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Munro: *Mojave Syntax; and Gorbet: A Grammar of Diegeño Nominals*

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Mojave Syntax. Pamela Munro. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., *Garland Studies in American Indian Linguistics*, 1976, xiii + 330 pp., \$33.00.

A Grammar of Diegueño Nominals. Larry Paul Gorbet. New York: Garland Publishing, Inc., *Garland Studies in American Indian Linguistics*, 1976, xiii + 237 pp., \$33.00.

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Mojave is spoken on both sides of the Colorado River, in California and Arizona, in the area between the towns of Blythe and Needles. Diegueño is spoken in southernmost California and across the border in northernmost Baja California. Both languages are members of Yuman, a large well-established family which, in turn, has been linked with other families and isolated languages in a less certain grouping called Hokan.

Munro's *Mojave Syntax* (henceforth MS) and Gorbet's *A Grammar of Diegueño Nominals* (GND) are, with slight revisions, the authors' 1974 doctoral dissertations at the University of California, San Diego (under the respective titles *Topics in Mojave Syntax* and *Relativization and Complementation in Diegueño: Noun Phrases as Nouns*).

There already exists a fine survey grammar of Diegueño (Langdon, 1970, of the Mesa Grande dialect, which might be consulted for more of an overall view of the language). Gorbet, therefore, restricts himself to enough of a sketch of Diegueño to enable the reader to understand the GDN without outside reference and then launches into his original contributions: a more detailed description and analysis of nominal constructions (this is not a narrow domain but embraces a major portion of Diegueño grammar), relating his analysis to syntactic theory, and revealing more of the

previously little-known Imperial Valley dialect. One 56-page chapter is devoted to comparisons with similar structures in other languages, primarily in English (these are brought in also throughout the GDN) and Japanese (also dealt with in other scattered spots); and, to a minor extent, with Bambara (of West Africa), Lahu (of Southeast Asia), and some Indian languages of the American Southwest. Gorbet's work is at its finest, in my opinion, in his detailed tracing of how each of the six noun case suffixes may have developed into their additional roles as complementizers, subordinate clause formatives.

There was no grammatical description of Mohave before Munro's work; consequently, the MS furnishes an introduction to the language more comprehensive than that in the GDN: case, person and number markers, pronouns, modals, syntactic affixes, word order, etc. Then the MS focuses on selected syntactic features among which, as in the GDN, nominalizations dominate (the discussion of them occupies over 40% of the MS volume). Besides including many types of relative clauses, nominalizations are postulated to be involved in pluralization, tense, aspect, in passive, causative and benefactive constructions and, in effect, in almost all Mojave sentences. What appears to be the main clause of a sentence is postulated to be underlyingly (or historically) a nominalization complementing a higher verb, BE or DO, which surfaces only in certain cases in present-day Mojave.

Both works are competent in their genre and should be of interest to linguists concerned with current investigations in syntax, language universals, and typology, and also with historical-comparative work, primarily within Yuman, secondarily further afield within Hokan. Points are well-illustrated with examples in an underlying form (there are few morphophonemic complications in either language). The analyses seem to depend very heavily on elicited sentences, very little on

material from free texts. Breadth of descriptive coverage is given up for greater depth of explanation in selected problem areas.

Explanation as used in these works has several facets. Sometimes it appears to be essentially a recapitulation of the investigator's discovery and decision-making process. Often it is the presentation of alternative analyses, some drawn from proposed language universals or similar phenomena in other languages, with arguments for and against each, usually leading to the favoring of one interpretation and a theoretical inference. Or, the argumentation may be on some language-specific problem of relating elements which share some phonetic similarity but are rather divergent semantically. This line of investigation easily flows into the domain of historical speculation. That there is a limit (admittedly fuzzy and varying among linguists) to which an analysis can be pushed is illustrated by Gorbet with a suffix in the Imperial Valley dialect of Diegueño: [bIs] 'but' could be assigned an underlying form *ps* and, by straining the semantic connection somewhat, be related to the demonstrative/indefinite *pu* plus the emphatic suffix *-s*. The effort would probably

be misleading, for it is quite likely that [bIs] is a borrowing from Spanish *pues* 'since; then,' as pointed out in the GDN (pp. 101-102).

There are a few scattered typographical mistakes in the English text of both volumes, which should be obvious to most readers and not interfere with comprehension. I would not recognize mistakes in the Yuman examples but noted several in the chart of Diegueño phonemes (GDN p. 3); namely the omission of the glottal stop (symbolized by an apostrophe elsewhere in the GDN), and the omission of the dots under *n* and *l* which distinguish the alveolar consonants from the dental.

I suppose we should be grateful to Garland Publishing, Inc., for undertaking the publication and distribution of technical works on little-known languages, but \$33 per volume seems grossly beyond the prices prevailing for such works, especially so because the authors had to furnish the copy ready for photo-offset reproduction.

REFERENCES

- Langdon, Margaret
1970 A Grammar of Diegueño: The Mesa Grande Dialect. UCPL 66.

