

much known on the ways of the data records except for the statement that they „have been based on multi-media techniques, part of which will be also available shortly via veb” (p. 9). The author also discloses that a full Maaka-English-Hausa dictionary with the reverse index is being prepared in collaboration with German linguists.

Out of the huge Maaka corpus, the author selected stories about migration and the relation of the Maaka to their neighbours, and has chosen some proverbs and riddles. The present text - as well as several others yet to be published - stems from the material recorded under the auspices of the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft and now deposited in Institut für Afrikanistik in Frankfurt under the care of Prof. H. Jungraithmayr. The typing, transcription and translation have been realised during a field research in 2012 by the author of the book, supported by Jibril Jatau Bara and Musa Ali Baba.

In „History of Bara” the pages on the left side (folios verso) contain the original Maaka text, including phonological and grammatical analysis with all morphological traits. The lines below the text comprise the literal translation accompanied by the morpho-syntactic indicators. On the front page (folio recto), the text is then reproduced alone, below followed by a free English translation.

Few pages of this volume are devoted to those Maaka proverbs which are frequently used by common people. They have been taken from a collection of proverbs and riddles gathered by H. Jungraithmayr and Jibril Jatau Bara (1998), and revised by A.S. Valli, Jibril Jatau Bara and Musa A. Baba (2012). The entries contain the original Maaka proverbs, literal translations, free translations, Hausa equivalents (if any), and one or two explanations.

The book is provided with hand-drawn beautiful pictures of the essential episodes of the story (by Massimiliano Sommella and Riccardo Rosati), a selection of which can be admired in the appendix. That is only a pity that in this very valuable and well structured book many misprints escaped the attention of the proof-reader. It applies to the free English translations of the text on pages recto.

Stanisław Piłaszewicz

Gian Claudio Batic, *A Grammatical Sketch of Bure – a Chadic Language of Nigeria, Chadic Linguistics /Linguistique Tchadique /Tschadistik* (ed. by Dymitr Ibriszimow, Henry Tourneux, H. Ekkehard Wolff), vol. 9, Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, Köln 2014, 178 pp.

The descriptions of endangered or little-known languages contribute to our knowledge about the varieties of language structures, but are also important as support to the attempts for language revitalization. The work done so far in the area of African studies is relatively significant in number but still insufficient with respect to the two above aspects.

The work under review presents a description of Bure (also known as Bubure or Bubbure), a Chadic language from northern Nigeria, used by a very low number of speakers in an ethnic population consisting of about 500 people. This is the first comprehensive approach to the structure of the Bure language which refers to material collected by earlier researchers (Rudolf Leger, Bernard Caron and Andrew Haruna), but is mainly based on the Author's field research undertaken during four trips in 2011 and 2012.

The book was published in a series of Chadic Linguistics as its 9th volume. Being a description of one Chadic language, it makes a breach in the sequence of publications dedicated to topics in Chadic linguistics which have a wider perspective. With the title stating that it is a grammatical sketch of Bure, it significantly differs from the descriptions of other Chadic languages done so far and from the linguistic descriptions of any other language in general. It combines the presentation of linguistic data with other factors that are relevant for the documentation of endangered languages by referring to the social, historical, religious and political context in which the language functions. The typological features of the Bure language are presented in the introductory chapter. The linguistic profile which is deeply embedded in current developments on Chadic covers lexical comparison and reconstruction. The position of Bure among Bole-Tangale languages is illustrated by ten lexical items from Bure and their equivalents in Kirfi, Galambu, Gera, and Bole. Their proto-Chadic roots are also indicated, according to the reconstruction by Jun-

graithmayr and Ibrizimow (1994). The Author's contribution to the knowledge of Chadic refers mainly to the description of Bure language structure in which already known but also some rare or unusual features have been manifested. As for criteria for fieldwork descriptions, the community's attitude is indicated as essential for collecting the data and their interpretation.

This is primarily a linguistic description but it also includes non-linguistic methodologies in the presentation of the collected material. The first chapter is devoted to sociolinguistic aspects that provide eleven disciplinary perspectives of the view on the Bure (*Bùbbùrè*) linguistic community (demography, geography, economics, sociology, linguistics, psychology, history, politics-law-government, education, religion, and media), according to the Sociology-of-Language framework proposed by John Edwards (remark: the book reference is correctly listed at the end as *Minority Languages and Group Identity*, 2010, but it is erroneously introduced on p. 23 as Edwards 2011). This approach also includes three basic categories (speaker, language and setting) that are relevant for the description. Adopting the criteria of language endangerment (following the model developed by the UNESCO expert group in 2003), the Author classifies the language as moribund, but at the same time he states that the language is critically endangered. The table on the multilingual situation in the Bure area in which Hausa and Fulfulde are the dominant languages completes the characteristics of the Bure language that justify the content of the book and how it was presented.

As far as the linguistic description is concerned, it is divided into five chapters which gradually deal with the phonology, nominal morphology, pronominal system, TAM system, and syntax. The Bure language has never been standardized; therefore, the Author adopts orthographic rules for the purpose of the description which are based on the Latin script and follow conventional rules of its application to African languages, including *b*, *d* for implosives and *mb*, *nd*, *nj*, *ng* for prenasal(ized) consonants. The correspondence with Hausa rules of orthographic encoding is observable in ignoring the glottal stop [ʔ] in the word-initial position, but indicating it with ['] in other positions in the word, as well as in the lack of an orthographic distinction

between the tap [r] and the trill [r̄]. However, four nasal consonants identified as phonemes are orthographically distinguished; therefore, we have the velar *ŋ* and palatal *ɲ* (to indicate /ɲ/), along with *m* and *n*. Long vowels are marked by double vowel letters, while both high and low tones have their diacritics placed above the vowel.

