



Review: [untitled]

Author(s): Brian D. Joseph

Reviewed work(s): Compendium of the Worlds Languages. Volume I: Abaza to Lusatian. Volume II. Maasai to Zuni by George Campbell

Source: *The Modern Language Journal*, Vol. 78, No. 3, (Autumn, 1994), pp. 405-406

Published by: Blackwell Publishing on behalf of the National Federation of Modern Language Teachers Associations

Stable URL: <http://www.jstor.org/stable/330142>

Accessed: 05/05/2008 11:27

Your use of the JSTOR archive indicates your acceptance of JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use, available at <http://www.jstor.org/page/info/about/policies/terms.jsp>. JSTOR's Terms and Conditions of Use provides, in part, that unless you have obtained prior permission, you may not download an entire issue of a journal or multiple copies of articles, and you may use content in the JSTOR archive only for your personal, non-commercial use.

Please contact the publisher regarding any further use of this work. Publisher contact information may be obtained at <http://www.jstor.org/action/showPublisher?publisherCode=black>.

Each copy of any part of a JSTOR transmission must contain the same copyright notice that appears on the screen or printed page of such transmission.

JSTOR is a not-for-profit organization founded in 1995 to build trusted digital archives for scholarship. We enable the scholarly community to preserve their work and the materials they rely upon, and to build a common research platform that promotes the discovery and use of these resources. For more information about JSTOR, please contact support@jstor.org.

are given. The authors show the same good sense in their use of the informal polite (-yo) style for most expressions, since it changes little and is least likely to cause embarrassment.

The main dictionary is followed by a short Korean-English glossary designed to give the English speaker some ability to decode spoken expressions. The next section contains a topical dictionary of twenty-two pages where important vocabulary, e.g., "go away," "stop thief" (p. 160), is arranged under thirty-six categories for easy reference. Entries appear first in *hangul*, on the assumption that most of these terms will be encountered in print. This leads to my only criticism: in view of the attention lavished on vocabulary and grammar, it is hard to understand why no effort is made to teach *hangul*. Less than one page is given to describing it, when the whole system could be taught well in five pages, giving the traveler a fast and useful means of getting into the real culture. Although it would not aid verbal communication, a modest investment in *hangul* would give instant access to the sounds of shop signs, billboards, road markers, and thousands of English words recently borrowed into the language.

Hippocrene's *Korean* is a highly focused tool for travelers and the best of its genre. Although it is not a textbook per se, a dark thought occurred to me while paging through it: how useful it would be, were it not for probable copyright restrictions, to extract three hundred of the most practical phrases and introduce them into a second-year Korean language class. I suspect the exercise would do more for proficiency and student interest than any of the drills given in standard textbooks.

WILLIAM C. HANNAS
Georgetown University

CAMPBELL, GEORGE. *Compendium of the Worlds Languages. Volume I. Abaza to Lusatian. Volume II. Maasai to Zuni*. London/New York: Routledge, 1991. Pp. xxvi, 1574. \$250.00, cloth.

Campbell's stated goal in this book is to show "the surface diversity of languages . . . [with] the underlying consensus [i.e. similarity] . . . as a corollary" (p. viii), and he does succeed, though the result is not without problems. Campbell surveys 290 languages in all, giving a four- to eight-page description for each, with

brief accounts of the extent and members of some fifty language groups (genetically or geographically defined), and includes a useful appendix on writing systems. He thus covers an enormous amount of linguistic territory.

Each description has information on the geography and demography of the language, its history, its writing system and literature (if any), its phonological inventory (using IPA symbols), and the major inflectional categories, with some representative paradigmatic forms for articles, nouns, adjectives, pronouns, and verbs. There are also brief remarks on syntax, typically noting adpositions and basic word order, and where available, a sample text, usually John 1-8, is appended (though with no glosses, its utility is limited).

This was undoubtedly a difficult book to write, because Campbell was often dependent on secondary sources and his interpretation of them. His accounts seem generally accurate, but, perhaps inevitably, there are errors and misleading statements, partly due to the necessary superficiality of the sketches and most likely, inaccuracies in his sources.

