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# Review of: A Grammar of Mangghuer: A Mongolic Language of China's Qinghai-Gansu Sprachbund

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linguistic aspects, but also literature and historical background. It is structured in eight units that explore different topics. Each unit contains exercises plus comments for the reader to work through in a self-paced design. Translation skills from Old English to present-day English are also developed through various reading passages.

Ch. 1, 'Thinking about the earliest English', presents an introductory framework in which to think about Old English and the societal as well as linguistic changes of the period. Important terminology is introduced, the most important of which concerns the uniformitarian principle. Ch. 2, 'History, culture, language origins', looks at the interaction between literature and linguistics. On the basis of a translation exercise of Ælfric's *Colloquy*, the sound system of Old English is elaborately dealt with, accompanied by a general discussion of phonetics and phonology. Ch. 3, 'Nouns', presents an introduction to noun phrase morphology, both in its general sense, but more particularly with regard to Old English. The difference between analytic and synthetic languages is explained and explicit attention is given to the link between inflection and word order.

Ch. 4, 'Verbs', investigates the various aspects of Old English verb morphology and compares it to present-day English. Concepts such as SVO and V2 languages are introduced. Between Chs. 4 and 5, an interlude is included that presents guidelines on how to work with three dictionaries that are essential in the study of historical English linguistics: *The Oxford English Dictionary* (OED), *The Middle English Dictionary* (MED), and *The Dictionary of Old English* (DOE). Ch. 5, 'OE metrics', moves from the linguistic behavior of nouns and verbs to OE metrics. The main reason for including this chapter is 'to engage with features of the OE sound system such as long vs. short vowel shapes and with the form of syllables' (143). In order to achieve this, the chapter goes into constructs such as stress, onset, nucleus, coda, and rhyme. Ch. 6, 'Standards and crosses', opens with background on the Viking raids and Alfred the Great's cultural reform program. With this background, the reader is then introduced to West Saxon. Preconditions for a written standard such as West Saxon are discussed.

The most important function of Ch. 7, 'Twilight', is to introduce inflectional erosion and loss. Three main questions are asked: what was lost?, why was it lost?, and when was it lost? (241). Ch. 8, 'Rebuilding English', continues the discussion on inflectional erosion, but more from a language contact perspective. The influence of both Old Norse and Old French on Old English is assessed and the different nature of borrowing from both languages is explained.

This volume is an accessible, well-structured text for students of English. The construal of the units is such that students are guided through the chapters,

which also renders this book very suitable for self-study. This is helped by the clear summaries, links to websites students may find useful, and the references and suggestions for further reading that follow each chapter. In *The earliest English* students are presented with an integrated approach to the study of Old English language, literature, and historical background in a manner that facilitates a deeper understanding of the field. The authors' assumption that their audience will have had little linguistic training may alienate more advanced students. Overall, however, this volume is an excellent introduction to the earliest English and because of its witty style and accessible organization, it has the potential to motivate students, who unfortunately often still view historical linguistics as a mandatory, stuffy subject, to study Old English. [MEREL KEIJZER, *Free University Amsterdam*.]

**A grammar of Mangghuer: A Mongolic language of China's Qinghai-Gansu Sprachbund.** By KEITH W. SLATER. New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003. Pp. xviii, 382. ISBN 0700714715. \$149.95 (Hb).

One of the least remarked aspects of the Mongol conquest is the dissemination of Mongolic languages to various corners of Eurasia. Like the far-flung remnants of a supernova, some of these are still spoken today. Keith Slater's book is a detailed synchronic description of one such language, called Mangghuer, which has received little attention from Western linguists before the appearance of this study.

One area beyond Mongolia proper where several Mongolic languages survive is China's Qinghai and Gansu provinces. Mangghuer is one of two language forms formerly known as Mongour, Tu, or Tuzu and represents the Minhe County variety of Mongour. The closely related though not mutually intelligible Huzhu Mongour is now known as Mongghul (cf. Stefan Georg, 'Mongghul', *The Mongolic language family*, ed. by Juha Janhunen, 286–306, New York: Routledge Curzon, 2003).

