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SUMMARY

This is the first grammar of Fa d'Ambô ever written in English. Fa d'Ambô, literally 'speech of Annobón' (from the Portuguese 'fala de Ano-Bom') is a Portuguese-related creole language, originally spoken in the Isle of Annobón, in the Gulf of Guinea. Nowadays, Fa d'Ambô is spoken by approximately 6,600 people, mostly in the isles of Annobón and Bioko, and is considered one of the four Gulf of Guinea creoles, along with Angolar, Santome, and Lung'ie. Native speakers of Fa d'Ambô are also fluent in Spanish, the official language of Equatorial Guinea, and in an English-based creole called Pichi.

Chapter 1 provides a quick introduction to the language and the volume at hand. First, the authors briefly outline the history of Fa d'Ambô, including a sociolinguistic overview. Next, they review some previous work on the language. Then, they address the topic of language variation and describe the database they used to compile this grammar, which includes three sources: first, audio and video recordings collected during a field trip; then, a collection of spoken data recorded and transcribed by Armando Zamora Segorbe (local team member, a native speaker of the language, and the author of a grammar of this language in Spanish, see Zamora Segorbe 2010); finally, additional elicited data provided by Zamora Segorbe and native speakers he consulted.

Chapter 2 is a concise outline of the phonology of Fa d'Ambô, covering the shape of the words, segmental units, spelling conventions, and tone. The authors inform us that, in this language, words have at least two forms: a long one, which occurs in isolation and sentence-final position, and one or more short ones, which occur(s) in all the other contexts (for instance, consider /balea/ vs. /bala/ 'whale'). Moreover, the language is characterized by many anticipatory assimilation processes which happen with both consonants (e.g., <nggê> /ŋge/ 'person,' which becomes <ng> /ŋg/ in <ng se> 'this person') and vowel sounds (<ba> /ba/ 'go,' which becomes <bo> /bo/ in <bo fundu> 'go to the ground'). Fa d'Ambô has seven oral vowels (/i, u, e, o, ε, ə, a) which can be short or long (although the latter may be better characterized as sequences of two vowels), and seven nasal vowels (/ĩ, ã, ê, õ, ê, õ, ã/). Moreover, it presents twenty consonants /p, t, k, b, d, g, m, n, ɲ, ŋ, f, s, ʃ, x, v, z, ʒ, ʧ, ʤ, l/, three glides (/j, w, ʝ/), and fourteen diphthongs, twelve rising (/ya, ye, yo, yu, wa, wẽ, we, wo, ja, jã, ji, ju, ay, oy/). Regarding syllable structure, this language tends toward open syllables.

The spelling conventions used are based on Maurer's (1995, 2009) proposals for Angolar and Lung'Ie and the unified spelling conventions officialized for Angolar, Lung'Ie, and Santome. However, Fa d'Ambô possesses three sounds that its sister creoles do not possess: [x], which is an allophone of [k], and is represented by <kh>; [ŋ] occurs not only before /g/ but also before vowels and any opposition between [ŋ] and [ŋg] is represented by <ng> vs. <ngg>; the nasal glide [j], represented by <nh> as opposed to [ñ]. As a further convention <m'>, <n'>, and <ng'> represent syllabic /m/, /n/, and /ŋ/. The chapter ends with an introduction to the two-tones systems of the language but stops short of providing a thorough analysis of the tonology of Fa d'Ambô.

Chapter 3 briefly outlines the morphological processes of the language, namely reduplication, derivation, and fusion. The syntactic categories that can undergo reduplication include nouns, nouns used as prepositions, nouns used adverbially, adjectives used as attributives, adjectives used as adverbs, verbs, the predemonstrative plural marker <nen>, and numerals.

Reduplications may be total (e.g., <pakhana-pakhana> 'big pimple') or partial (e.g., <vê-vêdji> 'intense green'). Normally they have an intensifying function. However, there are exceptions: with <men> 'woman' or <pe> 'man' the reduplication refers to an important person, and with <tadji> 'early evening' the reduplication means 'around' (see Spanish *hacia la tarde* 'around the early evening'). Derived words may maintain their original shape (e.g., <khaza> 'get married' > <khaza-mentu> 'wedding') but may also suffer some alterations (e.g., <ola> 'pray' > <la-san> 'prayer'). Fusion occurs with personal pronouns and verbs. In the former case, first- and second-person singular subject pronouns undergo fusion with the negation marker <na> (e.g., <bo> 'you' + <na> 'not' becomes <ban> 'you-not') whereas verbs may fuse with an object pronoun (e.g., <ta mu> 'put me' becomes <ten>).

