

SOME RECENT BOOKS ON AMERINDIAN LANGUAGES

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- CANTARES MEXICANOS: SONGS OF THE AZTECS.* Translated from the Nahuatl by JOHN BIERHORST. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press, 1985. Pp. 559. \$48.50.)
- A NAHUATL-ENGLISH DICTIONARY AND CONCORDANCE TO THE CANTARES MEXICANOS WITH AN ANALYTIC TRANSCRIPTION AND GRAMMATICAL NOTES.* By JOHN BIERHORST. (Stanford, Calif.: Stanford University Press. Pp. 751. \$69.50.)
- THE PIPIL LANGUAGE OF EL SALVADOR.* By LYLE CAMPBELL. (Berlin: Mouton, 1985. Pp. 957.)
- A GRAMMAR OF MAM, A MAYAN LANGUAGE.* By NORA C. ENGLAND. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983. Pp. 353. \$25.00.)
- THE AYMARA LANGUAGE IN ITS SOCIAL AND CULTURAL CONTEXT: A COLLECTION OF ESSAYS ON ASPECTS OF AYMARA LANGUAGE AND CULTURE.* Edited by M. J. HARDMAN. (Gainesville: University Presses of Florida, 1981. Pp. 317. \$25.00.)
- AN ANALYTICAL DICTIONARY OF NAHUATL.* By FRANCES KARTTUNEN. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983. Pp. 349. \$35.00.)
- SOUTH AMERICAN INDIAN LANGUAGES: RETROSPECT AND PROSPECT.* Edited by HARRIET E. MANELIS KLEIN and LOUISA R. STARK. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1986. Pp. 863. \$32.50.)
- KUNA WAYS OF SPEAKING: AN ETHNOGRAPHIC PERSPECTIVE.* By JOEL SHERZER. (Austin: University of Texas Press, 1983. Pp. 260. \$22.50.)

The eight books under review represent important recent studies of languages in Latin America on a wide range of topics. This review will discuss the works in the context of current advances in describing Amerindian languages, their genetic classification, and various sociolinguistic aspects. The last category includes basic information on linguistic situations as well as particular uses of certain languages, whether for curing, as part of religious customs, or in oral and written aesthetic manifestations.

Description and Classification

Nora England's *A Grammar of Mam, A Mayan Language* thoroughly analyzes Mam, which had previously been treated only in a few grammatical sketches and in a grammar of a Northern dialect based on the Hjemselev model (Canger 1969). England states that the dialect she describes, that of the town of San Ildefonso Ixtahuacán in the department of Huehuetenango, Guatemala, diverges significantly from the dialect previously presented by Canger.

The inventory of phonemes is quite large: twenty-seven consonants (excluding b, d, g from Spanish) and ten vowels (which differentiate length). As is true of other Mayan languages, Mam's most interesting feature is the fact that glottalization is implosive with the bilabial and uvular stops while it is ejective in the six other positions. The transcription followed throughout the book is a practical orthography devised by Terrence Kaufman (1976). Morphophonemic processes are treated in a separate chapter.

England's introduction states that she organized her book from sounds to morphemes to phrases to sentences in order to "present material in a fashion such that the necessary information for understanding an issue under discussion [had] already been given in a previous section" (p. 21). Thus her straightforward description advances from the simple to the complex, moving from roots and words to stems, phrases, and sentences. Mam's most interesting grammatical feature is ergativity, meaning that two sets of person markers exist: set A is ergative and indicates an agent of a transitive verb and the possessor of nouns; set B indicates the object of a transitive verb or the subject of an intransitive verb or of a nonverbal predicate. Ergative systems, with some variations, are common in Mayan languages. Ergativity has also been discussed in several theoretical and typological studies (see Silverstein 1976; Dixon 1979; Anderson 1985).

Whereas Mam is spoken by more than three hundred thousand speakers, and the variety England describes by some twelve thousand, Pipil, the Nahua language of El Salvador described by Lyle Campbell, is spoken by only an estimated two hundred speakers. All of them are elderly people who are fearful of using their language due to an Indian massacre in 1932 and a decree that Indian languages could no longer be spoken (p. 2). These circumstances dictated the approach taken by Campbell in *The Pipil Language of El Salvador*, which is in some senses more cautious and less confident than that of England. Campbell could not go back and check his data with many alert speakers and instead had to interpret the data he had gathered during several visits between 1970 and 1976. One has the impression that his data may be restated in the future but that little more can be added to the corpus, whereas

future generations of linguists can argue about minute details of England's interpretation of Mam.

