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

*** SSILA BULLETIN ***

An Information Service for SSILA Members

Number 10: November 11, 1994

CONTENTS:

10.1 CORRESPONDENCE
10.2 "LANGUAGE IN THE ANDES"
10.3 T-SHIRT FOR AMERICANISTS
10.4 CENTER FOR ENDANGERED LANGUAGES/LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY
10.5 REVIEW OF "SQUANTO"

10.1 CORRESPONDENCE

From Alex King (aking@virginia.edu) 28 Oct 1994:

I am a graduate student in anthropology and linguistics, and I am
studying the Korn language of the Kamchatka Peninsula (and
related languages) in the Russian Far East. I am trying to meet
other people with an interest in the Koryak language, especially
people doing research on the Koryak closely related
languages and languages to the north. If you are interested in
the native language and culture of the Russian far north, please write or e-mail me.

Alex King
Anthropology Department
University of Virginia
Charlottesville, Virginia 22906

From Fran Karttunen (11a457@utvms.cc.utexas.edu) 5 Nov 1994:

I have compiled a bibliography of studies of the effects of contact on
indigenous languages of Spanish (and hypothetically of Portuguese)
in Latin America. The bibliography is rather rich in studies of
contact with the Andes. I have found absolutely nothing in
print about the effects of Portuguese on any indigenous language.
Also, I am interested in contact studies dealing with
the languages of Amazonia. If anyone knows of anything I have missed,
I would be deeply grateful for references.

On another topic: There's a free review copy of my recent book,
"Endangered Languages, Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors."
(Rutgers, 1994), available from the book review editor (Daniel Seely) of
LINGUIST List; I'm slogging along, and I have sent a few
requests to Rutgers to send a copy to LINGUIST. When they finally did, it languished
over the summer and into the fall because nobody was taking care of book
reviews. It was finally advertised as available, under "History of
linguistics," but it's been nearly two months now and nobody has asked
for it. Surely someone would like a free book! I would certainly like to
be the first of a discussion of it on LINGUIST. Anyone who would like to start
the discussion should contact seely at (eng_see)@unix.mich.edu.

For a summary of the contents of "Endangered Languages, Interpreters, Guides, and Survivors."
see "Recent Publications" in the April 1994 SSILA NEWSLETTER. —R.K.

Frances Karttunen
Linguistics Research Center
University of Texas at Austin
Austin, TX 78713

10.2 "LANGUAGE IN THE ANDES"

From Peter Cole (pcole@strauss.udel.edu):

The Latin American Studies Program and the Department of Linguistics of the University of Delaware are pleased to announce the appearance of "Language in the Andes," edited by Peter Cole, Gabriella Mendelson, and Martin Peretz. The papers in this volume are selected
from those presented at a conference entitled "International Conference on Language and Education in the Andean," which was held
Oct. 28-30, 1993. The papers included are those written by many of the leaders in the field. It includes papers on sociolinguistics (Pedro P. Platt, Uta von Kiechle; Wolfgang Holck, Anna Maria Escobar, Diane Meier);
and on phonology (Raul Aranjuch, Rodolfo Carrion-Palomino, Peter Landerman), and on language teaching (Roger Andersen, Jaime Luis
Daza & Richard Robison).

The volume is No. 4 in the occasional monographs series of the Latin American Studies Program of the University of Delaware. The Program has priced the 400 pp. book at only US $12 for individuals ($20 for Libraries.
10.3 T-SHIRT FOR AMERICANISTS

The graduate students in the Linguistics Department at the University of Kansas are planning to publish a volume on Native American languages and to this end their latest t-shirt venture features (on the front) a multi-color map of the indigenous languages of North America. Shown are: Eskimo-Aleut, Athabaskan, Halkasen, Salish, Klamath-Sahaptin, California Puegian, Algonquian, Siouan/Cadougan, Iroquoian, Caddoan, Muskogean, Hokan, Coahuiltecan, Uto-Aztecan, Otomian-Pame, and Mayan, with other groups and language isolates in white. This map is adapted from one in D'Arcy Dobrasky's "Contemporary American Linguistics: An Introduction." They reference Voegelin and Voegelin's 1977 "Classification and Index of the World's Living Languages," but the classification departs from the Voegelins in several respects.

On the back is the wording: University of Kansas, Linguistics, 1994-95. The shirt is 100% cotton, and is available in sizes Large and Extra Large. It costs $16.00 (including postage and handling), Send check or money order to Linguistics Graduate Student Association, Linguistics, University of Kansas, Lawrence, KS 66045.

