INTRODUCTION

The present collection of articles is the result of a linguistic symposium on the indigenous languages of the lowlands of South America. The symposium, which was entitled 'Indigenous Languages of Lowland South America' / 'Lenguas Indígenas de las Tierras Bajas de Sudamérica', was an initiative of Peter van Baarle and Pilar Valenzuela. It took place on July 7 – 11, 1997, at the 49th International Congress of Americanists, at the Pontifica Universidad Catolica del Ecuador, in Quito.

The central theme of the symposium concerned the languages of the geographical region called Amazonia. This region is usually defined as the Amazon river basin, which covers parts of Bolivia, Brazil, Colombia, Ecuador, French Guyana, Guyana, Peru, Surinam and Venezuela. In the present work, the languages of the Orinoco river basin as well. The ecology of this entire region is characterized by dense forests, a humid tropical climate, and relatively modest elevations (until about 1500 metres). Because of the similar ecological circumstances it comes as no surprise that the peoples who originally inhabit Amazonia share many aspects of traditional material culture. The linguistic situation, on the other hand, is immensely diverse. About 300 indigenous languages are spoken in Amazonia today, most of which are divided over a great number of linguistic families, which belong to some twenty linguistic stocks. Furthermore, about thirty languages of Amazonia are generally taken to be linguistic isolates.

One contribution to the present volume (Klein) deals in part with lowland languages spoken outside of Amazonia 'proper', namely certain languages of the Gran Chaco region of Paraguay and Argentina. The Chaco region is subtropical and very hot. The vegetation is characterized by tough scrub-forest and palm savannah. The region is humid because of the bad drainage properties of the clay soil. Due to these inhospitable characteristics, the region may have functioned as an area of refuge for certain Amazonian and Andean peoples who had been driven away elsewhere. Some language families of this region have representatives in Amazonia.

Two other contributions (van de Kerke and Muysken) concern the languages spoken on the eastern slopes of the Andes. Their discussions have ramifications for the nature of the division between the Andean and the Amazonian languages (i.e. highland and lowland). As it turns out, it is difficult to draw a sharp boundary, since the distinction between Andean and Amazonian languages is gradual, both from a genetic perspective and from a typological perspective.

Because of the absence of precolombian written documents and the sparsity of archaeological evidence, the linguistic map is one of our most promising sources of information for the native history of the South American lowlands (e.g. Urban 1992). Unfortunately, only a few of the languages which constitute this map have been studied exhaustively, while the majority of the languages is in danger of becoming extinct. The total number of languages spoken in the lowlands of South America today, about 400 (Payne 1990), is relatively low when compared to the number of languages which must
have been spoken at the time when the Europeans first visited the region. As an example, Rodrigues (1993) estimated that over a thousand languages were spoken in Brazil alone before the coming of the Europeans. Today about 180 Brazilian indigenous languages have survived the consequences of genocide and disease, which have been brought upon their speakers by the Europeans since the year 1500. In actual fact, introduced diseases may still ravage isolated groups of Indians, and wilful cultural and physical genocide against the Indians continue until the very present day. Pressure from outside on the habitat of the Amazonian Indians has been increasing especially during the latest decennia. Due to the unequal status quo, millions of impoverished people from elsewhere see themselves forced to try their luck in Amazonia. In addition, multinational companies have been involved in one-way extraction of the natural resources of the region. The result is pollution and deforestation on an unprecedented scale. Because the presence of the Indians in the Amazonia has been attested for over 12,000 years, it is obvious that the indigenous cultures were the appropriate basis for survival there.

It is beyond doubt that documentation of the indigenous languages of South America is of great scientific importance. Furthermore, one cannot expect to make a thorough and reliable study of a living language without being aware of the situation in which its speakers live. Conversely then, such studies can also be important for the native speakers themselves. The preservation of the indigenous cultures goes hand in hand with maintenance of the native languages. Fieldwork, documentation and research by experienced linguists is one of the most important bases for successful preservation of the often seriously endangered indigenous languages in the present day. In the first place, it is a prerequisite for establishing a useful orthography with which materials for native language alfabetization and bilingual education can be created. Secondly, serious study and acquisition of an indigenous language by an outsider in collaboration with native consultants may lend the language in question extra prestige. Lastly, once a language is thoroughly analysed and documented, it may be forgotten, but it will never be lost. Languages can even be revived on the basis of linguistic descriptions as long as these contain correct analyses, a comprehensive lexicon and plenty of texts, preferably along with audio and video documentation.

