

## REVIEWS

A GRAMMAR OF BELLA COOLA. By Philip W. Davis and Ross Saunders. University of Montana Occasional Papers in Linguistics, no. 13. Missoula: University of Montana, 1997. Pp. vii + 190.

THE LILLOOET LANGUAGE: PHONOLOGY, MORPHOLOGY, SYNTAX. By Jan van Eijk. Vancouver: University of British Columbia Press, 1997. Pp. xxx + 282.

The last two decades of the twentieth century saw the publication of several major reference works on Salishan languages (e.g., Czaykowska-Higgins and Kinkade 1997 and Kroeber 1999), including a number of dictionaries (e.g., Kinkade 1991, Bates, Hess, and Hilbert 1994, Thompson and Thompson 1996, and Mattina 1997) and grammars (e.g., Nater 1984, Thompson and Thompson 1992, and Galloway 1993). In its own way, each of these works has had to strike an uneasy balance between the need for comprehensive, detailed, and accessible documentation of a language and the need for theoretically relevant and original linguistic analysis. In the case of Salishan languages, the tension between these two goals is made more acute by the fact that this language family is not only theoretically interesting and typologically unusual but is also severely endangered, the majority of surviving Salishan languages having fewer than 20 fluent, elderly speakers. The two grammars under review here represent diametrically opposed responses to these issues, and the contrast between them raises questions about the responsibilities of linguists working with endangered languages both to their profession and to the communities they work with.

Davis and Saunders's *A Grammar of Bella Coola* falls clearly on the theoretical side of the divide. It is a concise and challenging exposition of certain aspects of Bella Coola (Nuxalk) morphosyntax, couched in terms of an original analytical framework familiar from previous writings (e.g., Davis and Saunders 1986; 1989) and briefly expounded, using English examples, in the first chapter of this book. The next chapter turns to Bella Coola and outlines what are generally termed clause structure and argument structure, though here these together are referred to as PROPOSITIONAL ORGANIZATION. PROPOSITIONAL ORGANIZATION manifests itself on two distinct levels, the semantic level of the EVENT and the grammatical level of the PROPOSITION. The realization of event PARTICIPANTS in the clause depends on their NUCLEARITY or PERIPHERALITY both to the EVENT and in the PROPOSITION itself. This idea is most transparent on the PROPOSITIONAL level, where the concepts of NUCLEARITY and PERIPHERALITY capture the distinction in Salishan studies between the direct and the indirect, or oblique, complement, e.g.:

(1a) <i>kaw-is</i>	<i>ti-?imlk-tx</i>	<i>ti-yatn-tx</i>
bring-3SG:3SG	DET-man-DET	DET-rattle-DET

'the man brought the rattle' (Davis and Saunders 1997:30)

- (1b) *kaw-im*                      *ti-yatn-tx*                      *x-ti-ʔimlk-tx*  
 bring-3SG:PASSIVE      DET-rattle-DET                      PREP-DET-man-DET  
 'the rattle was brought by the rattle'
- (1c) *kaw-a-∅*                      *ti-ʔimlk-tx*                      *x-ti-yatn-tx*  
 bring-ANTIPASSIVE-3SG      DET-man-DET                      PREP-DET-rattle-DET  
 'the man brings rattles'      (Davis and Saunders 1997:41)

The noun phrases in (1a) are direct complements in that, unlike the second arguments in (1b) and (1c), they are not introduced by a preposition; in Davis and Saunders's terms, the preposition-less arguments in (1) are NUCLEAR to the PROPOSITION, while the obliques contained in PPs are PERIPHERAL. Grammatical voices such as the passive (1b) and antipassive (1c) manipulate the PROPOSITIONAL PERIPHERALITY OF PARTICIPANTS in accordance with what is commonly termed the communicative or information structure of the utterances.

