UvA-DARE (Digital Academic Repository)

Preface

Link to publication

ASTRID ALEXANDER-BAKKERUS (AMSTERDAM), OTTO ZWARTJES (AMSTERDAM)

Preface

1. Introduction

The present volume of the STUF series is a follow-up of the workshop "Americanists in the Netherlands" and the IVth meeting of the Research group "Revitalising Older Linguistic Documentation" (ROLD, ACLC, Amsterdam Centre of Language and Communication), held on May 12th, 2011, at the University of Amsterdam. The workshop/ meeting was an overwhelming success, and a wide range of interesting older linguistic documentation about a variety of languages was presented at the workshop. However, the decision was made to restrict the contributions to the book to those concerning descriptions and reconstructions of Amerindian languages, including Sandwich.

This volume also came about thanks to the cooperation of Hella Olbertz as a co-organiser of the meeting. She has also refereed some contributions, made a new style sheet and wrote conveniently arranged guidelines. The editors would also like to express their gratitude to the general editor of the STUF series.

1.1. Unpublished manuscripts

In a number of articles presented in this volume the study of the language at issue is based on texts that have not been published yet. The texts concerning unpublished data are the following:

- a Nootka and a Sandwich word list from the Franciscan Fray Lorenzo Socies (? – ?), copied in 1797. Nootka was the first colonial settlement in British Columbia, the only Spanish settlement established in the territories which today belong to Canada; Sandwich is the name given to the Hawaiian Islands by James Cook in one of his voyages in 1778;

- a Northern Valley Yokuts catechism, written in what is called the *Lengua de los Llanos*, most likely the variety spoken by the Lokobo tribe, composed at Misión Santa Cruz. The handwriting of the catechism has been identified by Johnson as that of the Franciscan Father Andrés Quintana (1777–1812) in ca. 1810;
- a vocabulary of Spanish, Quechua and Jebero, more than likely from the pen of the Jesuit missionary Samuel Fritz (1654–1726);

In the articles, the contents of the manuscripts mentioned above are thoroughly studied, so that, by means of this publication, their significance is brought to light and made accessible to a larger public.

1.2. Extinct and moribund languages

Many of the languages documented in colonial and post-colonial times are now extinct or moribund. The documents containing such languages are valuable and we cherish them, because they are the only sources of information about the languages at issue. Thanks to them we can still study these languages, so that we can form an idea of how they looked like, and revitalise them in a linguistic analysis. In this volume, at least some aspects of the following extinct languages are thus revitalised and re-examined: Apolista, Historical Baure, Joaquiniano, Paikoneka, Saraveka (Danielsen) and Rokorona (Birchall).

The moribund languages re-examined in this book are Baure and Paunaka (Danielsen), Jebero (Alexander-Bakkerus), Nootka (Fernández Rodríguez), and Northern Valley Yokuts (Smith & Johnson).

It should be noted that both Birchall and Danielsen choose indigenous languages of Bolivia as the subject of their article. Birchall succeeds to classify Rokorona into the Chapacuran language family. Danielson also mentions Rokorona in a footnote and remarks that the language has been difficult to classify properly, which is now corrected by the findings of Birchall. The Bolivian languages discussed by Danielsen belong to the Arawakan language family.

It should also be noted that both Fernández Rodríguez and Smith & Johnson worked on indigenous languages of Nothern America. Smith & Johnson report that the notebook containing their Northern Valley Yokuts catechism also contains a Nootka and a Sandwich word list, but that these wordlists are from a different version than the ones studied by Fernández Rodríguez. Yokuts also differs from Nootka in that that they are part of different language families: Yokuts belongs to the Yokutsan family, Nootka to the Wakashan family.

1.3. Colonial grammars and wordlists: a transmission of religion

The arrival of the Europeans and the subsequent colonization has unmistakably changed the so-called New-World. One of the most striking changes is that of religion. When at the end of the 15th century, and later on, European explorers and colonisers entered the 'New World', they were accompanied and followed by missionaries eager to bring the 'right faith' to the 'poor savages'. According to these superseded, Eurocentric views America also was a 'waste' land which was waiting for them, so that it could be 'cultivated', viz. christianised. Colonization thus involved Christianization.

In order to be able to preach the Word of God and to translate the Bible, prayers, and other religious texts, the missionaries had to learn the languages of the people. Therefore they needed a grammar and a vocabulary of the languages at issue, which resulted in a large production of *Artes* (colonial grammars) and dictionaries in all conceivable kinds of Amerindian languages. Unfortunately, many of these works have been lost and many of the languages described are extinct (see section 1.2 above).

For instance, a great part of Danielsen's material and all the other documents treated in this volume are colonial documents written by missionaries. The religious purpose they aimed at, conversion to Christianity, is clearly demonstrated by the choice of the texts translated into the indigenous language: prayers (Birchall's description of Rokorona is based on three prayers: Ave Maria, Pater Noster and Credo), and the Christian Doctrine (see the catechism of Northern Valley Yokuts analyzed by Smith and Johnson).

