

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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242.0 SSILA Business

- * Reminder: Abstracts due September 1

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Members of SSILA are reminded that the deadline for receipt of abstracts for a paper or poster to be presented at the annual winter meeting (Anaheim, January 4-7, 2007) is 9 pm (Pacific Time) Friday, September 1.

Submission should be by e-mail (to [ssila@ssila.org](mailto:ssila@ssila.org)), although paper submissions will be accepted if arrangements are made in advance with the SSILA Secretary ([golla@ssila.org](mailto:golla@ssila.org)). Every effort will be made to acknowledge receipt of abstracts within 24 hours, but the delay may be somewhat longer on the weekend of September 2-3.

The Call for Papers is posted at the SSILA website ([www.ssila.org](http://www.ssila.org)).

\* New host for SSILA website

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The SSILA website is now being hosted by The Linguist List. While it continues to be accessible through our alias ([www.ssila.org](http://www.ssila.org)) the actual web address of the homepage is now:

<http://linguistlist.org/ssila>

If you have set a link to the SSILA site, it will be necessary for you to reset it. Delete your current link and manually direct your browser to the SSILA site, either by typing the address above or by typing the SSILA alias:

<http://www.ssila.org>

Re-link to the page that comes up.

If your browser does not open the SSILA homepage correctly, please contact our web master, Ardis Eschenberg ([ardis@ssila.org](mailto:ardis@ssila.org)), and let her know what browser you use and what problems you have encountered.

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242.1 Correspondence  
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\* Problems with the Ethnologue

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From Hein van der Voort ([hvoort@xs4all.nl](mailto:hvoort@xs4all.nl)) 25 July 2006:

Last year the International Standardization Organization (ISO) decided to adopt the Ethnologue's language codes as the reference standard for the languages of the world, called ISO 639-3. The responsibility for setting up the standard was in fact given to the Summer Institute of Linguistics (SIL) (see SSILA Bulletin #227, 16 August 2005, and SSILA Newsletter, April 2006, p.16). This decision was not discussed with the wider linguistic community.

Why should a missionary organization like SIL be given the control of the universal standard for linguistic reference?

One reason is the fact that SIL has developed the Ethnologue, which is a

highly useful reference tool. The good thing about the Ethnologue is that it represents the most complete survey of the languages of the world that exists today.

However, the Ethnologue is filled with errors, at least as far as South America is concerned. With regard to the 50 languages of the region where I work, the Guaporé region of Bolivia and Brazil, these errors include languages being represented as dialects, dialects represented as languages, languages attributed to the wrong family or stock, living languages declared dead, languages omitted entirely, and countless alternative names applied incorrectly or to more than one language.

SIL has, indeed, set up a procedure to correct and improve the information that forms the basis for the ISO standard. Linguists with documentable knowledge have been invited to submit their corrections on special forms that are to be evaluated for the Americas by an independent committee of SSILA members. This procedure will also improve the quality of the data contained in the Ethnologue. But why is the existing information in the Ethnologue not subjected to the same scrutiny as the corrections that will be submitted to the SSILA committee?

There are alternatives to the Ethnologue, in particular the ideologically neutral UNESCO website in Tokyo for the Red Book of Endangered Languages ([http://www.tooyoo.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/Redbook/SAmerica/SA\\_index.cgi](http://www.tooyoo.l.u-tokyo.ac.jp/Redbook/SAmerica/SA_index.cgi)). Granted, the Red Book's database is still not complete (the important sections on Brazil and North America are not yet activated). But at least the information it does contain is reliable and comprehensive, and it deserves to be developed.

Perhaps another reason SIL was chosen is because the ISO Institute was not aware of any of these issues, since it is not specialized with regard to language and linguistics. They seem to have handed over the controls to the first organization that was pointed out to them. I can't recall any preceding discussion of this ISO decision at all.

The central issue I raise here is an ethical one: should we as scientists collaborate so directly with a proselytizing organization, lending it legitimacy and potentially contributing to its ultimate goal -- that of replacing indigenous cultures with a specific Western one?

--Hein van der Voort  
Radboud Universiteit Nijmegen, The Netherlands  
([hvoort@xs4all.nl](mailto:hvoort@xs4all.nl))

[To be fair, the editorial staff of the Ethnologue has asked for help from the linguistics community in identifying factual errors of any sort that appear in the publication, including misclassifications and outdated information on numbers of speakers and their locations. Updates and suggestions can be sent to [Ethnologue\\_Editor@sil.org](mailto:Ethnologue_Editor@sil.org). --Ed.]

\* Native American songbird?  
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From Robert C. Skorkowsky ([robert\\_skor@hotmail.com](mailto:robert_skor@hotmail.com)) 2 August 2006:



information, etc. Is the item borrowed areally, or does it have cognates in genetically-related languages. If the latter, is a proto-form reconstructable? If possible, could you give a ballpark estimate of when and where the proto-language was spoken? Any data which we use will be properly credited to you, and we will recheck our accuracy with you before submitting for publication.

Because my e-mail program does not reproduce diacritics, I would appreciate it if you could send replies as a Word attachment.

