

Henry Tourneux & Yvonne Treis (eds). *Topics in Chadic Linguistics X. Papers from the 9th Biennial International Colloquium on the Chadic Languages, Villejuif, September 7–8, 2017*. Köln 2019. Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 274 p., Euro 59,80, ISBN 978-3-89645-530-7

This latest publication of the Chadic Linguistics Group is full of interesting articles, which reflect various Chadic languages. The articles are: *Russell G. Schuh: An overview of his Chadic scholarship* by Paul NEWMAN (pp. 13–22), *Less commonly documented literacy practices: secular Hausa Ajami as situated social literacy* by Umma ALIYU MUSA, Esther MORGENTHAL & Henning SCHREIBER (pp. 23–52), *Animal names in Hausa and Kupto: Their specific characteristics mirrored in proverbs, epithets and sayings* by Sergio BALDI & Rudolf LEGER (pp. 53–66), *Verb classes and TAM system in Kushi (Nigeria)* by Gian Claudio BATIC (pp. 67–84), *Current research on the A3 West Chadic languages* by Roger BLENCH (pp. 85–112), *Les stratégies de traduction de l'Ancien Testament dans les trois versions haoussa de la Bible: un problème d'interprétation?* by Philippe CASSUTO & Victor PORKHOMOVSKY (pp. 113–142), *Verb classification in Mogum (Eastern Chadic)* by Emma KUIPERS (pp. 143–158), *Ideophones in Barayin* by Joseph LOVESTRAND (pp. 159–176), *Patterns of organisation in the Hausa grade system* by Joseph McINTYRE (pp. 177–196), *Semantic and pragmatic motivations of gender assignment in Hausa* by Nina PAWLAK & Joseph McINTYRE (pp. 197–214), *On ideophones in Musey* by James ROBERTS & SOULOKADI Albert Camus (pp. 215–226), *Lexical links between Chadic, Cushitic and Omotic languages* by Olga STOLBOVA (pp. 227–240), *Le syntagme nominal dans le parler «kotoko» de Kousseri* by Henry TOURNEUX (pp. 241–256), *Gavar verb morphology* by Melanie VILJOEN (pp. 257–274).

The volume collects the communications presented and is full of interesting ideas concerning various Chadic languages. The first article concerns the work of a great Chadist, Russell G. Schuh, died in the meantime, to whom this volume is dedicated. His colleague Paul Newman, but above all his friend, briefly outlines the scientific work and presents his enormous bibliography, which highlights a tireless field work. In this regard, it is sufficient to mention *Chadic Cornucopia*, a fantastic work that can be downloaded from the Web, like many of his Chadic language dictionaries, the result of a tireless continuous research in the field of Chadic languages. Unfortunately, these last few years have seen

the disappearance of other illustrious Chadists, such as Daniel Barreteau, Jean-Pierre Caprile and Claude Gouffé.

In the second communication the authors address a fascinating topic concerning the secular Hausa Ajami literacy, denying “the misconception that Africa has a purely oral culture”. In Sahelian West Africa, the writing system in Ajami is well-known and much used especially in Hausa and Fulfulde.

The fourth article concerns the verb classes and TAM system in Kushi, a West Chadic language of Nigeria of the Bole-Tangale group, spoken on the northeastern fringe of the Muri mountains (Nigeria, Gombe State).

The fifth communication concerns the current research on a branch of Chadic languages, the A3 West Chadic languages, which “consists of twenty-three languages grouped into seven clusters”. Our knowledge of these languages, on the whole, has increased considerably to the point that from the alleged 153 idioms, classified by Carl Hoffmann (1971: 1–10), we have come to number them in 193 (Ethnologue 2018¹). The research is of course in continuous development as a large group of languages completely insufficiently documented. In this regard Blench observes, citing the case of Jorto people that they make their first appearance in Ames (1934) and later appears in following sources, but according to his field research Jorto do not exist.

