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Carmen Dagostino, Marianne Mithun, and Karen Rice (eds.) 2023 (vol. 1), 2024 (vol. 2). *The languages and linguistics of indigenous North America: A comprehensive guide, Volume 1; Volume 2.* (The World of Linguistics 13.1-2). Berlin – Boston: De Gruyter Mouton. Pp. LII (front matter) + 1-715 + separate enlarged map insert (vol. 1), and + pp. XII (front matter) + [987] 717-1702 (vol. 2)

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... listing Nez Perce words
[...] is like writing a dictionary of *sentences* in English.
(Aoki 1994: x)

This reviewer has since his early childhood been interested “in languages” but, as he recalls now, it was a chance encounter with two bulky volumes entitled *Handbook of American Indian Languages* (Boas 1911, 1922), followed by an outburst of utmost fascination with descriptions of tongues with unimaginable before both phonetic as well as morphological structures¹, that resulted in the decision to make linguistics his profession. To be sure on

¹ The languages fairly extensively described being Athapaskan (Hupa), Tlingit, Haida, Tsimshian, Kwakiutl, Chinook, Maidu, Algonquian (Fox), Siouan – Dakota (Teton and Santee dialects, with remarks on the Ponca and Winnebago), Eskimo in vol. 1 (1911), and Takelma, Coos, Siuskavan (Upper Umpqua), Chukchee in vol. 2 (1922). Eskimo and Chukchee seemed out-of-the-place in the set as not necessarily American, the former being transborder and transcontinental (in use from Canada westwards to Alaska and Russian Chukotka (Asia), and eastwards, via Labrador on the way, to Greenland (autonomous territory of the Kingdom of Denmark, Europe), the latter in use in Chukotka (Russia) but Boas explained the insertion of the latter (and actually both) in the following way: “It seemed important to add the Chukchee to the sketches contained in the Handbook, because it proves conclusively that those features which are most characteristic of many American languages are found also on the Asiatic continent. It seemed essential, furthermore, to present material for determining the position of the Eskimo language in relation to all its neighbors” (1922:637). We shall come back to “Eskimo” in this text toward its end.

obvious reasons, this writer never intended to become a researcher or “specialist” in Amerindian languages² but both “Boas volumes” served for several decades as one of sources of linguistic data frequently referred to, or used as illustrative examples, in university courses and lectures, and conference presentations.

Now, the situation is different, much better: extensive research brought numerous modern descriptions, grammars, dictionaries of languages insufficiently, partially, or never documented which revealed abundant linguistic facts and phenomena even more attractive for such purposes. Nevertheless, works which competently sum up and generalize, like for this case, Goddard 1996³, Campbell & Mithun 1979, Campbell 1997, Mithun 1999, or the work under concern here, are awaited, looked for, and welcomed on the linguistic market.

The “Preface” (cf. below) categorizes the publication as a *handbook* and this author will adapt this handy term in the present text.

The fairly extensive front matter (52 pp.) includes a two-page “Preface” (V-VI), six-page “Table of Contents” (VII-XII; these two components have been repeated as front matter in vol. 2), eleven maps with a special “Introduction” with “References” to them (XLI-LII), and the, dominant in this part of vol. 1 (XIII-XL), extremely useful “List of North American families, languages, and dialects” arranged alphabetically and cleverly tabularized, with the head entries in the left-side column listing glottonyms for all the three classificatory level items, provided in the parallel middle column with “alternate names and spellings” (!), and with the information, whenever appropriate, on the “family (branch)” affiliation⁴. Maps appear also on the pages of individual texts throughout the edition (pp. 269 and 271 (morphological types and variation of negatives), 566 (Ahtna speaker’s 1912 trip map), 570 (a screenshot locating Native Land), 671 (John Powel’s 1891 map of 58 language families), 672 (Sapir’s macro-families), 674 (Voegelin’s map of 1965, phyla and families), 931 (Algic), 1014 (Wakashan), 1116 (Kiksht, Chinook), 1142 (Sahaptian), 1170 (Karuk), 1253 (Californian – “Key to Tribal Territories”), 1305 (Yuman), 1520 (Chitimacha), 1628 (location of unclassified extinct languages))⁵. A 1999 “revised and enlarged [70 (width)×64 cm separate sheet], with additions and corrections” map of “Native languages and language families of North America” by Ives Goddard (1996) is attached in vol. 1; it verbally locates 452 (rough count) glottonyms (“linguistic units”), including areas of 34 language families and 28 individual languages distinguished by numbers (1-62) and color shades. There are also many other illustrations in the two books.

² with years passing, focusing primarily on minor, “lesser-used” tongues (*langues moins répandues*) of the Far East, some structurally polysynthetic included.

