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REVIEWS

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Miriam Ayafor & Melanie Green, *Cameroon Pidgin English: A comprehensive grammar* (London Oriental and African Language Library 20). Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2017. Pp. xxi + 314.

Reviewed by ANTHONY P. GRANT, Edge Hill University

The London Oriental and African Language Library, originating from SOAS, University of London and published by Benjamins, has provided solid and varied accounts of a wide range of languages of Asia and Africa. This well-assembled volume describes the nineteenth such language, the third African language, and the first pidgin/creole to be so documented. This work covers a lot of ground in considerable detail, living up well to its subtitle, and ranks highly among other descriptions of West African Pidgin/Creole Englishes, including those by Loreto Todd (not least Todd 1984 and also Todd 1991), but also work by Faraclas (1996), Huber (1999: 165–252), Yillah & Corcoran (2007) and Yakpo (2009).

Cameroon Pidgin English (hereafter CPE), often known as Kamtok, is spoken by about half the population of the internally riven country of Cameroon, especially in those western parts previously controlled by Britain (the eastern parts were given to France after the Treaty of Versailles) and contiguous with Nigeria. Cameroon is multilingual, with some 280 indigenous languages belonging to the Niger-Congo, Afroasiatic and – in one case (that of Kanuri) – the Nilo-Saharan superfamilies, in addition to CPE, French and English. No single indigenous language dominates numerically or has attained the status of a nationwide lingua franca. CPE's origins are uncertain as to whether it is endogenous or whether it was diffused in the nineteenth century from the Caribbean via Sierra Leone and Nigeria (its use of a few Africanisms of wider circulation in West African pidgins/creoles such as Igbo-derived *wuna* 'you plural' lends some support for the latter view). But in more recent times it has clearly diffused inwards from the coast, and was already of major linguistic significance when the Germans took over Cameroon from 1884 to 1918. There are words of German origin in CPE (*shwain* 'pig' < *Schwein*) but they are few; elements of Portuguese origin also occur in small numbers (*sabi* 'to know', and indeed the name *Cameroon* derives from Portuguese *camarões* 'shrimps').

The authors are well-informed and excellently placed to write this book: Miriam Ayafor has intimate knowledge of CPE though being an L1 speaker of the Grassfields Bantu language Awing (p.c. 2011), and Melanie Green is also an experienced Africanist with a specialism in Hausa. It is essential to mention

the corpus of 240,000 tokens, collected at five locations within Cameroon, upon which the study is firmly centred, and from which exemplar sentences and passages are taken wherever possible. (This is itself the successor to a 70,000-item minicorpus.) Structures which did not occur in the corpus were collected by the compilers through elicitation. An account of the larger corpus, which includes a list of the 60 most frequent morphs in the corpus (unfortunately not with frequency figures) is available in Ayafor et al. (2017) and that should be consulted in conjunction with this grammar.

Apart from the usual front matter, including a list of abbreviations from the Leipzig Glossing Rules which are employed throughout the book, there are 12 chapters, each commencing on an odd-numbered page. There is one general map, on page 12.

Chapter 1 (1–12) introduces the language and the study, and finishes with a short typological sketch with sample sentences. These and all others in the book are presented in CPE with interlinear glosses and English translations. Note that the numbering of the sentences starts with (1) in every chapter.

Chapter 2 (13–29) concentrates on the history and sociolinguistics of CPE. It is overwhelmingly used as a second language, and as such is known to perhaps half the Cameroonian population, many of whom also know English (and often French) in addition to at least one indigenous language and often several. The preponderance of speakers is in the south of the country but speakers of CPE can also be found in the north, which stretches to Lake Chad, where traditionally Fulfulde is the dominant language, while Kanuri and Hausa and other languages are also used. Acrolectal forms of CPE, more open to newer lexical items from English, do exist, and details are given in Table 4.1 on page 77. CPE plays an important part in interactions in Cameroon, from trading in marketplaces to political campaigning and Christian evangelisation, but it is strictly disbarred from use in education, where concerns about the propagation of 'better' English are paramount.

The orthography used throughout the book for writing CPE, presented in Ayafor (1996), is outlined in some detail in Chapter 3 (31–46), which also covers phonetics, phonology and suprasegmental matters including intonation. Indeed it might have been a good idea to introduce the orthographical system earlier in the book, for instance as part of the front matter. It marks /e/ with <ei> while /o/ when it is followed by a consonant in coda position is written with a final <-e> placed after that consonant. In addition, a small number of pairs or groups of homophones are distinguished from one another according to spelling: for instance /de/ is written <deiy> when it is a locative copula or 'there', <dey> when it means 'they' and <dei> when it means 'day'.

CPE phonology contains most of the consonants of RP apart from the voiced postalveolar fricative, but differs from RP in having seven basic vowels in the well-known 'triangular' format, thereby distinguishing mid-open and mid-close front and back vowels and four diphthongs. Acrolectal CPE makes additional use of a fresh diphthong [ɪə], which is represented in the orthography as <ie>, and

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which corresponds to more basilectal CPE [ɪa] (orthographically <ia>). CPE is a tone language, though tone is not marked in the orthography. CPE also contains seven prenasalised plosives or fricatives such as /mb/ and /ns/, which are found in words of African origin.

The chapter entitled 'The lexicon' (Chapter 4, 47–77) covers more than the title may suggest. In fact it gives quite a detailed account of the various open (noun, verb) and closed (preposition, pronoun) form classes which CPE contains, and also discusses derivational processes (including compounding) in the CPE lexicon. CPE has no productive inflectional morphology, so that a chapter on morphology is not provided here.

