IV Rezensionen

1 Linguistik: Gerhard Leitner

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Muñoz's book, *LE* from now on, is about "linguistic heterogeneity, its decline and the costs of such decline. It is also a book about the study of human languages and the inability of most practising linguists to understand what is happening around them, that their very object if study is disappearing at an alarming rate... The main thrust of this book is that an understanding of language death and ecological matters go hand in hand." (p 1). That is a tall order. Muñoz, from now on, weaves together the study of changes in language ecologies and the claim of linguistic imperialism and applies the result to the Pacific region. The definition of the notion of ecology, which he borrows from Haugen, is worth quoting:

"According to Haugen (1985), the ecology of language can be defined as interactions between any given language and its language ecology may be defined as the study of environment." (p 1)

Surely, Haugen did not say that! What *M* means is that the notion of ecology describes the context of use of languages along with the contexts they receive in a society and the worldviews they express. If this is so, and with diversity being a fact of life--the Pacific hosts more than 4,000 languages--diversity must reflect, and respond to, basic human needs. Endangering diversity is an undesirable disruption, and it is the mission of linguists to stem the destruction of language ecologies that leads to language death. As languages 'die' speakers don't (necessarily at the same time). And so resolutions to their communicative needs must be found. Pidgins, which *M* calls 'parasitic weeds,' are one solution, but they, *M* contends, further accelerate the decline and death of languages. One cannot fail to note that *M* approaches his topic with strong personal convictions and an intensity that may blind his eyes to the facts. Siegel (1997) has shown in great detail that *M* goes wrong.

Let me add three points, one of principle, two of detail. The first one is that his contention that only diversity reflects human needs must be counter-balanced by the equally human desire to have languages of wider communication. How else could one explain that, e.g., Hindustani gained so much ground in India or that *languages* can cut across languages of quite different genetic and typological affiliation. Both India and Aboriginal Australia present examples. *M* 's worthy effort is somewhat one-sided. Two points of detail. For one, while the periodicization of European contact with the Pacific (p 23) appears convincing in its simplicity, it is impressive for many parts of the Pacific. For M. 1500-1750 marks the era of Spanish trade and exploitation; 1750-1830 that of scientific and anthropological discovery, followed by the modern economic exploitation, through whaling, sandalwood, trepang, and blackbirding (from 1830-1880; and the time between 1880-1975 is the era of colonial contact. As for Australia, it was the Dutch and French, not the Spanish, that made the discoveries. In his section of 'salient properties' of the region, *M* gives the number of Aboriginals before 1788 as '2-2' and '250' languages (p 31); on p 32 he mentions 300,000 inhabitants and 200 languages. Figures are, of course, impressive but the general consensus of experts is around 300,000 and 200 languages. *M* has no reference to any of his figures.

While one may quibble with many details of *M* 's approach and beliefs, the underlying perspective is right: languages exist in a wider societal context, their 'ecology'. Their future is affected less by individual changes, say borrowing from other languages, than by the maintenance of their ecology. Language maintenance and revival efforts of declining or 'dead' languages, as are carried out for many indigenous Australian languages, will have little success unless an ecology or, one should perhaps say, a context, can be re-created that makes their use a natural consequence. The adoption of a wider perspective is certainly a healthy move. It is also in line with a concept of language as a repository of cultural knowledge that is so frequent amongst indigenous Australians. One hears often no clear boundary is drawn between language and cultural knowledge. And one should perhaps add that such a wide notion is not entirely alien to Europeans either. Even lexicographers question the distinction between encyclopedic and linguistic meaning.