³ Including twelve grammatical sketches (of Central Alaskan Yupik, Hupa, Cree, Lakota, Zuni, Eastern Pomo, Seneca, Wichita, Thompson, Coahuilteco, Sahaptin, and Shoshone).

⁴ This “List” alone, as well as the eleven maps, if one cannot afford having access (or for whom such access is not “a must”) to the handbook, are publicly available in pdf.

⁵ This writer had no intention to make this recital exhaustive but probably it is complete (there is no special list of maps for the entire edition, so it can prove useful).

The core of the *handbook* is organized into eight units (let me call them “parts”) marked with Roman numerals I-VIII each in turn divided into chapters marked with Arabic numerals 1-61) authored by 82 contributors, among them also native users of individual languages (their “who is who” provided on pp. 1649-71). Actually, the editors (publishers?) see it in a slightly different way: “The volume [*sic!*] is divided into two main parts, the first on general topics, and the second on revitalization and sketches of languages and families” (p. V in both volumes). Physically vol. 2 (save the front matter) in fact and every aspect is a direct continuation of the physical vol. 1, so this writer also tends to treat the entire work as oneness, perceiving the “part” units his own way. Each chapter is further divided into sections and subsections and ends with its own list of “references”, at times with addition of relevant literature not cited in the respective text.

“Part” I (1-179, *chapters 1-7*) concentrates on characterizing phenomena related to the sound and sounds of the languages, often drastically different from what the “Western world” is familiar with or accustomed to, discussing acoustics and articulations, tone systems, sound and phoneme inventories, and prosody (“word” and “beyond the word”). There are some very informative and useful figures (e.g. IPA and NAPA (“North American Phonetic Alphabet”), conversion charts, tone notations, syllable structures, prosodic morphology (prosodic features as vehicles of categorial-grammatical meanings), phenomena like “lexical tone beyond the word” or “stress beyond the word”, intonation).

“Part” II (181-244) opening with a chapter (8) attempting to answer the fundamental question “What is a word from the perspective of Indigenous North American languages (183)?” and mentioning “the areas where we need further research to learn more about complex and heterogeneous phenomena related to *word(-like)* units” (*ib.*, *cursive* afm). No wonder, therefore, that the (only) other chapter (9) is conceived as “an introduction to word classes” in these languages which “have a unique part to play in research on word classes” (*ib.*)⁶.

“Part” III (245-381, seven chapters **10-16**) aims at elucidating how to put such words into clauses (word order, ergative and nominative-accusative constructions, agreement, negatives, interrogation and requests (immediate and delayed, affirmative and negative, prohibitives), imperative-only lexemes, information structure⁷, focus and topic, case marking, polysynthesis) and clauses into sentences (“clause combining” with “some tricky cases”, 323-62) which leads us to:

⁶ Try, Dear Reader, to cope with e.g. *igamsiqayugvikumanginaghyaqhqaqsaghaghpesikut* (848, quoted from de Reuse 1994: 83) concerning ‘thankfulness’, or *ayagciqsugnarqnilruuq* informing that ‘he said he would probably go’ (*ib.*, 196) < *ayag-* ‘to leave, to go away, to depart’ (Jacobson 2012: 162) and cf. with e.g. *ayagcecissuun* ‘starter of an engine’ or *ayagcetaag* ‘missionary’ (*ib.*, 163); you are also encouraged to look for Rubtsova 1971 and find in it a 45pp. (610-44) appendix constituting a list of 764 examples of derivatives of *қимյұхси-* ‘sled in a dog-team’, like for instance *қимյұхсиңұдқұтыйзакуқ* ‘he intends to hire (somewhere) a dog-team sled for himself’ (or, ‘he intends to hire (somewhere) a dog-team sled with a driver for himself’; *ib.*, 643). Hence – validity of the above question: indeed, *what is a word?*

⁷ – with questions like “what is information structure?” or “how does one talk about information structure in languages with sentences that frequently consist of a single word, as in Unangam Tunuu [Aleut ...] *aniqduğikuqing* ‘I have a child?’” (306-7).

“Part” IV labeled “Discourse”, again with two (**17-18**) chapters only: “Verbal art” (385-419, with extensive bibliography of “Further references of interest”, 411-9, following “References” 407-11) and “Conversation structure” (421-49).

What comes next is “Part” V “Meaning” (451-616) with eight subsequent chapters (**19-26**) on “Lexicalization and lexical meaning” (453-77), “Lexicography” (a key issue for compiling dictionaries of languages so different from what most linguists have experienced; 479-95), “Evidentiality” (497-510), “Pluractionality and distributivity” (511-26), “Mass and count nouns” (527-46), “Space, landscape, and orientation” (547-76), “A sense of time and world” (547-98: tense(s and tenselessness), 578-82, aspect(s), 583-7, modality and mood, 587-93; references complemented with “other readings of interest”; 577-98), and “Pragmatics” (language and context interactions: “conversational implicatures”, 601-6, politeness, 606-9, presuppositions, 609-12, “importance of pragmatics for documentation and revitalization”, 612-4).

