

SANTIAGO, ALFONSO O. 1979. *Panimulang linggwistika*.
Quezon City: Rex Printing Company, Inc.
Pp. xix, 178.

Reviewed by NILA L. NICOLAS, De La Salle University

Panimulang Linggwistika by Alfonso O. Santiago is geared to beginning students of Philippine Linguistics as well as to education students who are prospective teachers of Pilipino at the elementary and secondary levels.

The major aim of the book, according to Santiago, is 'to show to the students that there are numerous languages existing in the world. Some have great similarities while others differ profoundly from one another' (p 3). If this is the *raison d'etre* for writing the book, then Santiago succeeds, although superficially. That is, he enumerates 13 major classifications of the world's languages including various subdivisions of each. It would have been better, however, had Santiago given specific examples that would lucidly describe how each language mentioned differs from or is similar to another at the phonological, morphological, syntactic and lexical levels. Otherwise, an anthology of selected poems and/or short passages written in different languages would have sufficed. The reader would immediately see Santiago's point succinctly.

If, however, Santiago had aimed to show to his reader how specific theoretical research materials can be applied to practical problems dealing with the teaching and learning of Pilipino, then, Santiago certainly fails to achieve his goal. After all, is this not what applied linguistics is all about?

Speaking of applied linguistics, this reviewer finds the book anemic in substantive discussions dealing with on-going research in Pilipino and other Philippine languages that language teachers as well as those who are teaching bilingual education, cross – cultural communications (if this subject area is offered at all in Philippine schools), communication arts in both Pilipino and English, etc., at the elementary, secondary and tertiary levels, can utilize as reference materials. This statement does not include, however, the lengthy discussions on Pilipino phonology, morphology, syllabication, stress, and accent marks found in chapters VII, VIII and IX. One notes, however, that the discussions in these chapters could have been incorporated in chapters III, IV and V, since they are all basically repetitions of the same discussions.

Although the book provides much welcome discussion on the history of linguistics in the Philippine and in the world, regrettably, it does not provide a rich source of information on the historical beginnings of applied linguistics in the Philippines, or in the world. Specifically, chapter II does not highlight such historical developments as: a) the European or Continental school with Otto Jespersen (1860 – 1943) who pioneered in studies on modern English phonology and grammar with his book, *A Modern English Grammar on Historical Principles* (7 volumes, 1909 – 1949); b) the British school that is sometimes referred to as 'Neo-Firthian', named after J.R. Firth who occupied the first chair of General Linguistics at the University of London at its formal establishment in 1944; c) the American school with Franz Boas (a European trained anthropologist who taught at Columbia University in the early 1900s) who expounded the concept of analytical grammar including the study of language structure; and, d) the Canadian 'experience' as it impacts on national bilingual education in the United States and in the Philippines.

The book's flaw (the numerous typographical errors saturating the book including some errors in collating/assembling the pages are something else) seems to be primarily one of style. Subdividing the book into several yet related chapters leaves it subject to an exercise in expository tautology. It could have been less taxing to the reader

(who continuously runs into seemingly unending and unnecessary repetitions of explicated concepts) had the chapters mentioned above been subsumed under one rubric, e.g., **speech events**. Thus, the subdivisions could very well have been: a) encoding the message **semantically**, grammatically, phonologically; b) transmitting the message via the brain and the **speech** organs such as the lips, tongue, etc.; and, c) decoding the message at the **phonological**, grammatical and semantic levels. Considering that structuralists (Noam Chomsky, among others) hesitate to tackle linguistic analysis at the semantic level, **semantic** encoding and decoding could very well be by-passed in this proposed arrangement.

Speaking of Chomsky, Santiago's inability to comprehend the pedagogical implications of the 1957 and 1965 models for language teaching and learning is very disappointing, to say the least. Santiago states: 'Hindi makita ng manunulat na ito ang implikasyon ng mga modelo ni Chomsky sa pagtuturo ng wika lalo na sa mababang paaralan na hindi pa natutuhan ng mga mag-aaral ang wikang pinagaaralan' (112). In light of this, it is not surprising that Santiago could state quite simplistically that the popularity of structural linguistics waned as a result of selected academicians' perceived necessity for coming up with a model that would be more scientific, thus resulting in the birth of transformational and generative grammar including psycholinguistics (24). This reviewer argues that the popularity of transformational generative grammar at the time he wrote his book was not a consequence of the waning popularity of structural linguistics; neither is the former much more scientific than the latter. The two approaches to the study of languages are distinct with separate foci and should thus not be used or viewed interchangeably. Along the same line, Santiago mistakenly equates psycholinguistics with transformational generative grammar as if the former were another model used in analyzing languages. Doing such is tantamount to comparing apples and oranges. The latter is a theoretical paradigm while the former is a subdiscipline of psychology linking language in studying the structures and processes underlying human ability to speak and understand language. The models or paradigms that psycholinguists use may run from: a) the human's innate ability to learn the structures of his language, b) the link between language knowledge and language usage, c) producing and comprehending speech, d) animal communications, to inter- and intra-language group behavior. (See studies on animal communication, Sebeok 1968; Thorpe 1972; and the European Monograph on Psycholinguistics, 1978, 1979 and 1980 with particular reference to the works of Giles and Tajfel.)