PERIPHERALITY to the EVENT is somewhat subtler. Morphosyntactic operations that manipulate EVENT-PERIPHERALITY include the affixation of *-amk-* and the middle voice *-m-*, which shift the focus of an utterance onto a semantic role that is not naturally considered to be NUCLEAR to a particular EVENT:

- (2a) *nuyamt-∅*      *ti-man-tx*                      *ʔut-ti-mna-s-tx*                      *x-ti-syut-tx*  
 sing-3SG      DET-father-DET                      PREP-DET-son-his-DET                      PREP-DET-song-DET  
 'the father sang the song to his son'
- (2b) *nuyamt-amk-is*      *ti-man-tx*                      *ti-syut-tx*                      *ʔut-ti-mna-s-tx*  
 sing-3SG:3G      DET-father-DET                      DET-song-DET                      PREP-DET-son-his-DET  
 'the father sang the song to his son'
- (2c) *nuyamt-m-is*      *ti-man-tx*                      *ti-mna-s-tx*                      *x-ti-syut-tx*  
 sing-MIDDLE-3SG      DET-father-DET                      DET-son-his-DET                      PREP-DET-song-DET  
 'the father his son the song'      (Davis and Saunders 1997:50)

The EVENT *nuyamt* 'sing' normally has only one NUCLEAR PARTICIPANT, the EXECUTOR, and therefore it is semantically, as well as syntactically, intransitive (cf. Hopper and Thompson 1980). The suffixes *-amk-* and *-m-* change the construal of the event so that the semantic roles of IMPLEMENT (2b) and EXPERIENCER (2c) become NUCLEAR, creating a semantically and syntactically transitive clause (cf. English *sing* and (2a) vs. *serenade* and (2c)). The theoretical treatment of the semantic shifts inherent in data sets like (2) has been a sticking point for many traditions of syntactic analysis, and the advantage of Davis and Saunders's framework is that it has been designed specifically to deal with these phenomena, which play such a fundamental role in Bella Coola grammar.

Chapter 3 continues in much the same vein, extending the theory and elaborating on the deictic system and the syntax of the noun phrase. As in the preceding chapter, the reading is challenging, and at a number of points in the exposition (for example, the discussion of modification in section 3.3), the reader begins to wonder if the exclusive use of novel terminology is entirely justified.<sup>1</sup> This impression is strongly

<sup>1</sup> At times, the invention and redefinition of terms runs a bit rampant—as, for instance, with the use of the term FOCUS as the counterpart to RHEME in section 2.9, whereas in most of the

reinforced in chapter 4, "Complex Expressions," where discussions of issues such as coreference between matrix and embedded clauses (e.g., sections 4.3.2, 4.3.3, and 4.4.2) would be considerably less opaque (and much more elegant) if standard concepts such as "subject" and "object" were invoked. On the whole, Davis and Saunders are successful in dealing with the syntactic phenomena they have targeted—frequently, however, their treatment of complex syntactic structures is unnecessarily difficult and, at times, seems daunting even for a professional linguist familiar with the language who has made the effort to follow the discussion from the very first pages. The educated layperson or non-Salishanist who looks to the book for an explication of a particular aspect of Bella Coola syntax will find the going much tougher.

As a theoretical treatise on aspects of Bella Coola morphosyntax, the book is something of a triumph, perhaps the only truly successful attempt to create a "Salishan-o-centric" theory of syntax (an antidote to the more familiar Eurocentric theories that plague the field). Unfortunately, as a **grammar**, it is something of a failure both in terms of breadth of coverage and in usability as a reference volume for researchers. Someone looking for information on prepositions, for instance, would be forced to piece together information from a number of locations in the book, the most substantive (but not comprehensive) of which is mixed in with a six-page discussion of PERIPHERALITY which would be incomprehensible to someone who had not read the preceding 31 pages. Likewise, the rich and expressive morphology of the language is discussed only insofar as it is relevant to PROPOSITIONAL ORGANIZATION, and virtually no mention (beyond a table and some cursory discussion on pages 182–83) is made of the elaborate system of particles or enclitics, which (as in most Central Northwest Coast languages) have important and interesting semantic and syntactic properties. Of course, this is not to say that the authors have not succeeded in the goals they set for themselves—that they have; but it seems a shame that they have chosen to represent their work as a grammar when a title along the lines of *Aspects of Bella Coola Syntax or Proposition, Participant, and Peripherality in Bella Coola* would have been more appropriate.

