

form a scientific continuum so far, even if mutual intelligibility should really be granted by their common interest.

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John Lynch: *Pacific Languages: An Introduction*. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1998. xix + 359 pp. US \$ 35.00, paper.

In the very first sentence of this book we learn that it “was born out of frustration,” because its author could not recommend to people — especially Pacific people — a “good general book on the languages of the Pacific.” John Lynch has filled this gap with his *Pacific Languages* in an admirable way. The book addresses the layman with a general interest in the topic as well as the linguist who wants to get a first overview of the phenomena to be encountered in Austronesian, Papuan, and Australian languages — and Lynch manages to steer his “middle course between being too simplistic and being too technical” (p. xiii) throughout the monograph. Readers who want further and more detailed linguistic information on certain topics are provided with very helpful suggestions for further reading, given for each chapter at the end of the book before the appendices (pp. 279–282).

After the table of contents, a list of illustrations, the Preface, the acknowledgments, and a list of abbreviations, the book starts with a general introduction to some basic concepts of linguistics (pp. 1–19). Lynch discusses the structure of language, presenting brief sections on the sounds of language and on the composition of words and phrases. Then he presents common grammatical categories and functions in sections on subject and object, transitivity and voice, adjectives and verbs, person, number, and gender, and possessives and classifiers. The first chapter ends with a section on reconstructing linguistic history — a short introduction to the aims, methods, and limitations of comparative historical linguistics. This chapter is especially meant for the general reader and serves as a kind of “prelude” for the following three major sections of the book.

Part 1, “Geography and history” (pp. 23–72), describes in three chapters the geographical distribution of Pacific languages and summarizes their history: chapter 2 (pp. 23–44) discusses the number of languages (about 1,400), gives a linguistic demography of the area (with excellent illustrative maps that list all the languages referred to in the book), takes up the problem of language names, and ends with a brief history of Pacific language research. Chapter 3 (pp. 45–59) presents a general overview of the history and genetic affiliation of Austronesian — especially Oceanic — languages, and chapter 4 (pp. 60–72) does the same for Papuan and Australian languages. These last two chapters also emphasize that linguistic research in this area has always been open for interdisciplinary cooperation — especially with anthropologists, historians, demographers, and archeologists.

Part 2, “Structure” (pp. 75–202), presents a general picture of the phonological and grammatical structure of Pacific languages — with “a bias toward Oceanic languages” already acknowledged (as well as explained and justified) by the author himself in the preface (p. xiv). Sound systems of Pacific languages are presented in chapter 5 (pp. 75–99). Lynch discusses vowel and consonant systems, stress and tone, word structure, and the problem of the development of orthographies. The chapters 6 (pp. 100–165), 7 (pp. 166–184), and 8 (pp. 185–202) give a grammatical overview of Oceanic, Papuan, and Australian languages. Pronouns, nouns and noun phrases, possessive constructions, verbs and the verb complex, and sentences are discussed and illustrated with a broad variety of excellent examples for all three language families.

The third part of the book, “The social and cultural context” (pp. 205–271), looks at the relationship between Pacific societies and cultures and their languages. Chapter 9 (pp. 205–219) deals with languages in contact. Lynch discusses the social context of language contact and the linguistic effects of this contact; he exemplifies such effects with

