

Fluent Selves: Autobiography, Person, and History in Lowland South America.

Suzanne Oakdale and Magnus Course, eds. Lincoln: University of Nebraska Press, 2014. xi +319 pp.

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This volume collects chapters focusing on South American ethnography through the lens of personal narrative and autobiography. A review in a more general anthropological forum could say much about how this work fits in with the body of work on indigenous societies of the Americas, but here in the context of *JLA* it is worth dwelling on this volume's treatment of linguistic expression. The contributors are a mix of social and linguistic anthropologists, although the former are in the majority (and the author of one chapter takes the time to explicitly point out: "I do not think of myself as a linguistic anthropologist"; p. 71). Because the primary data for all of the chapters is oral discourse (or written narrative, in a few cases), in this review my comments will orient around something linguistic anthropologists are especially interested in: how language is treated within ethnographic analysis and writing.

In their introduction, editors Course and Oakdale frame the volume as being about personhood and history, focusing on expression of individual narrators as a counterpoint to the "collective indigenous subject" (p. 4) of traditional ethnography. While this approach is not unprecedented, as shown by the similar studies surveyed in the introduction, these new pieces offer many rich details about the social histories of Amazonian indigenous peoples including the Ashánika, Kalapalo, Kayabi (Kawaiwete), Kuikuro, Marubo, Piro (Yine), Tukano, Waorani, and Xavante, as well as the Mapuche (presumably the motivation for the term "lowland" rather than "Amazonian"). One important point made in the introduction and followed up in the chapters in the first section is that for peoples who have not been part of the Western written historical tradition, these types of narrative can be considered historical sources in their own right, and not dichotomized as "myths" relative to Western historical documents. High, Gow and Veber describe how histories of conflicts, colonization, migrations and ideologies of "civilization" intersect with the experience of individuals in indigenous societies. Later chapters delve deeper into the different models of personhood that are reflected in the narrative; Course's chapter develops a concept of "fluid" personhood that connects with the "fluent selves" referenced in the volume's title and with similar concepts used in several of the other contributions. The chapters in the final sections address questions of contact and politics among different indigenous peoples, many based in the famously multicultural and multilingual Xingú area, the setting for studies by Basso, Oakdale, Graham, and Franchetto. In the spirit of bringing indigenous histories into dialogue with other historical accounts, all of the chapters succeed in bringing indigenous voices and perspectives to bear on historical developments over the past several generations.

This being *JLA*, however, it is not enough just to mention this volume's contribution to ethnohistory; from a linguistic anthropological perspective, while the primary data considered here is linguistic, there was a missed opportunity to use the tools offered by our subdiscipline for understanding linguistic expression in social context, leading to a lack of transparency in how language is represented. All of the chapters set apart narrative text in sections that are indented or otherwise distinguished from the body text, but beyond this there is no unifying approach toward the representation of discourse across contributions. Often the text is presented as blocks of English which conform to the paragraph structure and punctuation system of written English. Narrative in South American indigenous languages has a very different structure, however, often chaining many clauses together or using different evidential or epistemic frames, but these aspects are largely invisible here, as are details about the methods of transcription or translation. In addition, presenting inherently multiparty oral discourse in the monologic voice of English prose obscures basic aspects such as who was listening to the narrative. In context, we might expect to see "back-channeling" by listeners, either verbally ("uh huh," "really?") or nonverbally (nodding, eye flashing, etc.), but this information is mostly excluded. Only four chapters give the original text in an indigenous language, and only High's chapter on Waorani personal narratives gives glosses, which adds a level of transparency missing from the other chapters' representations of indigenous languages (excluding one chapter based on a written Portuguese account). A common rhetorical strategy

in ethnographic writing that is seen in several chapters is to refer to indigenous words in italics juxtaposed with English translations, but the semantic or grammatical differences of these linguistic resources are rarely discussed; only Franchetto's and Basso's chapters make some observations about the role of resources of the languages such as epistemic markers. In some chapters it is difficult to determine what language the researcher spoke in the field, or even what language the original narrative was in, whether an indigenous language or Spanish or Portuguese; these basic details should have been clearer.

While this volume will certainly be useful to those interested in the history of indigenous South America as told by members of indigenous communities, the perspective reflected here seems to be that the content of narratives can be easily detached both from their form and the social context in which they were performed and recorded. For a linguistic anthropological perspective on what is missing in this approach, we could think of models like Dell Hymes' SPEAKING mnemonic that remind us to consider many different aspects of communication, including the setting in which it took place, the people who participated, the social norms that their behavior reflected, the forms and genres of speech that they used, and more. Classic work in linguistic anthropology includes in-depth discussions of the transcription, translation and textual representation of Latin American indigenous languages in particular that could also have relevantly drawn on (e.g., *The Spoken Word and the Work of Interpretation*, D. Tedlock, University of Pennsylvania Press, 1983; *Translating Native Latin American Verbal Art: Ethnopoetics and Ethnography of Speaking*, J. Sherzer and K. Sammons, eds., Smithsonian Institution, 2000). Perhaps the argument could be made that anthropological analysis is able to neatly sidestep issues of language and communication to get to social questions, but not only does this perspective not do justice to the complexity of these issues, it leaves unexplored a whole range of entry points for ethnographic analysis made possible by the specialized tools developed over decades by linguistic anthropologists. When the primary data being considered is linguistic expression (in this case, personal narrative), it may not be a good idea to leave these tools on the shelf.

Iberian Imperialism and Language Evolution in Latin America. *Salikoko S. Mufwene*, ed. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 2014. 368 pp.

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This edited volume is an informative collection of 11 papers about language contact in Spanish and Portuguese Latin America. The papers cover a wide variety of languages, contact situations, and theoretical approaches. The majority hinges on or at least addresses the concept of language ecology, extensively theorized by the editor Salikoko S. Mufwene in other publications. Mufwene draws a comparison between language and biological species arguing that intra-species variation and competition are crucial to understand the final outcomes of language change processes (*The Ecology of Language Evolution*, Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001; *Language Evolution: Contact, Competition, and Change*, London/New York: Continuum Press, 2008). His introduction frames the volume from the complementary perspectives of colonial linguistics and linguistic ecology. It explores the impact of Iberian colonialism on language evolution through ten case studies of Spanish, Portuguese and several indigenous languages, such as Tupi-Guarani, Quechua, Yucatec Mayan and various Amazonian languages. The last piece is a compelling postscript by Michel Degraff in which he evaluates the papers as contributions to the empowerment of marginalized language groups. Surprisingly, given that Degraff and the editor himself are well-known Creole language specialists, none of the case studies focuses primarily on Creoles, although most authors touch on them for comparison.

John Lipski's "The Many Facets of Spanish Dialect Diversification" explores different scenarios for the diversification of Spanish in the Americas. It is an excellent summary of the state of the field of Spanish dialectology and provides useful examples highlighting the contribution of peninsular dialects, contact with indigenous, African and other European languages as well as of the rise of urbanization and various Latin American nationalisms. He is particularly critical of the Founder's Effect hypothesis, as in the Antillean Period hypothesis, which argues that Andalusian Spanish varieties had a crucial contribution to Caribbean dialects by virtue of being the earliest linguistic input. He and defends a more dynamic and complex model of dialectal diversification.