The Pipil Language of El Salvador includes chapters on the classification of the language, ethnohistory, and internal variation and on phonology, grammatical categories and morphology, and syntax. It features a Pipil-Spanish-English dictionary, a Spanish-Pipil dictionary, six texts with identification and translation done morpheme by morpheme followed by a free translation, two appendices on Pipil and other varieties of Nahuatl spoken in Guatemala, and a bibliography.

Campbell's thorough treatment of morphophonemic rules reflects his previous experience in reconstructing proto-Nahuatl (Campbell and Langacker 1978) and sheds light on similar processes occurring in other varieties of Nahuatl. His treatment of verb morphology and classes is far superior to that found in other Pipil grammars.

The least marked, most common word order is verb-subject for intransitive sentences (for example, "Died the deer," rather than "The deer died"). For transitive sentences, the usual word order is verb-object-subject ("Killed the cow the man," rather than "The man killed the cow"). The influence of Spanish on Pipil syntax has not affected word order, but it is salient in comparatives, coordination, relatives with *ke*, clauses with *porké*, and so on. Such effects are common in Latin American Indian languages today. More interesting is a series of features typical of Pipil and other southern varieties. For more specific examples, see Lastra de Suárez (1986).

Campbell considers Pipil a distinct language, more similar to other Nahuatl varieties than to Pochutec. He discusses various classifications, ethnohistory, and Pipil's relation to other varieties. I agree with his preference for the interpretation of colonial sources according to Jiménez Moreno (1966) rather than Lehmann (1920). According to this view, the Pipil migrated to Central America circa 800 A.D. They originated around Cholula, Puebla, and escaped from the tyranny of the Olmecs. They subsequently traveled south to Veracruz and later to what is now Soconusco, Chiapas, passing through several places and leaving colonies in Guatemala, El Salvador, Nicaragua, and on as far as Costa Rica and Panama (pp. 9, 11–12).

Campbell admits that relationships must exist between Pipil, the Gulf region, and the Sierra de Puebla (p. 13). He nevertheless considers Pipil to be a separate language because of several major linguistic differences, which he discusses in detail. The topic of the subdivision of Nahuatl varieties could take far more space than can be devoted to it here. Although a highly specialized subject, it bears significantly on the interpretation of colonial sources and on ethnohistory. Canger (1980) considers her classification tentative, and I have posited a different (also tentative) typological classification (Lastra de Suárez 1986). Camp-

bell's arguments for a separate Pipil language can also be considered as arguments for setting up a subdivision within the Eastern peripheral dialects.

The works under review include two dictionaries. Frances Karttunen's *Analytical Dictionary of Nahuatl* was prepared to provide information about vowel length and glottal stops in individual words as well as English glosses. This useful reference tool goes beyond the author's modest claims in the introduction because of its grammatical data and because its consistent alphabetical arrangement is much easier to use than Molina's *Vocabulario* (1571) or Siméon's *Dictionnaire* (1885). The orthography used is close to that of Andrews (1975), which offers an excellent compromise between phonemics and traditional orthography. This compromise orthography can be handled by nonlinguist translators and satisfies linguists as well because the phonemes are all represented fairly unambiguously. This same orthography is used by John Bierhorst in his dictionary, although somewhat reluctantly (see below). Karttunen's sources are primarily the examples in Carochi's grammar (1645), the modern Tetelcingo dictionary (Brewer and Brewer 1971), the Huehuetlatolli manuscript in the Bancroft Library, a dictionary of modern Zacapoaxtla Nahuatl (Key and Key 1953), and secondarily, Clavigero's *Reglas*, Paredes's Nahuatl sermons, and Ramírez and Dakin (1979).

The Carochi examples had already been compiled in a useful mimeographed work by Adrian, Canger et al. (1976), but Karttunen chose not to base her work on it because she wanted to work directly with the 1645 edition and not with the nineteenth-century reprinting that was available to Canger and her students. Bierhorst, who treats the question of orthography rather extensively in his *Cantares* and in the *Dictionary*, objects to Karttunen's mixture of old and modern sources, preferring to use Adrian and Canger's list instead. Karttunen's work is a careful comparative lexicographic treatment of length and glottal catch, phonological contrasts long neglected by Nahuatl specialists.

