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**Kuna ways of speaking: An ethnographic perspective.** By JOEL SHERZER. Austin, Texas: University of Texas Press, 1983, Pp. xii, 260.

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As students of language from all branches of linguistics have by now come to realize, language as a system and speaking as a practice have a double nature: they can either free us from the tyranny of the here-and-now or tie us, in meaningful and often powerful ways, to the physical and sociocultural context of verbal performance. Within the last fifty years or so, grammatical studies within the structuralist tradition have fruitfully exploited the context-independent aspects of linguistic codes whereas anthropological (and, more recently, sociolinguistic) studies have focused on the context-bounded nature of talk, revealing an increasingly complex, yet often systematic, web of associations between linguistic forms and social life. Within the latter tradition, the approach initiated by Dell Hymes and John Gumperz and known as the Ethnography of Speaking or Ethnography of Communication has inspired a number of students of language to extend ethnographic methods and ethnographic concerns from the study of cultural patterns and social organization to the study of verbal performance. In particular, the ethnographic approach as originally outlined by Hymes tries to capture that part of human communicative behavior that is typically left out of grammatical studies, on the one hand, and social or cultural

anthropology on the other. Hymes's focus on 'ways of speaking' rather than 'language' or 'code' stresses the need to understand communication as a set of linguistic registers and linguistic strategies that speakers use and often reinvent in the course of their daily life. It is from this tradition that Joel Sherzer took inspiration for his work among the Kuna of Panama. Based on materials collected over a period of more than a decade, this monograph constitutes the richest sociolinguistic account to date of Kuna language use.

Ch. 1 reviews the basic theoretical and methodological assumptions and practices of the ethnographically oriented study of situated speech. S briefly discusses here the relationship between ethnography of speaking and other research programs such as ethnoscience, sociology of knowledge, and symbolic anthropology.

Ch. 2, 'Language and speech in Kuna society', is a sociolinguistic overview of Kuna language. It describes the linguistic varieties found in different socio-cultural contexts. This chapter also provides a succinct discussion of the main features of Kuna grammar (phonology, morphology, syntax), with some information on special registers such as 'chief language' and 'stick doll language'—a linguistic variety used in curing practices. In the best tradition of the ethnographic paradigm, examples are taken from texts rather than isolated sentences. Finally, S uses speaking as a guide to Kuna social organization. This strategy is in fact suggested by the Kuna themselves, for whom the ability to speak fluently and appropriately in a variety of contexts is essential for a man of power and prestige. Grammar is shown to be embedded within a larger frame of reference through the discussion of social, political, and artistic practices.

Ch. 3, 'The "gathering house": Public and political "gatherings"', is an ethnographic account of different kinds of speech events that take place in the gathering house—an important center of Kuna social (and verbal) life. The gathering house helps define the spatial and temporal boundaries of innumerable speech events that are important for the life of the community. It also constitutes an ideal place for the linguist/ethnographer to observe and record verbal performance.

Ch. 4, 'Curing and magic: Counselling the spirits', discusses native curing practices and their reliance on verbal performance. It is in fact knowledge of secret, somewhat archaic texts (*ikarkana*), that gives the curer the power to treat illness. In the Kuna world, verbal skills become the tools to control the power of both good and evil spirits. In a proto-Austinian fashion, as so often is the case in traditional societies, speaking is seen as the carrier of change; the ability to communicate skillfully is equated with social, moral, and physical control over others.

Ch. 5, 'Puberty Rites and Festivities', focuses on girls' puberty rites, a set of events that are distinct from curing and from what goes on in the gathering house. In these contexts, verbal and physical confrontations are common. 'Puberty festivities are an occasion for letting go, for both humans and spirits', writes S. In several ways, as documented by S, puberty festivities are liminal: they evoke and instantiate "anti-structure," in Turner's (1974) sense.

