern summer release next year,
  spokesman Alan Nierob said.

  As with The Passion, Gibson will direct and produce the Mayan-language
  film from his own script through his company, Icon Productions, and he
  will not appear in the movie.

  The film's cast will consist of unknown performers native to Mexico,
  Nierob said. The story is described as a "unique adventure" set 500
  years ago.

Entertainment trade paper Daily Variety reported that at least three
studios passed on the film before Disney landed rights to it.

It remains to be seen whether Gibson can repeat his success with a
subtitled film that lacks a built-in religious-based audience or
controversy like the criticism leveled by some Jewish leaders at
The Passion of the Christ.

226.4 Positions Open
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* Postdoctoral field research in S America or New Guinea
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From Alexandra Aikhenvald (A.Aikhenvald@latrobe.edu.au) 21 Jul 2005:

Applications are invited for a two-year Postdoctoral Research Fellowship
in the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology. This is to commence
within six months from the date of offer.

Applicants should have been awarded their doctorate within the last five
years. They should have experience of linguistic fieldwork and will,
ideally, have already completed a grammatical description of some
previously undescribed language (not their native language) in terms
of basic linguistic theory. The University may consider cases in which
the period is in excess of five years due to special circumstances.
Applications will be considered from candidates whose thesis is
currently under examination. Applicants must hold a doctoral degree
or have equivalent qualifications at the date of appointment. La Trobe
graduates should normally have a minimum of two years postdoctoral
research experience at another institution. A Fellowship will not
normally be awarded to an applicant who holds a permanent appointment
within the University.

The successful applicant will work as part of a team with Professor
R.M.W. Dixon, Professor Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald, and other members of
the Research Centre, on a topic relating to languages preferably from
South America or New Guinea (although applicants with primary interest
in another area would be considered). They will undertake extensive
fieldwork and will either (i) produce a comprehensive description of
some previously undescribed language; or (ii) pursue an in-depth study
of a language contact situation. Exceptionally, applicants may suggest
their own research topics, which must fall within the ambit of RCLT's
research profile. Option (ii) will be suitable for someone who already
has good knowledge of one or more of the languages involved in a
suitable contact situation. The choice of project will be made after
discussion between the successful applicant and Professors Dixon and
Aikhenvald.

The Fellowship will be a two-year appointment and is intended to advance
the research activities of the University by bringing to or retaining in
Australia a promising scholar.

Enquiries should be directed initially to the Associate Director of
RCLT, Professor Alexandra Y. Aikhenvald (a.aikhenvald@latrobe.edu.au).

Further information and the application form may be obtained from:

   http://www.latrobe.edu.au/rgso/grants/ltuschemes/index.htm

The application must be received by the Secretary of the RCLT Research
Committee, Mrs May Tan, no later than 23 September 2005. Applicants
should supply the names and addresses of three academic referees; they
should ask each referee to provide a confidential statement, to reach
the RCLT Research Office directly by 23 September 2005. Applicants
should also send in hard copies of their theses and/or dissertations,
and of published work (including papers in press).

Salary range is currently A$50,336 to A$52,184 per annum. Closing
date: 23 September 2005.

La Trobe University is an Equal Opportunity Employer and provides a
smoke-free work environment.

226.5 Websites of Interest
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* Linguistic minorities in Panama
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From Marta De Gerdes (degerdes@uni-lueneburg.de) July 20, 2005:

Sometime ago I let those interested know through the SSILA Bulletin
about the construction of a Kuna Data Base. I have managed to keep
it up for five years with the help of students, colleagues and some
indigenous collaborators, and have managed to expand it.

The project is now called "Documentation Center of the Linguistic
Minorities of Panama", and features a Spanish and German version.
The address is:

            http://www.uni-lueneburg.de/fb3/suk/akpam

The platform is still under construction, so all collaboration is
welcome!

                                          --Marta de Gerdes
                                   (degerdes@uni-lueneburg.de)

226.6 E-Mail Address Updates

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

Altman, Heidi .... haltman@GeorgiaSouthern.edu
Barkhausen, Mat .... kituhwa79@yahoo.com
de Gerdes, Marta Lucía............. degerdes@uni-lueneburg.de
Johnson, Rick .... nihil.est@gmail.com
Webster, Anthony .... awebster@siu.edu

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