S's book is the first full-length description of Mangghuer to be published in any language. The description is basically synchronic, but comparisons with cognates from other Mongolic languages provide a solid estimation of the position Mangghuer occupies in the family. S pays his greatest attention to the language contact situation in this area. In contrast to the author's unpublished dissertation (*Minhe Mangghuer: A mixed language of the Inner Asian frontier*, Santa Barbara: University of California, 1998), S here views Mangghuer not as a true mixed language but rather as a Mongolic language that has undergone

two phases of contact-induced change. The first phase involved local Bodic (Tibetan) languages and Sinitic dialects, which affected vocabulary and grammatical structure; the second phase is still in progress and involves the superstrate influence of Standard Chinese, which has greatly influenced the phonology in particular. The data S presents amply validate his conclusions about the existence of a Qinghai-Gansu Sprachbund, of which both varieties of Mongour are members. The basic Mangghuer word stock remains largely Mongolic, but the phonology has come to closely resemble Standard Chinese, except in the lack of a tone system.

The book's eight chapters describe all aspects of Mangghuer linguistic structure, including word formation and syntax. Word- and sentence-length examples are mainly derived from the author's original fieldwork and are presented in a Latin alphabet based on China's Pinyin. The excellent description of the phonology and orthography (53–65) far exceeds in precision anything published earlier. An appendix (334–50) contains a folkloric text given in the same alphabet, with interlinear morpheme glosses and idiomatic English translation.

The bibliography is generally excellent, with much attention paid to Chinese sources as well as those published in Western languages. Unfortunately, S seems to have made little use of the many Russian-language sources available on Mongolic. But since no significant analysis on Mangghuer has appeared in Russian, this omission is not as serious as it might have been.

Although this grammar is primarily descriptive, its well-substantiated conclusions on the areal and genetic connections between Mangghuer and neighboring languages makes it likewise valuable to any linguist interested in working out the complex picture of language contact in this area of the world. [EDWARD J. VAJDA, *Western Washington University*.]

**Vocabulario vaquero/Cowboy talk:** A dictionary of Spanish terms from the American West. By ROBERT N. SMEAD. Norman: University of Oklahoma Press, 2004. Pp. xxxiv, 197. ISBN 0806136316. \$20.

This scholarly lexicographical work in southwestern US dialectology emphasizes the etymology of ranching expressions with careful references to material from English and Hispanic reference works. From the introduction we read: 'Both the origins (etymology) and usage in English as well as Spanish have been carefully documented for each term or expression . . . a scholarly linguistic treatment of its subject matter—a treatment often found lacking in

other sources' (xxi). In addition to explaining borrowing as a linguistic process, Smead's introduction gives ample sources ranging from the *Oxford English Dictionary* to little known glossaries of ranch terms. The illustrations by RONALD KIL that show details of the bridle reins, types of saddles, and types of characters that populated the southwest are beautifully drawn.

This reference work, 763 terms organized from A–Z in 197 pages, is well written, covering Spanish and Native American loanwords, for example, *California bible* 'a pack of playing cards', *tequila* (Nahuatl *tequillan*) 'place where tributes are paid', and *Mexican* and its sixteen collocations, including *Mexican breakfast* 'a cigarette and a glass of water'. The foreword by RICHARD W. SLATTA considers historical arguments about the place of Hispanics in ranching culture in the American southwest, changing perspectives, and revisionism in historical circles. The macrostructure has easy-to-read typography with boldfaced headwords, generally making guide-words in the headers unnecessary. Vocabulary coverage is limited to ranching terminology, flora and fauna, pejoratives, and other culturally relevant expressions.

Run-ons follow each main term; for example, *bronco* is followed by *bronca* and fourteen more. These run-ons occasionally violate alphabetical order because S decided to list all of the run-ons in one semantically related list; for example, following *Mexican*, we see *Mex*, *Mex livin*, *Mexicanized*, and *Mexican standoff* (127–28). As a result, some expressions may not be as readily findable as they might be. Otherwise, given the moderate length and the reasonable number of three to seven entries per page, the macrostructure is well constructed.

As for microstructure, the organization of the information inside the entries for the headwords, the terms are translated into English and sources are provided. A full sentence proposing a likely etymology is given, the first appearance of the term in English and Spanish reference works is cited, and encyclopedic cultural information is added. Regarding the pronunciation in each entry, it is occasionally inadequate for the English-speaking reader, since one wonders how twentieth-century cowboys pronounced the term. This occurred for me with *maguey*, the plant that produces tequila, *arriero*, a muleteer, *arroyo*, a streambed, and *fofarrow*, trinkets or baubles. The encyclopedic information may go beyond the scope of a typical dictionary, as in the following: '*cigarro* . . . Among his vices, the cowboy often demonstrated a fondness for (if not an addiction to) tobacco in its various forms. Smoking was associated with the tough hombre and was depicted in commercials (Marlboro Man), western literature, and film' (62). This may strike the reader as overly wordy from time