Bierhorst's *Nahuatl-English Dictionary* also includes grammatical notes and is based on a concordance of the *Cantares*. He decided to publish it because it adds to Molina and Siméon rare words, nonce words, extended usage of familiar words, figurative meanings, unfamiliar derivatives, and loanwords. Some of the rare words and the figurative meanings are also found in Fray Bernardino de Sahagún's *Historia general de las cosas de Nueva España*. It will be useful in the field of poetry and as a source for a future complete dictionary of classical Nahuatl.

The descriptive works include one book on South American Indian Languages and one on Aymara. It is not really fair to call either one "descriptive" because they are not phonologies or grammars but rather guides to the descriptive literatures of many languages. Harriet

Klein's and Louisa Stark's *South American Indian Languages* divides them into languages of Lowland South America, the Andes, and the Southern Cone. The editors explain that the work is intended to complement Campbell and Mithun (1979) on Canada, North America, and Mexico as well as Suárez (1983) on Mesoamerica. These three books together provide a general picture of Amerindian languages, but gaps remain in the overall picture. Still needed is a summary of recent research on the language families south of the U.S. border and north of Mesoamerica to round out the brief treatment in Campbell (1979). Also needed is updated coverage of Central America to take up where Campbell left off. One recent Costa Rican publication that will help is Margery and Constenla's *Estudios de lingüística chibcha* (1984).

Klein and Stark admit in the introduction that many languages of Colombia, Bolivia, the Guyanas, and parts of Brazil as well as entire families (such as Chibcha) were given scant attention in their book, but they do not explain why they left out Guaraní entirely. A good reference to make up for this omission is the recent Corvalán and Granda volume (1982) on bilingualism in Paraguay. Other references that round out the picture are Kaufman's small work on Mesoamerican Indian languages (1974), his volume on Guatemalan languages (1973), Sebeok (1977), and Pottier (1983).

Klein and Stark's compilation consists of papers presented at the 1977 and 1978 meetings of the American Anthropological Association, along with more recent articles. The collection emphasizes literature published after O'Leary's bibliography (1963). Although space does not permit discussing each article, perhaps the most enlightening in Part I are Ernest Migliazza on the Orinoco-Amazon region, Marshall Durbin on Carib, and Aryón Rodrigues on the relationship between Tupí and Carib stocks. The Rodrigues article partially substantiates Joseph Greenberg's proposal regarding a Jê-Pano-Carib phylum: evidence exists of a Carib-Jê relationship but not of correspondences between Pano-Tacana and either Jê or Carib. Tupí is grouped by Greenberg in the Equatorial branch of Andean-Equatorial. But comparative work is proving that Tupí is related to Carib, as is demonstrated by Rodrigues's contribution to *South American Indian Languages*.

Part II contains chapters on Ecuadorian Highland Quechua, Southern Peruvian Quechua, and Aymara. The best Aymara grammar to date is the third volume of Hardman et al. (1975), but it is available only through University Microfilms in Ann Arbor. The question of the classification of the Quechua and Jaqui (Aymara, Jaqaru, and Kawki) languages is discussed at length by Hardman and Bruce Mannheim, who are convinced that all the similarities found among the two groups are due to borrowings and that no genetic relationship is involved. The

chapter by Stark on Ecuadorian Quechua is also relevant here. She believes that Quechua originated in Ecuador and was spoken there long before the Incas spread their own dialect.

As for Quechua's internal subdivisions, Mannheim's contribution is instructive. He believes that subgrouping in the Quechua family is still embryonic and that the classification in Parker (1963) and Torero (1964) must now be modified in view of new grammars of varieties that had not yet been described in the 1970s. The situation within Aymara is simpler because unlike Quechua, it does not constitute a language family, being instead a single language subdivided into mutually intelligible varieties. This situation is clearly set forth by Lucy Briggs.

In Part 3 of *South American Indian Languages*, the history of the Quichua of Santiago del Estero is taken up by Stark. She points out that archeological and ethnohistorical evidence suggests that the language was spoken in the area before the Spanish conquest (p. 734). Other articles refer to present-day Argentine languages (Klein), the languages of the Tierra del Fuego (Christos Clairis), Mapuche dialects (Robert Croese), and the Paraguayan Chaco (Klein and Stark).