“Part” VI “Languages over space and time” (617-715), final in vol. 1, with five chapters (**27-31**) on “How grammar can emerge”, 619-46, “Language contact and linguistic areas” (*i.a.*, native-native and native-European contacts and their results, mixed languages as “extreme linguistic results” of such contacts), 647-68, “Language classification”, 668-87 (including “An abridged history of language classification in North America”, 670-5), “Archival-based sociolinguistic variation” (linguistic data retrieval from archival records and their relevance, 689-700), and “Community-based sociolinguistic variation” (701-15).

Part VII “Language revitalization” (719-839) with six chapters (**32-37**) devoted to strategies, methods, problems, resources, etc., conceived and implemented to save from extinction, revive, preserve for generations to come, indigenous North American languages, most of them being seriously-to-critically endangered, or to reclaim those no longer used (dormant or even extinct but recorded in the past and in some petrified way – like written documents or wax cylinder audiorecordings – preserved in museums, libraries, research institutions, ...). Consecutive chapters discuss “outcome of a Mentor-Apprentice program/style (MAP) learning” (719-39), first-language acquisition (“child and child-directed speech” in indigenous languages), reviewing published research results (741-66), “pedagogies of decolonization” of these languages (767-88), “digital tools for language revitalization” (789-805), “using archival materials for language reclamation” (807-21)⁸, and “*changing* [from “linguist-centred” to “community-centred”] notions of fieldwork” (823-39, *italics* afm).

“Part” VIII “Language families and isolates”, the most extensive in the handbook (841-1647), embraces 23 (**38-60**) chapters – sketches of particular language families (19) or language isolates (4) and one chapter (**61**) on extinct “unclassified languages”, providing basic data on genetic ties, location, state of preservation, characteristic and unique features in phonetics, phonology, morphology, with numerous illustrative examples:

⁸ of special interest to this writer with his years of experience gained while reconstructing Bronisław Piłsudski’s results of research on Sakhalin, Hokkaido, and Lower Amur region indigenous peoples and languages (Nivhgu, Ainu, Orok, Ulcha, and Nanai) between 1892 and 1906 and in 1910 (CWBP 1998-2011).

chapter 38 “Inuit-Yupik-Unangan: An overview of the language family” by Richard Compton⁹, 843-73; we shall come back to this chapter at the end of this review.

39 “Dene-Athabaskan” by Leslie Saxon (875-930), family including “some 40 languages, and [their] varieties” (no special easy-to-find language list or data on preservation or endangerment of these languages (pity)¹⁰, instead a fairly long and rich list of references (fortunately) provided;

40 “Algonquian” by Will Oxford (931-50), family (or part of Algic family, if Yurok and Wiyot added) with 25-30 languages (more familiar glottonyms~ethnonyms being Arapaho, Blackfoot, Cheyenne, Cree, Delaware (Lenape), Penobscot (Abenaki), Fox (Meskwaki), Mahikan, Menominee, Micmac (Mi’kmaq), Montagnais (Innu), (Maliseet-)Passamaquoddy, Potawatomi, Shawnee; Cree-Innu-Naskapi dialect cluster with 86,475 (Cree) + 11,605 (Innu-Nascapi) users in 2021 (*Statistics Canada, Census of Population*) is said to constitute the aboriginal language with the highest number of speakers in Canada¹¹;

41 “Michif” by Nicole Rosen (951-84) with 11 “alternate names and spellings” (XXVII), a hybrid (mixed) language or (glotto~topo)-lect cluster¹² “developed at the turn of 19th century [...] spoken today by likely fewer than a couple hundred [Metis] people in Western Canada and North Dakota” (951);

42 “Tsimshianic” by Clarissa Forbes (985-1012), family consisting of two <Maritime> (Coastal~Sm’algyax, the best known, and Southern~Sgüüxs, no longer spoken, Tsimshian) and two <Interior> (Nisga’a and Gitksan) languages, all treated also as a dialect continuum and seriously endangered, with small and diminishing number of speakers (low hundreds but also between dozens and zero) but “hundreds of self-reported active learners” (986); “other relevant literature” list added¹³ (1010-12);

⁹ Technical reasons (limited space and character/genre of this text – a *review*) prevented this reviewer from planned providing names of all contributors of all the handbook chapters but he convincingly (reference needs) insisted on identifying contributors for this part.