direct and indirect inheritance of vocabulary in Rotuman, with borrowing as a result of word taboo in Australia, and with a description of the contact situation between Austronesian and Papuan languages in north-west New Britain. After a short section with a few remarks on the problem of whether a language can be truly "mixed," the chapter ends with a brief discussion of the historical implications of such language-contact phenomena. Loanwords offer insights into what kinds of things were introduced from one language into the other and into what kinds of changes took place in a culture and society as a result of external influence through contact. From the very beginning of "man's conquest of the Pacific" (Bellwood 1978) contact has been part of the linguistic scene there. Some "drastic effects" (p. 220) of languages in contact situations, the creation of totally new languages through pidginization, creolization, and koineization, are presented in chapter 10 (pp. 220–236). Lynch gives a brief introduction to what he calls "Melanesian Pidgin" — a cover term for Tok Pisin of Papua New Guinea, Pijin of the Solomon Islands, Bislama of Vanuatu, Hiri Motu (but not Police Motu!), a well-known trade language in Papua New Guinea, and Fiji Hindi. "Language, society, and culture in the Pacific context" are in the focus of chapter 11 (pp. 237–271). Lynch discusses first the vocabulary of Pacific languages. He points out that with respect to the lexicon the average speaker of a Pacific language — like an average speaker of English — knows and uses between 5,000 and 10,000 words (p. 239). In a further subsection on "specialization, classification, and abstraction" he illustrates and emphasizes that a language's vocabulary reflects what is important to its speakers (p. 240). Sections on "counting systems" and on "kinship" illustrate various forms of ethnic thinking about number concepts and social relations. A section on languages in use discusses aspects of language and gender, aspects of languages of respect, and aspects of language socialization. The role of colonial and other intrusive languages, the phenomenon of multilingualism, language usage in the national context, languages and formal education, vernacular literacy, and the role of the media for the Pacific languages are the topics of a very interesting section on language use in Pacific nations. The chapter ends with some considerations on endangered languages in the area. The heading of this section — shift, survival, death, revival — summarizes the phenomena in focus.

In his conclusion (pp. 272–277) Lynch presents some ideas about Pacific languages — mainly ideas about their future, about the language attitudes of their speakers, and about their relevance for linguistic research.

The conclusion is followed by the above-mentioned suggestions for further reading and by four appendices with a list of the data sources for

the 76 Austronesian, the 46 Papuan, and the 29 Australian languages and the seven creoles, pidgins, and koines referred to in the book (appendix 1), a description of the phonetic symbols used (appendix 2), with sample phoneme systems (appendix 3), and with a glossary of technical terms (appendix 4). After the notes to the individual chapters, 290 references are listed. The book ends with a very detailed and helpful index.

The book is clearly structured, the author's style is easy to read, and the linguistic phenomena presented and discussed are extremely well illustrated with excellent examples from 158 Pacific languages. There are some typos, inconsistencies, and errors, though: p. 16: read "What use can linguists and others make ..." for: "What use can linguists and others can make"; p. 45: read "Niger-Kordofanian" or "Niger-Congo" for "Benue-Congo"; p. 46: Palauan and Chamorro are not closely related; p. 53: Tai-Kadai languages are not found "in parts of Malaysia"; p. 71: read "Rather than accentuating differences ..." for "Rather that accentuating differences ..."; p. 128: in the example from Rotuman the morpheme-interlinear transcription is not aligned properly; the Anejom form for 'you' is presented on p. 140 as *aak* and on p. 157 as *aek*; p. 151: read "we-PAST-DUAL-afraid" for "we-PAST DUAL-afraid"; the examples on p. 156 and on p. 161 have a different font size from the other examples presented; p. 172: read "CONDITIONAL" for "CONDITINOAL"; p. 185: read "... work and that little — usually." for: "work — and that little usually ...". Nevertheless, this monograph is a very good introduction to the languages of the Pacific, not only for the interested layman but also for the linguist and the student of linguistics who wants to get a first impression of languages spoken in this part of the world.

Lynch finishes his very personal concluding chapter, which reveals his strong engagement and bond with these languages and with their speakers, with the following remark: "As long as Pacific Islanders continue to recognize that their languages are both their past and their future, the unity in diversity so characteristic of the Pacific will continue to make this region unique" (p. 277). Together with *The Design of Language: An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics*, which John Lynch co-authored (Crowley et al.: 1995), this book provides the Pacific Islanders with another important means to help them do this. And if he thus contributes to reaching this goal, he will also falsify critics like his family doctor in Port Vila, who commented on his job as a linguist and on the documentation of languages spoken by a few hundred speakers with the words, "Fascinating, ... fascinating but bloody useless!" (p. 272).

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