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Mejdell, Gunvor / Edzard, Lutz (Hg.): *High vs. Low and Mixed Varieties.* Status, Norms and Functions across Time and Languages. Wiesbaden: Harrassowitz 2012. 210 S. 8° = Abhandlungen für die Kunde des Morgenlandes 77. Brosch. € 48,00. ISBN 978-3-447-06696-9.

This volume is based on the papers delivered at the "Oslo Workshop on High and Low varieties, diglossia, and language contact: linguistic products and social processes", held at the University of Oslo in 2010. The papers deal with research on 'high' and 'low' varieties in such diverse languages as Arabic, Hebrew, Latin/Romance, Turkish, Hindi, Irish, Czech, and Norwegian. The volume contains an introductory article and a further 11 contributions, all written in English, except for one paper in French. Even though the book has a well-defined theme, the variety of languages discussed, all with their particular, often long-standing, history of diglossia and language variation, makes for very diverse contributions. Most of the papers describe the linguistic situation in a particular country (e.g. the Czech Republic, Mauritania, Norway), while other, more theoretically oriented papers, deal with matters of definition and terminology. One paper deals with the linguistic features of a minority group (Christian Arabs). Frequently recurring themes are language attitudes, standardization, the (lack of) recognition of the low varieties, and code-switching and -mixing. Each contribution is followed by its own list of references, and the contributors rarely refer to each other's papers, thereby giving more the feel of separate descriptions of language situations than chapters focussing on a common research question. However, the introductory article by Gunvor Mejdell, in which she summarizes, comments upon, and compares the findings of the contributors, serves as a 'bridge' between the various papers.

The second paper, 'Vulgar Latin and Middle Arabic' (pp. 24–31) by Tore Janson, begins by explaining the provenance of the term Vulgar Latin, which was coined in the 19th century for a form of Latin that existed alongside Classical Latin, but deviated from it in certain aspects, such as the vowel system. However, nowadays the term Vulgar Latin is avoided by scholars, because the strict dichotomy of the two separated registers of the spoken language which it implies never actually existed. The second half of the paper deals with the division used in Arabic linguistics between Classical Arabic, Middle Arabic, and spoken Arabic dialects. Janson offers his outsider's view on the term Middle Arabic, which is comparable to Vulgar Latin. He points out the different interpretations of 'Middle Arabic' by various scholars (e.g. Blau, Versteegh), for whom the term can mean,

among other things, a register of spoken Arabic, a type of text with deviations from Classical Arabic, or a chronological stage between Old and Neo-Arabic.[1] One of the reasons to introduce the concept of Middle Arabic was based on the fact that features which are not in accordance with Classical Arabic are evidence for an interesting earlier form of the language, rather than deplorable errors. Janson concludes that "[a]t some stage, it may be found that the tripartition into Classical Arabic, Middle Arabic, and modern dialects is no longer satisfactory for the description of a reality that has been found to be more complex than originally expected. At least that is what the comparison with the Latin and Romance situation would lead us to expect" (p. 30). Indeed, the term Middle Arabic has been felt to be inadequate by some Arabists, a sentiment expressed by Den Heijer when he recommended "replac[ing] the obsolete chronological definition of 'Middle Arabic' with a typological one, applicable to written Arabic of a mixed variety, irrespective of time [...]"[2] as a point of discussion for future AIMA conferences.

In the third contribution, "Reflections on Middle Arabic" (pp. 32–52), Jérôme Lentin touches on the same problem of the lack of consensus on "the nature, status, role and importance of Middle Arabic" (p. 33). Lentin points out the misunderstanding among (especially) Arab scholars of the nature of Middle Arabic: it is often perceived as being 'weak' and containing 'language mistakes' or 'relaxed' *fuṣḥā* (the 'high' variety of Arabic). However, as Lentin explains, this view does not take into account the fact that in some circumstances a language which was too refined was felt to be inappropriate, and rather than displaying a lack of knowledge of Classical Arabic, Middle Arabic was sometimes a conscious style choice of the author. Also, rather than displaying random influences

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[1] The definition of Middle Arabic was one of the key points under discussion during the first conference of the *Association internationale pour l'étude du moyen arabe et des variétés mixtes de l'arabe* (AIMA). See also the proceedings of the first AIMA conference: Lentin, Jérôme and Grand'Henry, Jacques (eds.), *Moyen arabe et variétés mixtes de l'arabe à travers l'histoire. Actes du Premier Colloque International (Louvain-la-Neuve, 10–14 mai 2004)*. Louvain-la-Neuve: Institut Orientaliste de Louvain (2008) (*Publications de l'Institut Orientaliste de Louvain* 58), especially *Objectifs du colloque*, *Allocution d'ouverture*, and *Petit bilan d'un premier colloque*.

