

**McFARLAND, CURTIS D., Compiler. 1980. A linguistic atlas of the Philippines. Institute for the Study of Languages and Cultures of Asia and Africa Monograph Series No. 15. Tokyo: Institute of Oceanic and African Cultures.**

*Reviewed by A. KEMP PALLESEN, Summer Institute of Linguistics*

Repeated pulses of migration in the pre-Spanish Philippines have left indelible traces in the data of languages currently spoken in this country, and the picture of language distribution today is one of considerable complexity, characterized by many apparent anomalies in identifying the provenance of particular language complexes. With the resettlement schemes that were implemented after World War II, when linguistically diverse communities deriving mainly from the central and northern Philippines were established throughout Mindanao, the fragmentation and overlapping increased.

The preparation and publication of a linguistic atlas for so complex an area is a massive task, and one that makes the linguist who attempts it vulnerable to criticism from several directions.

McFarland has taken the risk and done an outstanding job in making order of a profusion of data, and in presenting it so lucidly. He has steered between the rocks of dogmatism on hand and indecision on the other, and his opening disclaimer is thoroughly disarming. He admits that 'our present knowledge is very incomplete; thus this atlas can only present partial, tentative, and in some cases undoubtedly erroneous answers to the questions posed. . .'. Such a disclaimer can hardly fail to convert would-be detractors into enthusiastic fellow researchers.

In his useful introductory essay the author discusses the distinction between dialect and language in the Philippines context, and uses mutual intelligibility as the criterial factor for establishing the status of a speech vis-à-vis related varieties. I think that it would have been profitable, in view of the diagnostic load placed on this factor as marking the crucial transition from dialect to language, to have given a little more attention to describing the means by which intelligibility is determined. As the author certainly knows from experience, it is not an easy task to decide what the threshold of intelligibility should be, and having decided, to arrive at a methodology that measures it constantly in the context of a plague of variables. Of these variables social factors are probably the most significant, and they have the extra complexity of changing quite dramatically through time. Two genetically related speech varieties, today sufficiently divergent to be considered as two different languages, may under certain plausible social conditions meet the intelligibility criterion twenty years from now, and be considered dialects of the one language.

It must be noted, in fairness to the author, that he uses the word 'still' to indicate the expected progressive nature of linguistic divergence; thus (reviewer's): "As long as the two dialects, in spite of the difficulty, can *still* be understood by their respective speakers – that is, they are *still* mutually intelligible – then the two dialects are taken to belong to the same language'. The problem is that when an observer looks at the synchronic situation he cannot always be certain that the level of intelligibility that he observes is 'intelligibility still' (an interception of the steady process of divergence), or 'intelligibility under the present social conditions' (current intelligibility due to social factors rather than to genetic closeness). The former is potentially a true measure of genetic relatedness; the latter measures a combination of factors. All this is not to take issue with the author's

position, but rather to share with him the frustration of working with an inadequate methodology for measuring the fuzzy border between dialect and language, however these are defined, in a linguistic region where so many speech varieties are related lexicostatistically in the 65-85% range. The problem may turn out to be an intractable one, in which case we need to acknowledge the fact.

A further observation flows out of the above. The assumption in the introduction is generally one of irreversible divergence, with some recognition of the fact that related speech communities sometimes separate geographically and later share a zone of interaction along their common border. This assumption of divergence is presented graphically by means of a tree diagram on p.7. It is, however, inadequate in the Philippines setting (though I have done it myself) to assume the validity of a tree diagram as an illustration of the true nature of the relationship among languages. Speech varieties both diverge and converge, and a network is much closer to the truth provided that it is understood that the convergence process does not lead to a reiteration of an early stage. There have been repeated instances of linguistic convergence in the millenia since the first speakers of Philippine languages arrived, of which the striking convergence between Tausug and Sama languages in Sulu is one example. Other examples are suggested by the anomalous positions of Ilongot and Sambalic with regard to their respective genetic affiliations. Linguistic convergence with Tagalog in the case of Sambalic is a partial explanation for the apparent closeness between the two, and I suggest that wherever similar anomalies are observed it will be profitable to examine the data in detail for evidence of convergence.

The discussion of language-simplexes and language-complexes I found very useful. As the author observes, no one has devised a theory for dividing L-complexes, but his analysis of the eight possible permutations is a step in the right direction. In this connection he mentions the predilection of field workers with the Summer Institute of Linguistics for working in small linguistic communities. A number of factors, particularly the need to find a location where the target language can be learned with as little interference as possible from other languages, have influenced SIL workers, but McFarland's discussion highlights the need for awareness of the significant socio-linguistic factors in each situation. It is particularly important to consider the variation in the communicative potential of the speech varieties within the complex.

Some of the most thought-provoking aspects of the introduction are found in its asides rather than in its main points. For example, the author comments on p. 2 that 'even nineteenth century English, such as that of Charles Dickens or Nathaniel Hawthorne, is noticeably different from today's language'. This statement is unexceptionable as it stands, but one questions whether the comparison of nineteenth century literary English is really illustrative of the kind of difference being talked about among Philippine language varieties. Surely the change cited for English is more one of style than of substantive language shift. It would be interesting to discover if a lexicostatistical comparison between the English of 1850 and that of 1980 would show any significant replacement of the lexemes that manifest the meanings of the Swadesh 200-meaning list. One also wonders if an intelligibility test between the diachronically separate varieties — admittedly a little difficult to arrange — would show evidence of divergence. In any case, I suspect that equally striking variations in style occur between contemporary literary genres and natural conversation.

