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

--- SSILA BULLETIN ---

An Information Service for SSILA Members

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31.0 DEADLINE FOR ABSTRACTS FOR THE SAN FRANCISCO MEETING

SSILA members are reminded that tomorrow (Friday, March 15) is the
announced deadline for receipt by the SSILA Program Committee of abstracts
for the CAIL sessions at the AAA meeting next November. As always, the
Committee will try to accommodate last-minute submissions, but all
materials MUST be in the Committee’s hands by the morning of Friday,
March 15. Abstracts should be sent to: Victor Golla, SSILA Dept. of Ethnic Studies, Humboldt State University, Arcata, CA 95521.
Tel: 707/826-4324. E-mail: gollav@axe.humboldt.edu.

31.1 THE NEW PUBLICATIONS ON LANGUAGE PRESERVATION

* Native Language Communities: A Descriptive Study of Two Community
  Efforts to Preserve Their Native Languages*_  Christine P. Sims. 130 pp.

This field study, carried out for the National Indian Policy Center, reviews
the social, political, and regional background and language experiences of the
San Felipe in New Mexico and the Karuk Tribe in northern California. It
examines the factors contributing to language maintenance and language
loss in these communities and analyzes the approaches each has taken to
language preservation. Topics include: the role of Native literacy,
school-based language programs, community-based maintenance strategies,
and language planning resources. The study concludes with a series of
national policy recommendations.

Available free of charge from: National Indian Policy Center, 2021 K
Street, N.W. Suite 211, Washington, DC 20006 (tel: 202/973-7667; fax:
202/973-7668; e-mail: barnold@w12.circ.gwu.edu)

* Stabilizing Indigenous Languages_*, edited by Gina Cantoni.

The proceedings of two symposia sponsored by the Office of Bilingual
Education and Minority Languages Affairs (OBELMA) at Northern Arizona

Among the contents are:

Linda Rehgner, "Rationale and Needs for Stabilizing Indigenous Languages"
Michael Krauss, "Status of Native American Language Endangerment"
Barbara Burnaby, "Aboriginal Language Maintenance, Development, and
Enhancement"
Dang T. Pham, "OBELMA’s Commitment to Endangered Languages"
James Crawford, "Seven Hypothesis on Language Loss: Causes and Cures"
Joshua Fishman, "What Do You Lose When You Lose Your Language?"
Damian Relph, "Hawaiian Language Means to Me"
Rauaoa Kamanu & William H. Wilson, "Hawaiian Language Programs"
Beverly Hiltunen, Kathy Gross, & Dianne Magoon, "Lower Kuskokwim Bilingual
Programs"
Norbert Francis & Rafael Andrade, "Stories for Language Revitalization
in West Africa"
Betsy Johnson, "Maintaining Languages: What Works and What Doesn’t"
"Selected Resources on Endangered Languages"
"A Model for Promoting Native American Language Preservation and Teaching"
31.2 CALL FOR PAPERS FOR 1996 ATHAPASKAN LANGUAGE CONFERENCE

The 1996 Athapaskan Language Conference will be held on Saturday and Sunday, June 15th and 16th, 1996, at the University of Alberta, in Edmonton, Alberta, Canada. Abstracts for 20-30 minute presentations should be submitted by May 1st, and may be submitted by e-mail, fax, or regular mail. Please indicate with your abstract, in addition to name, address, e-mail address, telephone, and fax numbers, if you require audio-visual support such as an overhead projector, liquid-crystal display, tape recorder, VCR, or monitor, etc.

The registration fee is $15 (CDN or US funds) for students, $20 (CDN or US) for non-students. This fee covers refreshments and light refreshments during the conference. On-campus housing (with common washroom) is available for $44 CDN, double $33.50 CDN (as well as suite-style accommodations at a residential hotel adjacent to campus (single room $35; these rooms also feature pull-out sofa-beds in the living room). These accommodations must be confirmed by May 15.

For further information about the conference or to submit an abstract, please contact: Solly Rice, Dept. of Linguistics, University of Alberta, 4-60 Annette Hall, Edmonton, Alberta T6G 2E8, CANADA; tel: 403/492-0809; fax: 403/492-0800; e-mail: rice@nova.ling.ualberta.ca.

31.3 SUMMER CD-ROM WORKSHOP ORGANIZED AT U OF IOWA

Brenda Farrell (bfarrell@blue.wieg.uiowa.edu) tells us that she has had a very positive response to her proposal for a summer workshop on the creation of CD-ROMs for Native American linguistic materials. She sends the following update:

The first CD-ROM workshop for American Indian Languages will be held at the University of Iowa this summer from June 17th through July 12th. The workshop will focus on the development of CD-ROM materials in the following languages:

- Cayuga (Six Nations, Ontario)
- Swampy Cree (Manitoba)
- Chipewa (Duluth, Wisconsin)
- Assiniboine (Montana)
- Yuchi (Oklahoma)
- Pomo (California)
- Lebwa Mono (California)
- Garifuna (Belize)
- and Xavante (Brazil)

Participants in each team will work closely with specialists in graphic design, multimedia technology, and CD-ROM production from the U of Iowa’s “Second Look Computing” to focus on the needs of their own project. Some projects are oriented towards archiving and disseminating language materials in a user-friendly format, while others will produce curriculum materials for language maintenance programs in schools and tribal colleges.