The majority of the articles included in this volume are based on extensive fieldwork in indigenous communities by the authors themselves. They contain (in many cases new) linguistic data from over 50 lowland languages. Because many of these languages have hardly been studied before, the present collection is not a state-of-the-art report, but rather the result of work in progress. Nevertheless, the present collection reflects the linguistic diversity of lowland South America. Moreover, the different contributions represent a wide range of fields of research: phonology, grammar, aspects of discourse, genetic and comparative issues. Furthermore, there is heterogeneity as to theoretical approaches: apart from descriptive work, there are contributions from functional, generative, historical and typological perspectives. We have tried to roughly group the articles together according to the following themes: descriptive, comparative, phonology and morphosyntax, in that order.
In her article, GALE GOODWIN-GÓMEZ investigates the use of Yanomam noun classifiers in ethnobotanical terminology in relation to the scientific classification of plants and to the uses assigned to these plants by the Yanomam speakers themselves. SIMON VAN DE KERKE describes areal aspects of case marking in the unclassified Bolivian Andean foothills language Leko, which shows correspondences with both lowland and highland languages. HEIN VAN DER VOORT gives a short descriptive sketch of the grammar of the unclassified Kwaza language, and includes a comparative list of lexemes from equally unclassified neighbouring languages.

In the historical and comparative section, JEAN-PIERRE ANGENOT & GERALDA ANGENOT-DE LIMA discuss the phonetics and phonotactics of the Chapakura stock and advance a partial reconstruction of the protolanguage. NILSON GABAS JUNIOR proposes a re-evaluation of the Ramaruma family of the Tupi stock, and shows that it consists of one language today: Karo. HARRIET MANELIS KLEIN discusses meronymy as expressed in the vocabularies of the languages which are grouped under the subfamily called Macro Panoan, with an emphasis on field data from families of the Gran Chaco region. PIETER MUYSKEN puts forward the hypothesis that a number of characteristics of the grammar of the Uru language are not original, but the result of influence from Aymara. PILAR VALENZUELA compares three Pano languages, contrasting split ergativity in Wariapano and Yaminawa with the pervasively ergative morphology of Shipibo-Konibo.

The article by ELSA GOMEZ-IMBERT shows how strongly the phonology and the other components of the Barasana language (Eastern Tukano) depend on one another. In this language, deictic reference (first and second person) is expressed by a tonal prefix on the verb, and non-deictic reference (third person) by a segmental prefix. The article by GERALDA ANGENOT-DE LIMA & JEAN-PIERRE ANGENOT contains a discussion of the prosodic systems of defining word boundaries in the morphologically isolating Chapakuran languages, and includes an extensive bibliography of these languages. The article by MARÍLIA FACÓ SOARES contributes to the discussion about the connection between phonology and syntax, and involves data from the isolated Tikuna language and the Pano languages Marubo and Matses. In her contribution on palatalization of Suruwaha (Arawa) sibilants, MÁRCIA SUZUKI highlights the symmetry of the system and the involvement of the OCP in defining vowel geminates, phonology acquisition, word minimalism, morphological processes and borrowings.

The morphosyntactic section forms the biggest part of this volume MARÍA EUGENIA VILLALÓN & TANIA GRANADILLO discuss the person marking system of Mapoyo, which is more simple than the systems of other Cariban languages of the northern lowlands. This is probably due to obsolescence phenomena and factors of language contact. The article by ANGEL CORBERA MÓR is a discussion in the Strong Lexicalist generative framework of morphological processes involved in noun-formation in Aguaruna, a Jivaro language of the Peruvian Amazon. MARÍA AMÉLIA REIS SILVA & ANDRÉS PABLO SALANOVA present an analysis of M̄bêngôkre (Kayapo-Jê) verb classes, case marking, and of split ergativity in particular. In his first contribution to the present volume, ANDRÉS ROMERO-FIGUEROA deals with the coding
of discourse participants through noun phrases, pronouns, affixes and zero, in Kari'ña, a Carib language of eastern Venezuela. The article by WOLF DIETRICH shows that the Tupi-Guarani languages do not have an autonomous lexical category of adjectives distinct from the category of substantives (which includes nominal predicates). SIDNEY DA SILVA FACUNDES discusses argument expression in Apurinã (Maipure). It turns out that the mapping of semantic arguments, such as agent and patient, onto syntactic relations, such as subject and object, is understood best in languages which show argument agreement on the verb. The article of MARCUS MAIA, ANDRES SALANOVA & ELDER JOSÉ LANES describes question words in Karaja, Kayapo (both Macro-Jê) and Manxineri (Arawak) and analyses their morphological and syntactic features within the theoretical framework of Principles and Parameters. LUCY SEKI gives a detailed functional-typological account of relativization strategies in Kamaiura, a Tupi-Guarani language of the upper Xingu river.

