

Viktor Krupa, *The Polynesian Languages: A Guide*. Languages of Asia and Africa Series, Volume 4. London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1982. Pp. vii, 193, bibliography. \$17.95.

Viktor Krupa's *The Polynesian Languages: A Guide* is the revised translation of a volume with the same title (Krupa 1975), originally published by Nauka, Moscow, in a series entitled "Languages of the Peoples of Asia and Africa" (*Jazyki Narodov Azii i Afriki*). The monograph is a brief overview of the structure of Polynesian languages, and the audience it addresses is described as "linguists who do not know any of the Polynesian languages and need some information on them for their theoretical work," and, secondarily, "those who intend to study the Polynesian languages and want to get acquainted with their structure" (1).

The book consists of five main sections devoted to "Phonology" (chap. 2), "The Structure of the Morpheme" (chap. 3), "Word and Phrase" (chap. 4), "The Structure of the Sentence" (chap. 5), and "Vocabulary and Semantics" (chap. 6). Illustrations throughout the survey are taken principally from the better documented languages of the family (Tongan, Samoan, Maori, Hawaiian), although examples from languages about which less is known, such as Tahitian, Rapanui, and Niuean, are sometimes cited.

While the sections of the book vary greatly in the sophistication and detail of the discussion, the disappointing overall impression one gets from the book is of mediocrity and superficiality in both the presentation and the discussion. To cite but a few examples, the chapter on syntax only presents the very broad lines of the most well-known studies of Polynesian grammatical structures, which any curious newcomer to the field with access to a university library catalog would be able to locate readily anyway. The discussion of "Vocabulary and Semantics" makes no mention of the extensive body of literature on the implications of Polynesian kinship terminologies for ethno-semantic theories of meaning (Carroll 1966; Epling 1967; Epling, Kirk, and Boyd 1973; etc.), even though nearly a page and a half is devoted to kinship terminology (158-159). The section on phonology, instead of reviewing the interesting and still poorly understood problems raised by the phonological structure of the languages of the Polynesian family (such as those raised by Schütz 1970, 1978; Harlow 1982; and others), consists principally of long tables of sound correspondences and of the distinctive features of all consonantal phonemes for the major languages of the family (the value of which is not entirely clear to the reviewer). Finally, the survey

lacks any discussion of the growing and theoretically significant literature on Polynesian sociolinguistics and psycholinguistics (for example, the works of Duranti 1980, 1981; Keesing and Keesing 1956; Kernan 1974; Mitchell-Kernan and Kernan 1975; Salmond 1974), much of which was in print long before the publication of the survey.

While some of these lacunae may be attributed to production delays, many other shortcomings of the book are less easily forgivable. Much of the text deals with details that would mean very little to anyone not already familiar with the languages of Polynesia, and they would already know these details anyway. An important proportion of the chapter on morphology, for example, is devoted to listing the grammatical morphemes of the major languages of the family, much of which (apparently with a few revisions) appears to be lifted directly from comparative works like Pawley (1970), where they are much better contextualized. The same discussion of some of the features, furthermore, can be found in more than one section of the book, like the rather unenlightening discussion of the focus marker *ko* that appears on both pages 123 and 130. In short, this chapter (and most of the survey) adds nothing to our understanding of the structure of the languages in question, and is useless to the uninitiated reader. The more difficult task of providing the audience with an abstracted and theoretically contextualized overview of what is found in Polynesian languages is given no attention whatsoever.

Not only is this survey incomplete and poorly conceived, but it also contains a great deal of incorrect information and questionable assertions. One of my favorite examples is the analysis (52) of the Maori word *kaainga* ‘village’ as the nominalized form of the verb *kaa* ‘to burn’ (even though **-inga* does not resemble the nominalizing suffix discussed in the same paragraph), obviously the fabrication of an imaginative folk etymologist. It is also surprising to read from the pen of a contemporary linguist the statement “Before the advent of Europeans, Polynesian languages were vehicles of oral communication . . . Therefore simple, fairly short sentences are clearly predominant and complex sentences are rather infrequent” (139, emphasis added); obviously, the author has yet to experience the difficulties of analyzing the multiply embedded structures typically used by Polynesian speakers even in the most informal contexts.

To add insult to injury, the book contains countless misprints and inconsistencies, both in the English text and in the Polynesian examples: the same words appear in different forms in different parts of the book (Tongan for “scrutinize” is **vakaivakai* on page 49, *vakavakai* on page

98; only the latter is attested); the languages from which illustrations are drawn are misidentified (such as the Maori example identified as Rarotongan on page 74); linguistic terms are scrambled (/v, f, s, h/ are identified as stops on page 22); and so on. This, combined with the single font used to produce the camera-ready copy (examples are neither separated from the text nor underlined for clarity), makes the reading of this book extremely tedious, and the price of this 200-odd page paperback volume scandalous.

In addition to the list of references at the end of each chapter, the volume closes with a bibliography, most of which overlaps the reference lists. The general bibliography, however, is less than adequate as a working bibliography: many important works on Polynesian languages are missing (a couple of these are nevertheless cited in one of the lists following the chapters); some works are cited in manuscript form despite the fact that they have been in print sometimes for more than a decade; and the years between the publication of the first Russian edition of the book (1975) and the year of publication of the present edition are only scantily represented (despite the claim made on the back cover that this edition was "completely revised and updated").

Though the author conveniently makes no reference to it in this book, an earlier and very similar monograph of his, published and widely distributed by Mouton under the title *Polynesian Languages: A Survey of Research* (1973), was very poorly received in reviews by Chapin (1976) and Clark (1975), among others. Yet some of the inaccuracies and misrepresentations found by Chapin and Clark in that previous monograph (and also found in the original Russian version of the present survey) are corrected here, though sometimes only partially. The reviewers' assessments of the Mouton monograph obviously influenced the author in his preparation of this volume, but did not convince him that a complete rewriting was needed.

The much needed critical overview of the state of the art in Polynesian linguistic research has yet to be written.

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