¹⁰ Among languages better known to linguists-non-specialists in Amerindian tongues are Slave, Chipewyan, Dogrib, Beaver, Carrier, Tutchone, Kutchin, Koyukon, Upper Kuskwokwim, Tanana, Han, Hupa, Wailaki, Tolowa, Navajo (with some 170, 000 – the largest number of speakers of any Amerindian languages north of Mexico), Kiowa Apache, San Carlos (Western) Apache (earlier literature widens the family to include also Eyak and Tlingit but the affinity is considered “an open question”). Slave (a language or language~dialect cluster with a little over 2,100 users) is possibly the best described of them with its 1414 pp. grammar (Rice 1989).

¹¹ followed on the list by Ojibwa with Oji-Cree dialect (25,440 + 15,210), Inuktitut (40,320 speakers), Chipewyan (~Dene, 11,375), Micmac (9,000), Atikamekw (6,740; Algonquian, a variety of Cree, mentioned in the handbook only twice (“the school project that developed Wikipedia in the Atikamekw language”, 799) but not in chapter **40** (cf. pp. 799, XV, and 1673); interestingly, Beland 1978:3 wrote that “the Atikamekw are less than three thousand and live in three villages”), Blackfoot (6,585), Slave (2,215). The 49-item list ends with <Tlingit (120)>.

¹² “The chapter discusses the genesis, status and terminology of the different languages that go by the name Michif” (951), cf. also “The language represented by the name [...] depends on the community in which it was spoken”; [...] the chapter “discuss[es] just one of these languages, [...] other languages also go by this name [...]” (953), despite the indicated minuscule but, on the other hand, growing population of speakers (according to *Statistics Canada*, the number of speakers for 2021 was 1,845, +57.7% from 2016; 13th place on the list, cf. fn 11).

¹³ Probably omitted Stebbins 2003 deserved listing here.

43 “Wakashan Languages” by Tłatłakūł Patricia Rosborough (an adult learner of her late mother’s language, Kwakwala”, 1664) and Daisy Rosenblum (1013-52), family with seven languages of which some, thanks to Boas and Sapir, quite famous among linguists – like Nuu-chah-nulth (~Nootka; Ahousaht dialect mentioned in the handbook (53) but in the chapter only in “References” cf. 1050 under Nakayama 2003), Kwak’wala (~Kwakiutl), Heiltsuk (~Bella Bella), Nitinah, Haisla – all seriously~critically endangered or no longer spoken;

44 Honoré Watanabe’s “Salish” (1053-113), ~Salishan family embodying 23 languages, among them Nuxalk (~Bella Coola), Squamish, Shuswap, Coeur d’Alene (~Snchitsu’umshtsn), Comox (with Sliammon¹⁴), “most of them with further dialectal divisions” and “known for their phonetic and phonological complexity [...] and [...] rich morphology” (1053), most of them critically endangered or (Pentlatch, Tillamook, Twana~Tuwaduq~Skokomish, Quinault) extinct;

45 “Chinookan family, with special reference to Kiksht and notes on Chinuk Wawa” by Philip T. Duncan, Valerie (Lamxayat) Switzler, and Henry B. Zenk (1115-38); the last fluent speaker of Kiksht, the last Chinook -lect spoken, is said to pass away on July 11, 2012; Chinuk Wawa (~Wawa~Lelang) as an entity is also known to linguists but – under a different name: Chinook Jargon, mainly as an example of pidgin¹⁵;

46 Joana Jansen’s “Sahaptian” (1139-67), family with two languages: Sahaptin (~Ichishkiin, with two dialects and at least 13 further subdivisions, severely endangered) and Nez Percé (~Nimipuutimt, with two dialects, critically endangered, allegedly 20 speakers in 2007, but famous for its impressive over 1300pp. dictionary, with twenty unique photographs, by Haruo Aoki¹⁶);

47 “Karuk” (~Karok~Araráhíh) by Andrew Garrett, Susan Gehr, Erik Hans Maier, Line Mikkelsen, Crystal Richardson, and Clare S. Sandy (1169-200), an isolate considered seriously endangered, yet we read that “in 2020, there are only a handful [allegedly 12 in 2007] of elder first-language speakers [b]ut there are fluent younger speakers who did not grow up fluent; and it is important to add that they and many others did grow up with the language around them. There has never been a time when Karuk was absent from every home [...], language classes are taught in [...] schools” and “community classes are offered [...]” (1194-5);

48 “Wá·šiw” by M. Ryan Bochnak, Emily A. Hanink, and Alan Chi Lun Yu (1201-21), better known in literature as Washo (also throughout the handbook)~Washoe and treated as an isolate but a number of other affinity suggestions emerged; 20 elderly native users quoted for 2008, current “revitalization efforts” reported;

49 Eugene Buckley’s “Pomoan” (1223-46), family of seven languages, in literature practically all labeled <Pomo> with a, usually toponymic, determiner (Southeastern (~Clear/Lower Lake Pomo), Eastern, Northerastern, Northern (~Coyote Valley~ Little Noyo River), Central, Southwestern (~Kashiya), Southern (~West Creek~Dry Creek), etc.), five of them

¹⁴ A 618-page grammar by Watanabe (2003) is worth mentioning here.