Ch. 6, 'Everyday speech: From morning to night, from birth to death', approaches Kuna everyday speech 'in terms of the settings, the occasions and locations, in which everyday speech occurs; in terms of the speech acts, events, and situations in everyday life; in terms of the communicative and social interactional activities and strategies involved in speaking; and in terms of the general patterns of speaking that cut across and interrelate settings, events, activities, and strategies' (155). Kuna speakers seem to follow the conversational rule 'no gaps no overlaps' (cf. Sacks, Schegloff, & Jefferson 1974) in an even stricter sense than English speakers have been shown to do. Overlaps, which are typically brief but quite common in English conversation, are said to be less frequent in Kuna conversational interaction, where speakers 'often talk for long periods of time without overlap or interruption, and extreme patience is exercised by others who wish to talk' (162). We are also told that Kuna conversations tend to be structured in the form of two-person dialogues, even when more than two persons are present (but see ch. 7). These and other features of Kuna everyday talk described by S reinforce the belief commonly held among ethnographers that our understanding of the mechanisms of 'everyday conversation' needs to be corroborated through detailed studies of conversational interactions across different sociocultural contexts.

Ch. 7, 'From everyday to ritual: Configurations and intersections', discusses the interpenetration of registers across social contexts. Here S shows that the boundary between what is considered Kuna ritual speech and everyday speech is not always sharp. In fact, ritual speech can be found in everyday discourse 'for two quite different ends—to show off and to parody' (217). As in other parts of the world, the display of knowledge of ritual speech in everyday talk can be a way of indexing one's power and thus a way of exerting social control over others. In this chapter S also makes several interesting remarks about the participant structure of ritual and everyday events. He suggests that the typical three-participant structure of speech events in the gathering house (addresser, addressee, and audience) is often reproduced (or, rather, re-emerges) within everyday conversations. This is the case when someone engages in the recounting of a personal narrative, or between people in certain relationships (e.g. father and son, teacher and student, guest and host). This suggests that Kuna conversation is more structured or more "formal" than its English counterpart or that, perhaps, the linguistic model offered by formal, ritual events can emerge within other occasions for purposes yet to be determined. S's observations are here, as elsewhere in the book, very suggestive, and one wishes that more data on conversational interaction were made available to allow the reader to engage in a comparative study of such features.

Overall, this is a rich and well written account of how words enter and sustain the social life of the Kuna. Its strongest theoretical contribution consists of the detailed study of Kuna speech genres and the ways in which their taxonomic organization interfaces with other cultural patterns and social practices. Americanists, folklorists, and literary critics should also find much valuable material in S's intriguing description of the mundane and religious poetics of daily speech among the courageous and proud Kuna, who, as S informs us, have managed

to maintain economic, social, and linguistic independence despite their physical and political location.

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*Language, poetry and poetics. The Generation of the 1890s: Jakobson, Trubetzkoy, Majakovskij.* (Proceedings of the First Roman Jakobson Colloquium, Massachusetts Institute of Technology, October 5-6, 1984.) Edited by KRYSZYNA POMORSKA, ELŻBIETA CHODAKOWSKA, HUGH MCLEAN, and BRENT VINE. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter, 1987. Pp. xi, 364. DM 155.

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This volume contains the papers presented at the First International Colloquium devoted to the linguistic thought of Roman Jakobson. The colloquium was conceived by Krystyna Pomorska, his widow, who herself did not live to see the volume's publication. The subtitle is slightly misleading, since only two contributions deal with Trubetzkoy and one with Majakovskij. Appropriately, therefore, only the first section is headed 'Jakobson, Trubetzkoy, Majakovskij', while the other sections all focus on Jakobson alone.

A foreword by Pomorska introduces the volume, followed by a brief welcoming address by MIT President Paul E. Gray, and a list of references concludes the volume; the index listed in the table of contents is actually missing. The introduction comments on J's keen awareness of his belonging to a particular generation of scholars and artists, many of them his friends. By contrast, the philosophical influences, notably Husserl and Hegel (later Peirce), resulted from J's readings and not, obviously, from personal contacts.

Section 1 opens with Pomorska's sketch. 'The autobiography of a scholar' (3-13), pointing out J's aversion to autobiography other than in strictly scholarly terms and discussing the fertile nature of Saussure's impact on J, as well as the impact of contemporary avant-garde poets (especially Xlebnikov and Majakovskij) and postimpressionist artists (such as Picasso and Braque). The essay also comments on the psychological setting of J's own creativity and his future-oriented research into the nature of ordinary and poetic language.

ELMAR HOLENSTEIN's 'Jakobson's and Trubetzkoy's philosophical background' (15-31) is a condensed version of an earlier, lengthier treatment (Holenstein 1984) pointing to the Russian ideological tradition and its Byzantine, German-Romantic, and Hegelian roots. J's general approach is characterized by the key concepts 'structural', 'holistic', 'dialectic', 'antireductionist' (im-