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Edited by Bernd Heine and Derek Nurse
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A Linguistic Geography of Africa

More than forty years ago it was demonstrated that the African continent can be divided into four distinct language families. Research on African languages has accordingly been preoccupied with reconstructing and understanding similarities across these families. This has meant that an interest in other kinds of linguistic relationship, such as whether structural similarities and dissimilarities among African languages are the result of contact between these languages, has never been the subject of major research. The aim of this book is to show that such similarities across African languages are more common than is widely believed. It provides a broad perspective on Africa as a linguistic area, as well as an analysis of specific linguistic regions. In order to have a better understanding of African languages, their structures, and their history, more information on these contact-induced relationships is essential in order to understand Africa's linguistic geography, and reconstruct its history and prehistory.

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Series editor's foreword

The series Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact (CALC) was set up to publish outstanding monographs on language contact, especially by authors who approach their specific subject matter from a diachronic or developmental perspective. Our goal is to integrate the ever-growing scholarship on language diversification (including the development of creoles, pidgins, and indigenized varieties of colonial European languages), bilingual language development, code-switching, and language endangerment. We hope to provide a select forum to scholars who contribute insightfully to understanding language evolution from an interdisciplinary perspective. We favor approaches that highlight the role of ecology and draw inspiration both from the authors' own fields of specialization and from related research areas in linguistics or other disciplines. Eclecticism is one of our mottoes, as we endeavor to comprehend the complexity of evolutionary processes associated with contact.

A Linguistic Geography of Africa diverges from the above tradition only in not being a monograph. We have made this exception because of the rich addition that the volume makes to the scholarly goals of CALC. Bernd Heine and Derek Nurse enrich the series with an outstanding collection of contributions that make evident how the linguistic history of a vast territory is naturally complicated by an intricate entanglement of genetic and areal ties. The backbone of the book consists of a few fundamental questions, including the following: why are the genetic and typological classifications of African languages not coextensive? Why are there so many typological features that cut across well-established genetic classifications of languages? How significant is the role of areal diffusion, therefore of language contact, in the structural affinities observable among so many languages?

From the perspective of language speciation, a number of other questions arise from the chapters of this book. For instance, what does this complex web of structural and genetic affinities suggest about patterns of population dispersal and subsequent inter-group communication over the millennia that have led to the present African linguascape? Can one do a genetic study of languages of any territory without sorting out among the following classic questions: among the features shared by a particular group of languages,

which are the ones that have been inherited from a common ancestor? Which are those that are due to parallel, independent innovations after diversification from the proto-language? Which are those that are due to mutual influence during post-diversification contacts? How can one tell the difference? Are there any correlations between linguistic groupings and geographical characteristics of the relevant territories?

These questions, and many more, are addressed or brought up in complementary and often also overlapping ways by the contributors to *A Linguistic Geography of Africa*. The authors are all veteran field workers, typologists, and students of genetic classifications of African languages. Like the editors, many of them are also students of various forms of human contacts which produced not only creoles and pidgins but also varieties identified by some as “intertwined languages,” those that display the most “global copying” or “grammatical replication.” They are also aware of the danger of attributing too much to contact, as Derek Nurse had previously shown in his study, with other associates, of the evolution of Swahili. All the authors show that it would be too simplistic to stipulate, without qualifications, that Africa is a *Sprachbund* (also known as *convergence area*). Not even the Balkan-like situation of the Ethio-Eritrean area fits this sweeping characterization.

The bottom line is that one must combine techniques from both genetic and areal linguistics to account for the complex ways in which genetic and typological connections are literally intertwined in Africa and perhaps elsewhere too. Population movements, which lead to language contact, are an important dimension of the study of language evolution. The genetic classification of languages to reflect patterns of language diversification in a geographical space as vast as Africa is a much more complex topic than traditionally assumed. As the editors conclude, the contributors to this volume are just scraping the tip of the iceberg. There is much more to learn; and I hope *A Linguistic Geography of Africa* will be as seminal as other previous publications in this series, especially *Language Contact and Grammatical Change* by Bernd Heine and Tania Kuteva (2005). The books show the extent to which studies of language evolution and of language contact at the macro-level are interconnected. In the particular case of *A Linguistic Geography of Africa*, both the areal and genetic linguistics approaches help us make informed distinctions between convergence and diversification with common genetic inheritance, and/or, in some cases, articulate the relevant problems. The book also drives home the fact that language evolution is conditioned by a wide range of ecological factors, including those that pertain to geography, as these bear on population movements and all that ensue from them, economically and linguistically.

Salikoko S. Mufwene, *University of Chicago*

Acknowledgments

Many a student of African languages has pointed out that the way grammatical meanings and structures are expressed in a given language is strikingly similar to what is found in some neighboring language or languages, even though the languages concerned may be genetically unrelated or only remotely related. The main goal of this book is to show that such observations are far from coincidental – rather, that such similarities across African languages are more common than is widely believed and that they can be accounted for in terms of areal relationship. In editing this book, we have benefited greatly from discussions with and comments from many colleagues, in particular the following: Sasha Aikhenvald, Felix Ameka, Walter Bisang, Bernard Comrie, Norbert Cyffer, Östen Dahl, Bob Dixon, Paul Newman, Margaret Dunham, Ludwig Gerhardt, Lars Johanson, Tania Kuteva, Yaron Matras, Salikoko Mufwene, Robert Nicolai, Mechthild Reh, Suzanne Romaine, Marie-Claude Simeone-Senelle, Anne Storch, Thomas Stolz, Martine Vanhove, Erhard Voeltz, Rainer Vossen, as well as many others. Special thanks are also due to Monika Feinen and Will Oxford for their invaluable technical assistance, and to two anonymous referees for all the work they did on an earlier version of this volume.

