Book reviews

Terry Crowley, John Lynch, Jeff Siegel, and Julie Piau: *The Design of Language: An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics*. Auckland: Longman Paul (now Addison Wesley Longman), 1995. xv + 471 pp. Paper, NZ$ 49.95.

The bookshop at the University of Papua New Guinea in Waigani, Port Moresby, used to sell a number of teaching reference materials for various disciplines. When I started my field research on the language and culture of the Trobriand Islanders in 1982, I found there two such works, John Lynch's *Introduction to Phonetics and Phonology* and his *Introduction to Morphological Analysis*. These booklets proved extremely helpful during my first period of field research in 1982–1983. When I returned to Papua New Guinea in 1989 I found John Lynch and Julie Piau's revised version of the above-mentioned works, now presented under the title *Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics* — and I really began to wonder why the authors did not transform these materials into a "real book." Now since 1995 such a volume is available: *The Design of Language* is not only a revised and expanded version of John Lynch and Julie Piau's University of PNG teaching materials, it also combines these materials with those produced by Terry Crowley for his students at the University of the South Pacific in Vanuatu and with those produced by Jeff Siegel for his courses at the University of New England in Australia. The authors have been teaching linguistics at various universities in the Pacific and are well-known, respected, and experienced Austronesianists. Thus it is no wonder that their introduction to general linguistics is strongly biased with respect to the use of data especially from Austronesian languages of the Pacific region (but also from Australian and Papuan languages) in their choice of examples. And this bias is completely acceptable, given the fact that the four authors regard their book as being "aimed specifically at second language speakers of English studying linguistics at the University of Papua New Guinea and at the University of the South Pacific" (p. vi).

Moreover, Longman announced this book specifically as "A Linguistic Text For the Pacific." As it turns out, *The Design of Language* is a comprehensive introduction to (almost) all areas of general descriptive linguistics that is extremely useful not only for undergraduates but to my mind for everyone who wants to study and describe one of the many languages of the Pacific (and I wish I had had such an introduction at hand when I started my research on Kilivila). Moreover, this book may also serve very well as an introduction to linguistic typology, given the fact that the authors provide a good sampling of the world's languages. In an introductory text for teaching general descriptive linguistics at all undergraduate levels the authors found it necessary to simplify some of their points; however, the list of supplementary reading in each chapter facilitates more detailed study. Throughout the book the authors never lose sight of their general maxims, namely "to give students a SOLID handle on the PRINCIPLES involved in analysing linguistic data" and to "not fall prey to prescriptive tendencies" (p. viii). The book is written in an easily digested, conversational style, the text is extremely accessible, and the points made are amply discussed and exemplified.

After the table of contents, the acknowledgements, a brief guide on "How to use this book," and a list of abbreviations, three maps show where the Australian, Melanesian, Micronesian, and Polynesian languages referred to in the text are spoken.

The first chapter on "Linguistic levels" (pp. 1–47) presents an overview of basic terminology and central concepts at all levels of linguistics and outlines the hierarchical structure and nature of language. It starts with the discussion of sounds and phonemes, then goes on to morphemes, words, grammar, and word classes and discusses the linguistic levels constituted by phrases and simple sentences. The chapter ends with the problematization and refutation of the traditional concept of linguistic levels as strictly separate units and with a brief discussion of discourse and semantics. The authors state that these two "important areas of linguistics ... are not traditionally included as levels of linguistic analysis" (p. 43) and point out that their "treatment of descriptive linguistics stops at the sentence level" (p. 45). This is, of course, legitimate, but I myself would have applauded had the authors taken a different view with respect to this matter.

Chapter 2, "Sounds and phonemes," discusses phonetics and basic phonology (pp. 48–114). This chapter presents all the central concepts that are involved in the analysis of sounds into phonemes and aims at enabling students to carry out a traditional phonemic analysis of a language. Here we find sections and subsections on segmental and supra-

segmental phonetics, on etics and emics, allophones and allophonic relationships, suprasegmental phonemes and phonotactics.

After this traditional introduction to phonetics and phonology, chapter 3 presents "More abstract (approaches to) phonology" (pp. 115–188). After a brief summary of the difficulties linguists had (and have) with traditional phonemics, this chapter discusses concepts like neutralization, abstract phonological representations, phonological rules, classes of sounds, distinctive features, naturalness in phonology, syllables, nonlinear and generative phonology, and the question of the psychological reality of phonological representations.