¹⁵ The authors consider the “two languages [as being] actively spoken today” (1135, cf. also 1116f. with fn 2).

¹⁶ Aoki wrote (1994: ix): „Today there are more than two thousand members of the Nez Perce tribe, but [...] the number of speakers of the Nez Perce language is not easy to estimate [...]. There are still hundreds of people who can count up to ten, but only scores can tell traditional folktales using classical vocabulary”.

extinct, “most” considered “dormant”, with “increasing interest in language revival and revitalization; [...] At this writing, there are a few native speakers of Central, and perhaps a dozen speakers of Kashiya” (1224, cf. also 1242-3);

50 Carmen Dagostino’s “California languages: Isolates and other languages” (1247-74); according to “Tab. 1: California languages covered in this chapter” (1251-2), 37 variants of 15 head units (five isolates, seven families, three languages) have been covered, including e.g. Yokuts, Klamath, Modoc, Achumawi, Miwo, Wintu, Yana, Maidu, Wappo, classified also as either “dormant”, “obsolescent”, or “awakening” (in four cases combining two of these features)

51 Timothy P. Henry-Rodriguez’s “Chumashan” (1275-302), family of six attested languages distinguished by their Hispanic glottonym endings (Obispeño, Cruzeño, Barbareño, Purisimeño, Samala (Ineseño), and Ventureño), all extinct: “By the mid-20th century, all Chumashan languages had lost their native speakers” (1275); one more remark seems worth quoting: “the list of completed dictionaries and grammars of Chumashan languages is short” (*ib.*);

52 Amy Miller’s “Yuman” (1303-32), family with some ten (“recognized by U.S. linguists” and mostly “relatively well documented”, 1303-4) to 22 and even 25 languages, including Kiliwa, Paipai, Hualapai-Walapai, Havasupai, Yawapai, Mohave, Maricopa, Cocopah-Kwapa), Cucapa-Kuapá, Kwatsáan, I(i)pai-Diegueño, Northeastern Kumeyaay-Diegueño, San José de la Zorra; “many [...] caught in a cycle of non-recognition and neglect: lacking recognition, they have not been systematically documented” (*ib.*), “endangered, in most cases severely or critically so” (1305), on the other hand, “many Yuman language communities have developed practical orthographies [, e]ach unique, reflecting the phonemic system of the language it represents and the preferences of its speakers” (1308); “other readings of interest” than “references” added (Langdon 1976 seems overlooked);

53 “Uto-Aztecán” by Eric Elliott and David Leedom Shaul (1333-59), family of about 30 languages, many of them known to linguists by their names, starting the list perhaps with the time/tenseless Hopi¹⁷, also Paiute, Shoshone, Comanche, Cahuilla, Luiseño, Tubatulabal, Pima, Tepehuan(n), Yaqui-Yoeme, Mayo, Huichol, Nahua(tl); individual languages as well as the entire family have been subject to intensive research to the extent that “(m)ajor works after 2000” turned out to be “too numerous to list” (1335); this writer would recommend to general linguists familiarization with subchapter 53.6 on “Vitality of Uto-Aztecán languages” (1348-56);

54 Logan Sutton’s “Kiowa-Tanoan” (1361-406), family of seven or eight languages spoken in 13 or 14 communities” (1361, both listed on p. 1362): Kiowa, Towa, two Tewa languages, three Tiwa languages, and extinct Piro (one more Tiwa?); very informative and well prepared fragments indicating or recommending existing literature and on current “language situations” (1363-6, an impressive list of references 1391-406);

¹⁷ Regretably, in this case the authors decided *against* adding “other readings of interest” listing such titles as e.g. Malotki 1983 (cf. the mottos opening the 700pp. volume), Karttunen 1983, Saxton et al. 1983, Robinson & Armagost 1990 or... Shaul 1999 and 2002.

55 “Caddoan” by L. Sutton and Armik Mirzayan (1407-46), “family of five documented languages”: Caddo, Arikara, Pawnee, Wichita, and Kitsai (probably all dead or on the verge of extinction but “all of the contemporary Caddoan communities [save Kitsai] are [said to be] interested and engaged in language revitalization efforts” (1408-9); abundant recorded language data examples illustrating discussed issues is worth special appreciation;