Chapter 4 is an extensive outline of the noun phrase and its structure. It offers a concise explanation of the noun, delving into properties such as gender, number, diminutive and augmentative forms, determiners with the corresponding pronouns (including the indefinite article, demonstratives, possessives, quantifiers, numerals, and indefinite pronouns), bare nouns, and noun phrases, and the adjectives (including intensifiers, degrees of comparison, the conjoining of adjectives, adjectives as stative verbs). Then, the chapter outlines noun phrases and prepositional phrases, modifying verb phrases, and relative clauses (as subjects, direct and indirect objects, benefactives, locatives, temporal adjuncts, comitative adjuncts, instrumental adjuncts, possessors, the relativizer <pa>). Next, the authors offer a detailed illustration of the forms and functions of personal pronouns (all singular and plural pronouns, the non-specific personal pronoun *a*, the personal pronoun <maya/maa> – which emphasizes or topicalizes the first-person pronoun and the first- and third-person possessive, and forms with prepositions), boundedness of the singular subject pronouns, the conjoining of personal pronouns, the absence of expletive pronouns. Finally, the authors devote some time to an overview of the conjoining of noun phrases, the noun phrase-final particle, and the structure of the noun phrase. All these topics are illustrated in detail, with the aid of plenty of examples.

Chapter 5 is the longest in the book and provides a detailed illustration of the verb phrase in Fa d'Ambô. First, the authors cover the functions of the whole range of tense, aspect, and mood markers (including zero, <kha>, <sakha/skha/ska>, <skee/skhee/kee>, <bi>, <ta>, the combination of *bi* with other markers, <kha sakha>, <kha ta>, <skhee/kee kha>, <la> and <sa>, and the combination of *la* and *sa* with other markers), which are also summarized in a table at the end of the section. Then, they deal with nominal predicates, verbs denoting possession and existence, positional verbs, modal verbs, and complements, before turning to

the wide variety of serial verb constructions present in the language (benefactive, motion and location, instrumental, comitative, completive, durative, resultative, degree). Next, they deal with other complex issues such as negation (sentence negation, the final negation marker, expletive negation, negative concord) and non-clausal adjuncts (place, time, manner, means, instrument, degree, focus, cause, and other).

Chapter 6 is devoted to simple sentences. The authors state at the onset that Fa d'Ambô is an SVO language and illustrate the basic word order of the language. Moreover, they also clarify that "[S]ubjects of both transitive and intransitive verbs occur in the preverbal position and require overt realisation." (p. 177). Furthermore, they specify that there is no over agreement marking between subject or object arguments and the verb. Then, they deal with topics such as focalization, topicalization, interrogatives (both content and polar questions), imperatives and hortatives, exclamatives and interjections, vocatives, and voice (reflexive, reciprocal, causative, passive).

Chapter 7 turns to complex sentences. First, the authors deal with argument clauses. Second, they deal with adjunct clauses (temporal, conditional, causal, purposive, concessive, comparative, and manner). Next, the authors deal with coordinate clauses, considering different coordinators (<se>, <ku>, <pa>, <a>) and illustrating negative coordination. Finally, they offer a brief account of the verb phrase and sentence-final particles. Concerning the latter issue, after distinguishing particles into two broad classes, the authors admit that further research is needed on the interaction between different grammar domains to unearth the fine-grained properties of all the particles discussed in the volume.

Chapter 8 addresses ideophones and onomatopoeia. The authors make clear at the onset that ideophones in Fa d'Ambô resemble reduplications because they consist of repeated syllables but, unlike reduplications, they normally lack a lexical base. Only one or two syllables are repeated, and the number of repetitions depends on the speaker's intention, although monosyllabic ideophones are generally repeated three times while disyllabic ideophones only twice. Ideophones follow the word they modify, which may be an adjective, participle, noun, or verb. Onomatopoeias just imitates sounds of the physical world. Strictly speaking, the grammar tout-court ends with this chapter.

Chapter 9 provides the transcription of four traditional stories which represent around fifty minutes of spoken language, recorded in Annobón and Malabo by Zamora Segorbe. The stories were read by three speakers, a woman and two men, aged between 28 and 67 at the time of recording (2011-2012). The audio recordings are available for download at the following webpage: <https://www.degruyter.com/view/title/510975>. The authors add footnotes to clarify (potentially) ambiguous passages, such as the use of lexical borrowings from other languages or sister creoles, pronunciation mistakes, change of point of view in the narration, and so on.

Chapters 10 and 11 provide two wordlists: A Fa d'Ambô-English one and an English-Fa d'Ambô one, respectively.

To provide an insight into the similarities and the differences between the four genetically related Gulf of Guinea creoles, the authors included an appendix featuring a story in the four languages. The authors picked a Lung'Ie story 'The mouth that says good things also says bad things,' whose translation into Angolar and Santome already feature in Maurer (2009). The words which occur in the four versions are listed in alphabetic order.