The sixth communication provides a selection of passages from the Old Testament in Hausa, French and English, offering an overview of the philological and ideological strategies of the translation of this sacred text, a subject very dear to the authors and repeatedly addressed by them in various aspects.

In the seventh communication the author proposes a classification system for verbs in Mogum, spoken in the Guera region of Chad. Mogum has several dialects according to *Ethnologue* and belongs to subgroup B.1.a of Eastern Chadic languages. As stated by the author Moghum “demonstrates several expected features for an Eastern Chadic language: verb roots composed of a single vowel and up to five consonants, the perfective/imperfective TAM distinction, an infinitive formed by suffixing a vowel to the verb root, the use of vowel epenthesis to break up consonant clusters”.

The LOVESTRAND’s article is interesting because it deals with a topic that has only recently been carefully studied in numerous languages. In fact, although the ideophones present, in different forms, in almost all languages, in some they continue to be ignored as a linguistic category. This is the case of Swahili, a language in which only recently a work has appeared, quite exhaustive on the subject (Baldi & Watimila 2014). LOVESTRAND examines the ideophones in Barayin, an East Chadic language spoken by approximately 5,000 people in the Guera region of the Republic of Chad. The author studies the various characteristics of ideophones going from phonetics to tonology, showing

¹ <<https://www.ethnologue.com>>

their eccentricity with respect to the other grammatical parts of the language. Unfortunately he is forced to admit that his analysis “is based on a corpus without any other means of lexicographic investigation of the meaning of ideophones”. The meaning of the ideophones, especially in the Chadic languages, is really interesting for their precision, if we examine Hausa, of which the author cites some works by Paul Newman, but not his grammar, where an entire chapter is devoted to the subject, showing all the semantic nuances that some loans have. It is hoped that the work can be deepened and that this aspect is developed in the future.

In the following article Joseph McINTYRE deals with patterns of organization in the Hausa grade system. Ever since the most illustrious Chadist, F.W. Parsons, shed light on the Hausa verbal system by formulating the seven-degree system much has been written and published. This communication adds a new element to the better knowledge of the subject.

An interesting topic is undoubtedly the one addressed by Nina PAWLAK & Joseph McINTYRE on gender assignment in Hausa, a language that distinguishes the masculine and feminine from the singular only, while the plural is common. The authors analyze in a precise manner “a description of gender in Hausa from the perspectives of semantics and pragmatics”. Interesting the observed phenomenon concerning the gender variation between Hausa and Arabic, where “*samā* ‘sky’ occurs with either feminine or masculine gender, as does the Hausa word *samà* ‘sky, heavens’”.

In the article, *On ideophones in Musey* by James ROBERTS & SOULOKADI Albert Camus, the authors, after a historical excursus on the ideophones in Musey, a Chadic language of the Masa branch, as a lexical category, affirm “a given ideophone cannot occur freely, but may be used in construction with one specific verb or adjective very narrow range of verbs or adjectives”. The article, while analyzing the ideophones from the tonal, morphological and syntactic point of view, has the merit of starting from a substantial corpus of some 500 items, collected by SOULOKADI and given their semantic meaning.

In her paper, Olga STOLBOVA presents a number of Chadic-Omotic-Cushitic cognates “to demonstrate that an investigation into such cognates is critical for the classification of Omotic languages” and hopes that “research into lexical links between Chadic, Cushitic and Omotic languages holds great promise”.

Henry TOURNEUX, after providing some historical references on the name and geographical location of Kousseri, gives brief indications on the classification of the Kotoko dialect, its phonology and examples of grammatical sentences illustrating the noun phrase.

The volume concludes with the communication of Melanie VILJOEN on the morphology of the verb in Gavar, “a Central Chadic language spoken by around 15 000 people in the division of Mayo-Tsanaga in the Far North

Region of Cameroon”. Gavar, like a number of other Central Chadic languages “distinguishes eight different person/number combinations, first person plural being divided into inclusive, exclusive and dual” and reveals a number of unusual features which could interest to Chadists and linguists.

Reference

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