Book Reviews

Engelberg, Stefan and Doris Stolberg, eds.

In German linguistics and philology, language contact studies have focused mainly on the post-war period of labour migration and varieties of “Gastarbeiterdeutsch.” More recent research has concentrated on the “Kiezdeutsch” debate, i.e. on mixed varieties of urban German in cities like Berlin (Wiese, 2012). The study of language contact in times when German was spoken in the new worlds is still at an early stage. This third volume of the series Colonial and Postcolonial Linguistics (Koloniale und Postkoloniale Linguistik) offers contributions on “colonial linguistics”, a relatively new area of research in German linguistics. The present publication looks at language contact of various languages with German during the period of German colonialism. The themes treated in this book comprise language contact and language change, historiography of linguistics, discourse linguistics, language policy. This anthology includes papers from the second conference of Colonial Linguistics 2010 in Mannheim (Germany); the contributions deal, often programmatically, with different contact situations in former German colonies in Africa and the Pacific, also discussing various contact-related matters such as language policies and issues of applied linguistics from a wider perspective.

The book is organized into four parts. Firstly, the editors Stefan Engelberg and Doris Stolberg introduce the field, offering a brief discussion of how “colonial linguistics” is understood and defined by the group of researchers who set up this area of research at the Institute for the German Language (“Institut für Deutsche Sprache”, Mannheim). They define their approach as one dedicated to “the systematic comprehension, organization and interpretation of all linguistically pertinent phenomena associated with colonialism”1 (Dewein et al. (to appear), cited from Engelberg and Stolberg (2013: 5). They further state that “any outcome of language contact in colonial contexts, idiosyncrasies of

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1 Here and henceforth, all translations from German into English by hs.
colonial discourses, peculiarities of linguistic research and language policies and their impact may be explained only with regard to the specific historical conditions of colonialism” (Engelberg and Stolberg, 2013: 5).

In Part A, Thomas Stolz argues that orthography rules regarding standardization may change over time with advancements in what is today termed linguistic theory. He describes the phases of changing orthography rules in Chamorro (Guam; Austronesian, Malayo-Polynesian) by discussing potential factors such as language ideologies, academic traditions and idiosyncrasies. All these factors may have had an impact on the proposals concerning orthography made by the various authors from 1668 to the present. Stolz limits himself to the representation of the category ‘word’ in Chamorro, a language that counts as a prototypical polysynthetic language. Stolz treats not only the impact of academic traditions but also - in some detail - the aspect of how analytical interference of the descriptors’ mother tongue (German) could have biased the principles of segmentation in writing and morphological analysis.

In her article on Swahili (Bantu, Sabaki; Tansania, Kenya (L1)), Susanne Hackmack discusses the orthographic rules regulating the representation of word status and of referentiality vs. agreement properties of subject markers in Swahili pronouns and noun class prefixes. Starting from a typological comparison of German and Swahili with regard to the “pro-drop” parameter of generative typology, she looks at the “German perspective” in historical proposals for orthography. This is understood as the potential analytical interferences of German speaking bantuists in linguistic analysis and the subsequent construction of writing rules. Furthermore, she attempts to relate the analyses of early bantuists such as Meinhof and Doke to current issues in language typology and generative grammar.

In part B, Peter Mühlhäuser gives a historical description of the emergence of Pidgin German in New Guinea. By analyzing the impact of missionary language policies in the area of Kaiser-Wilhelmsland, he shows how a strict German-only policy led to imperfect language learning in formal education and the emergence of new pidgin varieties. The article illustrates features of language contact and gives examples of the contact variety, with data in the form of texts written in Pidgin German as well as historical documents related to language policy.

In the following article, Brigitte Weber describes the administrative imposition of German toponyms in the former German colony of Cameroon. When taking control of the new territory, the colonial administration required geographical surveys and terms for important landmarks and settlements. The article examines colonial naming practices in this multilingual