[2] Den Heijer, Johannes, "Introduction", in Zack, Liesbeth and Schippers, Arie (eds.), *Middle Arabic and Mixed Arabic: Diachrony and Synchrony*, Leiden: Brill (2012) (*Studies in Semitic Languages and Linguistics* 64), p. 8. See also the comment by David Wilmsen on this point in "Review: Historical Linguistics: Zack & Schippers (2012)", <http://linguistlist.org/issues/23/23-5132.html>, 9 December 2012 (retrieved 29 March 2013).

of the spoken dialects, Middle Arabic "was a well-established and standardised register" (p. 41). Lentin notes that Middle Arabic may well have "played the role of a cultural mediator for illiterates" (p. 47) in a culture where a perfect knowledge of Classical Arabic was confined to a small number of people. As such, it has brought forth a very rich tradition of popular literature, such as the *Thousand and One Nights*. In the last part of his paper, Lentin expands on the notion of Artistic Colloquial, a refined and sophisticated kind of colloquial currently used in e.g. theatre plays, television series, and colloquial novels. This variety causes another type of diglossia, where the two poles are not Classical Arabic and the dialects, but (local) colloquial and Artistic Colloquial. Lentin concludes that "[t]he importance of this phenomenon should not be underestimated since [...] this second diglossia has been, for a long period of time, for the great majority of the population, and especially the illiterates, the real Arabic diglossia, "la diglossie du people" ('the people's diglossia')" (p. 49).

In the next paper, "On language and religious identity: the case of Middle Arabic, with special reference to the Christian Arab communities in the medieval Middle East" (pp. 53–87), Johannes den Heijer defines his research questions as "how the Christian communities in the premodern Middle East used Middle Arabic in such a specific way that their written language can be typologically distinguished from that of Jews and Muslims" (p. 54). The paper discusses the main aspects of this question and presents some analysed text samples. Den Heijer notes that "[s]ince the use of a specific script as a confessional identity marker has always been much more limited among Christians than among Jews in the Arab world, this criterium is not generally used for the definition of 'Christian Arabic'" (p. 55). Den Heijer notes that the idea that Jews and Christians were less concerned about adhering to the strict rules of Classical Arabic, and therefore were more prone to produce Middle Arabic, has now been questioned by specialists, since numerous texts from Muslim environments have been found to contain Middle Arabic features as well.[3] In the second half of the paper, Den Heijer presents and analyses fragments from three different types of Christian Arabic texts: Ancient South Palestinian, Syrian monastic epigraphy, and a Copto-Arabic historiographical text. In his recommendations for further research on communal identity in Christian Middle Arabic, Den Heijer suggests that one

should not only look at the religious affiliation of the author, but to also take into consideration other social aspects such as profession.

The next contribution, "Arabe(s) et berbère en Mauritanie: Bilinguisme, diglossie et mixité linguistique" (pp. 88–108) by Catherine Taine-Cheikh, is an illustration of the dichotomy with which Lentin concluded his paper. Her article deals with the linguistic situation of Mauritania, where the majority of the population speaks the Arabic *Ḥassāniyya* dialect, introduced in the 14th century with the advent of the Banū Ḥassān, while there are also speakers of African languages such as Pulaar, Soninke, and Wolof, as well as speakers of Zenaga Berber. Education was always in Classical Arabic (Koran, hadith, grammar, etc.) for both Berber and Arabic speakers. The relation between Classical Arabic and *Ḥassāniyya* is one of diglossia. However, Ferguson's description,[4] where the 'high' variety is the prestigious variety, does not do credit to the situation, because in Mauritania *Ḥassāniyya* and dialectal poetry have high prestige: *Ḥassāniyya* is the language of the Arab conquerors, and it is considered close to the language of Islam. Taine-Cheikh is more in favour of the notion of 'diglossie' as introduced by William Marçais,[5] which focuses on the dichotomy of written versus oral, instead of Ferguson's division of formal versus informal. From the time Mauritania gained independence in 1960, the role of Classical Arabic started to more closely follow the model as described by Ferguson, as nationalists called for Classical Arabic to replace French as the official language. Since then, an 'arabe médian' has emerged, which mixes Standard Arabic and the dialectal varieties. Taine-Cheikh's conclusion is that in Mauritania, there is a distinct domain for *Ḥassāniyya* (the oral) and Classical Arabic (the written and 'aural'). This is less a hierarchical than a complementary relation, and *Ḥassāniyya* is considered as a 'bridge' rather than a 'ladder' towards Classical Arabic.