56 A. Mirzayan’s “Sketch of the Siouan Language Family” (1447-518, perhaps the most extensive sketch and chapter¹⁸), Family consisting “of a number of languages¹⁹ – each with several dialects – spoken by at least 25 Indigenous Nations of North America in a broad area [...]” (1447, *italics* afm), including (Eastern) Dakota~Santee, Lakota (~Teton Sioux), Crow, Hidatsa, Assiniboine~Nakota, Hochunk~Winnebago, Omaha~Ponca, Osage, extinct Biloxi, Mandan, Tutelo, Saponi, and Ofo, and distantly related Catawba and Woccon; preservation statistics are contradictory and confusing, apart from <extinct>, several are “currently sleeping” or dormant, several seriously endangered, substantial population (4,160 for Crow in 2015, 2,100 for Lakota in a 2016 source²⁰) seems exceptional;

57 Daniel W. Hieber’s “Chitimacha” (1519-43), and

58 “Tunica” by Judith M. Maxwell and Patricia Anderson (1545-75) are sketches of two dead but sufficiently documented language isolates with revitalization attempts;

59 Jack B. Martin’s “Muskogean” (1577-99), family of seven languages, some with names known to wider circles of linguists not specializing in Amerindian linguistics: Choctaw (9,600 users in 2015 census), Koasati, Alabama, Chickasaw, Seminole (Muskogee~Creek and Mikasuki~Hitchiti), and extinct Apalachee (the author adds here trade Mobilian Jargon, also extinct);

60 “Iroquoian” by M. Mithun and Ryan DeCaire (1601-25), family of, depending on the source, between nine and sixteen etnolects with the status of independent languages, including Cherokee (2,100 speakers in 2019, famous for its own unique writing system), Mohawk (with the population of speakers between 1,140 and 3,875 in 2016 considered “threatened”), Seneca, Cayuga, Onondaga, Oneida – all considered “seriously endangered”²¹, and Wenro(hronon), Conestoga~Susquehannock, Tuscarora, Nottoway~Meherin, Huron~Wyantot, and some more, like Erie, Scahentoarrhonon, Laurentian), classified as “extinct”;

61 Raoul Zamponi’s “Unclassified languages” (1627-47); “a guide to what is known about fifteen languages once spoken [...] that now exist only as fragmentary records which

¹⁸ “In general [the editors wrote in the “Preface”], we have opted for a greater number of shorter chapters rather than fewer longer ones, with the goal of covering as many relevant topics as possible while striving for user friendliness, though we recognize that the chapters necessarily vary somewhat in their accessibility and interest to different audiences” (VI).

¹⁹ depending on the source, from 10 to 20, and more... (“... twenty two or so different Siouan languages portrayed...”, p. 1451).

²⁰ A representative sample of Lakota (and some Caddoan Pawnee) could be heard worldwide by millions of spectators (thousands of linguists included) of Kevin Costner’s 1990 film *Dances with Wolves*. Although much is said about surge of interest and revitalization, many evident educational aids (like e.g. WarCloud or Karol dictionaries) resulting from these trends have, unfortunately, not been listed in the bibliography (no list of “other readings of interest”).

²¹ And it is a euphemism in this writer’s opinion.

resist (a convincing) classification": northeastern Nansemond and Pamunkey, southeastern Akokisa, Bayogoula, Bidai, Calusa, Congaree, Cusabo, Guale, Sewee, Shoccoree-Eno, and Amotomanco, Aranama, Solano, and Tanpachoa of the Southern Plains" (1628).

The handbook ends with three indexes – of languages (1673-84, as a tool well harmonizing with the front matter "list of families, languages, and dialects" mentioned at the beginning of this text), of names (1685-94), and of subjects (1695-702).

Spiritus moventes of the handbook under scrutiny here "intended to provide broad coverage of topics of interest to linguists in general, and more specifically to community and academic scholars engaged in the study and *revitalization* of North American languages. Particular attention has been given to new ideas and recent trends in research, to features of the languages that are typologically unusual or unusually well developed in comparison with others outside of the area, and topics of special importance to communities" (V, *italics* afm. – revitalization is *leitmotiv* of the entire publication).

For this reviewer, it is obvious that the handbook will find its place in personal libraries of the academic scholars mentioned and equally obvious expecting that most of particularly important works on North American Indigenous languages quoted as sources and listed in the bibliographies throughout the handbook are already in these private collections or at least remain easily accessible in nearby university libraries²². For native community scholars, activists, teachers, etc., it undoubtedly can and will long serve as a tool, a source of inspiration, a guidebook in their efforts to retain their in most cases seriously or critically endangered tongues (as well as other components of cultural heritage).

