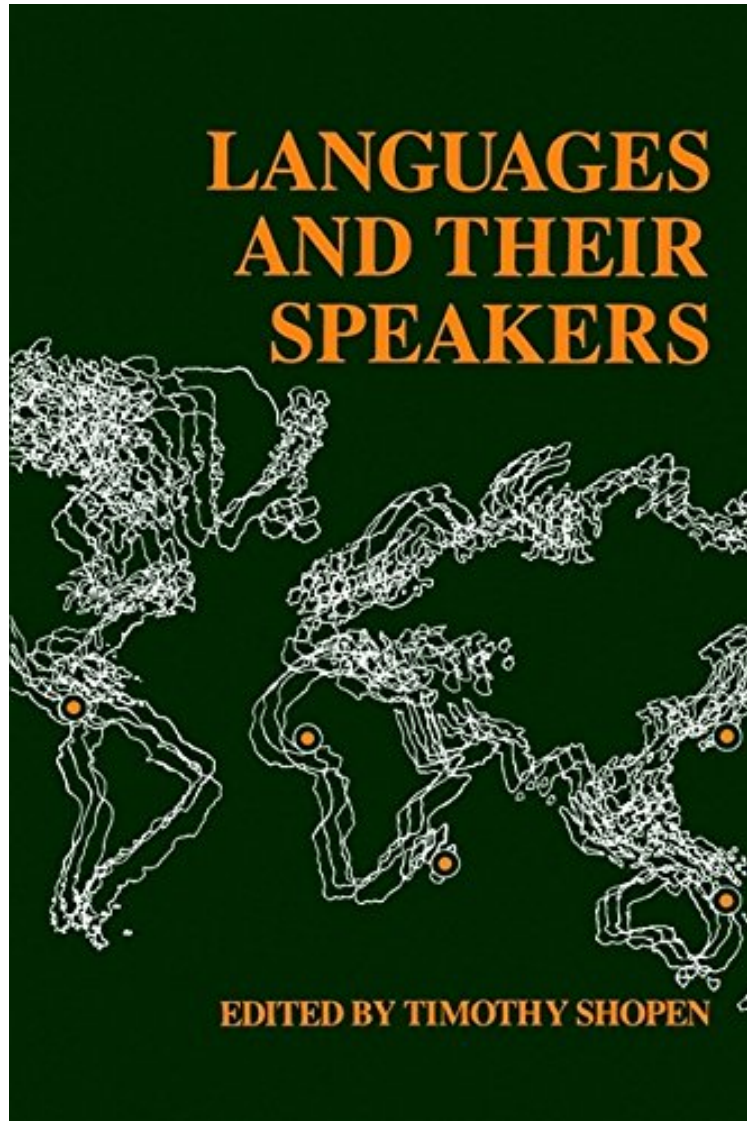


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Languages and Their Speakers

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This book and the companion volume (Languages and Their Status, also edited by Shopen) provide an excellent introduction to linguistic anthropology through several case studies. Each chapter is written by a different author. The text does not assume any knowledge of linguistics and jargon is kept to a minimum. Each chapter focuses on one language and provides a discussion of a theoretical topic (e.g. morphemes, formality, word order) and several sections presenting a small grammatical "lesson" about the language. Coupled with a discussion of the language's grammatical features is a discussion of how native speakers USE the language. Thus the reader gets a nice package of some linguistic theory, grammatical description, and cultural anthropology in each chapter.

Languages and Their Speakers provides an introduction both to languages themselves and to their social functions. Written especially for nonlinguistic majors, the book gives insight into the meaning, value, and function of language within a culture and into the ways language behavior varies and changes. Each chapter of the book discusses what it means to be a speaker of a particular language, and puts the language in context among the languages of the world. The book explores how people know their languages—know them as grammatical systems and know them as part of a cultural fabric. The authors discuss the ways speakers, as opposed to linguists, view a language. They consider what one must know in order to be a good speaker of a particular language; the constraints placed on communication by the culture in which it takes place; how social relationships influence language; and how the use of language can, in turn, influence social relationships. Languages and Their Speakers will be of interest to students of linguistics, anthropology, and those concerned about the use of language in its cultural context. This volume is complemented by a second volume entitled Languages and Their Status, also available from the University of Pennsylvania Press.

About the Author
Edited by Timothy Shopen