In the inventory of phonemes, some features characteristic of other Chadic languages are manifested, such as the implosives *b* and *d* (but not ejective *k*), palatalized (but not labialized) velar consonants, allophonic variants of the phoneme /p/, whereas a rich set of prenasalized consonants can be rather attributed to the features common to non-Chadic languages, similarly the lack of /z/ in the phonological inventory.

The analysis of vowel length and tonal pitch were made with computer-aided support (using the PRAAT program for sound analysis). The detailed presentation of the phoneme distribution makes the description of the Bure language quite exhaustive at the phonological level. Some very interesting linguistic material is placed under the section "The rhyme", illustrating the intended use of the language's sound properties. However, some inconsistencies in the description can be pointed out. The consonantal inventory consisting of 28 phonemes has the item *mb* listed in two different places. Since the phoneme *nk* mentioned elsewhere is lacking in the table, one may expect a typographical error which affects this consonant and its proper placement in the table. Moreover, the column headed as labio-velar imposes a misleading interpretation of its content. It includes the approximant *w* and the two consonants *kw* and *gw*, which in Chadic descriptive tradition are rather interpreted as labialized velar consonants. The latter one is not listed under the onsets admitted in Bure, whereas the word *gwómà* 'antelope' seems to confirm it.

The presentation of the structure is based on the most distinctive patterns in the area of morphology and syntax. Nominal morphology is illustrated by noun plurals, associative constructions and adjective-like structures. Separate chapters are devoted to the pronominal system and the TAM system. Typological properties of Chadic can be recognized in some structural patterns, but less common features are also manifested. Quite significant in this respect is a category of gen-

der which follows the Chadic characteristics (i.e. a distinction present only in the singular), but the rules of its assignment might be different. Gender distinction is productive in pronouns (in the second and third person of the singular), in demonstratives, in relative markers, but not in copulas. In verbal morphology, some features are interesting for their relevance for comparative works, e.g. the perfect marker *-kò* which is suffixed to the verbal stem is important for historical investigations focusing on the development of TAM systems in Chadic. Also the markers which function as verbal extensions are open for further interpretations in comparative analyses of other Chadic and non-Chadic languages.

The chapter on syntax covers different types of clauses (verbless, complement, relative, and interrogative clauses), but also includes patterns referring to semantic relations within the clausal frame. Providing examples from Bure, the chapter shows how semantic types of arguments (giving, affecting, speaking, thinking, and liking) differentiate language structure properties. This section is not supported by theoretic interpretations, but it provides source material for such studies from a more general linguistic perspective.

The final chapter consists of two texts provided with word-by-word morphological coding and interlinear English translation with the Hausa version at the end. The recorded speech in Bure is a piece of unique linguistic material which provides a source for further linguistic investigation and comparative analysis. A list of references complements the descriptive parts of the publication.

An important part of the book comes in the form of the appendices. The first appendix presents a set of colored pictures that create a photographic portrait of the Bure and present their traditional way of life. The second appendix consists of Bure-English-Hausa vocabulary, along with two glossaries – English-Bure and Hausa-Bure. Using the three languages for lexicographic purposes is a strategy motivated by the sociolinguistic situation in the area. Special attention to lexicographic entries related to local flora is devoted by providing illustrations to the listed terms. With this material, the names of plants that have been the subject of studies on Hausa language data

for decades (Blench 2003) have now received a new comparative perspective.

The whole book is supplemented by maps, tables and figures that make the presentation more compact but at the same time clear and easy to follow.

A Grammatical Sketch of Bure is a significant contribution to the description of Chadic languages from both the linguistic and sociolinguistic aspects. It brings new insights to the current investigation on Bole-Tangale languages and West Chadic from a broader perspective. First of all, the description of Bure provides new data for areal studies. Bure has many features of a contact language that are relevant for studies on the stages of language development and language reconstruction. As for other aspects, this approach to the presentation of language is connected with the specific function of linguistic descriptions of endangered languages which tend to the use of the knowledge of languages for social good. This work is an attempt at language revitalization and provides support for initiatives which aim to protect small cultures living in contact with dominant cultures.

Nina Pawlak

Marjolijn Aalders Grool, *Verbal Art of the Fon (Benin)*, Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2013, 252 pp.; *Vodun Stories of the Fon (Benin)*, Köln: Rüdiger Köppe Verlag, 2014, 725 pp.

This book is a result of about two and a half years of the Authoress stay in Benin. She came to this country in February 1975 and started to learn Fongbe in the summer of that year, which enabled her to commence a thorough research on the indigenous verbal art. The main objectives of the research was getting understanding of the techniques and skills of the performers of the Fon literary genre known as *hwénúxó*. Between April and June 1976 she recorded on audiocassettes the performances of 37 texts in Fongbe, and during her stay in Benin she completed the transcription and a first translation into French. In the years following the fieldwork, the Authoress checked the transcription and the French translation of the stories. However, she had to work for a living, which forced her to store the