The second-named editor would also like to thank the Henrietta Harvey Foundation for continued and generous support during the period of his work on this book. The first-named editor is deeply indebted to the Center for Advanced Study in the Behavioral Sciences, Stanford, and the Institute for Advanced Study, LaTrobe University, and in particular the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology in Melbourne and its directors Bob Dixon and Sasha Aikhenvald, who offered him academic hospitality to work on this book. We are grateful to these institutions for their generosity and understanding. Our gratitude also extends to our colleagues Lenore Grenoble and Lindsay Whaley, Dartmouth College, who offered the first-named editor academic hospitality and the means to work on this book when he was invited as a visiting professor in 2002. Finally, thanks are also due to the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Study (NIAS) and its rector Wim Blockmans for the outstanding hospitality that the first-named editor was able to enjoy in 2005/6 at the finalizing stage of the book.

Abbreviations

(In Bantu examples, numbers in glosses of nominal forms, or following '3:' in glosses of pronominal markers, indicate noun classes. Elsewhere, numbers indicate persons. For example, O3:2 means 'object marker, third person, class 2.')

A	agent, transitive subject function, aspect (Dimmendaal), verb class A, affirmative
AA	Afroasiatic
ABL	ablative
ABS	absolutive
ABS	absolute form of nouns
ACC	accusative, accusative system
AFF	affirmative, affix
AG	antigenitive
ALBU	Alagwa and Burunge
ANAPH	anaphora
ANN	annexion state
ANT	anterior
APPL	applicative
AP	antipassive
ASS	associative
ATR	advanced tongue root
AUX	auxiliary
B	verb class B
CAUS	causative, causative extension
CL	noun class marker
CMPL	complementizer
CND	conditional
CNV	converb
COM	comitative
COMP	comparative

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COMPL	complement
CON	construct case
COP	copula, copulative
CSTR	construct state
D	dative object marker
DAT	dative, dative extension
DC	declarative sentence marker
DECAUS	decausative
DECL	declarative
DEF	definite
DEM	demonstrative
DET	determiner
DETR	detransitivization
DIM	diminutive
DIR	directional
DP	declarative particle
DS	dependent subject
DU	dual
E	evidential
E40	Mara Bantu languages
E50	Central Kenyan Bantu languages
EAB	East African Bantu
EE	end of event marker
ELA	Ethiopian Linguistic Area
ERG	ergative, ergative system
EXCL	exclusive
F	feminine
F10, F20, etc.	groups of the Bantu zone F
FAC	factive
FOC	focus
FF	far future
FP	far past
FPL	feminine plural
FSG	feminine singular
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
GO	go
HAB	habitual
IDEO	ideophone
IMP	imperative
INCL	inclusive
INDEF	indefinite

INDIR	indirect mood
INF	infinitive
INIT	initiator of reported speech
INST	instrumental
IO	indirect object
IPF	imperfective
IRR	irrealis
JUS	jussive
LINK	linker introducing a noun modifier
LOC	locative
LOCPRED	locative predicator
LOG	logophoric
M	masculine
MAL	malefactive
MNOM	marked nominative
MPL	masculine plural
MSG	masculine singular
N	neuter, noun
N.PRED	nominal predicate
NEG	negative
NF	near future
NFIN	non-finite
NOM	nominative
NOML	nominalizer
NP	near past, noun phrase
NS	Nilo-Saharan
NSM	non-interrogative sentence marker
NTS	non-topical subject
O	object, transitive object function, direct object marker
OBJOR	object orientation
OBL	oblique case
OPT	optative
PAST	past
PEC	Proto-Eastern Cushitic
PEE	possessee
PERF	perfect
PERS	persistive
PFV	perfective
PIRQ	Proto-Iraqwoid
PL	plural
PNM	predicate nominal phrase marker
POR	possessor

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POS	positive (or affirmative)
POSS	possessive
POST	posterior
PRE	preposition
PRES	present
PROG	progressive
PSAM	Proto-Sam
PSN	Proto-Southern Nilotic
P(N,S)WR	Proto-(North, South) West Rift
PSV	passive
PURP	purpose
Q	question
QUOT	quotative
REL	relative
RSM	resumptive marker
S	subject, intransitive subject function
SC	subject concord
SEQ	sequential
SG	singular
SJN	subjunctive
SIM	similative
SPEC	specifier
SUB	subordination
SUBJ	syntactically marked case form
TA	tense–aspect
TAG	tag question
TAM	tense–aspect–modality
TMP	temporal
TR	transitive
V	verb
VEN	venitive (ventive)
VN	verbal noun
WR	West Rift
I	non-past verbal juncture
II	past verbal juncture
1, 2, 3	first, second, third person, or noun class 1, 2, 3, etc.
=	clitic boundary