make clear the success of the volume. Linguistics here has a higher purpose, and it is patent that those who knew Don Laycock lament the untimely passing of a very special person.

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Reviewed by Daryl Pfantz
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Within the ten contributions in this volume a diversity of topics and language situations are covered. Each article opens a new window on the complex interactions between language change and culture change. The only deficiency in the volume is that it does not contain more articles on the hundreds of other languages and topics that have not yet been studied.

One of the most interesting articles is "Language Shift as Cultural Reproduction" by Don Kulick. This is a study of the exactly eighty-nine speakers of the Taiap language living between the lower Ramu and Sepik rivers. It captures language and culture as they change together and influence one another.

Individualism, which was traditionally tied to femininity in Taiap culture has, in current culture, become tied with paganism, backwardness, lack of education and the Taiap language; while collectivism, traditionally tied to masculinity, has currently become tied to Christianity, modernity, education and Tok Pisin. The author argues that the present language shift from Taiap to Tok Pisin is caused by the fact that the cultural items currently associated with Tok Pisin are more highly valued than those tied to the vernacular.

Another very interesting article is "Sociolinguistic Typology and Other Factors Affecting Change in Northwestern New Britain, Papua New Guinea" by William R. Thurston. The author demonstrates that three closely related languages (Lusi, Kove and Kabana) which for many years have functioned as local trade languages, are now losing ground to Tok Pisin. The main reason cited is that the three languages have grown more and more similar lexically and thus have lost the ability to be markers of ethnic distinctiveness between the speakers. Without this ability they have lost most of their value as against Tok Pisin and therefore are in danger of being replaced by it.

Contrasted with these three languages is the neighboring Anêm language. It is a non-Austronesian isolate which has never been used as a language of wider communication and is very seldomly learned by people from the neighboring languages. It is, therefore, a salient marker of ethnic distinctiveness. Due to their linguistic isolation and a number of other factors, Anêm speakers are increasingly showing feelings of linguistic
and cultural superiority. There is a drive for linguistic purity in the language as shown in the fact that:

Some of the boys devised a competitive word game aimed at exposing one another’s ignorance of the name for an obscure vine or bush; in order to keep ahead, boys were asking older people, secretively, for words they could use to try tricking other boys (p.131).

This article clearly points out a number of factors affecting a language’s viability.

As for the other articles in the volume:

Karl J. Franklin and Roman Stefaniw discuss two different but closely related ‘pandanus languages’ in the Southern Highlands.

David Lithgow discusses language changes radiating out from the dominant Dobu language on Fergusson and Normanby Islands.

Otto Nekitel, a native speaker of Abu’ Arapesh in the Sandaun Province, presents items of traditional culture that have been lost since western contact and the corresponding lexical and grammatical losses.

 Günther Renck demonstrates that the adaptation of Christian values into the Yagaria language and culture in the Eastern Highlands has preserved and even encouraged culturally invented idioms in the religious domain. This preservation is contrasted against the fact that most other culturally invented idioms to describe new objects and concepts have given way to Tok Pisin loan words.

Gunter Senft outlines the Trobriand Islanders’ drive to rid themselves of their language and traditional culture in order to become as westernized as possible.

Jeff Siegel discusses the 60,000 laborers from India who were brought to Fiji at the turn of the twentieth century. He shows that, although they were from many different regions, languages and castes, they build a new society and a new language – Fiji Hindi.

Geoff Smith presents contrasting case studies of two similar small languages in Morobe Province. He shows that they are both ‘in danger of submersion and obsolescence’ but that they have been affected by different external and internal factors.

S.A. Wurm discusses changes in language structure that are broad enough to cause changes in typology of the language involved. He starts with a broad discussion of these changes in various languages of the world and then discusses similar changes occurring in the Santa Cruz Archipelago of the Solomon Islands.


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Pidgin and creole studies such as those appearing in the volume under review augur well for pidgin and creole linguistics (PCL).