For – globally not small – flocks of "linguists in general" who have never even planned any involvement in dealing with Amerindian languages but always wished to widen their professional knowledge and understanding of "<language> in general" also through interest in the enormous variety of languages and linguistic structures and their relation(s) with the ways of thinking of their users, for linguists who have no libraries with rich collections of literature (grammars, dictionaries, handbooks, text anthologies) on – very intriguing for them – indigenous languages of North America²³, the handbook can potentially, and then successfully, serve as a reference book (together perhaps with additional support from publications like Heizer 1978), an encyclopedia of the discipline (Amerindian linguistics) with guaranteed competence, source for amazing (at times shocking) illustrative examples adding life and color to lectures and writings, an info-book to reliably help to decide whether, say, a modestly printed Rath 1981, Sylestine et al. 1993, DeBlois 1996 and CLC 1974 are reliable dictionaries, whether one can learn the language from e.g. Goossen 1995²⁴, or simply to provide linguistic facts and phenomena, and hints for further study (hence underlining above the

²² It is not the case of "linguists in general" active in other branches or areas of linguistic research in most countries outside USA.

²³ Every course in linguistics includes, as a must, the "linguistic relativity (~(Sapir)-Whorf hypothesis" and almost every participant of such a course must have heard about the "Hopi timelessness" but relatively few linguists got acquainted with, or just had a look, at texts like Malotki's mentioned as an example in fn 17.

²⁴ Rath and Sylestine et al. are listed ("reliable" for a user of the handbook), the other three not found, probably not mentioned (thus, possibly "unreliable").

importance of listing recommended additional or other relevant literature “of interest”). Using the material as a whole is not specially difficult when one gets familiar ~ learns how to optimize it (e.g. simultaneously using the indexes, table of contents, and the “List of North American families, languages, and dialects” mentioned above), although problems can emerge with details.

To demonstrate it, this writer selected only one such “problem” and only one chapter – that on “Inuit-Yupik-Unangan” – not in order to particularly criticize it (there is nothing peculiar inclining to “criticize”) but rather to reveal some problems he came across within a period much too short²⁵ to identify all shortcomings possible in every publication. The selection, however, was deliberate: it is the only chapter which takes into account (or at least mentions) -lects from beyond North America²⁶.

His first reaction inducing some more detailed search throughout the two volumes was the paragraph (869) mentioning MacLean’s Inupiaq 2014 dictionary as “particularly impressive – arguably the most comprehensive dictionary of any language of the family”. Indeed, with its 1036 pp., 15~19,000 entries, an English index, a grammatical outline, bibliography, and thirty-one ethnolinguistic appendices, it *deserves* the attributive *impressive*, and there is no doubt about it. But the preceding paragraph (*ib.*) discusses “Yupik languages” in the very same context (the caption of the subchapter (38.7) is “Language maintenance and revitalization” (868-70)), and Jacobson’s 1984, and especially ²2012 Central Alaskan Yupik two-vols. dictionary which seems, arguably, equally impressive with its 1247 pp. “and approximately 11,200 entries (and subentries) in the main section” (p. 10²⁷) have not been mentioned in the text or listed in the “References” (872)²⁸. Of course, Rubtsova’s 1971 dictionary (much less impressive in size but in fact with its 19,000 entries on 580 pp.²⁹ equally imposing) also not, possibly because of the Russian metalanguage of the publication.

²⁵ It is pity that we are not accustomed to, and do not expect reviews written a few *years after* the publication of works like the handbook here described.

²⁶ Perhaps, one more reservation is not out of place: as a principle, this reviewer avoids looking in similar texts for petty mistakes (like misprints, insignificant fact inexactitudes or misinterpretations) or suggesting the authors’ “omissions” (it is the author’s inalienable prerogative to select, omit, widen or limit, add or reject anything while creating her~his text), unless such remarks seem prospectively functional (a reviewer is neither proofreader nor editor).

²⁷ Jacobson warns that “this figure should be used with caution in making comparisons with other Eskimo dictionaries. Numerical comparisons will be meaningful only if the other dictionaries have been compiled following the same criterion (or more generally put, the same spirit of inclusion, the same judgment of non-predictability) that has been followed in compiling this dictionary” (*ib.*). The 1984 765pp. edition contained approximately 6,500 entries and subentries (*ib.*).

²⁸ Painstaking, but quick and one-time, poring over the handbook revealed at least four references to Jacobson’s dictionary, two to its 1984 edition, in chapters 4 (on “Segmental phonology”, 90, 106) and 22 (on “Pluractionality and distributivity”, 512, 525) and two in chapter 27 (on dynamics of language systems, 634, 635, 645) to ²2012. The “Index of names” proved not helpful (cf. p. 1688) which means that, optimally, in such monumental editions *every case of appearance* of personal names (also in references and other logistic tools or systems to make the edition user-friendly) should mandatorily be documented in such an index.

²⁹ supplemented with a “short index of stem- and form-derivative suffixes” including the really genuine attraction for linguists with forms~words derived from *qimuhsi-*, cf. fn 6.

