

REVIEWS

A Contrastive Grammar of Brazilian Pomeranian. By Gertjan Postma. (Linguistik Aktuell 248). Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2018. Pp. 312. Hardcover. \$158.00.

doi: 10.1017/S1470542720000185

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In this volume, Gertjan Postma delivers a detailed account of the grammatical properties of Pomeranian as spoken by Europeans who emigrated from Farther Pomerania (in present-day Poland) to Brazil between 1857–1888. This grammar focuses on the synchronic aspects of Brazilian Pomeranian, which is now a heritage grammar used by disparate groups of remaining speakers in Espírito Santo. Postma focuses predominantly on the synchronic grammar of Brazilian; however, the comparative component of the volume involves modern (High) German, Dutch, and Frisian, as well as historical aspects of Pomeranian—both in Brazil and Europe.

The book is comprised of 10 content chapters and is additionally supported by ancillary materials—such as an early immigration record, maps, and a concise word list of frequent lexical items—at the conclusion of the book. Chapter 1 is primarily a historical introduction to Pomeranian that provides a primer on certain elements pertaining to the dialectology of European Pomeranian, such as the *n/ø*-isogloss in pronouns that appear in different infinitive constructions, strong adjectival declension patterns, and variation in the production of the long vowel *ē*. The latter two thirds of this first chapter provide a detailed account of the migration of European Pomeranian speakers to Brazil, touching on a variety of relevant factors such as the motivations for emigration, background on the various settlements in Brazil, and relevant sociolinguistic variables responsible for shaping the speakers' identity and the use of Pomeranian in different contexts and environments.

Chapter 2 focuses on the phonology of Brazilian Pomeranian from both synchronic and diachronic perspectives. Postma provides a concise overview of the consonant and vowel inventories of modern-day Brazilian Pomeranian in the first half of this chapter. This discussion of the contemporary phonology of Brazilian Pomeranian then shifts to a

comparative treatment of phonological developments in historical Germanic languages and dialects, and their manifestation in Brazilian Pomeranian. The primary focus of chapter 3 concerns the morphological properties of Brazilian Pomeranian. Here Postma provides a detailed overview of properties of determiners and demonstratives (D-domain), noun phrases (NP-domain), adjectival phrases (AP-domain), adverbials, numerals, and verbal and prepositional morphology.

Chapter 4 explores the fundamental syntactic properties of Brazilian Pomeranian. With respect to verbal syntax, Postma highlights a key contrast in the domain of nonfinite clauses. Postma provides evidence for two distinct infinitival constructions—infinitive 1 and infinitive 2—that show striking similarities to infinitives in Frisian. In addition to nonfinite clauses, Postma addresses other aspects of verbal syntax such as verb raising, negation, the left periphery of clauses (CP-layer), and additional issues related to complementation.

In chapter 5, Postma returns to morphological properties of Brazilian Pomeranian, discussing aspects of its derivational morphology, for example, nominalization, prefixes, conversion, and compounding. The next two chapters present materials on the lexis (chapter 6) and contemporary prose songs and texts (chapter 7). In chapter 8, Postma once again returns to his treatment of vowels in Brazilian Pomeranian found in chapter 2. Postma also provides data from Wenker sentence translations from speakers of European and Brazilian Pomeranian. The chapter concludes with brief sections on heritage Wisconsin Pomeranian, and Wenker sentence translations into Dutch, German, and Portuguese. Chapter 9 contains texts from contemporary and historical European Pomeranian, and chapter 10 contains two historical charters from the 12th and 13th century, originally written in French, that mention European Pomeranian.

The most attractive feature and lasting contribution of this volume is the collection of these data from Brazilian Pomeranian and the comparisons that Postma makes with other synchronic and diachronic data from other Germanic languages. Another facet of this volume that is praiseworthy relates to the style in which it has been written. The prose is written in a way that makes it intelligible to a wide audience. Postma provides a detailed overview of grammatical properties of Brazilian Pomeranian that can be enjoyed and used by linguists of various backgrounds.

This volume marks an excellent first step in documenting aspects of Brazilian Pomeranian and highlights their relevance in continuing synchronic and diachronic work on this language. Its coverage is, however, noticeably lacking in some key areas. For example, there is no mention of filler-gap dependencies or interrogatives more generally in chapter 4.

There are other noticeable gaps in this volume concerning the empirical coverage of the grammatical properties of Brazilian Pomeranian that unfortunately prevent this volume from being a truly comprehensive overview. First, the claim that this volume is “contrastive” is somewhat misleading, given that only a handful of related grammars are consulted for comparison and only with respect to a limited number of grammatical factors. Second, the structure and design of the individual chapters are somewhat difficult to follow, with discussions of morphology and phonology appearing in nonadjacent chapters throughout the volume.

These weaknesses notwithstanding, Postma delivers an account of Brazilian Pomeranian that will serve as a valuable reference for future research on this language and its place in comparative Germanic studies.

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