The fourth chapter on "Grammatical categories" (pp. 189–229) shows "how morphemes can be used to make distinctions between various kinds of meanings in language" (p. 189). It discusses grammatical meaning and grammatical categories, especially number, and then presents other noun-phrase categories like person, deixis, reference, possession, noun classes, and gender as well as means of indexing or cross-referencing. The few remarks on deixis are somewhat short, even for the standards of an introduction; however, the references with respect to further reading after this subsection enable the interested reader to find good coverage of this important field of language and linguistics. The chapter ends with a section on sentence-level categories and a section on transitivity and voice and with the important insight "that the grammar of each language must be described from within its own terms, and should not be described with reference to the grammatical facts of other languages" (p. 229; see also Senft 1993). I would like to note here that it is with this chapter, if not before, that the reader will detect how many example sentences reflect not only the authors' humor but also some of their life experiences, as well as aspects of their political convictions (in the Reagan/Thatcher era of politics).

After having shown how morphemes mark a variety of grammatical categories, chapter 5 continues to deal with morphemes (pp. 230–271) and describes "how morphology works in different languages" (p. 230). In this chapter the authors discuss how morphemes can be recognized; present morphological processes like affixation, compounding, reduplication, etc.; discuss morphotactics and inflectional and derivational morphology; and, finally, tackle the problem of productivity and irregularity in morphology.

Chapter 6 introduces morphophonemics (pp. 272–304). After a discussion of morphs and allomorphs the authors show how to account for morphological alternations; they introduce the notion of "underlying forms" and present morphophonemic rules like assimilation, dissimilation, segment modification, segment deletion, segment addition, and

segment movement. They then establish criteria for justifying underlying forms, discuss abstractness in morphophonemics, and finish the chapter by presenting their readers with a number of clear steps to help them solve morphology problems.

The next chapter deals with morphosyntax (pp. 305–329). After a definition of this field of linguistics the authors deal with sandhi phenomena, with processes of phonological fusion, with clitics, and — in great detail — with case. Chapter 7 ends with a discussion of concord.

Chapter 8 is an introduction to syntax (pp. 330–372). The authors first outline the domain of syntax, then discuss the structure of sentences and the syntactic marking of roles, and finish this introductory chapter by making, and justifying, the distinction between simple and complex sentences. A somewhat carping criticism here would note that the authors do not properly introduce phrase-structure rules and their bracketing conventions (p. 342) and that the rule presented on p. 367 is somewhat inelegantly formulated — even for simple PSG standards (see also p. 415), but this criticism is only marginal.

Chapter 9 deals with "more abstract syntax" (pp. 373–444) and discusses subordinate clauses, underlying structures (and transformational rules), advanced syntactic descriptions, and linguistic universals. It is evident that the last two chapters are strongly biased by, if not solely based on, the syntactic theories of Chomsky and his disciples: only on page 372 in the "further reading" section and on the last five pages of this chapter are rivals to the "government and binding" approach mentioned and briefly presented. However, it is difficult to decide what kind of syntax theory an introduction to linguistics should present these days — and given the fact that GB is still very dominant in linguistics, even descriptive linguists who are highly critical with respect to this theory may finally accept and understand the authors' decision (although the further reading column would have been an excellent place to refer to other theories or to surveys of linguistic theories, like the one by Edmondson and Burquest [1992], for example).

The book ends with the authors' epilogue, a language index that lists all the 103 languages from which data have been drawn for this book, a bibliography, and an index. In this index a star (*) after a page indicates that the term is defined on this page — and given the good quality of these definitions, this introduction thus also incorporates a kind of dictionary of linguistic terms, so to speak.

The chapters of this book are very well cross-referenced (see, e.g., p. 41); the book is clearly structured; the authors' conversational style is easy to read and often quite humorous (see, e.g., pp. 86, 185, 268); some excellent pieces of linguistic criticism are to be found "en passant," like,

for example, the criticism of compilers of dictionaries for Pacific languages (p. 123); and a number of general and interesting facts, like a listing of the languages with the world's smallest and largest phoneme inventories (p. 75), are also given in passing.

What is annoying, however, are the many typos in this book. The authors are very well aware of this fact — as three of them assured me at the Third International Conference on Oceanic Linguistics held at the University of Waikato in Hamilton, New Zealand, in January of this year. Thus I will not list all the typos I found but will just briefly remark on one German example that is presented incorrectly: on page 245 the authors mention a German compound, *Fahrgeschwindigkeitserlaubnis*; it sounds like a nice German nominal compound, it would even be a possible form, but unfortunately it does not exist. In German we have the compounds *Fahrgeschwindigkeit* 'running/driving speed' and *Fahrerlaubnis* 'driving licence'; however, the concept 'speed limit' is expressed in German by either of the following two compounds, *Geschwindigkeitsbegrenzung* or *Geschwindigkeitsbeschränkung*. I hope that this introduction to descriptive linguistics will see a second edition in which the authors can correct all the typos that have been found so far.

To sum up, *The Design of Language* is an excellent comprehensive introduction to descriptive linguistics not only for students in courses at first, second, and third year undergraduate level, but also for everyone who wants to start studying and describing one of the many languages of the Pacific. I am sure that every linguist who wants to teach, or to learn about, descriptive linguistics will profit from this book.

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