

Yakpo, Kofi. 2016. Review of Exploring language in a multilingual context. Variation, interaction and ideology in language documentation, by Bettina Migge and Isabelle Léglise. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press (2013). In *Journal of Pidgin and Creole Languages* 31(2), p. 467-472

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Bettina Migge and Isabelle Léglise's monograph *Exploring Language in a Multilingual Context* sheds light onto recent developments in the English-lexified creole languages of Surinamese origin spoken in western French Guiana, i.e. Eastern Maroon (a cover term for the mutually intelligible varieties Aluku, Ndyuka, and Pamaka), Saamaka (also referred to as Saramaka/Saramaca), and Sranan Tongo. This book makes fascinating reading for linguists and social anthropologists interested in linguistic and cultural hybridization in linguistically, culturally, and socially complex (post-)colonial societies. It is also an important contribution to the study of the languages of Suriname and French Guiana. So far, most of the available linguistic literature on the latter country is in French, and often published with smaller, specialized publishers (for an overview of the linguistic situation in Guiana, see e.g. Renault-Lescure & Goury 2009; Vernaudon & Fillol 2009). The book anticipates the publication of two other works (in which the two authors are involved as editors and/or contributors) that also look at the languages of Suriname from a more multidisciplinary perspective. One spans social geography, linguistics, social anthropology and politics (Carlin et al. 2014), the other examines developments in the non-creole languages of the region in addition to the creole languages, e.g. Sarnami, Javanese, Lokono, Hakka, Dutch (Yakpo & Muysken, in prep.).

Exploring Language in a Multilingual Context is an attempt to understand and explain the nature of a linguistic entity labeled *Takitaki* in French Guiana. *Takitaki* comprises a lectal continuum consisting of idiosyncratic foreigner talk varieties at one end, L2 varieties employed by a broad spectrum of Guianese people of diverse ethnic and social origins and characterized by differing degrees of grammatical and lexical "elaboration" in the middle range, and the L1 languages of distinct Maroon and Amerindian peoples at the other end, including an emerging koine resulting from the convergence of the Maroon Creoles. *Takitaki* has been evolving in a highly multilingual environment in which not only several distinct Maroon Creoles are spoken, but also various Amerindian languages (e.g. Lokono, Kalin'a, Wayana), French-lexifier creoles

(e.g. Guianese Creole, Haitian), French, Dutch and various Asian-descended languages (e.g. Sarnami, Javanese, Hakka, Cantonese).

Chapters 2 and 3 contain an excellent overview of the socio-historical, political and linguistic context, providing the less-informed reader with the necessary background knowledge to French Guiana and Suriname. Particular attention is given to Maroon history and society, since it is their languages that provide the main input into *Takitaki*. It is also they who manifest the highest degree of agency in shaping this linguistic entity. In the second thematic block, the authors concentrate on the linguistic system of *Takitaki*. In chapter 4, they first investigate language naming practices and the discourses surrounding *Takitaki* by making use of data from personal interviews, academic publications, and lay literature like travel guides. In doing so, they unravel prevailing linguistic ideologies surrounding this lectal continuum. The chapter also contains a discussion of the wide range of definitions of the term *Takitaki*. It seems that in French Guiana the term has largely moved away from its derogatory and belittling connotations inherited from colonial times (“taki-taki” literally means something like “chitter-chatter” in Sranan Tongo) to designate any of the lects found on the continuum that I have mentioned earlier. It should be noted, however, that the term *Takitaki* has no wider currency in present-day Suriname, though it is found in older academic publications (e.g. Herskovits 1930; Hall 1948; Voorhoeve 1953).

Chapter 5 analyzes the composition of the heterogeneous speaker “community” of *Takitaki* in terms of social entities like class, ethnicity, as well as geographic origins. The authors move on to describe in chapter 6 how the *Takitaki* continuum is employed in everyday speech. They do so by drawing on a vast range of naturalistic data collected in institutional settings (e.g. patient-caregiver interactions), during commercial transactions, leisure activities, within the extended family and during peer-group communication, as well as within formal and political settings (e.g. in interactions involving Maroon traditional political authorities). It transpires that *Takitaki* is a cover term for a structurally heterogeneous entity that different groups of speakers employ for a range of uses. For many non-Maroon Guianese and metropolitan French, *Takitaki* is chiefly employed as a contact language for practical purposes. For many Maroons, the language serves to construct, index, and negotiate specific social identities, for example by backgrounding inter-Maroon ethnic differences and projecting a pan-Maroon identity.