The colonial grammars and dictionaries also show that they were written to serve this goal. The grammars often contain a Christian doctrine or a part of the doctrine, and the examples illustrating linguistic phenomena of the Amerindian language often are parts of prayers, biblical verses and phrases from the liturgy and the doctrine. This is also the case in the vocabularies, where many entries belong to an ecclesiastical semantic field: confession, matrimony, churchgoing, etc. The following articles are actually based on colonial grammars and wordlists written by missionaries:
- Alexander-Bakkerus's description of Jebero is based on a Spanish-Quechua-Xebero vocabulary written by a Jesuit priest;
 - Danielsen's data of historical Baure come from two Jesuit grammar sketches, and her data of Saraveka partly come from a wordlist written by the Franciscan Fray José Cardús;
- Fernández Rodríguez description of Nootka and Sandwich is based on the wordlists of the Franciscan friar Francisco Socies.

1.4. Colonial grammars and wordlists: a bilateral transmission of culture

Besides transmitting religious thoughts and being "un instrumento de la evangeli-zación" 'an instrument of evangelization' (see Zimmermann 1997: 15), colonial linguistic documents also transmitted a non-religious range of thoughts. Since the missionaries were educated in Europe, where Latin was the language of the church and of the humanities, it is inevitable that this cultural background is reflected in the *Artes* and the dictionaries they wrote. This cultural baggage comes to light in the sorts of words occurring in the grammars and vocabularies, sc. words concerning European concepts (such as 'a week', 'cruel', 'horse', 'judge', 'prison', 'marriage', 'mayor', 'shirt', 'shoes', 'soap', 'testimony', 'to give false evidence', 'to fornicate', 'uneducated'), and in the way the indigenous languages are described, viz. "in terms of a Latin model" (Smith-Stark 2009: 4).

However, this cultural transmission is not unilateral. It also occurs the other way round, not compellingly, but under the skin. When the missionaries tried to translate European and Catholic concepts into an indigenous language, they had to search for an equivalent in the object language; and when they tried to describe the complex structure of an Amerindian language by means of the Latin model they were faced with difficulties. Through this searching of equivalents and facing with difficulties they came in contact with a completely different 'world', cf. Sapir, cited by Chandler (1994):

"[...] the 'real world' is to a large extent unconsciously built upon the language habits of the group. No two languages are ever sufficiently similar to be considered as representing the same social reality. The worlds in which different societies live are distinct worlds, not merely the same world with different labels attached [...]".

They thus became aware of a totally different range of thoughts, which they had to bear in mind in order to be able to deliver an adequate translation and a right description of the language in question.

1.5. A colonised world revisited

The article of Danielsen is an example of the lively interest shown by European linguists and ethnographers in indigenous languages in post-colonial times. The material concerning Apolista and Paikoneka, and a large part of the material of Saraveka, handled in Danielsen's paper, have been documented by European researchers (Chamberlain, Créqui-Montfort, d'Orbigny, Métraux, Natterer, Nordenskiöld, Rivet) in the post-colonial era. These scholars did not came to propagate the Roman Catholic faith as the

missionaries did, but to broaden their horizon. Their aim was scientific: they wanted to study those indigenous languages with their exotic sounds and their extraordinary structures. The worthwhile studies of these linguists and ethnographers have contributed to a standardization of the symbolization of sounds (IPA), and they have given us an insight into all kinds of linguistic structures and phenomena.

Amsterdam

The editors, December 2012

REFERENCES

Chandler, David. 1994. "The Sapir-Whorf Hypothesis". Internet:
     www.aber.ac.uk/media/Documents/short/whorf.html

Smith-Clark, Thomas C. 2009. Lexicography in New Spain (1492-1611). In Otto Zwartjes, Ramón Arzápalo Marín, Thomas C. Smith-Clark (eds.). 2009.3-82.

Zimmermann, Klaus. "Introducción. Apuntes para la historia de la lingüística de las lenguas amerindias". In Klaus Zimmerman (ed.). 1997. *La descripción de las lenguas amerindias en la época colonial*, pp. 9-17. Frankfurt am Main/ Madrid: Vervuert/ Iberoamericana.

Zwartjes, Otto, Ramón Arzápalo Marín & Thomas C. Smith-Stark, eds. 2009. *Missionary Linguistics IV/ Lingüística misionera IV. Lexicography. Selected papers from the Fifth International Conference on Missionary Linguistics, Mérida, Yucatán, March 2007.* [Studies in the History of the Language Sciences, vol. 114.] Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

Key words: Colonial Linguistics, Missionary linguistics, Revitalising, Linguistic documentation.
Languages and linguistic families: Apolista, Arawakan, Baure,. Chapacuran, Joaquiniano, Jebero, Nootka, Paikoneka, Rokorona, Sandwich, Saraveka, Yokuts