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Review of: Maipure

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Maipure. By RAOUL ZAMPONI. (*Languages of the world/materials* 192.) Munich: LINCOM Europa, 2003. Pp. v, 89. ISBN 3895862320. €38.

Maipure is an Arawakan language that became extinct before the end of the eighteenth century. Formerly spoken in what is today Venezuela's Amazonas Province, Maipure is largely known from information recorded by priests or missionaries. Chief among these was Father Filippo Salvatore Gilij, who left extensive notes about a number of languages of the Orinoco Basin. Other key sources are attributable to Lorenzo Hervás y Panduro. Both of these men published their original descriptions in Italian. The author of the present grammatical sketch is also a native speaker of Italian and was easily able to make full use of all primary sources (listed on pp. 86–87).

This is the first modern summary of everything that is known, perhaps of everything that is knowable, about this formerly widely used language. In addition to his thorough study of all extant descriptions of the language, Raoul Zamponi was also able to make major extrapolations about Maipure linguistic structure through judicious comparison with other, closely related Arawakan languages. These include the recently extinct Yavitero (Parene) language, spoken near the border area of Venezuela, Colombia, and Brazil, whose last speaker died in 1984. The resultant deductions round out the information provided in Z's grammatical sketch, which is surprisingly detailed for an indigenous language that was studied only cursorily by nonprofessional linguists over two centuries ago.

The contents of this book are divided into four parts. An introduction offers basic historical and so-

ciolinguistic data and compares Maipure to closely related Arawakan languages and dialects, notably Avane. There are sections on language mixing (11–13), particularly with Cariban, and even a few brief comments about possible male and female registers of the language (11). Not surprisingly, Z is particularly thorough in his description of the existing primary sources on Maipure (1–3). The phonology is also discussed in considerable detail (14–20), including information on the language's prosodic structure. The longest section (21–60) treats various aspects of the morphosyntax, including the derivation of form classes, and the expression of grammatical categories. The picture that emerges is one of considerable detail, despite inevitable gaps in the recorded data itself. The final section contains two texts (61–67) given in Maipure, in the original Italian translation, as well as in idiomatic English translation. Two appendices list the textual origin of all examples used in the grammar (68–71) as well as a classified word list that serves as a sort of dictionary of all lexemes preserved in Maipure (72–86). The reference section (87–89) recapitulates the primary sources on the language, but also includes more recent treatments of Arawakan languages that have a bearing on our knowledge Maipure linguistic structure.

The author's ability to provide such a comprehensive and authoritative treatment of a language that disappeared over two hundred years ago is truly commendable. This book is definitely one of the better volumes in LINCOM Europa's series 'Languages of the world/materials'. It also represents a significant contribution to the study of Lowland South American languages and to Arawakan studies in particular. [EDWARD J. VAJDA, *Western Washington University*.]