

**Keith W. Slater**, *A Grammar of Mangghuer: A Mongolic Language of China's Qinghai-Gansu Sprachbund*. London and New York: Routledge Curzon [Routledge Curzon Asian Linguistics Series], 2003. xviii + 382.

**George van Driem (Leiden)**

This brilliant study is a wonderfully readable and detailed grammar of the Monguor language as it is spoken in Mínhé county in Qīnghǎi province of what today is northern China. Slater refers to this variety of the language as 'Mangghuer'. The other main dialect of the Monguor language, spoken principally in Hùzhù county, is referred to as 'Mongghul'. Both 'Mangghuer' and 'Mongghul' represent the name of the Monguor language as pronounced by these two distinct speech communities. Slater adduces compelling evidence in support of treating these two varieties of Monguor as distinct languages. The author provides a good overview of previous scholarship on Mangghuer and Mongghul as well as of work on Baonan and Santa, two other Mongolic languages of the Qīnghǎi-Gānsù region.

The author's former fascination with the trendy mixed language school has been replaced by a balanced approach to Monguor, which Slater now treats as a Mongolic language that has for centuries lain awash of the contact influences permeating the Qīnghǎi-Gānsù *Sprachbund*. Not surprisingly, Slater is well versed in the literature of contact influence in the area, and relevant literature cited in his bibliography ranges from celebrated publications, such as *Tibeto-Mongolica* by Róna-Tas, to unpublished work, such as a 1993 University of Washington Master's thesis on language contact in the border area of Qīnghǎi and Gānsù by Keith Dede. Slater is keen to highlight the effects of contact phenomena, and his sensitivity to lexical and grammatical influence enhances the diachronic dimension of this synchronic study throughout the book.

The arrangement of the grammar follows a conventional pattern. The first chapter presents a solid but succinct introduction to the language, speech community, relevant ethnolinguistic facts, and previous scholarship. The second chapter presents the phonology of Mangghuer, heavily influenced as it is by Sinitic. The third chapter, entitled 'Nouns and noun phrases', is a treatment of nominal morphology, and the fourth, entitled 'The clause', is a treatment of Mangghuer verbal morphology.

Chapter 5 deals with 'the subjective/objective speaker involvement distinction'. Despite Slater's choice of label, the Mangghuer distinction has nothing to do with what is known in the Uralic literature as *Objektkonjugation* (*tárgyas*)

and *Subjektkonjugation (tárgyatlan)*. Instead the Mangghuer distinction resembles epistemic, evidential or conjunct vs. disjunct distinctions common to verbal systems of many languages of Central Asia. An important but sometimes overlooked fact about these Central Asian systems is that analogous grammatical categories involving the degree of control or volition on the part of the speaker, old vs. newly acquired knowledge, personal vs. public knowledge, etc., all demonstrably represent somewhat different meanings in each and every language. Many languages of the region in fact contain more than just one such distinction.

Slater's survey shows selective familiarity with the literature on this topic, and greatest familiarity with a narrow subset of American writing on the topic. Slater's treatment of the data appears to support his claim that the Mangghuer distinction is 'best explained in terms of the degree of personal involvement which a speaker wants to assert', but the treatment fails to give as detailed an account of the language-specific meanings of the Mangghuer categories as might have been possible with more pointed contrastive examples. In short, Chapter 5 shows the author's fascination with the areal prevalence of this type of distinction but neglects to focus on what is uniquely Mangghuer.

Chapter 6 deals with clausal grammar, e.g. gerunds or 'converbs', clause chaining and verb serialisation, nominalised and dependent clauses, coordination, and other related concerns. Chapter 7 deals in minute detail with reported speech in folktale narrative. Chapter 8 provides a summary and discussion of language contact phenomena. An appendix offers a short morphologically analysed Mangghuer folktale about a trick perpetrated by a rabbit on a fox and a wolf.

One drawback of the book is that Mandarin forms cited in Hànyǔ Pīnyīn transcription consistently omit the tone marks. This commonplace practice is phonologically deficient and not worthy of emulation, especially in linguistic work. The inadequacy of the practice is not mitigated by the fact that the tone system of the variety of Mandarin spoken in Qīnghǎi differs substantially from that of the standard dialect.

In sum, this Mangghuer grammar is an insightful and well-written contribution of lasting value. The volume is handsomely produced, as befits a work of this stature.

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**Dimova, Ana & Herbert-Ernst Wiegand (eds.)** 2003. *Wort und Grammatik. Festschrift für Pavel Petkov anlässlich seiner Emeritierung*. Hildesheim-Zürich-New York: Georg Olms Verlag. [*Germanistische Linguistik* 171–172].

**Werner Abraham (Vienna)**

Not all Festschriften gain the applause by the contemporary academic community, this for several good reasons. This one should, mainly because of person this work is targeting: Pavel Petkov, professor of German in Sofia, Bulgaria, since the late nineteen-seventies. His life-long work on the contrasts between Bulgarian, one of the most elaborate aspect languages in the world, and German, one of the most discourse-oriented ones, has turned out fruitful for both languages. The citation frequency of his name in the two different linguistic communities is exemplary.

The present collection, less than evenly divided between Bulgarian and German scholars on German(ic), aptly honours Petkov's merits and reflects, at the same time, the width of his own research and linguistic interests. All of the contributions, in a way, have to do with contrast, (non)equivalence, translation, and acquisition between the two languages.



**Clausia Maienborn (ed.)** 2003. *(A)Symmetrien — (A)Symmetries. Beiträge zu Ehren von Ewald Lang — Papers in Honor of Ewald Lang*. Tübingen: Stauffenburg Verlag.

**Werner Abraham (Vienna)**

The collection of essays acknowledges the 60ieth birthday of the founder and long-standing director of the *Zentrum für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft (ZAS)*, an academic research centre for linguistics in Berlin sponsored directly by the Deutsche Forschungsgemeinschaft/German Research Society (DFG) and the