The response from Native American communities has been extremely enthusiastic—not to mention enquiries from as far away as Aboriginal Australia. Students from the U of Iowa’s Native American Studies Program and members of the Meskwaki Community will help us make our guests feel welcome.

SSILA members are invited to drop in and see what is going on if they are in the Iowa City area this summer.

31.4 PRELIMINARY PROGRAM FOR MANITOBA SYNTAX WORKSHOP

A Workshop on STRUCTURE AND CONSTITUENCY IN NATIVE AMERICAN LANGUAGES will be held at the University of Manitoba, March 29th - 31st, 1996. The following papers are on the preliminary program:

FRIDAY, MARCH 29
10:00 Filomena Sandalo (U of Pittsburgh & Carnegie-Mellon U), "Category interactions and phrase structure in Naskapi"
10:40 Kevin Ruggell (U of Manitoba), "What's with all these long words anyway?"
11:35 Liliana Sanchez (CSU, Long Beach), "Why does Southern Quechua agree in person nominally?"
12:15 Elganon R. Blain (U of British Columbia), "Restrictive complementizer ka- in Plains Cree"
2:40 Leslie Saxon (U of Victoria), "Reflections of Syntax in the Athapaskan Verb"

SATURDAY, MARCH 30
10:00 Sherry Allen & Heike Schroeder (MPI for Psycholinguistics), "Discourse effects on argument representation in early Inuktitut"
10:40 Alana Johns (Memorial U), "The Decline of Ergativity in Inuktitut"
11:35 Martha McGinnis (MIT), "Is there syntactic inversion?"
12:15 Michelle Long (U of Manitoba), "Obviation and clausal relations"
2:15 Charlotte Keenhoft (U of Manitoba), "Real vs. look-ALike determiner movement in Swampy Cree"
3:10 Jorge Camacho & Liliana Sanchez (USC & CSU, Long Beach), "Conjunction in Southern Quechua"
4:05 Rose-Marie Dechaine (UCB), "What Algonquian morphology really lick? Hockett revisited"

SUNDAY, MARCH 31
10:00 Roundtable: Current trends in Native American Linguistics

For further details contact the workshop organizer, Charlotte Reinholz, at reinfrc@b.ccc.unmanitoba.ca.

31.5 J. P. HARRINGTON SESSION AT CALIFORNIA ARCHAEOLOGY MEETING

The 1996 Annual Meeting of the Society for California Archaeology, to be held in Bakersfield, California, April 4-6, will feature a symposium on Thursday, April 4, on JOHN PEABODY HARRINGTON: REEL TO REAL.

Organized by Lynne F. Christenson and Cindy T. Stankowski (San Diego State U), the papers in this symposium will focus on the archaeological and material-culural relevance of the work of one of the greatest field workers in the history of American Indian linguistics. Presentations will include:
March 9, 1996

Senate backers of the "Language of Government Act" (S.356), hoping to make the proposal more palatable to their colleagues, plan to exempt "the use of indigenous or foreign languages in education" from the bill's English-only mandate. Sen. Ted Stevens (Alaska), chairman of the Senate Governmental Affairs Committee, endorsed this "clarifying amendment" at a March 7 hearing on S.356.

As currently drafted, the legislation requires that English be used by all employees and officials of the Government of the United States while performing official business. Exceptions are allowed only for purposes of "measuring language proficiency, international trade and diplomacy, public health, protection of the rights of victims of crimes or criminal defendants, and performing certain functions of art ... from languages other than English."

The amendment, which is supported by some Democrats otherwise skeptical of S.356, would shield programs funded under the Bilingual Education Act and the American Indian Languages Act from the bill's restrictions. It would do nothing, however, to safeguard other rights and services now available to limited-English speakers, including bilingual voting.

A broad coalition of educators, civil libertarians, and minority rights advocates have said that S.356 cannot be fixed to eliminate its ethnically divisive and discriminatory impact. But a few Native American groups have campaigned merely to exempt indigenous languages from the English-only policy.

Sen. Stevens attempted to exploit this division at the March 7 hearing, the first opportunity for opponents of S.356 to be heard. (At an earlier hearing, only supporters were allowed to testify.) Five Native American witnesses -- all but one selected by Stevens -- detailed their concerns about the bill's threat to their languages, many of which are already endangered.

Stevens asked Iliodor Philomenof, an Alaska Native linguist, whether "the Aleut people would still oppose the bill if the amendment were accepted." Philomenof called the exception for language education "an improvement" and said, "I'm not sure they would really oppose the bill now."

