

Revitalising Older Linguistic Documentation (ROLD)

Coordinator : Otto Zwartjes

The members of the group investigate older texts (colonial, postcolonial, missionary and non-missionary, word lists of travelers and historians) with the following objectives: historical linguistics, the history of linguistics, linguistic documentation, translation studies and sociocultural analysis. The aim of historical linguistics is to describe older stages of languages as well as (processes of) language change, while the history of linguistics studies early thinking on languages, linguistics typologies and structures and linguistics. Linguistic documentation is a crucial part of both branches. These studies are often interrelated with those of the cultural context in which colonial societies developed. Non-Western languages are our main focus.

Missionary Linguistics

The members who work on missionary linguistics focus on the European expansion, colonisation and Christianisation after the discovery of the New World, which was accompanied by the study and recording of the native languages of the Americas. In the same period, Christian missionary activities culminated in Asia. Almost without exception, grammars, dictionaries and doctrinal texts in the indigenous languages were composed by missionaries for missionaries. The results of recent research demonstrate that many missionaries, if not most, had an excellent command of these 'exotic' languages and often focused on the idiosyncratic features of the native languages; they also approached the challenge of comprehending indigenous cultures through their languages. The work of these missionaries was hardly known in the Old World and, until today, many works have never been studied nor analysed in a satisfactory way. Other members work on non-missionary texts with the same objective, such as the pre-modern description of colloquial Arabic as it was spoken in Egypt and the disclosure of linguistic and ethnographic documentation in the Americas and the Philippines and networks of transcontinental information in the 18th century. Areas of interest:

- ♣ Historiography of Linguistics
- ♣ Historiography of Missionary Linguistics (Phonology, Morphosyntax, Lexicography, Pragmatics)
- ♣ Sociohistorical and Historical Anthropological Linguistics
- ♣ Linguistics of Ethnohistory
- ♣ Colonial, Postcolonial and Pre-modern Linguistics
- ♣ Linguistic Documentation
- ♣ Descriptive Linguistics
- ♣ Sociolinguistics
- ♣ Typology
- ♣ Translation Studies

- ♣ Lexicology, Lexicography and Semantics
- ♣ Early-modern documentation of linguistic variation and change.

Workshop and conferences

The ROLD group organised six annual meetings on older linguistic documentation at the UvA since 2006. Workshops in the future will be organised at the two universities UvA and Université de Paris. The first five International Conferences on Missionary Linguistics were organised each year, starting in 2003. After the fifth, the conferences are held every other year.

The 1st, 4th, 7th and 10th in Europe : (Oslo, Valladolid, Bremen and Rome)

The 2nd, 5th, and 8th in the Americas: (São Paulo, Mérida (Yucatán), Lima).

The 3rd, 6th, and 8th in Asia: (Hong Kong/Macau, Tokyo, Manila)

The next conference (the 11th International Conference on Missionary Linguistics) will be organised in Argentine (Santa Rosa, la Pampa) (March 2020):

<https://linguisticamisionera2020.wordpress.com/>

Published books, derived from these conferences:

Missionary Linguistics: 5 volumes published by John Benjamins, 1 volume as special issue of the review *Historiographia Linguistica*. and recently, the volume of selected papers of the 8th Conference in Lima (Fondo editorial).

ROLD publications: (derived from the ROLD meetings: Two volumes as special issues of the review *Language Typology and Universals/ Sprachtypologie und Universalienforschung* (Berlin: De Gruyter / Mouton), one special issue of the review *Linguistics in Amsterdam* and a forthcoming volume will be published in the BSLC series edited by Aikhenvald & Dixon (Brill Academic Publishers).

Dissertations:

<http://htl.linguist.univ-paris-diderot.fr/laboratoire/membres/zwartjes/12>