

Thomas Stolz, Dik Bakker & Rosa Salas Palomo (eds.) Romanisierung in Afrika: Der Einfluss des Französischen, Italienischen, Portugiesischen und Spanischen auf die indigenen Sprachen Afrikas. Diversitas Linguarum, Volume 22, Universitätsverlag Dr. Norbert Brockmeyer; 129 pages. Auflage: 1., Erstaufgabe (19. Februar 2009).

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The volume is the third part of the published outcome of the conference ‘Romancisation world-wide’ held in May 2005 at the University of Bremen, Germany. Two previous volumes covering theoretical issues and contact scenarios with Spanish as the dominant language (Stolz et al. 2008 a, b) only accepted English contributions. This prerequisite excluded three papers on the African situation that happened to be written in Spanish and French. However, the editors considered these papers worth presenting them to the public and thus decided to edit this small volume of *Diversitas Linguarum* (Vol. 22). For completion they invited further contributors so that the present volume finally comprised six papers of which two are in Spanish, one in French and three in German. Given the German title and preface of the volume, this language mix may come as a surprise to readers who are not necessarily fluent in all three languages. Furthermore, the subtitle of the book suggests papers on the influence of the major Romance languages on indigenous African languages. Unfortunately, this is somehow misleading as most contributions look predominantly at the changes in the former colonial languages brought about through contact with indigenous African languages.

The first paper *Peculiaridades del español de Guinea Ecuatorial y los préstamos del español en las lenguas indígenas* by Gloria Nistal is a case in point. The brief introduction gives an outline of Equatorial Guinea’s (E.G.) history and an inventory of all languages spoken on the mainland and the islands. This informative list also includes some details on the sociolinguistic status of each of the languages and their actual direction of development. However, the author then goes on with a detailed description of the main changes that Spanish has undergone through the influence of the indigenous African languages in E.G. These changes apparently reflect the usual tendencies of appropriation that are quiet well known from other African countries where former colonial languages also underwent substantial changes (e.g. loss of article, reduction of prepositional sets and widening of use, semantic shifts). The author misses the chance to compare for instance French varieties in West-Africa with Spanish in E.G. and work out its specificities: The fact that nasal epenthesis occurs frequently in Spanish lexemes (e.g. ‘bueno’ pronounced [mbwéno]; ‘tapón’ [tampón]) demonstrates nicely how pre-nasalized Bantu consonants of the local languages are transferred to the Spanish variety spoken in E.G. The Spanish input on local languages is said to be restricted to some place and personal names and some obvious lexical borrowings in specialized semantic fields. The article concludes: “*La mayoría de la población guineana habla un español de ínfima calidad*” (Nistal 2009 :15). This judgement of European language varieties in Africa against the background of the standardised norm of the home country reflects a view that most Africanists have generally overcome for some time.

The second article *Ceuta y Melilla: elementos para una aproximación sociolingüística* gives a short overview on the sociolinguistic situation in the two Spanish enclaves Ceuta and Melilla in Morocco. The author, Mohand Tilmantine, starts with a short historical outline of the relation between Spanish and Moroccan languages and cultures in these two cities. Despite the constant growth of population from Moroccan descent during the last century the Spanish government seems reluctant to accept the indigenous languages, Moroccan Arabic and Amazige (Rif-Berber), as co-official languages for administrative and educational purposes. Given this background, it is not surprising that the status of these two Moroccan languages in the enclaves is very low and juvenile speakers with Moroccan background start switching to Spanish. This switch has effects on the two

languages that are briefly outlined by Tilmantine, mostly relying on data from Vicente (2003, 2005) for Ceuta and his own for Melilla. He notes some interesting differences between the linguistic developments in the two cities: while third generation speakers of Moroccan Arabic in Ceuta heavily code-switch with Spanish young speakers in Melilla ‘only’ display lexical and morphological borrowings. The article concludes with the hope that future research will describe these apparently understudied situations more coherently.

The third contribution of the volume is a short account of Italian borrowings in the Arabic dialects of Egypt and Tunisia. The paper which is written in French briefly introduces the reader to the history of the Italian language in the Mediterranean and its status as Lingua Franca along its eastern and southern coast from the beginnings of the 15th century. The main influence of Italian was however established in the early 19th century when the Ottoman Empire declined and the Arab world opened to European influences. Having outlined this historical scenario Guido Chifoletti goes on with an account of some lexical loans relating to the European cultural influence. He also explains some phonological and morphological processes of the adaption to the Arabic systems in Tunisia and Egypt. The contribution is interesting for a non-specialist but seems only to scratch the surface of the question, as there are no further explanations regarding the influence of the other Romance languages and their possible contributions. It is—at least to my mind—not easy to prove the purely Italian origin of words like /familja/ ‘family’, /dakurdu/ ‘all right’, /karto:n/ ‘card’ or /karto:na/ ‘carton’ to cite just a few.

