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En conclusion, les auteurs reviennent sur les défis mais font aussi miroiter les possibilités de développement harmonieux qui attendent les habitants et les autres bénéficiaires de l'entente. En effet, à peine 37% des quelque 7000 ayants droit inuit vivent présentement à l'intérieur des limites du Nunatsiavut (p.10) et l'identité autrefois étroitement liée à l'utilisation du territoire et de ses ressources s'est complexifiée, de sorte que l'approche préconisée par le gouvernement des Inuit devra être souple et inclusive, à défaut de quoi son administration des terres et des ressources pourrait être mise en péril.

En somme, ce collectif s'avère très important puisqu'il traite de la survie d'une culture, d'un mode de vie et d'une petite population marginalisée dont le territoire officiel se limite désormais à une section bien délimitée de la frange maritime du Labrador. Sauf au chapitre 5, il s'agit de données inédites et d'une mise à jour importante puisque rien d'aussi étoffé n'a paru depuis le monumental collectif publié sous la direction de Brice-Bennett (1977). Cette nouvelle publication devrait combler les attentes de tous les lecteurs intéressés par l'archéologie, l'histoire et le devenir des peuples autochtones et du Grand Nord.

Référence

Brice-Bennett, Carol (dir.)

1977 *Our Footprints are Everywhere: Inuit Land Use and Occupancy in Labrador*, Nain, Labrador Inuit Association.

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WEINSTEIN, Charles

2010 *Parlons Tchouktche. Une langue de Sibérie*, Paris, L'Harmattan, 241 pages.

This book, the title of which can be translated into English as "Let's speak Chukchi. A language of Siberia," is one of the popular "Parlons..." series, by the Parisian publisher L'Harmattan. This series apparently aims to present relatively nontechnical accounts of a variety of languages, usually with some pedagogical component, and their sociohistorical, sociopolitical, or ethnographic context, for the general non-linguist public. It is therefore remarkable that Chukchi, a little known and endangered language of the Chukotko-Kamchatkan family of the Russian Far East, would be presented in this series to the French-speaking public. It is, indeed, the only monograph on this language in French, and one of the few in a language other than Russian.

The book starts with a small map, a brief historical introduction, and then, without overarching chapters, goes on with unnumbered sections on phonetics, the pronunciation (of the standard Cyrillic alphabet used in Russia for Chukchi), various phonological processes, male and female speech, morphological typology, noun formation, the plural, noun inflection, adjectives, adverbs, determiners, numerals, postpositions, personal pronouns, inflection and derivation of verbs, participles, gerunds, deverbal adjectives, and comparatives. The last grammatical section is called “elements of syntax” (pp. 128-133). Then follow some pronunciation exercises, conversational sentences in phrasebook format, little stories, “words to say fast”—I assume tongue-twisters, riddles, taboos, “oral tradition” (i.e. traditional myths and tales, poetry and songs), and brief Chukchi-French and French-Chukchi lexica. Oddly, the brief bibliography presents Russian-language references in French translation only, and the non-specialist reader has no way of telling whether, except for the first two references by Bogoras and the two by Kurebito, they are actually written in Russian. A brief table of contents, but no index, completes the book.

In a sense, this is an impressive book, quite a bit more informative and more demanding and richer in data than many other books in the “Parlons...” series. There is no doubt that the author has a profound knowledge of Chukchi grammar. I have reservations, however, about what this book can achieve for the non-linguist, or even for the non-specialist linguist. With the knowledge gathered in the grammar sections and the lexicon, I doubt whether a devoted linguist, not to mention a non-linguist, would be able to analyze the texts at the end of the book. In the next four paragraphs, I will comment on these problems.

First, Chukchi examples, sentences, and texts are given without morpheme-by-morpheme or word-by-word glosses. A loose translation comes after the example or text. In the author’s short account of the language for linguists in this journal (Weinstein 2007), morpheme glosses were provided, and as a result I found that publication of his quite a bit easier to follow than this one! An index of constructions and morphological elements (prefixes, suffixes, and circumfixes) would also have been helpful.