In chapters 6, 7, and 8, Migge and Léglise attempt to correlate the widely differing communicative and social functions of *Takitaki* varieties with distinct morphosyntactic features, differences in discourse patterns, and the use of multilingual practices like codeswitching. The structural analysis is very enlightening because it shows that *Takitaki* is, in spite of the existence of considerable variation, a conventionalized system. What characterizes all varieties within the *Takitaki* continuum is the strong presence of linguistic practices, lexical items, and structures associated with Sranan Tongo (besides an Eastern Maroon foundation), as well as the presence of

code-mixed or borrowed items of French, Dutch, and French Guianese Creole origin. The *Takitaki* of speakers closer to the foreigner talk end of the continuum is additionally characterized by the presence of strategies of structural generalization, e.g. the overextension of imperfective marking, the use of the general locative preposition alone instead of complex bi-partite structures involving locative nouns. Equally fascinating is the detailed description of the linguistic practices of predominantly urban, male and young Maroons on the other side of the *Takitaki* continuum. These speakers have been forging a koine characterized by mixing Eastern Maroon and Sranan Tongo structures, lexical items and discourse practices, but the koine also features considerable import from French and Dutch.

Apart from summarizing the findings of this work, the concluding chapter also deals with the implications of the study of non-normalized, oral varieties for fieldwork methodology. The authors implicitly challenge researchers to abandon the last vestiges of a research perspective that rests on an idealized understanding of language as a discrete system, and the assumption that, typically, a single language is dominant in an individual, a community, or a society. The complex, multilayered situation of multilingualism and multilectalism encountered in western Guiana is far more typical for societies around the world, where a majority of people communicate in at least two or more languages in their everyday activities. This book argues in favor of a fuzzy view of language and identity over a discrete one. It shows how deeply entrenched and conventionalized multilingual practices can be on a societal scale, and what the consequences may be for the languages in contact.

This book represents an important advance in the study of the Surinamese creoles and their offshoots. The authors identify the mechanisms underlying the dynamism of these languages and their speaker communities, whose expansionary nature is due in part to significant socio-economic changes in the wake of urbanization and migration in the Surinamese-Guianese borderlands in more recent times. The present vitality and dynamism of the Maroon Creoles must also be seen as a consequence of the remarkable degree of adaptability, flexibility, and cultural pluralism practiced by “traditional” Maroon societies for centuries (see e.g. Bilby 1990; Hoogbergen 1990).

The degree of multilingualism and multiple contact constellations found in western Guiana/Suriname will be surprising to those more familiar with the scenarios found in creole-speaking nations of the insular Caribbean. Countries like Jamaica and Trinidad & Tobago, for example, are linguistically less heterogeneous than French Guiana. Language contact studies focusing on these countries have therefore also tended to concentrate on the relationship between the creoles and their lexifier English, often from a variationist, creole continuum perspective (see e.g. Patrick 1999; Lacoste 2012).

The situation in French Guiana (and Suriname) is however more akin to contact scenarios found in the super-multilingual creole/pidgin-speaking nations of West Africa than those found elsewhere in the Caribbean. For example, Nigerian Pidgin can be ordered along a continuum with respect to the degree of fluency of speakers and their respective speaker communities, the range of domains in which the language is employed, use as (one of several) L1(s) or L2(s), degree of adstrate/substrate versus superstrate/lexifier convergence, etc. (Faraclas 2013: 177). The distinction between “educated” and “non-educated” Ghanaian Pidgin English also points to the existence of a range of overlapping lects that are differentiated with respect to their functions and structures (Huber 1999; Dako 2002). Likewise, Cameroon Pidgin, serving as an L1 to millions of speakers in western Cameroon, one of the most linguistically diverse regions of the world, shades off into part English-, part French-lexified urban youth languages like Camfranglais, which in turn, interact with African-lexicon contact languages such as urban Ewondo spoken in the metropolitan area of the capital Yaoundé (see Anchimbe 2013 for an overview).

The work of Migge and Léglise raises interesting questions about the nature of the often diffuse and indeterminate relation between language and ethnic identity in culturally diverse societies, as well as the relation between class, ethnicity and language in colonial and post-colonial societies. The authors deserve praise for the sheer wealth of primary data in the book, all of which stems from natural speech and conversations collected during years of field work, and featuring an astounding range of discourse topics. The fact that the authors managed to gather such highly original naturalistic data goes a long way to show the strength of their participant observation methodology. The authors’ appreciation of the peoples of French Guiana and Suriname and respect for the sophistication of their cultures seeps through the lines at various places in the book. This work is therefore also a fine example of the type of postcolonial multi-disciplinary approach that will have to inform serious linguistic research in the 21st century – with respect to research ethics, scientific accountability, the presentation of research results, and the representation of research subjects.

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