The last three contributions are all written in German and are invited articles not originally presented at the conference ‘Romancisation world-wide’. The first by Martina Drescher is on the developments of the French language in West Africa taking the case of Burkina Faso as its key example. As the title of the article—*Französisch in Westafrika zwischen endogener und exogener Norm: das Beispiel Burkina Faso*—already shows, the main interest is (again) the description of he forms and functions the ex-colonial language has taken under African influence. The indigenous languages of Burkina Faso are only mentioned as possible sources for some peculiarities of the colloquial French spoken in Burkina Faso today. Taken as such, the article provides a very dense and up-to-date overview of most relevant aspects connected to this topic. After a historical outline of French colonial rule and its language related issues the author goes on to describe the post-colonial language situation in Burkina Faso. This includes the discussion of alphabetisation and educational rates and shows the difficulties for an estimation of the actual rate of the French speaking population today. Related to this is the question of different varieties on the scale from basi- via meso- to acrolect and the idea of some general ‘Popular African French’. Drescher convincingly argues for a multi-centric perspective of French languages based on mesolectal varieties developing their own endogenous norms. According to her and her references such endogenous forms of different French varieties develop in a number of African urban centres all over the francophone part of the continent. Besides her convincing arguments a discussion – or at least mentioning – of the growing influence of hybrid youth languages in the same centres is missing (cf. Kießling & Mous 2004).

The last part of the paper is dedicated to the linguistic description of the French mesolectal variety in Burkina Faso. This part is based on oral material collected by the author during a project on HIV/Aids protection and on two written columns in newspapers that are caricaturizing colloquial language forms. It gives an interesting insight in the peculiarities of the French spoken in Burkina Faso and also tries to figure out the sources of these features. The author admits that some of the features are also known from other French African varieties and even show up in some forms of French spoken in France itself. The presentation touches on all linguistic levels and provides telling examples of the relevant features. Finally, Drescher identifies the field of textual pragmatics as an interesting ground for further research. She concludes that the emerging varieties of French in West Africa provide an excellent research area for the study of processes of language contact in the

context of globalisation and migration.

The second of the German articles formulates the objective to provide a comprehensive documentation of lexical influence from Portuguese on African languages including those that have never been under direct lusophone influence. The author—Helma Pasch—is neither trying to interpret the data in terms of cultural history nor is she looking at linguistic processes of incorporation into the indigenous languages. She also hints at the fact that so far no grammatical interferences from Portuguese to any African language have been reported, but cites personal communication for a possible quantifier of Portuguese origin in the Bantu language *Lucazi*. In the remaining part of this short paper Pasch presents Portuguese borrowings in languages from West to East and South Africa and discusses their possible direction of spread. She organises the data in two broad categories: new cultural acquisitions and items displacing indigenous words and concepts. Taking only examples into account where at least two languages display the borrowing she reports nine items for the first and nine for the second category. Given her rich list of references that reflect the amount of work done on the issue, one is surprised to find only these few Portuguese reflexes in African languages. Knowing that Portuguese itself has borrowed quite substantially from Arabic the author admits in the conclusion that it is not always easy to tell whether a lexical item stems directly from Portuguese or whether it came to Africa through the Arabic language. I would add that Spanish and French influence might also complicate the issue in some areas.

The last contribution has again a strong socio-linguistic direction. It discusses problems of language policies in connection with the goal of Nation-building taking Togo as an example. The influence of French on the local languages only plays a role in so far as the competition among them is outlined. Eva Gugenberger briefly reviews the history of the term ‘*Nation*’ and describes its transfer to the post-colonial states in Africa. She also provides an account of the different definitions of the terms ‘*official language*’ and ‘*national language*’ used by various actors in the field. In the case of Togo, the term ‘*national language*’ is only applied to the two major indigenous languages namely Ewe in the South and Kabyè in the North. Unlike countries such as Cameroon and Côte d’Ivoire the only official language French is not used as a *Lingua Franca* and thus has – so far – not developed a local variety. Furthermore, the author sets out to give a summary of the language policy in Togo over the past three decades and relates it to national and international politics. She uses a model introduced by Chaudenson (1993) to compare the developments of the three languages French, Ewe and Kabyè. It is interesting to see that although language related decisions have been announced, the basic relation between the three languages hasn’t changed during the last thirty years. French was, and still is, the most prestigious language in the country while the other national languages are still excluded from most areas where they are meant to improve their standing. The analysis clearly demonstrates how policy makers from all sides only pay lip service to the goal of strengthening local languages but rarely take real action to achieve the promoted goals. The article concludes with the provoking question whether language politics are at all useful and if it wouldn’t be better to let the speakers decide about uses and directions on their own.

In conclusion one must say that the presented volume is very heterogeneous as it brings together articles of very different quality, three different languages and different perspectives. Its overall theme—the influence of Romance languages on African indigenous languages—is not visible in all contributions. There are however lots of interesting aspects that the articles touch upon. Particularly, the two articles on the language situations in Burkina Faso and Togo are very good overviews that name all relevant aspects and open the field for further research.

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