Second, the phonological and morphosyntactic descriptions are too impressionistic and too informal. While there is too much detail in some sections, there is not enough in others. For example, pp. 69-79 provide verb paradigms, but without analysis. The curious reader will have to go through them with a pencil to figure out what the inflectional morphology is, and will not find that morphology to be obvious. On the other hand, there is detailed discussion of the meanings of the verb tenses, of auxiliary verbs, and of comparatives and superlatives.

Third, the terminology is often idiosyncratic. For example, on pp. 28-33, the author calls “incorporation” what most linguists would call “compounding” (and they would consider incorporation a subtype of compounding), and he calls “compounding” a type of frozen or lexicalized “incorporation.”

Fourth, the presentation of the grammar is sometimes repetitive, inconsistent, and generally too conservative, possibly in an attempt not to stray too far from the categories of French grammar. For example, the relational suffix -КИН/-КЭН is described on p. 44 for nouns, on p. 47 for adjectives, on p. 48 for adverbs, on p. 53 for demonstratives, on p. 53, p. 60, and p. 62 for postpositions, and on p. 100 for the gerund, all without cross-referencing. The linguist reader will conclude that these are all one and the same suffix, but the non-linguist reader will not know what to think. On p. 80, an infinitive -к is mentioned, but on pp. 100-108, several usages of a gerund in -к are mentioned, and it is hard to imagine that this is not the same as the infinitive -к. There is no description of inverse marking. There should also have been a section on relative clause formation, even though the section on participles covers some of the questions a linguist might have about relative clauses. The subsection called “*relatifs*” (p. 55) deals with indefinite and interrogative modifiers, and does not provide information on relative clauses.

For these reasons, the book cannot be called a success as a tool for linguistic vulgarization, or as an elementary teaching tool. The problem is, of course, that Chukchi is a seriously polysynthetic language and quite a bit harder to decode than Inuit or Yupik languages because it has a fair amount of prefixation, suffixation, circumfixation, lots of compounding, and complex morphophonemics putting it all together. Inuit and Yupik, in contrast, have lots of suffixes, but suffixation only. This is easier to deal with, since linguists know that the beginning of the Inuit or Yupik word is the stem, and that everything else is going to be suffixes.

A user-friendlier list of references would also have been useful. The literature on Chukchi in the Russian language is vast, although uneven in quality, and of course, there is no excuse for Chukchi specialists for not being able to read that literature. However, for the non-specialist who does not read Russian, the author should have mentioned such works as the sketch in German by Kämpfe and Volodin (1995), the morphological sketch in English by Muravyova (1998), the typological profile of the family in English by Fortescue (2005: 438-440), and especially the dissertation in English by Dunn (1999), although this work deals with a dialect fairly different from the one treated in this book.

Furthermore, especially since the 1980s, there have been quite a few insightful articles on Chukchi grammar and phonology in English, by scholars such as Jonathan Bobaljik, Bernard Comrie, Michael Dunn, Michael Fortescue, Megumi Kurebito, Michael Kenstowicz, Maria Koptjevskaja-Tamm, Isaac Kozinsky, Vladimir Nedjalkov, Maria Polinsky, and Andrew Spencer, as well as other articles by Tokusu Kurebito. The articles by these authors are referenced in the bibliographies in Dunn (1999) and Fortescue (2005), and on Spencer’s (1999) webpage, and are often directly accessible on the Internet. While some of these articles are based on Russian primary sources, as is the case for the sketch by Kämpfe and Volodin (1995) and Spencer’s (1999) webpage, I assume that English is more accessible than Russian for most French readers.

Notwithstanding these shortcomings, this is an intriguing book because the Chukchi specialist might well be able to find in it a few interesting morphosyntactic tidbits generally glossed over in the traditional grammatical literature. I am sure that many of the problems mentioned in the above paragraphs exist because the publisher might have told the author to keep it simple. Unfortunately, keeping Chukchi grammar simple is not a simple matter. I do hope that this review will not discourage Weinstein from continuing his endeavors to make the Chukchi language more accessible to Western linguists, since he did so well in making Chukchi literature more accessible in Weinstein (2004).

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