

NEW BOOK INFORMATION

Anthropological Linguistics / Cognition and language

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Endangered Metaphors

Edited by Anna Idström and Elisabeth Piirainen

University of Helsinki / Steinfurt, Germany

In cooperation with Tiber F.M. Falzett

When the last speaker of a language dies, s/he takes to oblivion the memories, associations and the rich imagery this language community has once lived by. The cultural heritage encoded in conventional linguistic metaphors, handed down through generations, will be lost forever. This volume consists of fifteen articles about metaphors in endangered languages, from Peru to Alaska, from India to Ghana. The empirical data demonstrate that the assumptions of contemporary cognitive linguistic theory about “universal” metaphors and the underlying cognitive processes are still far from plausible, since culture plays an important role in the formation of metaphors. Moreover, that theory has been based on knowledge of metaphors in some standard languages. Indigenous and other minority languages, especially mainly orally used ones, have been disregarded completely. Besides researchers and students in linguistics, especially in metaphor and figurative language theory, this compilation provides food for thought for scholars in large fields of cultural studies, ranging from anthropology and ethnology to folkloristics and philosophy.

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“Perhaps the major issue facing linguists today is the phenomenon of language endangerment. [...] Metaphors are a particularly interesting area of language because of their interaction with both language and culture, providing an insight into the ways in which different cultures come to terms with their environments, an insight that will be lost if the metaphorical systems of different languages disappear without being documented. It is therefore with great pleasure that I recommend the present volume to a broad linguistic readership. The editors and contributors have succeeded in bringing together and systematizing a wide range of phenomena involving metaphors in endangered languages [...]. I join them in encouraging others to continue their work by documenting metaphors in endangered languages, always bearing in mind that metaphors may be one of the first parts of a language to disappear once it becomes endangered.”

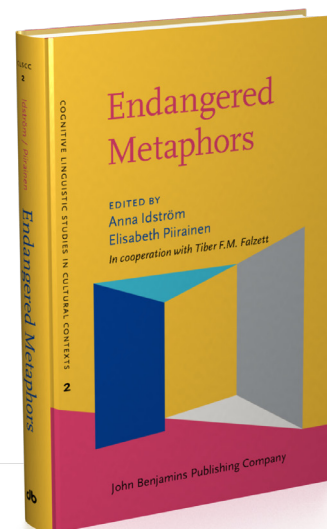
Bernard Comrie, Max Planck Institute for Evolutionary Anthropology and University of California Santa Barbara

“Endangered Metaphors offers a fascinating collection of articles looking at metaphoric language in languages that are slowly vanishing from the world’s landscape. These chapters focus on many issues related to metaphor theory, including questions on the universality and cultural specificity of conceptual metaphors, and topics associated with globalization in human languages and culture. The range of linguistic data explored is incredibly impressive [...]. Endangered Metaphors is a wonderful addition to the new book series on Cognitive Linguistic Studies in Cultural Contexts.”

Raymond W. Gibbs, Jr., University of California, Santa Cruz

“The book breaks new ground in empirical and theoretical metaphor and idiom research, since it looks at the figurative lexicon of endangered minority languages that have never before been the topic of metaphor or idiom research. Therefore, the book is highly innovative and stimulating. The fifteen articles treat significant issues of figurative language and its cultural foundation in languages of five continents. [...] No similar publication exists to date.”

Dmitrij Dobrovol’skij, Russian Academy of Sciences, Moscow



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