The second contribution of ANDRÉS ROMERO-FIQUEROA, which was not presented at the symposium in Quito, relates to pragmatics. It deals with the class of legendary periphrastic time adverbs in Warao, an isolated language of Venezuela.

Besides the talks which resulted in the articles included in the present volume, the symposium also featured talks by Maria Sueli de Aguiar, José Alvarez, Tania Clemente de Souza, Bruna Franchetto, Marynarcia Guedes, Denny Moore, Henri Ramirez, Margarethe Saring-Chávez and Iara Maria Teles.

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References
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6 LOWLAND SOUTH AMERICA

1. Mapuche (Araucanian) (Klein)
2. Paumari (Arawa) (Klein)
3. Suruwahá (Arawa) (Suzuki)
4. Kariña (Carib) (Romero-Figueroa)
5. Mapoyo (Carib) (Granadillo & Villalón)
6. Pemon (Carib) (Klein)
7. Kuyubí (Chapakara) (Angenot & Angenot)
8. Miguelinho (Chapakara) (Angenot & Angenot)
9. Moré/Itepe (Chapakara) (Angenot & Angenot)
10. Wari (Chapakara) (Angenot & Angenot)
11. Cholon (Cholon) (van de Kerke)
12. Abipona (Guaykuru) (Klein)
13. Eyiguayegi-Mbaya/Kadiwéu (Guaykuru) (Klein)
14. Pilagás (Guaykuru) (Klein)
15. Toba (Guaykuru) (Klein)
16. Leko (Isolate) (van de Kerke)
17. Tikuna (Isolate) (Facó-Soares)
18. Warao (Isolate) (Romero-Figueroa)
19. Yuracare (Isolate) (van de Kerke)
20. Aymara (Jaqí) (van de Kerke, Muysken)
21. Jaqaru (Jaqí) (van de Kerke)
22. Kayapó (Jê-Kayapó) (Maia, Salanova & Lanes)
23. MêBêngôkre (Jê-Kayapó) (Reis-Silva & Salanova)
24. Aguaruna/Jibaro (Jivaró-Shuar) (Corbera-Mori)
25. Karajá (Macro-Jê) (Maia, Salanova & Lanes)
26. Apurínã (Maipure) (Facundes)
27. Guajiro (Maipure) (Klein)
28. Macuiguenã (Maipure) (Klein)
29. Maxe (Maipure) (Maia, Salanova & Lanes)
30. Resiguaro (Maipure) (Klein)
31. Daw (Makú) (Klein)
32. Mataco (Mataguaya) (Klein)
33. Amahuaca (Pano) (Klein)
34. Marubo (Pano) (Facó-Soares)
35. Matses (Pano) (Facó-Soares)
36. Shiwíbó/Konibo (Pano) (Valenzuela)
37. Waraná (Pano) (Valenzuela)
38. Yanomáwí (Pano) (Valenzuela)
39. Piaroa (Piaroa-Sáliba) (Klein)
40. Quechua (Quechua) (van de Kerke, Muysken)
41. Ese eja (Tacana) (Klein)
42. Barasana (Tukano) (Gomez-Imbert)
43. Coto/Coto (Tukano) (Klein)
44. Tatuyo (Tukano) (Gomez-Imbert)
45. Chiriguano (Tupí-Guarani) (Dietrich)
46. Guaraní Paraguayo (Tupí-Guarani) (Dietrich)
47. Guarayo (Tupí-Guarani) (Dietrich)
48. Guaykikí (Tupí-Guarani) (Klein)
49. Kamayurá (Tupí-Guarani) (Seki)
50. Mbyá (Tupí-Guarani) (Dietrich)
51. Wayãpi (Tupí-Guarani) (Dietrich)
52. Gaviao (Tupí-Mondé) (Gabas)
53. Garai (Tupí-Ramaríma) (Gabas)
54. Akotsú (Tupí-Tupari) (van de Voort)
55. Mekens (Tupí-Tupari) (van de Voort)
56. Aikaná (Unclassified) (van de Voort)
57. Kanoê (Unclassified) (van de Voort)
58. Kwoa (Unclassified) (van de Voort)
59. Chipaya (Uru-Chipaya) (Muysken)
60. Uru (Uru-Chipaya) (van de Kerke, Muysken)
61. Yanomam (Yanomami) (Goodwin-Gómez)
Map of South America with the locations of the languages from which data are presented in the present volume.