

REVIEWS

Zygmunt FRAJZYNGIER, *A Dictionary of Mupun*.
(Sprache und Oralität in Afrika, 11) Berlin:Dietrich
Reimer Verlag, 1991, 102 pp., DM 65.

Mupun is a Chadic language spoken in the Plateau State of Nigeria, in an area within the Lankan District (lying some sixty miles southeast of Jos) by an estimated 11,000 people (according to the 1963 census). Except for some general remarks or attempts at classification, Mupun had attracted little attention until early 1980s, when Z. Frajzyngier took interest in it. Some results of his research on Mupun have been known since 1988: it is during the 4th Symposium on Mega-Chad in Paris (14-16 September) that he presented a paper on the development of gender marker in Mupun ("Un homme, une femme ou la (ré)invention du genre grammatical dans une langue tchadique"), and distributed among the participants another one entitled "Typology of Complex Sentences in Mupun". Now we learn from the book under discussion that his large work, *A Grammar of Mupun* (545 pp.), is at present in press.

In a concise *Introduction* to the dictionary (pp. I-XVII), the author provides valuable data concerning the name of the language (together with geographic information) and presents linguistic classification of Mupun, its dialects, sources of information, ways of identification of plants, animals, birds, and insects as well as Mupun phonological system with a proposal of orthographic conventions. Since Mupun has an elaborate system of deictics and anaphoric pronouns, a tabular list of them has been also included "[...] to show the interrelationship of elements within a paradigm, and thus to make possible a better understanding of the system involved" (p. XII). Two maps (pp. XIIff.) show the location of the Lankan District within Nigeria as well as Mupun villages within the Lankan District.

Mupun with all the surrounding languages (Mwaghavul, Angas, Fyer and Chip) belongs to the West Branch of the Chadic:

Mwaghavul, Angas and Chip are classified in the same group as Mupun, whereas Fyer is placed in Ron group.¹

It seems that Z. Frajzyngier has not yet decided for sure whether Mupun is a distinct language or merely a dialect: both designations are used in the dictionary. For example, on p. V he states: "Since there is considerable understanding between Mwaghavul and Mupun, the two languages could be classified as dialects of the same language". On p. VI, however, the author provides the information that the speakers of Mupun perceive three main divisions within their language community. According to him, those divisions correspond to linguistic dialectal differences, and so they allow to detect three dialects: Jing, Jipaari and Jiblik. Whereas the names Jipaari and Jiblik are proposed by Mupun themselves, what is the reason to consider the speakers of Sapuru as using the Jing dialect? What is the origin of the latter name? We believe that the vagueness in the sphere of linguistic classification of Mupun will be finally elucidated in the announced grammar of the language. Anyhow, it appears that the linguistic status of Mupun is still a subject of discussions. Recently P. Newmann in his *Chadic Language Classification*² placed Mapun (*sic!*) in Subbranch West-A, in Angas group (I.A.3a), but in an inventory of Chadic languages and alternative names his doubts about such solution became apparent in one of the entries which runs as follows: Mapun (→ Sura?).

Having proposed the orthographic conventions for Mupun, Z. Frajzyngier rightly based himself on a compromise between the phonological and phonetic properties of the language, and on orthographic conventions of English which is familiar to the educated speakers. Let us hope that Mwaghavul and Mupun are really distinct languages, and that in this particular case the "merits" of

1 Cf. P. Newmann, *Nominal and Verbal Plurality in Chadic*. Dordrecht: Foris Publications, 1990, 12, p. 3.

2 *Op. cit.*, p. 3.

some early missionaries and colonial administrators in creating a few writing systems for a single language (e.g. Ewe) will be avoided. Anyhow, the proposed orthography is not a final one. When discussing the problem of *shwa*, the author does not exclude some future orthography in which "[...] this character [i.e. the symbol for *shwa* - S.P.] can be replaced by a letter [...] more readily available on standard keyboards" (p. IX).

The main bulk of the Mupun dictionary is composed of two parts: Mupun-English and English-Mupun. The Mupun-English part (pp. 7-30) contains some 1,900 entries and is consciously devoid of the majority of very recent borrowings from English and Hausa. This was done in accordance with the author's conviction that "[...] such words would not provide much useful information for a student of Mupun, or comparative Chadic, or of Afroasiatic" (p. IV). Two naturalized borrowings from Hausa are included, as very often the older Mupun speakers do not know that important vehicular language.

The Mupun words are recorded with their variants as well as with cross-referencing and determining lexical category when possible. The entries contain not only "translatory" information, but they provide also important data on grammatical function of a given word and on its behaviour in a syntactic group.

The English-Mupun part (pp. 71-102) contains slightly over 1,600 entries and offers a quick access to lexical information for those doing comparative work.

Summing up one is entitled to conclude that the dictionary well fulfills the expected needs. It not only provides scholars in general linguistics, Chadicists and Afroasiatic comparatists with valuable data for their research, but it could also be used in a prospective literacy campaign in Mupun. The merits of the dictionary become even greater when we look at it in the perspective of awareness that it is a record of a language which may disappear in near future as the result of urbanization processes and the further encroachment of Hausa and English. Even today young speakers

(20-30 years old) of the language, in conversation with each other, if they are educated, tend to use those foreign languages.

Technical side of the dictionary deserves the high esteem which the famous Dietrich Reimer Verlag had gained so far. The only misprint has been "detected", on the very first page (p. I), where instead of *Yearwood* one reads *Year-wood*.

Stanisław Piłaszewicz

Joseph McINTYRE, Hilke Meyer-Bahlburg (assisted by Ahmed Tijani Lawal), *Hausa in the Media. A Lexical Guide*. Hamburg: Helmut Buske Verlag, 1991, 289 pp.

The period of the latest five years has been marked by a remarkable progress in the sphere of Hausa lexicography. Beside the lexical guide under review, two other dictionaries were published and both came from the hands of women-Hausaists.³ The problems of Hausa lexicography were also discussed in several Conference papers, both published and those awaiting for publication.

The book under discussion is a joint venture of a team of authors who were, or still continue to be connected with the Hausa Service of the Voice of Germany radio station (*Deutsche Welle*). It is not a complete dictionary, and that is why its authors preferred to call it a "lexical guide".

The material presented in this lexical guide was collected randomly. Most of examples come from Hausa translations checked by J. McIntyre in his work for the Hausa Service since 1983. As for H. Meyer-Bahlburg, she is responsible for vocabulary collected

3 Cf. Irmtraud Herms, *Wörterbuch Hausa-Deutsch*. Leipzig: Veb Verlag Enzyklopädie, 1987, 186 pp.; Roxana Ma Newman, *An English-Hausa Dictionary*. New Haven & London: Yale University Press, 1990, 327 pp.