I sampled Campbell's success with three languages I know reasonably well, with mixed results. All contain much that is accurate, although misstatements and omissions occur. He clearly misunderstands the nature of the Cree obviative, equating it with accusatives in a language like Latin (when it can actually be subject or object, under appropriate conditions). He also says Plains Cree is an *l*-dialect, though it shows /y/ not /l/ as a reflex of Proto-Algonquian *l; the *m* he identifies as part of the possessive markers is rather a stem-extension found with only some nouns. For Modern Greek, he says the phone [g] is rare, though it is no rarer than [ts] or [dz], and he confounds orthography and phonology, saying [ps, ks, gz] are affricates (they are instead clusters that happen to be spelled with a single letter, and [gz] arises only from /ks/ after /n/). The section on stress deals exclusively with orthographic representation, but does not make that clear. Finally, he suggests the presence of a past tense prefix (the argument) depends on person/number when, in fact, it occurs only for a small number of verbs and the link to person/number is actually derivative, generally dependent on a word's syllable count. For Albanian, the admirative mood should be explained; <rr> is phonetically a voiced apical trill liquid, not (geminate??) [rr]; the definite article is affixal/enclitic within the noun phrase, not on the noun alone; finally,

some of the noun forms are wrong and no mention is made of the ablative case.

All in all, this book is a good try, and it will certainly interest many readers. For specialists, though, the descriptions are superfluous and undoubtedly will often annoy with their superficiality, erroneous facts, and interpretations. However, it could be of value to nonspecialists in some areas of language studies, whether linguistics, pedagogy, or literature, simply by providing a starting point for a brief take on various languages. Thus, though imperfect and to be used with caution, Campbell's compendium is worth looking into.

BRIAN D. JOSEPH
Ohio State University

Responsibility and Evidence in Oral Discourse. Ed. Jane H. Hill & Judith T. Irvine. Cambridge: Cambridge Univ. Press, 1992. Pp. viii, 316. \$19.95, paper.

This volume contains twelve articles by some of today's most active scholars in the field of anthropological linguistics. The papers are remarkably united in assessing the contribution of interaction to meaning and investigating the poorly understood mechanisms used by speakers to indicate responsibility and validity. Hill and Irvine provide an erudite introduction that explains the issues addressed by the twelve papers and linkages to work in the ethnography of speaking, speech act theory, conversational analysis, literary criticism (especially Bakhtinian), and even formal linguistics. The twelve case studies examine diverse aspects of oral discourse in a variety of speech communities.

The first two papers demonstrate that a speaker's intentions often count for little in oral discourse. Alessandro Duranti describes one Samoan speech event to show how words are considered actions, not intentions, and how the interpretation of meaning becomes a collective activity. John Du Bois argues that in the ritual speech of divination sessions among the Yoruba, Azande, and Sisala of Africa, speech is determined by traditional texts and chance results beyond the diviner's control.

The next two papers demonstrate the association of specific linguistic features with the notion of responsibility. Wallace Chafe's study of Seneca examines the linguistic characteris-

tics of three styles that form a continuum of decreasing speaker responsibility and greater remote authority for the content expressed. Joel Kuiper explores the ritual speech of a divination performance and placation rite among the Weyewa of Indonesia, where a poetic style with identifiable characteristics evokes the voice of the ancestors and serves to remove responsibility from the immediate performance.

An intriguing study that invites parallel research in other communities is Irvine's paper on verbal abuse among the Wolof of Senegal. Using two very different modes of discourse, she explores the roles of directness and indirectness in expressing insults and the use of mitigating devices to avoid responsibility while dishing out the verbal abuse.

Four papers emphasize the functions of reported speech. Amy Shuman provides a lengthy interpretation of reports of conflicts by US junior high school students and their perceptions of who has the authority to report on experience. Niko Besnier's investigation of the Polynesian community of Nukulaelae examines several linguistic features of discourse to show that speakers, in reporting what another has said, are able to maintain the degree of their own responsibility for the content. Richard Bauman's "Disclaimers of Performance" studies the performance of one man who was asked to recount yarns told by accomplished storytellers and shows how the individual repeatedly avoids responsibility by citing his lack of knowledge and poor performance skills. Hill and Ofelia Zepeda investigate a long discourse by a Tohono O'odham woman of Arizona who explains that her nineteen-year-old son has not yet graduated from high school. This tour de force discourse analysis documents one person's use of multiple discourse resources, especially reported speech, to minimize her own responsibility for the situation and to diffuse responsibility among others.

The final three articles focus on evidence. Edward Bendix's study of the Newari language of Nepal, utilizing speakers' provision of contexts for sentences containing specific evidential morphemes, describes the system of Newari evidence marking and shows how speakers may manipulate this system in interactions with others. In a short essay on evidentiary standards in US courts, Susan Philips describes the legal constraints on trial evidence and discusses the origins of these constraints. Finally, Tullio Maranhão's excursus on earlier fieldwork among Brazilian fishermen recognizes in hindsight the