We are not on a fishing expedition (pardon the pun). These are categories which Polynesianists and Americanists (both linguists and archaeologists) are examining critically in the context of eastern Pacific voyaging and possible prehistoric contact. Thanks for any help you can give.

--Kathryn A. Klar  
Celtic Studies Program, UC Berkeley  
([kkestrel@berkeley.edu](mailto:kkestrel@berkeley.edu))

\* Looking backward in Aymara, and Inuktitut...?

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From Louis-Jacques Dorais (Louis-Jacques.Dorais@ant.ulaval.ca)
21 August 2006:

I have read with great interest the text on "Looking backward in Aymara" in the Media Watch section of the latest SSILA Newsletter. The evidence is interesting, though perhaps looking backward at the future is not as uncommon as the text leads us to believe (cf. the last sentence: "[Aymara in Northern Chile] appear to have reoriented their thinking and, *along with the rest of the globe* [my italics], their backs are to the past...").

In eastern Canadian Inuktitut and, quite probably, in Eskaleut languages in general, the root SIVU- means "the front part of something" (cf. SIVUA "its front part" or SIVURAQ "what lies in front of something"). But the same root is also used for expressing anteriority in time (cf. SIVULLIMIK "at first" or SIVULLIVUT "our ancestors; lit. those who came first"). According to context, the word SIVULLIQ can either mean "which is in the forefront" or "which came first", and SIVUNIQ "a part of space which is in front of something" or "a period of time which came before now."

Conversely, the root KINGU- means "the rear part of something" (cf. KINGUA "its rear part"), but it also expresses posteriority in time (cf. KINGULLIMI "afterwards, then" or KINGULLIVUT "our descendants; lit. those who will come later on"). The word KINGULLIQ can either mean "which is in the back" or "which will come afterwards", and KINGUNIQ "a part of space which is behind something" or "a period of time that will come after now."

This seems to mean that, like the Aymara, the Inuit conceptualize the past as being in front of us, while the future is behind. And they are not alone. In Vietnamese, the same morpheme TRUOC can either mean, according to its semantic and/or morphological context, "in front of" or "before in time" (cf. NGAY HOM TRUOC "the day before yesterday; lit. day, yesterday, before/in front"). Similarly, the morpheme SAU can mean "in the back" or

"in the future." A Vietnamese speaker I questioned about such a conceptualization told me it was normal for the past to be in front of us because we are able to see it, while the future -- which we cannot see -- lies behind us.

And thinking about it, such a vision may have been shared at some time by speakers of at least some Indo-European languages. In English, the word BEFORE can either apply to space ("in front of") and to time ("a period of time anterior to now"), while in French, DEVANT ("in front of") is derived from AVANT ("before in time"), the AVANT of something being its fore part. Conversely, in English (but not in French), AFTER means "in a period of time posterior to now [i.e. in the future]", while in nautical terms, the AFT part of a ship is her rear part. And more generally, ANTERIORITY and POSTERIORITY apply to both space and time, "in front/ before" for the former, and "behind/after" for the latter.

So, after all, the Aymara may not be alone in looking backward at the future.

--Louis-Jacques Dorais
Departement d'anthropologie, Universite Laval
Quebec, Canada

242.2 Breaking News

* Workshop in Leipzig assesses Siberian connection of Na-Dene
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From Bernard Comrie ([comrie@eva.mpg.de](mailto:comrie@eva.mpg.de)) 14 August 2006:

On August 7-8, 2006, the Linguistics Department of the Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology in Leipzig hosted a Na-Dene Workshop. The workshop's purpose was to share recent advances in reconstructing the ancient language ancestral to Athabaskan, Eyak, and Tlingit, and further to assess progress in attempting to link it genetically with Haida and with Ket (central Siberia), the last surviving member of the Yeniseic language family. The gathering brought together specialists in the historical development of Athabaskan, Eyak, and Tlingit (Michael Krauss and Jeff Leer, Alaska Native Language Center), Haida (John Enrico, Washington), Yeniseic (Edward Vajda, Western Washington University), as well as comparative linguist Eric Hamp (University of Chicago). Also contributing to the workshop by correspondence but not attending in person were Athabaskanist James Kari (Alaska Native Language Center), Ketologist Heinrich Werner (Bonn, Germany) and Juergen Pinnow (Sylt, Germany), noted scholar of Na-Dene historical linguistics.

In addition to a lively exchange of ideas, the workshop produced three important results. First, Jeff Leer demonstrated that Tlingit and Athabaskan-Eyak reveal many more regular sound correspondences than hitherto understood, beginning to allow for a principled reconstruction of Proto-Athabaskan-Eyak-Tlingit (AET). Second, the consensus of most of those attending was that the issue of Haida's genetic relationship to AET is left open, pending further reconstruction of Proto-AET, with Haida data



arenas. From the Zapatista movements in Mexico, the civil war, peace accords and Rigoberta Menchu's Nobel Prize in Guatemala, to the toppling of presidents in Ecuador and Bolivia and Evo Morales's presidency, organized indigenous communities have become cultural and political references to understanding national and continental possibilities and problems. Such increasing invigoration of indigenous communities has depended, to a large extent, on the conscious revitalization of their native languages, their traditional cultures, and the skillful and widespread use of communications technologies (from sound recordings and video taping to electronic mail and the Internet). This conference will focus on the impact and potential of global technologies of communication on Indigenous languages, cultures and identities in the Americas. We hope that this approach will bring together a variety of participants from diverse disciplines and cultures.

