

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 Groot, *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 Author's 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 *hwéniúxó*. 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