Probably few, if any, potential users of the handbook under scrutiny, seeing and knowing its title, would reach for it anticipating comprehensive information on minor languages of northeastern recesses of Asia. On the other hand, since the territory of the Eskimo-Aleut language family does spread beyond America, it would be difficult to leave the fact unmentioned. Surprisingly, the chapter on these languages provides in short quite a lot of information in this respect, this reviewer expected one or two longer sentences or, at most, a short paragraph, signaling it only – but including references to at least the most important sources related to glotto- or topolects quoted like *Sirenik*, *Naukan*, *Central Siberian Yupik*³⁰ (in form of e.g. “other relevant literature ~ readings of interest” appended to “References” in some chapters) would not be out of place. In this respect, the quarter of a century earlier Mithun 1999: 400-3 is much better as a source, although references to Russian works are not made (except for Rubtsova 1971). Recommended is Dorais³² 2017.

The author of the Eskimo-Aleut chapter quoted (848) and listed in his bibliography (870-3) de Reuse 1994 (in which many references to important Russian source publications can be found), so he could treat it also as kind of substitutional solution assuming that one interested in such literature would in need reach just for that monograph which, however, is naturally a bit outdated and its bibliography of “References” (*ib.*, 459-80) is far from easy to use³¹. Recommended is Dorais³² 2017³².

Full of praise for P.T. Authors, Editors, and Publishers of the handbook surveyed and portrayed here, below we shall wind up this text with a short independent premium illustrated list of references to selected literature concerning Eskimo-Aleut tongues from the opposite coast of the Bering Strait, also with focus on revitalization efforts there (“other readings of interest”), dedicated to readers of the present review.

Examples of important results of Russian academic research: **Yupik** – dictionary (Rubtsova 1971); grammars (Menovshchikov 1962, 1967; *Sirenik* 1964); texts (*Chaplino* Rubtsova 1954, Menovshchikov 1988; *Naukan* Menovshchikov 1987); monographs (Menovshchikov *Naukan* 1975; *Imaqliq* 1980; Vakhtin *Chaplino* 1987; 1995; *Old Sirenik* 2000; *New Chaplino* Yemelyanova 1982); **Inuit-Inupiaq / Imaqliq** – (Menovshchikov 1980); **Aleut** – (a). dictionaries Bering Island: – (Menovshchikov 1977; Oshima 2003: 1-308, 321-48); monograph (Golovko & Vakhtin & Asinovskiy 2009); (b). Copper Island (Golovko & Vakhtin 1990). Examples of school education aids as revitalization effort results: (a) teacher’s aids – Menovshchikov & Vakhtin 1983; Vakhtin & Yemelyanova 1988³³; (b). dictionaries – Golovko 1994

³⁰ Neither ‘Central’ nor ‘Siberian’.

³¹ Russian language text (titles, etc.) is provided in Roman character transliteration (not necessarily optimally chosen) with neither translation nor explanation given and the unusual medley of arrangement of the bibliography (“abbreviations are keyed to references found in the text” (*ib.*, 459, good question *why?*) and interwoven with the alphabetically arranged bibliographical descriptions) rather irritates than helps. No help can be expected also from e.g. Miyaoka 2012 (used and listed by Compton) quoting e.g. (pp. 3 and 16) Menovshchikov 1959 and 1964 without, however, identifying them in his list of “References/sources” (cf. *ib.*, 1589-90, 1600-1).

³² Available for this reviewer has been only the 1990 edition.

³³ There are at least six booklets – methodical programs and recommendations for teachers concerning the organization of Eskimo language courses for kindergarten children 2-, 3-, and 5-years of age and for 1st-4th primary (Eskimo!) school grade pupils published by central (Ministry of Education) and local state administrative authorities between 1986 and 1989 in Magadan, Provideniya, and Anadyr – in this reviewer’s possession.

(Bering Island Aleut)³⁴; Menovshchikov 1954; 1988 (Chaplino Yupik); (c). handbooks – Aynana et al. 1989; Menovshchikov 1974. Cf. also Menovshchikov 1968.



Menovshchikov 1974

Aynana et al. 1989



Menovshchikov 1988

Golovko 1994

Primary school books for Chukotka (Siberian) Yupik and Bering Island Aleut (Russia)

³⁴ The compiler of the dictionary and main author of Golovko, Vakhtin & Asinovskiy 2009 listed (p. 13) six names of his principal informants – all ladies, two of them deceased; the very same names have been listed in the 2009(:5) book, with the remark that “unfortunately, most of them no longer are among the living”. On March 7, 2021, Golovko informed that the last native speaker of Bering Aleut, Vera Terentyeva Timoshenko, aged 93, passed away in her native village of Nikolskoye on Bering Island.

References³⁵

~ ‘or’, alternative~variant

// (an)other language variant provided *in* the source

[] translation, explanation, intrusion, additional information by this reviewer

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³⁷ Thus on book covers; the title page indicates Felipe S. Molina, Hermina Valenzuela, and David Leedom Shaul.

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³⁸ A model potential question from inquisitive student audience: *don't they have nouns?*