

Abdourahmane Diallo, *Language Contact in Guinea. The case of Pular and Mande Varieties (Topics in Interdisciplinary African Studies, Volume 36). Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2014, 422 pp.*

Language contact has become a major subject in African linguistics over the last several decades, providing a new perspective on studies into language development, mainly as the basis for drawing historical inferences (Möhlig *et al.* 2009). Much attention has been paid to identifying areas of convergence in West Africa (Cyffer, Ziegelmeyer 2009) and the linguistic mechanisms of spreading areal features (Baldi 1997; Zima 2009). Less widely explored issues include extra-linguistic factors (such as social aspects) that are responsible for linguistic phenomena.

The book under review presents an analysis of language contact phenomena in a limited territorial dimension and includes processes that are motivated by sociolinguistic factors, such as language diversity, extensive multilingualism and migration to cities. The study refers to Guinea, a recognized area of convergence in which languages of different origins and various typological features meet. The languages under investigation are Pular (the Fula variety spoken in Guinea), which belongs to the group of Atlantic languages, and some members of the Mande languages. Though these languages represent different units in genetic classification, it is worth mentioning that the notion ‘family’ is not quite appropriately used with respect to their status within genetic classification. Both Atlantic and Mande languages are major groups of the Niger-Congo family, though their relationship is relatively distant in terms of the system of genetic ties.

The analysis of contact phenomena between the Atlantic (Pular) and Mande languages of Guinea is well rooted in the Author’s earlier achievements, which include the description of the Pular variety from Fuuta Jaloo (Diallo 2000) and studies on the sociolinguistic situation in Guinea. The extension of the analysis to Mande languages is supported by a detailed presentation of the Mande languages spoken in the area of investigation and comparison of their variants at the phonological and morphological level. The basis for the identification of contact phenomena is the significant difference between the two groups of languages (representing Atlantic and Mande patterns) in respect to their typological features. The two systems vary considerably in terms of their phonological inventory, morphophonological processes and suprasegmental phenomena. The interpretation of linguistic processes also includes their non-linguistic dimensions, such as language policy favoring Pular as the local *lingua franca*, and indicates some other factors which may influence language changes, such as the status of the president’s mother tongue which grants a kind of political bonus to its position in the country.

The main study consists of three parts distributed over eight chapters. Part one “Social history and language change” provides an overview of the areas of investigation conducted over the course of three research trips between 2001 and 2004. The ten regions within Fuuta Jaloo and the immediate surroundings are presented as contact areas in which Pular interacts with individual Mande languages. This part deals with the documentation of historical and sociolinguistic factors that justify language contact. Linguistic data are presented as the contrastive description of the phonological and morphological characteristics of the Mande languages spoken in the research area. Through this description, the identification of dialect clusters and their mutual relationships is provided.

Part two “Mande influence on Pular” investigates the contact situation from the perspective of Pular. It deals with different levels of its system which undergo changes motivated by contact with Mande. In the process of borrowing, the phonological integration of Mande loanwords in Pular is marked by both regular changes and deviating peculiarities. Special attention is paid to the adaptation of vowels, which is based on re-ordering processes in the receiver language with regard to the ATR vowel harmony functioning in Mande languages. There is also well-based documentation related to the question of how tones are realized in a non-tonal language. The description provides evidence of the development of the Pular sound system in contact with Mande languages, but also demonstrates general phonological and morphophonological processes which are open to further theoretical interpretations. At the level of the morphology, it is shown that the integration mechanisms respect categories relevant for the receiver language, but this situation of permanent contact evokes processes

of morphological restructuring that lead to systemic changes. Syntactic influences from Mande are illustrated with examples that are interpreted as evidence for mixed languages.

Part three “Pular influence on Mande” presents the contact situation from the Mande point of view. It contains two chapters which analyze the phonological and morphological integration, respectively, of Pular loanwords in Mande. The systems in contact have been analyzed through the rules of phonotactics (with reference to syllable structure) and suprasegmental phenomena, such as vowel harmony and the tonality of the receiving language. An interesting observation is that in the process of borrowing Pular words into Mande some diachronic stages can be distinguished. They are marked by the gradual reduction of adaptation processes, which are replaced by respecting the original systemic rules of Pular. These processes are motivated by the bilingual situation in the region and increasingly better command of the standard variety of Pular by speakers of the Mande languages.

The study on language contact in Guinea provides rich documentation of language contact in a well-defined sociolinguistic setting. The collection of linguistic data is supported by good recognition of linguistic geography and of the language policy in the area under investigation, as well as by the proper identification of authentic discourse situations that might be relevant for the study. 37 tables and 12 figures summarize and present the results of the analysis in the form of graphic models. In the Appendix, parts of the data collection (free recordings of narrations and word lists) are presented.

The analysis which is made on serious methodological grounds provides more insight into the phenomenon of language contact. It presents processes which affect systems that are considerably different. It also provides an explanation for the changes in the morphophonology of Pular that make the Guinean variety significantly different from the other varieties of Fula. As for the Mande languages spoken in Guinea (especially Kakkabe and Jalunka spoken in the Fuuta Jaloo), the study gives evidence for divergence processes within Mande languages that separate languages influenced by Pular from the other Mande languages spoken in Guinea.

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