10.4 MIT WORKSHOP SERIES ON ENDANGERED LANGUAGES/LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY

From Rob Pensalfini (rpensal@mit.edu) 28 Oct 1994:

Those of you who will be in the Boston area between January 12 and February 2 are warmly invited to attend any or all sessions of a workshop on ENDANGERED LANGUAGES AND LINGUISTIC DIVERSITY. The sessions will be held in Room 39-395, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge, Massachusetts, 1pm-4pm, Thursday Jan 12, 19, 26, and Feb 2, 1995. The sessions will be on the following topics, with session leaders as indicated:

Jan 12, 1-4pm: General Issues in Endangerment and Diversity (including a survey of the state of the world's languages, what does 'endangerment' mean, why is this a problem, what is lost when a language is lost) led by Jonathan Bobaljik & Rob Pensalfini

Jan 19, 1-2:30pm: South America led by Luciana Storto

Jan 26, 1-2:30pm: North America

2:30-4pm: Central America led by Wayne O'Neil & Maya Honda

Feb 2, 1-2:30pm: The Far North led by Jonathan Bobaljik

Feb 2, 2:30-4pm: Ireland led by Andrew Carnie

The sessions on specific areas of the world will focus not only on the situation in these regions and the kinds of projects that have been undertaken, but also on addressing the question 'What works in language maintenance?'

If you have any comments or questions the workshop, please don't hesitate to e-mail the organizers, Rob Pensalfini (rpensal@mit.edu) or Jonathan Bobaljik (jdbobal@mit.edu). They can also be contacted by regular mail c/o Department of Linguistics and Philosophy, MIT 50-213, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, Cambridge MA 02139, USA.

10.5 REVIEW OF "SQUANTO"

From Marie-Lucie Tarpe (mtarpe@trend.lmsdu.ca) 2 Nov 1994:

I wrote this review a little while ago, just after seeing the new film SQUANTO. Readers of the SLLA Bulletin might be interested.

***

I have just seen the premiere of the movie SQUANTO, which took place today a few blocks from where I live, as part of the annual Atlantic Film Festival. I confess that I had never heard of Squanto, but I am told that the screenplay is based (very loosely according to a historian friend) on the true story of an Indian who was taken to England and returned home in time to prevent the Pilgrim Fathers from getting killed or starving and to help them celebrate the first Thanksgiving.

The film was shot entirely in Cape Breton Island in Nova Scotia, where a reconstructed French fortress of Louisbourg provided a reasonable facsimile of 17th-century Plymouth (in England), and a number of Mi'kmag reserve on the reserve of Louisbourg provided a reasonable facsimile. The story begins with the arrival of the Pilgrims in England, and one of the most memorable scenes is the meeting between Squanto and Captain John Smith, played by Anthony Hopkins, who is shown speaking in English. The film is directed by Jean-Jacques Annaud, and the main stars are Michael York, John Lithgow, and Robert Mitchum.

The Mi'kmag language is still spoken by all ages in Eskasoni, and that is the Indian language heard in the film. Squanto had a Patuxet" and his fellow captive, Apinow, a Micmac. I don't know whether these languages are historically correct, but as the real Squanto probably spoke an eastern Algonquian language, the film is not too far off the mark. Jim Augustine from Eskasoni has a short part as a medicine man, for which he was coached by the Mi'kmag-speaking parts. actors were coached by Mi'kmag elder Harold Jedore, also from Eskasoni, and there is a fair amount spoken at the beginning of the film with English subtitles, but much less later: for instance, after Squanto and Apinow have learned English while captive in Plymouth (Apinow, it seems, by listening alone), they speak English to each other on the ship that brings them home.
Not knowing any Mikmaq, I cannot comment on the quality of the actors’ pronunciation, but the English spoken in the film is often definitely anachronistic. I don’t mean that the actors should have spoken 17th-century English, but, for instance, people did not talk about ‘culture’ and ‘values’ in those days, or say ‘you’re fired’, at least not in those words.

I recommend that linguists go see this movie accompanied by school-aged children. It is a Walt Disney production and was appropriately shown in the youth section of the festival. There is a lot of typical Hollywood-style action: spectacular chases and stunts, daring rescues, etc. with the presence of Native American characters providing a few new twists on the well-worn formulas. Of course you always know that the hero is going to triumph in the end. It would be too much to expect subtlety in characterization or development. The British characters are for the most part either villainous buffoons or the epitome of political correctness. Adam Beach as Squanto is strikingly handsome in any costume, but I got tired of looking at a face that only seemed capable of two expressions.

—Halifax (Nova Scotia, Canada) Sept. 26, 1994