It should be clear that *LE* casts a wide net in discussing an ill-defined, but vast, area with over 4,000 languages. After general questions, some of which have been mentioned, *M* turns to factors in the ecology that can, and have been, affected through colonial policies or the intervention of missionarians, and the like in Ch. 3. He then turns to the creation, development, and social role of pidgins and creoles. He maintains that "languages spread rapidly and outcompete others in a disturbed language ecology" and that they are "both consequences and agents of linguistic change" (p 75). But one cannot fail to see their function of permitting interaction in a situation in which no other options exist, although it is true that they tend to spread almost without inhibition. *M* does not fail to note that pidgins and creoles can become repositories of

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The Atlas of languages of intercultural communication in the Pacific, Asia, and the Americas (henceforth the Atlas) deals with particular linguistic responses to the demands of intercultural communication in the Pacific Hemisphere. As it presumes the existence of an 'Atlantic Hemisphere', Europe and Africa are excluded. For its vast area, it surveys contact from the distant past into our period and shows that language development cannot be seen as on-going, irreversible processes of diversification, as the development of ever more branches on the well-known family tree. It emphasizes the convergence of languages and of cultures, in addition to diversification, it shows that diversity is natural, indeed it constitutes a basic human need. It might, but does not, define that aspect of the history of human communication as tidal waves that shift between proximity and distance.

The Atlas consists of three volumes. Volume One contains 151 (mostly) multicoloured maps, the other two total 1622 pages of text. There is a subject finder list, which is a lot more than a keyword index, of nearly 170 pages that makes the Atlas extremely accessible. References are grouped under regional names, such as 'Australia', with headings like 'General remarks on Australia' or 'Koiies and Aboriginal languages', and index phrases with page references. An extensive table of contents and codes at the head of maps that indicate which text relates to them make the Atlas even more user-friendly.

The Atlas is the culmination of an idea circulated from the early 1980s. Given the scale it reached and the value it means for an understanding of communication patterns in the world, it has attracted considerable outside funding (UNESCO, ACH). But the amount of innovative thinking on how to map out knowledge that is conventionally represented in the format of written discourse, the co-ordination of dozens of experts worldwide, the enormous editorial task that has implied, the consideration of minute technical and other details cannot have been paid for by funding. The result is a product well worth the cost of over one thousand deutschmarks and deserves to be in every university library.

This review will look at the Atlas from the perspective of scholars interested in Australia and relevant, adjacent regions. I will omit all of Asia (with some exceptions), the Middle East, north and south America, and most of New Zealand. My review will be critical but that should not detract from the praise that the Atlas deserves. I will address the following topics:

(i) General aspects of the Atlas, e.g. its structure and ordering, the content of the maps and texts, the underlying 'philosophy' about language contact, the effects of contact.
(ii) A survey of the Atlas with regard to the coverage of Australia
(iii) Language contact and its effects in Australia from the earliest known (inferable) periods
(iv) An evaluation of the Atlas in comparison with its sources and other available materials.

To begin with (i). The Atlas divides its hemisphere into (i) the Greater Pacific Basin, Southeast and South Asia, Arabia and East Africa (=Volume One) and (ii) East, Central and West Asia, the Americas (=Volume Two). To quote:

"For the purposes of this Atlas, the Pacific Hemisphere is to be defined as comprising the Greater Pacific Area as its core, ... to which the hinterland and far hinterland areas of Southeast, East and Northeast Asia and the Americas are added. In the light of this, the Atlas covers Australia (Australia, New Zealand, and the New Guinea area including the Solomon Islands, Vanuatu and New Caledonia); Insular and Continental South East Asia comprising Indonesia, Malaysia, Thailand, Laos, Cambodia, Burma and also Nepal and some relevant areas of India adjacent to these countries, the Indian subcontinent (South Asia); China; the Philippines; Taiwan, and the Japan area, all the Asian parts of the former USSR, Mongolia, the Bering Strait and Alaska; and the North American and South American continents with Central America" (1996 xix).

There is no comprehensible reason for casting the net that way, except the pragmatic one that the editors are hoping for an Atlantic Atlas to follow. But would it not have made sense to include some parts of the Atlantic hemisphere? After all, some creolists argue for the continuity of maritime pidgin, etc. But, of course, that theory holds for European language-based pidgins and creoles, while other themes relate to other parts of the world. The overall structure is arbitrary and is bound to be so. And yet, it would have been useful to argue the points more elaborately. Coverage of some region is surprising. The chapter on "Metropolitan languages" deals with...