Another assertion that provokes a query is the statement, also on p.2, that 'the child never gets enough examples to provide for all possible situations. As he goes through life, he repeatedly uses sentences which he has never heard, and is forced to use language in new situations which he has never been able to observe. He must repeatedly guess at what is the "right" thing to say. He might guess the same way as his ancestors would have done. Or he might make a different guess, and say something that has never been

said before, or use a word in a way it has never been used before. Such a different guess is a linguistic *innovation*'. I agree that such a guess would be a linguistic innovation but I do not believe that the competent speaker of a language, even when he is composing a string of speech that has never been uttered before, is reduced to the resort of guessing. His performance, if he intends to communicate, must surely be constrained by a very narrow range of options.

The guessing hypothesis does not do justice to the alternative possibilities for linguistic innovation. Investigation into the convergence phenomena of the Sama-Tausug interaction in Sulu suggests that the main source of innovation in a language is borrowing from other languages or dialects with which its speakers are in contact, under a variety of social conditions, including bilingualism that is at least intermittent. A second source of innovation is semantic shift of an existing lexical item. Innovation by means of a new creation appears to be much less frequent; even when it does occur the innovation is frequently contrived under quite specific social conditions. For example, the utterance of a lexical item may be proscribed because it occurs in the name of an important person who has died. Taboo of this sort was frequent in Eastern Polynesia, and is illustrated in the replacement of the inherited lexeme *wai* 'water' by the innovative *noho* in some varieties of New Zealand Maori. Another sort of taboo apparently led to the avoidance in Germanic languages of the reflex of Proto Indo-European *\*kso* - 'bear (the animal)', which was reflected as Latin *ursus* and as Spanish *oso, osa*. In the Germanic languages it was replaced by an innovation meaning 'the brown one', hence English *bruin* and *bear*.

The major section of the atlas, and its major contribution, consists of the maps, beautifully presented with color coding, and followed by a discussion of each of the major language groupings involved, with black and white maps showing further detail. These maps convey a wealth of information with the minimum of confusion. It is necessary for the reader to master thoroughly the key principles on which they are constructed, since the key is unfortunately not repeated on the face of individual maps, but the effort is well worth it. No prose can match a map like that for Region II in its power to demonstrate vividly the complicated mosaic of language distribution in Northern Luzon, but even so some relevant information has had to be omitted. The Region III map, for example, does not distinguish between two contiguous varieties of Sambalic, namely Tina Sambal and Botolan Sambal. For this the reader must go to pp. 78-79, where these two varieties are identified as distinct languages of the subgroup, and their distribution indicated on a black and white map. There are some limits as to what can be included on a single map without loss of clarity, and I am both sympathetic and admiring, but it would have been helpful to have cross-references on the color-coded maps to significant information presented on the black and white maps for particular subgroupings.

Some limitation is also expected with regard to the inclusion of detail about minority language groups on the regional maps, and the 5% of total population for the municipality in question is a reasonable rule of thumb. It has the regrettable effect, however, of excluding a minority population that may be very significant in relation to the total population that speaks that language, simply because the municipality in which it is found has a fairly large population. It is for this reason, presumably, that no Dumagat language is listed on the Region IV map as being spoken in the Baler-Dingalan area, on the Pacific coast northeast of Metro Manila.

There are remarkably few typographical errors, and those that I picked up are minor. For example, *Ilanum* on pp.61, 100-101 should be *Ilanun*; *kuqu* in the second Yakan example on p.124 should be *huqu*; Pullon-Mapun, the alternative designation for Jama Mapun (literally 'Mapun people' or 'Cagayan Sulu people') given on p. 106, should be *Pillun Mapun* (literally 'Mapun speech'). A few other problems occur. Binukid is properly identified as a Manobo on the Region X map; the presence of Sama speaking minorities is indicated on the map for Palawan and on the Region XI map, but no reference

is made to these communities in the discussion of Sama languages on p. 106. Some questions come to mind. Is Davawenyo, for example, really spoken in the inland montane area of Davao Oriental, and what of the Mandaya languages spoken in the same area, east of the divide? Is the Davawenyo recorded at Digos spoken by less than 5% of the municipality's population, or do the Davawenyo speakers there declare themselves as other than Davawenyo for census purposes? Specialists in other areas of the Philippines will perhaps find minor discrepancies in their areas, and will undoubtedly be stimulated to ask questions and make counter-suggestions.

That is how it should be. It is sometimes lamented that all the linguistic work in the Philippines is being done in this generation, that the pool of data is being drained rapidly. A contribution such as this atlas makes it very clear that this is by no means the case; there is a wealth of data that has never been dipped into, a plethora of fascinating questions waiting to be asked and answered. Even in a relatively simple area like Region IX (A), the patterns of migration and interaction have barely begun to be understood, and much more needs to be done there in data collection, in descriptive and theoretical linguistic studies, and in sociolinguistic inquiry. The contribution that McFarland has made to Philippine linguistic studies is an outstanding one and should stimulate a great deal of interest. This Linguistic Atlas of the Philippines will take its essential place in the working library of linguists, anthropologists, geographers and others interested in Philippine peoples and their languages.