EVALUATION

This grammar represents a remarkable achievement. By contributing a comprehensive, well-structured grammar of Fa d'Ambô in English, the authors provide the linguistic community with a largely accessible resource for the study of this creole. This book will be particularly interesting to scholars working in the fields of language contact, language typology, African studies, and sociolinguistics, but it may also appeal to specialists in Spanish and Portuguese studies. As a high-quality grammar of a thus far underdescribed language, this book fits in very well in the 'Mouton Grammar Library,' which already includes authoritative contributions such as McPherson (2013) and Heath and Hantgan (2018).

This slim yet ambitious volume is characterized by two properties that are commonly found in a single work: conciseness and exhaustiveness. Each chapter treats a different aspect of the grammar of Fa d'Ambô in as much detail as needed, avoiding the risk of including redundant and irrelevant information. Instead, every point which is made in the book is illustrated with the aid of a wide range of carefully chosen examples, all diligently glossed and translated into English. By integrating the observation of corpus data with the intuition of native speakers, this concise grammar hits the double target of reaching clarity and, at the same time, avoiding tediousness.

This *modus operandi*, while certainly commendable, often runs the risk of becoming mechanical, glossing over important issues, which may slip under the radar. It is not the case of this book, where the authors are careful to make explicit all the less than trivial points. As an example, the remark in Chapter 3 (p. 25) on lexical reduplication not being semantically transparent is very important. Likewise, the authors succeed in picking examples that best illustrate slight differences between similar constructions. A case in point is the use of the copula versus zero with predicative adjectives to distinguish temporary from permanent states in Chapter 4 (p. 131).

Chapter 5 deserves a special mention. In this long chapter, the authors manage to provide a comprehensive, detailed yet far from verbose explanation. A clear explanation is provided for potentially tricky topics such as the temporal and modal functions of TAM markers, also summarized in a useful table (pp. 129-130). The section on serial verb constructions is also rich and poignant and makes relevant remarks on the different levels of grammaticalization and serialization. The use of argument extraction as a test to distinguish serializing constructions from asyndetic coordination constructions is also cunning. Some of the points made in this chapter may have relevant consequences on grammatical theory at large. For instance, the treatment of the functions of zero seems to bear out the points made by Givón (2017). Likewise, the detailed illustration of serializing constructions may foster the contrastive investigation of this family of constructions, currently understudied even in widely known languages such as English (exceptions include Matsumoto 2016 and Broccias and Torre 2018).

The inclusion of four texts in the language provides the user with a substantial sample of running text in the language and the links to the corresponding audio recordings allow us a brief full immersion in the language. Potentially tricky issues in the recordings as well as some apparent inconsistencies in the texts themselves are dealt with in the footnotes (that are, however, used sparingly, as in the rest of the book). Likewise, the inclusion of a Lung'le story translated into Angolar, Santome, and Fa d'Ambô provides an idea of the similarities and the differences between the four genetically related creoles, rounding off a concise,

comprehensive, and relatively ambitious grammar, which fills a gap in the literature on Portuguese-related creoles.

While my evaluation of this grammar is extremely positive, I will now address a few minor issues in the book. First, a rather awkward statement can be found in the section on vowel sounds: “Long vowels tend to be shortened in discourse (...) A further issue is whether the long vowels are to be considered long vowels or whether they constitute a sequence of two vowels. The second hypothesis is probably the correct one...” (p. 9). This statement seems to call into question the very existence of long vowels in the language, which was previously presented as a fact. In the same chapter, at p. 15, the authors specify Fa d’Ambô possesses three sounds that its sister creoles do not have, but then they provide a list with four bullet points, including a spelling convention they adopt but does not involve a sound which is not present in the other languages. At first, this is a bit confusing.

Other minor problems include the insertion of a brief overview of the history of possessive determiners on p. 53, which is not problematic per se but may result out of context in a strictly synchronic grammar. It would have probably been more appropriate to either include this excursus in a footnote or omit it altogether. Finally, I will mention a couple of typos that may confuse the reader: on p. 60, the authors assert that “[b]are tens may show this construction if the more Portuguese- or Spanish-based numerals are used (187b),” while the relevant example is (186b). Likewise, at p. 154, the personal pronoun <ineyn> ‘they’ is mistakenly glossed as ‘3sg,’ whereas the correct gloss would be ‘3pl.’

Despite these minor shortcomings, the work of Hagemeijer, Maurer-Cecchini, and Zamora Segorbe can hardly be overvalued: not only did these scholars provide us with the first grammar of Fa d’Ambô ever written in English, but they also delivered a high-quality piece of work, which admirably strikes a nice balance between conciseness and inclusiveness. This book will become a reference point for all the sociolinguists and language typologists interested in deepening their knowledge of this language and, more generally, for all linguists willing to familiarize themselves with the linguistic landscape of West Africa.

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