Speaking personally, however, he added, "I would still have some problems with it."

None of the other Native American witnesses commented on whether the amendment resolved their objections. John Chase, executive director of the National Congress of American Indians, objected to a provision of S.356 that would protect only English speakers from language-based discrimination. "It would be equally wrong to deny government services to Native Americans on that basis," he said, making no mention of other minority language speakers.

Leonard Chee of the Navajo Tribal Council, which has voted to oppose any version of English-only legislation, cited a range of adverse effects for Navajos who speak little English, including the denial of services at Social Security offices.

Kauanoe Kamana, president of the 'Aha Punana Leo immersion schools in Hawaii, proposed amendments to S.356 that would enhance federal support for indigenous language education and give Native American programs priority in funding ahead of programs for immigrant language groups. "(Current) programs under the Bilingual Education Act focus on program quality, with no set-asides for any language group. Under the 1988 version of the law, priority is given to funding schools that stress proficiency in two languages and to serving diverse populations of limited-English-proficient students."

Stevens has been solicitous of indigenous language advocates, first, because of strong feelings among his Alaska Native constituents, and second, because the support of at least some Native American groups could ensure passage of the measure in Congress. The vote on the Language of Government Act is expected to be especially close in the Senate.

Apparently sensing that the time is not yet ripe to move the legislation, Stevens has decided to postpone committee action on S.356 from March 28 until sometime in June, according to staff sources.

Several Democratic members of Congress testified against the bill on March 7. Sen. Daniel P. Moynihan (N.Y.) criticized it as a "not very subtle symbolic attack on Hispanic and Asian Americans. It's very interesting to me how frequently the people who say let's make English the official language are the very people who oppose appropriations for the education of non-English speakers."

Rep. Joe Bingham (N.M.) characterized the English-only mandate as an attempt "to label one language and culture superior to others" that is profoundly offensive to the multicultural citizens of his state.

Rep. Patsy Mink (Hawaii) said the legislation would impede her efforts
to conduct official business as a member of Congress, which require her
to communicate with constituents who speak numerous languages.

Rep. Nydia Velasquez (N.Y.) argued that the bill would legitimize dis-
advantage of America’s most vulnerable populations, including mi-
nority language speakers while doing nothing to help anyone learn English,
citing the long waiting lists for adult English classes in her district.

Del. Robert Underwood (Guam) noted the irony of a bill that purports to
foster national unity but is having precisely the opposite effect: "The
implication is that citizens who speak another language, as I do, are
somehow creating fault lines in the American body politic. There is no
problem with the use of English today in the American civic and economic
and political life, immigrants recognize the need to learn English and
they are learning it faster than ever before." He continued:

No one questions the fact that the Potomac is the largest river
flowing through Washington, D.C. How absurd it would be to
propose legislation declaring the Potomac to be the only
official river. Clearly, the intent of such legislation would
be for no other purpose than to belittle other rivers. Rather
than resolving any particular problem in government, mandating
English as our official language is to communicate a negative
and divisive message about people who can speak other languages.

Juan Perea, a law professor at the University of Florida, warned that a
section of S.356 would create "great mischief" by giving "any person
standing to sue any government official for speaking a language other
than English. He added that, like an Arizona English-only measure ruled
unconstitutional in federal court, the bill would violate the First
Amendment by creating a chilling effect on federal employees who need
to speak other languages" on the job.

Karen Harasak, executive director of the National Asian Pacific American
Legal Consortium, outlined in detail the potential impact of S.356 on
minority rights, public services, due process, law enforcement, and
governmental policies. When she finished, Stevens said: "I don't have
time to argue with you, but I disagree with many of your assertions."

At times the chairman appeared defensive and uncertain about the bill's
implications. No other Republican attended the hearing and Sen. Richard
Shelby (Ala.), the chief sponsor of S.356, did not appear as scheduled
to question witnesses. Sen. Stevens repeatedly invoked the views of his
late friend and colleague, Sen. S. L. Hayakawa (Calif.), who sponsored
the first constitutional amendment before his retirement in 1983.

At one point Stevens argued that S.356 is needed to prevent "a Quebec-
type situation" from occurring in the United States. At another he
charged that in California there are several schools that teach only
in a foreign language at taxpayers' expense and "there's no act to
 prohibit that.

Later he insisted: "I do not think [a federal official] can force a non-
foreign-language-speaking citizen to deal in another language in an
official capacity. That's what this bill is dealing with. Sen. Shelby
can explain it further — it's not my bill."

---Jim Crawford
(73261.1120@compuserve.com)

31.7 QUECHA WEB SITE

Russ Gibbons (gibbons@best.com) is creating a web site for Quechua,
including poems, songs, stories and eventually an on-line dictionary.
If you would like to see what is already there, or submit something to
post, please check:  http://www.best.com/~gibbons/

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