In addition to plenary addresses and individual papers, the Conference will host up to nine roundtables designed to encourage interaction between conference participants working in and outside of academia.

Submissions are invited for papers on original, unpublished research on any area related to the conference topics, including but not limited to the following: Impacts of communications technologies on indigenous languages (linguistics, language pedagogy, e-learning, instructional design), cultures (oral traditions, native knowledge, spirituality, traditional clothing, arts) and identity (political movements, concepts of identity and history).

We will accept proposals for alternative-format presentations.

Presentations may be given in English or Spanish. Translations of the presentations will be made available to conference participants.

Please submit your proposal electronically in Word format by September 30, 2006. Please include the following:

- \* Paper title
- \* Name, affiliation, mailing address, phone and fax numbers, e-mail
- \* 150-200 word abstract

Please submit abstracts as a single email attachment and not in the body of the e-mail to [elowe@ufl.edu](mailto:elowe@ufl.edu)

Acknowledgment of receipt of the abstract will be sent by e-mail as soon as possible. Notice of acceptance or rejection will be sent by October 31, 2006, along with pre-registration materials.

For further information, please contact:

Elizabeth Lowe, Associate Director  
Center for Latin American Studies  
University of Florida  
319 Grinter Hall  
Gainesville, Florida 32605  
[elowe@ufl.edu](mailto:elowe@ufl.edu)  
352-392-0375  
FAX 352-392-7682





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

Please send all applications to:

Ms Siew-Peng Condon  
Research Centre for Linguistic Typology  
La Trobe University  
Victoria 3086  
AUSTRALIA

The application must be received by 29 September 2006. 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 29 September 2006. Applicants should also send in hard copies of their theses and/or dissertations, and of published work (including papers in press).

Salary range: A\$56,077 - 60,194 per annum. Closing date: 29 September 2006. La Trobe University is an Equal Opportunity Employer and provides a smoke-free work environment.

\* Assistant Professor of Linguistics, CSU San Marcos

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From Nersa Niksirat (niksirat@csusm.edu) 17 August 2006:

The Liberal Studies Department at California State University, San Marcos, seeks to hire a full-time, tenure track, Assistant Professor of Linguistics. The department invites applications from linguists with an interdisciplinary perspective and expertise in one of the following areas: phonetics/phonology, bilingualism, or first or second language acquisition. The candidate's research program should involve working within a diasporic language community.

Applicants must have a Ph.D. in Linguistics. They should demonstrate a commitment to excellence in the teacher-scholar model of post-secondary education and be willing to work in an interdisciplinary setting. The successful applicant will collaborate with the other linguists in the department in continued development and supervision of the linguistics offerings of the Liberal Studies Department. The candidate will play a key role in preparing future K-8 teachers by offering core introductory (including English grammar and syntax) and advanced undergraduate courses in linguistics for the Liberal Studies degree; the candidate will also develop and teach new courses for our new Border and Regional Studies major and Linguistics minor degrees.

Deadline for application is October 31, 2006 or until the position is filled. Applicants must submit a letter of interest (which includes discussion of: evidence of teaching success; commitment to interdisciplinary teaching and scholarship; and understanding of engaged scholarship), curriculum vitae, two samples of scholarly work, and three letters of recommendation. Address all correspondence to:

Liberal Studies Linguistics Search Committee
College of Arts and Sciences

Educational Modules: Social Studies/History lesson plans for teachers (grades 4-10). Topics: Ancient Olmec, Maya, Aztec civilizations (available September 2006).

242.7 E-Mail Address Updates

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

Corbett, Terry L. tcorbett@zianet.com
Davis, John gigath@yahoo.com
Garzon, Susan susan.garzon@okstate.edu
Granadillo, Tania tgranadillo@gmail.com
Harley, Heidi harley@email.arizona.edu
Holmes, Ruth Bradley crholmes@cableone.net
Steele, Susan M. ssteele@redshift.com

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

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

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The SSILA Bulletin is distributed electronically to all members of SSILA. Non-members may subscribe free of charge by sending their e-mail address to the editor (golla@ssila.org).

SSILA also publishes a quarterly hard-copy Newsletter that contains book reviews, notices of journal articles and recent dissertations, and other news and commentary. The Newsletter and other publications of the Society are distributed only to members or to institutional subscribers.

SSILA welcomes applications for membership from anyone interested in the scholarly study of the languages of the native peoples of North, Central, and South America. Dues for 2006 are \$16 (US) or \$20 (Canadian) and may be paid in advance for 2007 and 2008 at the 2006 rate. Checks or money orders should be made payable to "SSILA" and sent to: SSILA, P.O. Box 555, Arcata, CA 95518. For further information, visit the SSILA website

<http://www.ssila.org>
