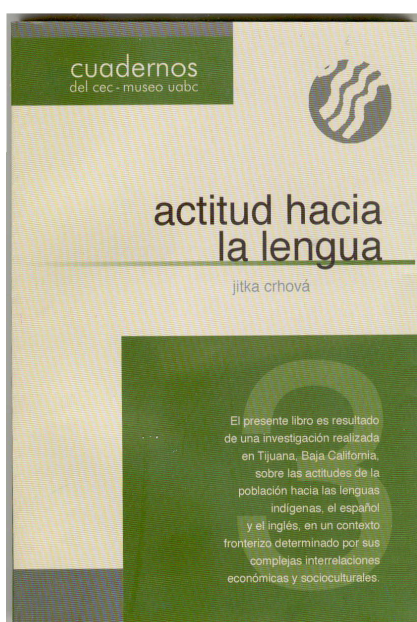


Comments about the book “actitud hacia la Lengua” (Attitude towards language)

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Comments about the book:

Crhová, Jitka (2004) *Actitud hacia la lengua*. Mexicali, B.C. UABC-CEC-Museo; PACMYC(ICBC)



The book we are pleased to comment on *Actitud hacia la lengua* (co-edited by UABC, CONACULTA, the Instituto de Cultura de Baja California, the Programa de Apoyo a las Culturas Municipales and the Instituto Municipal de Arte y Cultura), is mainly based on the doctoral thesis of PhD Jitka Crhová, as part of her studies in the School of Philosophy and Literature, Romance Languages, Specialty in Sociolinguistic, in the University of Palacky, one of the most recognized universities in the Czech Republic.

PhD Jitka Crhová was born in Stenberk, in Czech Republic. She has a relevant experience in translation, language

teaching, literature, specifically in Czech, English, Spanish and Russian. She has participated in several events in Belgium, England, Ukraine, Cuba, United States, and Mexico. It has been an honor for UABC to have her as a professor for several years, sharing her knowledge and experience. She has worked as an English teacher at the Tourism School and recently at the Language School.

This book discusses a topic non-well explored by the specialists of language: The attitudes people have towards the indigenous languages, Spanish and English in Tijuana (a border city), with all its complexity that characterizes the relations between residents of this multicultural and multilingual region.

The relations between Spanish and indigenous languages have been varied through history and in this territory known as Hispanic America. For example, at the beginning of the colonization of the continent, the labor of missionaries contributed to the expansion of some indigenous languages, used as lingua franca, even more than during the splendor of those peoples. I am particularly referring to Nahuatl, which the monks made sure was spoken from

Zacatecas to Central America, which the Aztec Empire could not accomplish. Something similar occurred in the South of the continent with Quechua.

However, as years went by, several effects in other regions were registered. In the Antilles, the process of Hispanization was translated into the disappearance of natives. In Paraguay and Yucatan, the prestige of Guaraní and Maya respectively, adopted a more convenient linguistic situation using Spanish equally in many circumstances.

According to Jitka, in Tijuana, we can see the extinction of indigenous languages such as Guaycura and the risk of the extension of other such as Paipai, Cucacpá, Kiliwa and Kumiai, all of them from Baja California. On the other hand, we can perceive interesting attempts towards the protection of native languages in Tijuana, such as the Mixteco. I am sure you have heard about the Real Academia Española, which has its corresponding academies in different countries of America, including the not so well-known Academia Norteamericana de la Lengua Española. Thanks to Jitka's book I just found out of the existence of the Academia de la Lengua Mixteca (mixteco Language Academy), which was founded in 1997 and surprisingly has a regional representative in this city.

The first idea about the relations between English and Spanish that comes to our minds when we think of this region is associated with Chicanos, the "third nation" and the famous "Spanglish". However, one of the things that surprised me the most about Jitka's study was the finding that a certain quantity of monolingual speakers of Spanish on this side of the border do not know how to name the language they speak, while others claim they speak Mexicano.

There are many interesting data in this book "Actitud hacia la lengua" (Attitude towards language), and many things to comment on. The reader will find this book valuable not only because of the explored issue but also as a tool to help us reflect on our behavior towards those who express themselves in a different way, in a different language or a dialect. With our attitudes of respect, appraisal, dismissal or indifference, we influence in people's development and vitality more than we think.