In contrast to the limited focus of Davis and Saunders's book, Jan van Eijk's *The Lillooet Language* presents a concise and exhaustive structuralist description of the phonology and morphosyntax of the Lillooet Salish (St'át'imcets) language. Ideally suited to descriptive work, this approach allows van Eijk to present data representing the majority (rather than a theoretically tractable subset) of the morphological and morphonemic patterns attested in his data base, and to do so in a way that allows others access to the linguistic facts that would have to be accounted for by a more theory-specific analysis. The result is a thorough explication of the phonological and morphological regularities of the language mixed in with a profusion of the (occasionally overwhelming) detail and minutiae that are often dispensed with in more theory-oriented attempts to create linguistic order out of the semi-chaos of natural language.

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rest of the literature (e.g., Halliday 1970, Hajičová 1975, and Mel'čuk, to appear), the counterpart of RHEME is THEME or TOPIC, the latter term being frequently opposed to the more common use of FOCUS, which is generally treated as loosely equivalent to RHEME.

The only point at which van Eijk deviates from his essentially descriptive approach is, unfortunately, in his treatment of the phonological inventory—a decision which has consequences for the rest of the book in that it conditions his choice of phonetic symbols. In many cases, these symbols depart quite radically from the usage dictated by the IPA—as, for instance, the use of /z/ for a voiced dental fricative (described as roughly equivalent to the English /ð/) or the use of /c/ instead of /tʃ/ or even the Americanist /č/. This is not to advocate slavish adherence to the IPA, but the use of a standardized, easily recognizable set of phonetic symbols is helpful to linguists interested in intrafamilial comparison and other users who wish to dip into the grammar without having to reconstruct the meanings of the symbols from van Eijk's in-text phonetic descriptions.

Once the reader has become accustomed to the idiosyncrasies of the transcription system, however, the grammar's merits become obvious. Its traditional tripartite organization into separate sections on phonology, morphology, and syntax and the familiar subgroupings within these topics allow the quick and easy access to information on specific topics that is crucial in a comprehensive reference work. The presentation, while at times bordering on terse, does full credit to the richness of the Lillooet language and seems to at least touch on every major theme in the grammar at and below the level of the word. As is often the case in structuralist grammars, syntax receives short shrift (a scant 25 of 250 pages), which at times obscures important themes such as the workings of the highly complex person-marking system, number marking, and various types of subordination. These are treated primarily in terms of their word-level morphology and receive only cursory attention at the sentence and textual levels, requiring the reader to piece together bits of information from various places in the book in order to form a picture of how they function as integrated morphosyntactic systems.

This is a minor drawback and would be easily corrected by the publication of a substantial annotated text collection and a comprehensive dictionary, both of which I hope we can expect from van Eijk in the future. Together, these works would place Lillooet among the best-documented languages of the Pacific Northwest, and *The Lillooet Language* is a first-rate model for the morphosyntactic component of the Boas-ian triptych. Unfortunately, Davis and Saunders's *A Grammar of Bella Coola* is not nearly so successful and, in fact, does not significantly advance the cause of the documentation of the Bella Coola language. Their earlier text collection (Davis and Saunders 1980) was outstanding in this regard, but as a reference work their present effort falls short of the existing grammar (Nater 1984—a thorough but rather terse structuralist treatment, no longer in print) or what the authors might have accomplished given their nearly 35 years of experience with the language. In the absence of a comprehensive dictionary, Bella Coola remains grossly underdocumented and, given the rapidly dwindling number of native speakers, is in imminent danger of being lost forever. As important as theoretical analysis is, it seems that the more urgent need at present is for documentation and conservation. Theories die even faster than languages: the enduring legacy of the fieldworker is the record of the language itself, and it is on this record, rather than our theorizing, that future generations of speakers, language learners, and linguists will depend.

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