George Huttar and Kenneth Gregerson (eds.), Pragmatics in
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Review by William A. Foley. The Australian National University.

This volume is a collection of essays written by Summer
Institute of Linguistics members working in languages from a number
of geographical areas, notably South America, the Pacific and
Africa. All the essays discuss topics in what can be very loosely
termed the `pragmatics´ of these languages. The topics range from
typical core areas of pragmatics, such as speech acts, to those
which would more generally be described as belonging to
sociolinguistics. The expressed aim of the volume is to provide
data from these exotic non-western languages to be used in the
construction of a general theory of pragmatics. I will discuss
briefly each article and comment on its potential contribution to
this task.

Headland´s `Social rank and Tunebo requests´ is one of the
papers which just as properly belongs to sociolinguistics. The
author describes the formal features of request speech acts in
this South American language and then correlates these formal
differences with the semantic components in the explication of
the speech act of requesting. He then goes on to discuss how the
variants in the forms of requests correlate with the social rank of
the addressee in the Tunebo social hierarchy; i.e. requests made to
social superiors have some different formal properties from those
addressed to social inferiors. This paper is an interesting example
of how the analysis of a language´s pragmatic system requires
crucial input from information about the social organization of the

speakers of the language and is an important contribution to a sociolinguistic theory of speech acts.

The next paper `The use of reported speech in Saramaccan discourse' by Naomi Glack discusses the different functions of direct and indirect speech in this South American creole. She finds that direct speech is used as a foregrounding device, to highlight information belonging to the main argument or to show strong emotion, while indirect speech is, conversely, a backgrounding device, to reinforce an argument given previously in direct speech or to supply peripheral information. This paper supplies data on still another device used in the languages of the world to express the contrast between foregrounded and backgrounded information in ongoing discourse. Other devices previously presented in the linguistic literature include voice oppositions (active versus passive), aspect contrasts (imperfective versus perfective) or syntactic relationship (subordination versus coordination).

The issue of speech acts is again dealt with in Joyce Hudson's essay `An analysis of illocutionary verbs in Walmatjari'. This is a detailed and finely grained analysis of the meaning of speech act verbs in this Australian language, using Wierzbicka's semantic primitives approach (Wierzbicka 1980). This approach is especially useful in the analysis of speech act verbs because it allows one to tease out subtle semantic differences among them and to state these differences in an explicit and intuitively verifiable metalanguage. Hudson's article is an important contribution to the development of a cross-linguistically valid theory of speech acts. Because the meanings of the Walmatjari speech act verbs are stated so explicitly, they can be compared with anologous verbs in English and other languages, with both language differences and potential universals noted.

Hartmut Wiens' paper `Please be specific: a functional description of non-marking particles in Limos Kalinga' describes the semantic differences encoded by the choice of various nominal

modifiers. Limos Kalinga, a language of the northern Philippines, has a very interesting contrast in its deictic system, not to my knowledge attested elsewhere. Wiens phrases this contrast in terms of what he calls `exophoric and endophoric reference´. If the referent of a nominal is said to be within the context of the ongoing discourse, that is, visible, observable, a living participant or one in an ongoing event, or a place known to exist contemporaneously, then the nominal is marked with the form for endophoric reference. If, conversely, the referent is outside of the context of the discourse, more specifically, invisible or otherwise not observable, deceased, or not a participant in a contemporaneous event, then the form for exophoric reference is required. This contrast is clearly related to that of visible or invisible referents more commonly found in the deictic systems of languages like Kwakiutl. This Limos Kalinga distinction is quite likely related to those operative in the unusual deictic system of its linguistic congener, Kawi or Old Javanese (see Becker and Oka 1974). Wiens´ paper provides important new data to be considered in the construction of a typology of deictic systems in the world´s languages.

The next paper by Betty Loos, entitled `Self-correction in Capanahua´, returns to the question of discourse structures. Loos is at pains to describe how speakers of Capanahua, another South American language, repair errors in ongoing narrative discourses. She shows there are different strategies of repair depending on the nature of the error. There are two basic types of errors: grammatical errors, those in the concatenation of words or morphemes, and lexical errors, those concerning choice of the lexical item and its semantic content. The former are repaired by going back and restating the word or form in question, but with the proper correction(s). The latter are corrected by an interjection like `what is it´ or `I said´, followed by the right lexical selection. These data provide important new information on speech

errors and their relevance for linguistic analysis (for example,
Loos points out the manner in which Capanahua speakers repair
grammatical errors provides important evidence for what counts as a
word in this language) and they also illustrate features of
language performance in the construction of text cohesion in yet
another language.

Ger Reesink's `Being negative can be positive' is the best in
the volume, a true gem. The author's expressed intent is to provide
a contrastic analysis for the behavior of negation in English and
Usan, a Papuan language of New Guinea, but he actually ends up
accomplishing much more than this. With regard to negation, Reesink
demonstates that Usan, an SOV language, is in many ways the mirror
image of SVO English. For example, a negative in the first of two
conjoined clauses in English can often have only the second clause
within its scope: I did not hit the child and drive on does not
actually deny the first proposition `I hit the child', but rather
the second, `I drove on' (after I hit the child). Usan is the
opposite. A negative in the second of two clauses need not negate
it, but may negate only the previous one: I dog hit not died in
Usan may mean `I didn't hit the dog, although it died', in which
only the first proposition is denied by the negative in the second
clause. In developing his analysis of negation in Usan, Reesink has
to consider a number of issues which has bedevilled students of
Papuan and other languages, such as how the embedding of a clause
relates to its presuppositional status and how to establish and
measure the closeness of linking between joined clauses, especially
as this is viewed culturally according to the sequence of actions
involved. I cannot begin to summarize here the richness of his data
and the clarity of his insights. I can simply urge all linguists
regardless of theoretical persuasions or interests to read it.

The next paper `Outline of a practical frame of reference for
a sociolinguistic analysis in an African context' by Suzanne Lafage
is, as the title suggests, one of the papers which properly belongs

to sociolinguistics. Lafage discusses a number of social variables in the African context which must be taken into account in any analysis of the social basis for variation in African languages. The social factors she mentions will by and large be familiar to sociolinguists from studies done in other parts of the world, but this paper provides still more useful input for the eventual articulation of a full sociolinguistic theory of language use.

The final essay in the volume is `Social context and Mampruli greetings´ by Anthony Naden. This is a very detailed and careful description of the proper performance of greetings, both linguistically and paralinguistically, in this West African society, using flow charts as a (somewhat confusing) formalism in which to couch his description. Naden provides a great deal of social information which is necessary to explain the form and context of the greeting rituals, and because of the careful description of the paralinguistic features of the rituals, provides data that students of proxemics will find interesting. Many of these features can be compared usefully with greeting rituals in other, very different societies, such as Japan.

In sum, this is a volume of articles which cohere rather loosely under the rubric of pragmatics. Some articles are brilliant, others, middling, but all present some data or analyses which are worthwhile. Linguists will find one or two articles in this volume which will pique their interest and which will profit them, and so I feel no qualms in recommending it generally.

REFERENCES

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