Discussion of morphosyntax begins in earnest with an account of the noun phrase, its determiners and modifiers (Chapter 5, 79–101), including a discussion of modes of nominal possession, which shows the intellectual impact of the model of grammar to be found in Quirk et al. (1985). This is followed by a chapter on the pronoun (Chapter 6, 103–131). Included here, among various kinds of pronouns (indefinite, interrogative, personal and others) and their uses, is the clitic *=am*, which indicates third person object, either singular or plural. The treatment of verbs and of syntactic constructions is split among a set of interwoven chapters. Chapter 7 (133–157) is a description of tense-aspect-modality (TAM) and negation, in which CPE is typical of Atlantic creoles in using a small number of mostly free morphs to express very subtle nuances of sense by combining TAM markers (*i noe don fit di wok* 'she will not be able to have been working'; 155). It illustrates how negation is tied in with this, and also highlights the primary distinction between active and stative verbs and the differing ways in which they usually operate within the TAM system in CPE. This chapter includes a very useful table of attested combinations of TAM markers (152–157), in which up to four markers are attested as being combined.

The coverage of sentence structures in CPE is split between Chapters 8 (159–194), which deals with simple sentences (including interrogatives and declaratives), and Chapter 10 (215–240), on complex sentences. In this account these complex sentences are examined in terms of co-ordination within the sentence or in terms of the embedded clauses (relative, finite and non-finite complement, subordinate adverbial and the rather rare subject clauses) which occur.

In between these two chapters, we have Chapter 9 (195–214), on complex predicates, which mostly discusses Serial Verb Constructions (SVCs), so characteristic of indigenous West African languages and of Atlantic creoles, and details and examples of various SVCs, with the semantic significance of each, are given in this chapter. There is also a strong account of Light Verb Constructions involving CPE cognates of *make*, *take*, *give*, *get* and *go* used with lexical verbs, and a shorter account of the language's processes of grammaticalisation (for instance the use of *meik* 'make' as a causativiser).

Information structure is dealt with in Chapter 11 (241–261), with plentiful illustrations of topic, clefting and kinds of focus, including focus in situ, attesting

to the great discourse flexibility of CPE. Chapter 12 (263–282) contains six texts, each of which is given with CPE forms, interlinear gloss and then a free English translation. The first four are monologues (two female and two male speakers, two older and two younger speakers), and the fifth text is a dialogue between two women, a 40-year-old hairdresser and a 29-year-old tailor. The final text is a translation of an excerpt of the Bible (John 4: 1–15).

A long appendix (283–292) includes important information. This is an anonymised register of the details of the consultants who provided data for the corpus underpinning this book, with information on their knowledge of languages and level of education. The codes here correlate with those used to identify the sources of the one thousand or more sentences which feature as samples in the body of the book; these are written superscript next to the ends of the sentences.

References and an index complete the book. There are a few typos in the references, for example 'Holga' (= Holger) Diessel and 'Terence' (= Terrence) Kaufman. But the items contained within the references also demonstrate how closely the authors have worked within typological traditions of grammar-writing. They further demonstrate something of the richness of material being written in and on CPE by CPE-dominant speakers and others, including material to be found in literary works.

Blemishes in the work are few (though I did encounter an ant as an insect mentioned in a text being glossed as ANT 'anterior'!). I would have liked to know more about the sources of indigenous material in CPE's structure and lexicon: how much has been absorbed from local lingua francas such as Duala and Ewondo, for instance? A linguistic map of the major languages of Cameroon would have been welcome too, as would links to websites of audio material in CPE. A Swadesh list would have been useful too, to compare with Faraclas' list for Nigerian Pidgin (Faraclas 1996), and so also would a greater number of conversational texts, for the purposes of analysing CPE intonation, pragmatics and information structure. The organisation of some of the material in the later chapters is also sometimes eccentric, as I have indicated above. But these matters are minor. Eric Anchimbe endorses the book on the back cover. He is right to do so. This book tells us a great deal about the language, and incidentally shows us what can be extracted from a well-conducted corpus-based study and deserves to be emulated. There are many ways to write a good creole grammar, and this is one of the best.

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Patrick Honeybone & Joseph Salmons (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of historical phonology* (Oxford Handbooks in Linguistics). Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. xv + 792.

Reviewed by ROBIN MEYER, University of Oxford

Historical linguists will generally acknowledge that phonological developments are the most noticeable, and have for a long time been the most researched subdiscipline within historical linguistics. In view of this, it is ever more curious that a comprehensive treatment of historical phonology in the form of a handbook has remained a *desideratum* for so long; to date, the subject has usually been constrained to chapters in other handbooks, e.g. in Joseph & Janda (2003), or treatments of single languages or language families in a variety of formats as in, for instance, Lynch (2003) and Minkova (2014).

In *The Oxford Handbook of Historical Phonology*, Patrick Honeybone & Joseph Salmons have successfully compiled a collection of 37 chapters, organized in six parts and authored by 47 leading scholars in their respective fields, which introduces, summarizes, and critically discusses a great number of key issues of historical phonology, from its scholarly history and scientific methodology to its interactions with other linguistic disciplines.

Part I, 'Introduction and context', provides the historical background necessary to understanding the development of the field of historical phonology over time.

In Chapter 1, 'Introduction: Key questions for historical phonology', Patrick Honeybone & Joseph Salmons outline the organization of the volume, emphasizing the 'networks of connections across chapters from the first chapter to the last' (3). More importantly, they summarize succinctly the key questions this handbook seeks to answer or at least to discuss, including 'What motivates phonological change?' (6), 'What kinds of phonological change are possible?' (7) and, crucially, 'Is phonological change exceptionless?' (9).