

the procedure. An example of the facilities that provide that service is the Primus International Super Speciality Hospital in Abuja.

In conclusion, all things considered, the book is an epitome of excellence. It is a pioneer work on different levels and dimensions. It is the first book to document the Yoruba sign language. It is also the first book to document and analyze postlingual deafness language patterns in an African language. It also increases our knowledge of the language of the Yoruba hearing community. It is, indeed, a must read book for scholars in language acquisition, special education, linguistics and spokespersons for the people who do not have a voice in the society. The book can be used as a textbook for a course on Yoruba spoken and sign languages. It is also a good book for courses on language acquisition in special populations, speech and hearing sciences, and cross-cultural deaf education in general.

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Rose Marie Beck. 2011. *Bridging the language gap, Approaches to Herero verbal interaction as development practice in Namibia.* Köln: Rüdiger Köppe, xii + 277. EUR 48.

Bridging the Language Gap by Rose Marie Beck is two books in one: a theoretical book asking critical questions concerning linguistic theory and manners of research and a second book of applied linguistic study researching the style of communication amongst members of a board concerned with the running of a local water pump in Namibia. And thus the book is presented in two parts, and

Beck gives two separate aims for these two parts. About the first, she writes that her aim is to bring the two fields of what she calls “the linguistic” and “the social” back together and she introduces some of the basic concepts needed to do this successfully. Her aim with the second part is to introduce a field of research that uses natural interactional data by way of the locally mediated research approach to Africanist linguists.

In the first part of the book, Beck gives an interesting historical account of how “the linguistic” and “the social” became separated in the field of language studies. She argues that these two need to be brought back together again and that language should not be viewed as detached from its users. She maintains that the practical aspects of language should be viewed as primary to language in the same way that language structure is viewed as primary to language.

Beck also devotes a large chunk of the first part of the book to a discussion of the sociology of knowledge. Very roughly, the interest here lies in the transformation of knowledge of the individual to common knowledge of the group, i.e. how the knowledge of one person eventually, through interaction, becomes shared and common knowledge. While, for a reader like me who is not wholly familiar with many of the theoretical concepts used here, this part of the book may be rather difficult and somewhat abstract, it does all become much clearer once these concepts are brought into the context of the applied linguistic study of interaction in the second part of the book. Much of the first part of the book is very theoretical, but Beck enhances the accessibility by including her own very personal experiences with interactions and miscommunications (often stemming from “knowledge” problems) in her field sites. Beck rounds off the first part of the book by giving a description of locally mediated research which is a method of research she subsequently uses in the second part of the book where she gives an organizational ethnography of a local Namibian Water Point Association.

The particular Water Point Association in question is located in a Herero linguistic area in Namibia and its members are relatively new to their task of running the water pump that provides the local inhabitants and livestock with water. Beck was present at numerous meetings of this Association and recorded these meetings. It is this data, as well as the data that was occasioned through these recordings (by subsequently showing them to the participants and the resulting talk for example, all of which is part of the locally mediated research approach), that the remainder of the book is based on.

The idea behind this case study is most aptly described by John Heritage’s words, which Beck herself quotes: “talking social institutions into being” (Heritage and Clayman 2010). It works as follows: the concept of Water Point Associations was passed down to the local community level by the Namibian government. This included training and manuals (in English) concerning the

running of the Associations. The local communities were then faced with the practical implementation of these government plans. In this study, Beck concerns herself with the knowledge processes and social organizational processes involved when such an abstract plan has to be implemented by the people who have to organize themselves according to such a plan. This happens through language use in the form of lengthy meetings and discussions through which the plan is transformed into organizational practice by the community. Beck shows how the turn-taking patterns used by speakers at talk during meetings can give information on knowledge and common sense categories and the construction of (shared) knowledge. By studying this talk, she argues, one can bring to a fore the social dynamics and the processes involved in the construction of organizations as well as the process of growing and changing states of knowledge and knowledge categories.

Included in the second part of the book are chapters of marvelously extensive background information concerning the physical location of the speakers, the history (including all present and past racial tensions) of the Herero, the sociolinguistic setting of otjiHerero, information on the organizations of which the meetings were recorded to provide the initial data for this work, as well as an extensive and very informative description of traditional and community meetings and an outline of the sequence of events at such community meetings. Beck also includes why she considers all this information to be important. I personally found the information given highly informative, and I agree with her, without it, my understanding, as a reader, of the communication occurring in this community would not have been optimal. We would all do well to include even half as much background ethnographic information as Beck has done in this second part of her book in our descriptions. As well as such extensive background information, Beck also gives very detailed attention to the thought processes involved in every single step of her work. She writes about the considerations that go into starting one's research, what exactly is the data, how you collect data, ethical considerations of handling data, how to transcribe the data, how to translate and analyze the data, the necessity to be aware of one's own preconceptions etc. All these steps involve choices for the researcher. I particularly like it that Beck has brought these numerous considerations and choices that we are all as researchers obliged to make out into the open and that she discusses them so explicitly. Tackling these issues will not make our work easier, but it would most certainly make it better.

Overall, *Bridging the Language Gap* is a very interesting and thought-provoking book. The book comes with a DVD that has the audio clips of the examples in the book as well as giving the examples with the interlinear glosses. It is well worth the read and I recommend it to all Africanist linguists.

Reference

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