

BOOK NOTICES

A manual of linguistic field work and structure of Indian languages. By ANVITA ABBI. (LINCOS handbooks in linguistics 17). Munich: LINCOS Europa, 2001. Pp. xii, 298. ISBN 3895864013. \$84.80 (Hb).

This useful manual is full of practical information. A highly original contribution to the field, it can be profitably consulted by linguists venturing into the Indian subcontinent for the first time. This friendly field guide is written in expressive Indian English, complete with the incidental omission of definite articles. I shall recommend the book to my own students under the following explicit provisos.

Abbi's typological approach introduces common structural features for those who have not yet studied a good many grammars of languages of the subcontinent. This orientation, however, should make the field linguist more keen to detect phenomena that do not fit the prevalent typological molds. A explains the complex sociolinguistics of 'the Indian scene', which many in the subcontinent take for granted, but which students and newcomers ought to know and appreciate.

A contends that being a woman is an advantage. Admittedly, cosmopolitan female outsiders, especially foreign women in rural Asian societies, may often come to represent what may be described as a third sex in that they may not fit the gender role locally reserved for women. Thus, women field linguists may have privileged access to both male and female informants in some traditional communities, where female informants might be reluctant to communicate with male field linguists. My experience among the Dumi, however, is that as a man I was made privy to the secret language of hunting and mythology, from which females and boys are excluded, in order to keep the realm of philosophical precepts expressed through hunting and botanical jargon an all-male reserve.

A cautions against using juveniles below the age of twelve as primary language informants. Ironically though, the 'infinite giggles' of the Bangani children in her example illustrate a very different point, one that I make to my own students about the input of children. The unabashed candor of children can sometimes call attention to the field linguist's errors and mistaken interpretations, where polite and hospitable adult informants may even acquiesce to errors, often being pleased that their language and culture get attention at all. A observes that 'people in general are nice to you, as long as you do not probe into their most honoured and defended secrets' (66). Yet if

your informant has become a good mate, he will tell you if your breath smells, your flexional ending is incorrect, or your interpretation of a meaning is wrong. A casual friend may gloss over such blemishes in his educated outsider friend. I could not agree with A more when she writes that 'language is a living organism' (3).

There are a few errors in this book. Claus Peter Zoller's Bangani forms on p. 77 (from 'Note on Bangani', *Indian Linguistics* 54.112–14, 1993) are partially incorrect and his interpretations erroneous. A full account is given elsewhere ('In search of Kentum Indo-European in the Himalayas', by George van Driem and Suhnu Ram Sharma, *Indogermanische Forschungen* 101.107–46, 1996; *Languages of the Himalayas* (2 vols.), by George van Driem, Leiden: Brill, 2001). The purported optionality of certain Bangani constructions with 'redundant negative particles' (52, 181) is doubtful. Not only does the difference in form correspond to a difference in meaning, however subtle or hard to glean for an outsider, but Zoller's interpretations of Bangani grammar are also sometimes mistaken, and A should not take them for granted. Some page number references in the index are one to five pages off the mark. [GEORGE VAN DRIEM, *Leiden University*.]

Triangulating translation: Perspectives in process oriented research. Ed. by FABIO ALVES. (Benjamins translation library 45.) Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2003. Pp. x, 163. ISBN 1588114295. \$102 (Hb).

This collection of conference papers investigates cognition and translation processes from three main viewpoints: theoretical perspectives, empirical studies, and pedagogical applications. The authors stress the need for different approaches to clarify the essence of inferential behavior, intersubjectivity, competence, segmentation, time pressure, dictionary use, and the novice-expert interface.

In 'A relevance theory approach to the investigation of inferential processes in translation' (3–24), FABIO ALVES and JOSÉ LUIZ V. R. GONÇALVES build on the theoretical framework proposed by relevance theory and competence-oriented studies of translation to consider the problem-solving and decision-making processes involved in the act of translation. The authors apply the theory of triangulation and use different data collection methods to locate the inferential patterns that relate to the translator's performance (*Translog* and retrospective protocols).