

The appearance of *The Hausa Language. An Encyclopedic Reference Grammar* by Paul Newman marks the new period of Hausa linguistics and establishes a new position of the Hausa language in general linguistic investigations. The scale of grammatic interpretations, classifications and reconstruction makes Hausa a leader in African studies tradition. At the same time, the richness of the language data accessible for linguistic studies creates a new stage of inspiration for further theoretical studies on Hausa and on the language structure in general.

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Rainer VOßEN, *Die Khoe-Sprachen. Ein Beitrag zur Erforschung der Sprachgeschichte Afrikas*, "Quellen zur Khoisan-Forschung", vol. 12, Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 1997, 536 pp.

In a broadly-conceived current of African studies of the late 20th century, which are directed towards comparative research and reconstructions of language communities based on synchronic data, Rainer Voßen's book is of special importance. First of all, because it covers the Khoisan family, the smallest language family in Africa, which is in danger of further decreasing in number or even extinction and which does not receive much attention from contemporary researchers. At the same time, the book includes an in-depth description of new unknown Khoisan languages based on fieldwork

The subject matter of the book is a comparative description and reconstruction of languages of the Khoe group, regarded as the central group in the Khoisan family. Only part of the linguistic material comes from the existing descriptions which focus on several languages (Nama, !Ora, Xiri from the Khoekhoe subgroup, and on the Kxoe language from the subgroup distinguished as Non-Khoekhoe (*Nicht-Khoekhoe*). Most part of the material comes from the author's own investigations and covers very little known or utterly undocumented other Khoe languages, including //Ani, Buga,

ʘAnda, Naro, ʘAna, ʘUi, #Haba, Ts'ixa, Deti, Danisi, Cara, /Xaise, Kua, Tsua and Cua. They enrich the contemporary knowledge of the Non-Khokhoe languages, thereby basing the reconstructions of the entire group on a broader source material. Linguistic data were gathered during the author's fieldwork in Botswana in 1983 and 1984.

The book consists of four parts which present separate sections of the material in seven chapters. Part I (Introduction) presents the state of research on the Khoe languages and their reconstruction, and explains the purposes, tasks and methodological foundations of the work. A new methodological approach which is undertaken by the author in his book consists in taking into consideration in the reconstruction not only the divergence processes accountable for the separation (split) of languages but also the processes of convergence which give the unrelated languages the features of the community. In addition to regular correspondences, that are important for the establishing of the relationship between languages, the author also takes into account irregular correspondences stemming from linguistic contacts. The Khoe languages under investigation have been put into six hypothetical groups which will be substantiated by the reconstruction and subdivision according to the rules of the genealogical tree presented in the further part of the book (p. 386).

The main part of the book is made up by Chapters 3-6 grouped in the following way: Description (Part II) and Comparison and Reconstruction (Part III). They present phonological and morphological data concerning the languages under investigation by describing separately their synchronic and diachronic level. Thus compared data lead to the reconstruction of initial data for the particular groups and for the entire community on both of these levels. In Chapter 7, being a separate part entitled Historical Division, the author discusses the criteria of subdivision of the Khoe languages into the particular groups and their position towards one another. There are also examples of convergence which break the rules of the linear development of languages. The book includes an appendix made up of a comparative vocabulary containing the lexical reconstruction of 400 Khoe roots and the

Khoe-German glossary. The information about the languages may be followed in 4 maps which show the distribution of the Khoe languages and locate them in the areas under investigation.

Rainer Voßen's book is an important comparative and reconstructive achievement in African studies of recent years. Its purpose is to establish the history of development of the Khoe languages but at the same time it constitutes a new methodological proposal for historical research referring to synchronic data. The widely used 'majority rule' in identification of the phenomena regarded as common to all related languages is approached statistically, while the consideration of contact phenomena in building an internal structure of the whole group in this book is an innovation of importance also for a broader context of historical studies.

In addition to historical aspects, the synchronic aspects of Rainer Voßen's book are also an important achievement in African studies. The Khoisan languages relatively rarely illustrate grammatical phenomena described in linguistic works (including works on African studies) and only some of their typological features have come to be more widely known thanks to their spectacular exceptionality (e.g. clicks). A detailed description of the Khoe languages shows that these languages are characterised by many other features which enrich our knowledge of Africa's typical and exceptional linguistic phenomena, such as the co-existence of tonal classes and morphological classes in nouns and verbs, dualis, verb-object concordance, joncture, or a rich set of derivative verbal extensions.

One of the elements of Rainer Voßen's work which may make it difficult to create a coherent picture of the Khoe languages in their synchronic approach is the lack of a definition of distinguishing the dialect from the language which causes that in the various parts of the book the same units are labelled in a different way. Speaking about details, I would like to point out that in the introductory part the table of signs lacks a couple of graphic symbols (at least in my copy of the book).

In sum, the book *Die Khoe-Sprachen* by Rainer Voßen fills a great gap in African studies pertaining to the languages of the

Khoisan family. The author has made an attempt to continue the research conducted by the late Oswin Köhler who published his last books in the 1980s, thereby becoming one of the few of researchers of these languages in our time. It was the intention of the author and of the publishers of the book *Die Khoe-Sprachen* to open a series of publications devoted to the presentation of source materials concerning language, history and culture of the Khoisan-speaking peoples.

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