Sociolinguistics

Adequate information on the sociolinguistic situation of the areas under discussion is given in England's and Campbell's grammars. The Klein and Stark volume is particularly good in surveying the linguistic situation of the languages under discussion. Each contribution has a section on the present-day situation, including information on bilingual education, where appropriate, as well as recommendations about urgent research for languages in danger of becoming extinct.

Language Use

Aymara Language in Its Social and Cultural Context, edited by Martha Hardman, is a collection of articles, most of them written by her students at the University of Florida. This work and the Aymara grammar already mentioned (Hardman et al. 1975) represent the fruition of the efforts of a linguist who has almost single-handedly fostered research on the Aymara language and trained a group of skilled students who can now deal with the topic in a scientific manner.

The subject of language use brings up Bierhorst's translation of the *Cantares mexicanos*. When the Mexican poet José María Vigil became director of the Biblioteca Nacional in 1880, he discovered the manuscript known as the "Cantares mexicanos." In 1904 Antonio Peñafiel published a facsimile edition of it (see León Portilla 1967, 11). Daniel

Brinton translated some of the poems, and Schultze Jena translated many more, although he died before revising his work. Angel María Garibay's three-volume *Poesía náhuatl* (1964, 1965, 1968) includes translations of many of these poems. In *Trece poetas del mundo azteca* (1967), León Portilla included selections and translations of some of the poems. He considers it feasible to assign certain poems to specific authors whose biographies he has reconstructed from various sources. His interpretation has been accepted by other classical Nahuatl specialists.

Bierhorst's approach in his translation of the *Cantares* is new and controversial. He views the poems as belonging to the genre *Netotiliztli*, which he translates as "ghost songs." He asserts that they were sung as part of a musical performance in which warrior singers summoned ghost ancestors to help defeat their enemies (p. 3). According to Bierhorst, the songs were acted out in the early colonial period, and the *volador* dance is a vestige of these performances. The cantares are thus interpreted as intellectualized manifestations of a nativistic movement not otherwise documented in sixteenth-century writings. Bierhorst also believes that the poems were probably collected by Antonio Valeriano for Sahagún to insert in his *Historia general*, although Sahagún did not choose to do so. Bierhorst characterizes the songs as persons or spirits of famous kings and other notables brought to life by the singer.

Bierhorst's long introduction to the *Cantares* also includes his own translation and a paleographic transcription normalizing word space, orthography, and punctuation. A critical analytic transcription can be found in Bierhorst's companion volume, *A Nahuatl-English Dictionary and Concordance to the Cantares Mexicanos with an Analytic Transcription and Grammatical Notes*. Not being a specialist in classical Nahuatl literature, I have not examined Bierhorst's translations in any detail. He has undoubtedly studied the language extensively, and his paleography seems carefully done. Experts will have to appraise his work critically in order to decide whether or not his controversial interpretation of the *Cantares* as ghost songs is valid.

Curiously, Joel Sherzer's *Kuna Ways of Speaking: An Ethnographic Perspective* describes the Kuna *ikarkana*, the chants of the "seers," as functioning similarly within Kuna culture to Bierhorst's explanation of the "ghost songs." The singer summons spirits who appreciate the verbal artistry of the *ikarkana* and who follow his directions because of their pleasure in verbal play and poetry (p. 118). Sherzer covers a wide range, from the everyday speech of the Panamanian Kuna of San Blas to the chief language chanted in the "gathering house" that serves as a means of social control and social cohesion, and from the stick-doll language of the curers to the *kantule* language of puberty rites. The result is a fascinating ethnography of speaking.

Kuna Ways of Speaking briefly describes the phonological and grammatical structure of the Kuna language. It also points out the differences in each of the four principal styles that have specific functions. Abundant examples of each type of language are given as well as a description of the occasions when each is used. From Sherzer's discussion of the language and its appropriate uses, the reader learns a good deal about Kuna culture. One comes to appreciate how the Kuna are adapting to their changing world and is left with the hope that their elaborate verbal life and their culture will continue to survive.

These eight recent studies of Amerindian languages represent significant contributions to our knowledge of the indigenous languages of Latin America. It is to be hoped that scholars will continue to provide sorely needed descriptions of many languages that are on the verge of extinction (particularly in South America) and that users and uses of languages having large numbers of speakers will receive the kind of careful description that Joel Sherzer has provided for Kuna.

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