

Preface *Revitalizing Older Linguistic Documentation: Proceedings of the Vth International Meeting*

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The present issue of *Linguistics in Amsterdam* is a result of the ‘Vth International Meeting of the research group *Revitalizing Older Linguistic Documentation* (ROLD)’, organized by Otto Zwartjes and held on June 13th, 2013, in Amsterdam.¹ This research group is part of the *Amsterdam Center for Language and Communication* (ACLC), a research institute of the University of Amsterdam. ROLD aims at the edition and study of historical linguistic documents, with a special focus on works written by Christian missionaries. Many interesting talks about different languages from different parts of the world (Egypt, Mesoamerica, the Philippines, South America, Turkey, and the Virgin Islands, among others) were presented at the Vth International Meeting.

This issue of *Linguistics in Amsterdam* contains a selection of the papers presented at the ROLD meeting. They give a good impression of the wide variety of documents, languages, and subjects presented at the meeting. The historical linguistic documents discussed in the papers date from the 16th–20th century, and the languages treated in this volume are Dutch Creole or Negerhollands (Van Sluijs), Ilocana (Fernández Rodríguez), Nahuatl (Máynez), and Venezuelan languages (Sarion). The information about these languages is mainly derived from missionary language descriptions. One article does not deal with a missionary language description, but, interestingly, with three handbooks for linguistic fieldwork from the colonial era (Schuster).

¹ Earlier meetings were held in 2006, 2007, 2008, and 2011 (the latter combined with the workshop of the ‘Americanists in the Netherlands’). The proceedings of the 2011 meeting have been published in *STUF: Sprachtypologie und Universalienforschung* (= *Language Typology and Universals*) 66,3 (2013) and 67,2 (2014).

The present issue of *Linguistics in Amsterdam* contains the following articles:

- Fernández Rodríguez, Rebeca. ‘The description of Ilokano in the 17th century’.

Fernández Rodríguez’ paper deals with a colonial grammar, or *arte*, of the Ilocana language. Ilocana belongs to the Austronesian language family and is spoken in the Philippines. The grammar, titled *Arte de la lengua ilocana*, was written in 1627 by Francisco López, an Augustinian monk. Besides presenting a biography of Francisco López and his sources, Fernández Rodríguez also discusses what the Augustinian says about the orthography used for the representation of some difficult sounds. Fernández Rodríguez furthermore explains the way Francisco López describes the grammar of the Philippine language, especially its phonology and morphosyntax. The great amount of schedules and examples contained in the grammar made the study of the language easier. López’ *arte* thus appeared to be very innovative and remained a must for everyone who had to or wanted to learn the Philippine language for more than two centuries.

- Máynez, Pilar. ‘Sobre la edición crítica y bilingüe de un texto sagrado en lingua Mexicana (Siglo XVI)’.

In this article, Máynez reports on a supposedly lost codex, found by chance in the Biblioteca Nacional de México, and of the difficulties researchers are faced with when making a diplomatic edition of an old manuscript. The codex dates from the 16th century and contains different texts that have not been published yet. One of these texts, the subject of Máynez’ paper, is a sacred text called *La Historia de la Pasión de Nuestro Señor Jesucristo en lengua Mexicana* ‘The history of the passion of Our Lord Jesus Christ in the Mexican language’. The so-called Mexican language is Nahuatl, the language of the Aztec. The Nahuatl text has been translated into Spanish by Máynez in the critical edition of the history. In addition to explaining the difficulties encountered when writing a critical edition, Máynez analyses the Nahuatl text and gives an interesting clarification of some of the linguistic and stylistic particularities of the narrative.

- Sarion, Roxana. ‘The missionary linguistic works in the Province of New Andalusia: A comparative study of three *artes* from the 17th century’.

Sarion compares three missionary grammars: *Arte y vocabulario de la lengua de los indios Chaimas* [...], written by Francisco de Tauste (1680), *Principios y reglas de la lengua cumanagota*, by Manuel Yangües (1683), and Matías Ruiz

Blanco's *Reglas para la inteligencia de la lengua de los indios* (1690). The languages treated in the grammars belong to the Cariban language family and were spoken in the north-eastern part of Venezuela. After a section about the history of the region (called the Province of New Andalusia in those days), Sarion describes the Cariban language family, the efforts of the missionaries at standardizing the linguistic phenomena encountered in these languages, and their sources. The paper also contains a section on the biographical data of the three missionaries, followed by a chapter in which Sarion compares their works. The comparison includes the way verbs, nouns, phonology (Tauste) and morphology are treated, and the distribution of linguistic contents: grammar, vocabulary entries, and religious texts. Sarion argues that the "pioneering linguistic works" of the missionaries are worth studying, because they represent an important "source of linguistic knowledge" and play a fundamental "role in the development of the historiography of linguistics".

- Schuster, Susanne. 'Aspects of linguistic fieldwork in the German colonial era'.

Schuster analyses three handbooks (one in English, two in German) instructing how languages, spoken in the colonies, should be recorded. The manuals were written for those who were sent to these colonies with the objective of documenting the local languages. They date from the second half of the 19th century. On the basis of a comparison between the three manuals, Schuster shows the development in the methodology of language description. The paper offers an instructive overview of the ways a colonial language should be described and of the subjects to be discussed in the description. Schuster's comparison also brings to light how these views altered in the course of time, how the opinion about indigenous languages – and, connected with this, about the indigenous peoples and their culture – changed, and how a (narrow) Eurocentric vision gradually broadened its horizon, or, in her own words "how the ideologically tinged language documentations resulted in outcomes, which considerably shaped the common thinking about these languages". In her conclusion, Schuster indicates that the study of colonial and postcolonial works needs further expansion, and that the Creative Unit 'Koloniallinguistik – Language in Colonial Contexts' at the University of Bremen is aiming at building up a corpus of relevant texts.

- Van Sluijs, Robbert. ‘Change or variation in historical data: A case study of the Virgin Islands Dutch Creole imperfective and prospective aspect marker’.

Van Sluijs’ research, as presented in this paper, is twofold. Van Sluijs not only focuses on the occurrence and the function of the words *le*, *lo*, and the double *lo lo*, encountered in the Dutch Creole texts dating from the 18th–20th century, but also tries to find out whether the occurrence of *le* > *lo* > *lo lo* indicates a language variation or language change. The Dutch Creole language was spoken on the Caribbean islands, nowadays known as the US Virgin Islands. At the beginning of his paper, Van Sluijs discusses the history of the islands, elucidates the sources of the Dutch Creole texts, and clarifies the Dutch Creole varieties. On the basis of a thorough analysis of the available texts, Van Sluijs makes a distinction between imperfective, progressive and prospective aspect, showing that *le* and *lo* are imperfective aspect markers, that *lo* also functions as a progressive and a prospective marker, and that *lo lo* expresses prospectivity. These findings are circumstantiated by other researches about imperfective, progressive, and prospective aspect. Van Sluijs concludes that, due to the lack of data, one cannot say with certainty whether the successive and/or simultaneous occurrence of the forms *le*, *lo*, and *lo lo* indicates language change or language variation. However, he makes a reasonable cause for the argument that in a number of cases change or variation are involved. Van Sluijs’ findings are worthwhile and his assumptions deserve a further, in-depth study.

Amsterdam, December 2014

The guest editors