Santiago compounds his mistakes when he equates anthropological linguistics as a model with the tagmemic model on the same page. Failing to explain the first concept (which is fairly legitimate!), he immediately dismisses the issue and goes on to explain the significance of the second model instead. To top it all, Santiago erroneously claims that the generative semantic model 'ay nagsisimula nang pumalit sa modelong transformational generative, gayundin ang modelong Case for Case ni Fillmore' (25). Just as explained above, how does one model replace another when each analyzes language from a totally distinct perspective? Besides, the current popularity of one at any given time versus the waning popularity of the other is not a sufficient gauge to generalize that one is a replacement of the other.

What bothers this reviewer most is Santiago's simplistic statements on the evolution of language and culture. To wit:

Naniniwala ang mga antropologo na ang wika ng mga kauna-unahang tao sa daigdig, kung mayroon mang wikang masasabi noon, ay isang wikang halos katulad ng sa mga hayop . . . Dahil sa likas na talino ng tao ay napaunlad niya ng napaunlad ang kanyang sarili sa pamamagitan ng kanyang pagkontrol sa maraming bahagi ng kalikasan hanggang sa tuluyan na niyang maibukod ang kanyang sarili sa mga hayop. Nakalinang ang tao ng kultura at wika na sa kasalukuyan ay masasabing ibang-iba na sa kultura at wika ng kanyang kanunu-nunuan. (1)

On the one hand, a society's linguistic evolution should be sharply distinguished from the evolution of a particular language. The first is concerned with the evolution of language in general from some earlier or less complicated animal signaling system to evolution of human communication (Greenberg 1957: 65). The second is concerned with how the contents of particular languages came into being. Which of these two is Santiago referring to? Besides, some anthropologists are anti-evolutionist with regard to language!

On the other hand, which anthropologist is Santiago talking about? Fox and Tiger of Physical Anthropology? Levi-Strauss and Franz Boas of Structural Anthropology? Bronislaw Malinowski and Radcliffe-Brown of Cultural Anthropology? George and Louise Spindler of Educational Anthropology? Or, is it Karl Marx of Economic Anthropology? Which particular work is he citing that would give credence to his first premise that man's language in earlier times was like that of the beasts? By stating such, is Santiago defending the 'continuity theory'? Or, is he arguing for its opposite, that is, 'discontinuity theory', when he qualifies his statement by saying: '. . . kung mayroon mang wikang masasabi noon . . .'. Should Santiago need to be cautioned on these two distinct schools of thought? Should he be also cautioned on the numerous studies done on animal communication in the field of psycholinguistics and neurolinguistics? (See recent publications in these fields published in the relatively new journal, *Language and the Brain*.)

Still related to Santiago's style of making simplistic statements is his overpowering comment on computer technology. To wit: 'Hanggang sa mga panahong ito ay wala pang naiimbentong "computer machine" na makapagsalin ng maayos sa isang mensahe mula sa isang wika tungo sa ibang wika' (p. 128). Considering that the book was published in 1979, has Santiago ever heard of FORTRAN, COBOL, BASIC, among others? Better yet, has Santiago learned of the symposium held at the Massachusetts Institute of Technology in September 1956 on various approaches in information theory, computer simulation, experimental psychology, and theoretical linguistics attended by distinguished scholars in varied disciplines such as Claude Shannon, Jerome Wiesner, Noam Chomsky, Herbert Simon and George Miller, who organized it? Has Santiago heard of or read about the scholarly encounter between Noam Chomsky and Jean Piaget at the Abbaye Royaumont conference in Geneva from October 10 through 13, 1975? Through the efforts of these men, cognitive science as a discipline was born. (It is that branch of science that deals with the study of the human mind: how it works when performing the most complex form of reasoning, e.g. Chomsky's extremely abstract analysis of linguistic structure which does not have to be taught, according to Chomsky, to the native speaker of the language by virtue of his/her innate knowledge of the linguistic system. And so goes the pedagogical implication of the 1957 model.)

Assuming that there was not enough space for Santiago to discuss work along similar lines done by anthropologists, computer and cognitive scientists, etc., the reader might appreciate it better if he had decided to provide at least a few pertinent references. If this was not possible, would it have been better had Santiago exercised caution in making generalizations and/or assumptions that cannot be easily supported by available scholarly data?

This review may seem excessively critical especially when one considers that applied linguistics in the Philippines is relatively young. It is precisely for this reason, however, that the book deserves careful consideration and some serious criticism rather than just a hearty dismissal.

REFERENCES

- GILES, HOWARD.** 1978. *Language and inter-group behavior*. London: Harcourt, Brace and Jovanovich.
- GREENBERG, JOSEPH H.** 1963. *Essays in linguistics*. Chicago: University of Chicago Press.
- SEBEOK, THOMAS A.** 1968. *Animal communication*. Bloomington: Indiana University Press.
- THORPE, W.H.** 1972. *Vocal communications in birds*. In *Non-verbal communications*, ed. by R.A. Hinde. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.