

the socioeconomic system of any built-in resistance to vagaries of the monsoon which produced famines and epidemics. Because the process seriously distorted the age structure of the population for decades, discussion of this very crucial factor would have been useful.

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**Symbolic and Pragmatic Semantics: A Kannada System of Address.** By SUSAN S. BEAN. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1978. xvi, 163 pp. Appendixes, Notes, Bibliography, Index. \$17.00.

In *Symbolic and Pragmatic Semantics: A Kannada System of Address*, Susan S. Bean presents a comprehensive semantic analysis of the terms for address in Kannada. She provides the theoretical background in the introduction and the first chapter. Address terms are grouped in one semantic domain on the basis of the socio-linguistic condition, "directed at the addressee." This binds the corpus of second person markers, kinship terms, and personal names into a functional whole. Because each subset shares few semantic dimensions with the other subsets, Bean analyzes each subset separately. In the concluding chapter she relates the analyses of the subsets to present the entire structure of Kannada address terminology. The focus of this book is theoretical. The illustrative ethnographic data was obtained from extended field research in the Kannada-speaking village, Avaruuru, which is composed of middle and low ranking castes.

The symbolic and pragmatic semantics as realized in this study are based on the classification of signs of the philosopher Charles Peirce. "Symbolic" refers to the arbitrary association between sign and object; "pragmatic," or "indexical" meaning refers to the existential association with the object. Terms of address possess both symbolic and pragmatic characteristics. Pronominal systems have two basic features, speaker and addressee. Minimal membership, socially close or remote, and gender are important distinguishing features in determining pronominal choice. The Kannada system of kin classification is essentially a componential analysis, with Floyd Lounsbury's rules specifying ways in which kinship terms are extended from focal kinsmen to more distant relations. When dealing with kinship terms of address, Bean returns to a Peircian approach. The two chapters on Kannada personal names are ethnographically the richest in the book. The six middle chapters (chapters two through seven) have a dual structure: the first in a pair focuses on the total system under analysis; the second, on address. These are sandwiched between an opening theoretical chapter and a concluding summary chapter.

Although both linguists and ethnologists operate on the assumption that address is a semantic domain, to my knowledge this is the first time that address has been treated in a formal semantic analysis, as well as the first time for a domain with a pragmatic aspect.

A basic assumption of this book is that the reader is acquainted with componential analysis, sociolinguistics, and ethnographic semantics. The analysis of a Kannada system of address is limited to the system in Avaruuru, and its main function is to illustrate theoretical points. When Bean ventures to more general statements on Kannada, such as, "In Kannada, unlike proto-Dravidian and most other Dravidian languages, there is no distinction between inclusive and exclusive

first person pronouns" (p. 20), she has probably limited herself to colloquial Kannada, literary Kannada, and Avaruru Kannada, excluding other dialects. Havyaka Kannada, for example, the dialect on which I worked, preserves the inclusive-exclusive first person plural distinction in the pronominal and verbal systems. Nevertheless, the analysis Bean presents is the one that best reflects both systems.

One of the inherent difficulties associated with formal semantic analysis—cumbersome terminology and notation—has not been avoided in this volume. It is also regrettable that Bean has not addressed the question of what the value of such an analysis may be. Chapter four, "The Semantic Structure of the Kannada System of Kin Classification," would have profited from a more detailed description of the background and basis for the equivalence rules. Those who are familiar with Lounsbury's work will find the chapter interesting; those who are not will be at a loss. Greater ethnographic detail throughout the middle chapters would have been valuable. Bean's research in Avaruru was of necessity limited to the middle and low castes residing there. One wonders how data from a Brahmin group would alter the analysis; some of the extensions (p. 72) do not apply to all Kannada-speaking groups, such as the Brahmins with whom I worked.

The major contribution of *Symbolic and Pragmatic Semantics: A Kannada System of Address* lies in the formal semantic analysis of a domain bridging iconic and existential areas. This difficult subject is handled clearly and intelligently. Secondary contributions are the presentation of the Kannada address system and the summaries of other research relevant to this study. The appendix listing Kannada kinship terms with their focal denotatum, other denotata, and equivalence rules will be convenient for others working on Kannada. This book will be primarily of value to those engaged in research on formal semantic analysis.

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**A Handbook of Comparative Tai.** By FANG KUEI LI. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press (Oceanic Linguistics Special Publications No. 15), 1977. xxii, 389 pp. Index, Bibliography. N.p.l.

This book is the result of more than four decades of research in Tai comparative-historical linguistics, and reflects the substantial contributions Professor Li has made to the descriptive analysis of Tai languages and to the reconstruction of Proto-Tai on the basis of comparative analysis. The present work provides an exposition of Li's proposed reconstruction of Proto-Tai phonology, a reconstruction based on the analysis of sound correspondences in cognate word sets drawn from languages representing the major subgroups of the Tai language family.

The first section of the book introduces the members of the Tai language family and their principal sources of documentation. The family is taxonomically divided into Northern, Central, and Southwestern subgroups in accordance with an a priori tripartite scheme familiar from Li's earlier work. The Southwestern subgroup includes the generally better known Tai languages such as Thai (Siamese), Lao, and Shan. Because languages of the Northern and Central subgroups are spoken mostly in the relatively less accessible regions of China's Guangxi Province and the Sino-Vietnamese border area, the languages of these two subgroups are less well-known.