

# Boundaries and Bridges: Language Contact in Multilingual Ecologies, by Kofi Yakpo & Pieter C. Muysken (eds.)

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Kofi Yakpo & Pieter C. Muysken (eds.), *Boundaries and Bridges: Language Contact in Multilingual Ecologies*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton, 2018. x + 443 pp. (Cloth €99.95)

Although the Guianas are intensely diverse, both socially and linguistically, there are not many books on linguistic diversity in the region. Apart from the *Atlas of the Languages of Suriname* (2003) and a sociolinguistic and anthropological perspective on languages, processes of mobility, and identity (*In and Out of Suriname* [2015]), *Boundaries and Bridges* is the only book devoted to contact involving various typologically diverse languages. Although multidirectional language contact and convergence involving more than two languages is well known—a notion such as "Sprachbund" and the discipline of "areal typology" are good examples of research on language crossroads—these phenomena remain poorly described and were until quite recently quasi undocumented for Suriname. Even though Suriname has not been identified as a Sprachbund such as the Balkans, one of the important features of this new book is that it clearly shows the kinds of long-term linguistic convergence that is nevertheless at play in such a multilingual context. Another valuable feature is that it provides a good overview of the historic events that gave rise to the contemporary multilingual setting of Suriname.

In such a diverse context, where multilingual people with complex allegiances to different groupings engage in a range of hybridization activities ranging from sometimes borrowing features from another language to heavily mixing languages, a central question that linguists or anthropologists deal with is whether and how it is still possible to document bounded languages or bounded communities. One possible theoretical orientation from "the multilingual turn" in social sciences and humanities calls on researchers to abandon the concept of languages and urges them to look at social and cultural mobilities by disinventing languages (see work by Sinfree Makoni and Alastair Pennycook) and looking at poly/translanguaging (J.N. Jørgensen, Ofelia Garcia, Li Wei, and others). In a different perspective, the orientation of *Boundaries and Bridges* is clearly to investigate bridges between bounded but interacting linguistic communities caught in a chain with complex relations among each other. In general the authors pursue a structural linguistic perspective and identify a fabulous variety of contact-induced changes and areal convergence.

The book is one of the results of a project funded by the European Research Council called "traces of contact," and its title clearly suggests that the focus is on historical developments and evidence or traces of contact-induced language change. It consists of eleven case studies; each has its own merit, and most present the long-term evolution of specific structural phenomena; see for



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example Pieter Muysken's article on the structural development of Dutch since the mid-seventeenth century or Eithne Carlin's on 400 years of contact and lexical borrowing between Amerindian and non-Amerindian language groups in southern Suriname.

Various chapters deal with similar processes or contact languages—for example, Kofi Yakpo, Robert Borges, and Bettina Migge on Maroon creoles, Sranan, and Dutch—but from slightly different perspectives, and the book offers a nice kaleidoscope on their interaction and crossroads. On one hand, Yakpo argues that there are layers of convergence toward Sranan and Dutch as donor and recipient languages to each other and that Sranan plays a dual role as a conduit for indirect Dutch influence on other languages of Suriname, while simultaneously exerting direct influence on these languages. When considering plurilingual practices, he is more interested in the influences that one language exerts on another than in the practices themselves. When Robert Borges explores hybridization between Maroon creoles, Sranan, and Dutch, he is more interested in identifying the different results and varieties (code mixing, borrowing, mixed codes) than in looking at the data as instances of language and social practices. On the other hand, Bettina Migge argues that taking a system-based perspective focuses only on structural and contact-induced effects but is silent on their social functionality. Considering switching and mixing practices, she shows how people make use of language contact to negotiate social and interactional meanings.

As a whole, the book permits the reassessment of two classic notions in descriptive and historically oriented contact linguistics: borrowability (much discussed in previous studies by Pieter Muysken and Yaron Matras) and the stability of linguistic structures in language contact (or its variability as discussed for instance by Isabelle Léglise and Claudine Chamoreau in 2013). The concluding chapter presents a broader picture of the various contact results according to the different linguistic levels (phonology, syntax, lexicon), which is useful in that it allows the authors to depict Suriname as a linguistic area.

This book provides food for thought and further research. It should be recommended to graduate students and scholars interested in language contact.

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