"Elements of diglossia in Biblical Hebrew and Modern Hebrew" (pp. 109–122) by Lutz Edzard starts with a comparison of paradigmatic variation and levelling of gender differentiation in Semitic, comparing verb paradigms in Akkadian, Biblical Hebrew, Modern Hebrew, Classical Arabic, and the Arabic dialects. In Biblical Hebrew, five different language levels can be distinguished. Edzard gives examples of morpho-phonological, morpho-syntactic, and lexical phenomena, such as the intervocalic weakening of the gutturals /'/ and /h/ and gender

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3 However, some scholars still adhere to this idea; it is, for instance, exactly the definition of Middle Arabic given by Lutz Edzard in the introduction of his paper (p. 109).

4 Ferguson, Charles A., "Diglossia," *Word* 15 (1959), 325–340.
5 Marçais, William, "La diglossie arabe", *L'Enseignement public – Revue pédagogique*, tome 104, fasc. 12 (1930), pp. 401–409.

neutralization, which indicate the existence of a 'low' variety of Biblical Hebrew. Also in Modern Hebrew there are differences between the Masora-based norms, educated Modern Hebrew, and the colloquial variants. Some notable examples are the weakening of the gutturals in Israeli Hebrew, and the disappearing of gender polarity in the counting system. On a lexical level, loanwords often prevail over words coined by the Hebrew Language Academy, and a good deal of Arabic lexical adstrate can be found in colloquial Hebrew. Edzard concludes that at the very least, one can speak of an emerging diglossia in Modern Hebrew due to the widening gap between colloquial pronunciation and the normative Masora-based morpho-phonemics, and the increasingly multicultural character of Israeli society.

In "Prestige registers vs. common speech in Ottoman Turkish" (pp. 123–132) Bernt Brendemoen sketches the language situation in Turkey from the 11th century, when Seldjuk Turks entered Anatolia. After the establishment of Istanbul as the capital of the Ottoman Empire in 1453, a literary language developed which became inundated with Arabic and Persian elements. This language was used in poetry and also for other purposes in court circles and high society, and was extremely difficult to master. Sources written by people outside the court circles, especially non-Turks, show a weaker impact of Arabic and Persian and are written in a more simple language, indicating that some kind of diglossic situation must have existed. From the mid-19th century, the Turks started to feel the problematic nature of the situation, because the common man was unable to understand written language. This eventually led to the alphabet and language reforms of Atatürk in 1927 and 1928, during which religious instruction, Arabic, and Persian were abolished as subjects from secondary schools and the language was rid of as many Arabic and Persian words and constructions as possible. Due to these reforms, diglossia no longer exists in modern Turkey, although of course there remain different registers, such as those used for religious purposes.

"Hindi bilingualism and related matters" (pp. 133–157) by Claus Peter Zoller tackles the complex language situation in India. Sanskrit was considered the language of the gods and was therefore naturally seen as the high variety. To this day, it is used in theatre performances, alongside other vernaculars and languages. Modern Standard Hindi is taught in schools in many parts of India as a first or second language, but there aren't many people who speak it with mother-tongue competence. During the Hindi-Urdu controversy (19th–20th centuries), Hindi, which is written with an Indian script, was over-loaded with Sanskrit words, and Urdu, which uses a Perso-Arabic script, with Perso-Arabic words. Therefore, for some people Hindi and Urdu are separate languages, while others consider Hindi and Urdu as two variants of a language they call Hindustani. There exist three varieties or registers in Hindi: Urduized Hindi, Anglicized Hindi, and Sanskritized Hindi. A complicating factor is the increasing influence of English on Hindi in the last decades. Also, English and Hindi fulfil different roles in society: "English as the language of the modern work world and higher education, Hindi as the language for the private domain and for issues related to Indian culture." (p. 147). Zoller gives examples of hybrid word formations (Hindi–Perso-Arabic and Hindi–English) and of Hindi-English code switching and -mixing. Zoller's recommendation for future research is to work with large text databases "in order to progress towards more and deeper insights into grammatical constraints" (p. 154).

In "Romance glosses in a Latin text: evidence of diglossia?" (pp. 158–168), Kristin F. Hagemann discusses the various interpretations of the language situation of Latin and Romance vernacular. The traditional point of view was that there existed a diglossic situation with Latin as the high variety and Romance as the low variety, which lasted until the Carolingian Renaissance. This theory was challenged by Roger Wright, who believes that Latin, although written in an archaic way, actually still represented the spoken vernacular. This theory, however, remains controversial, as scholars have pointed out differences between Latin and Romance that go beyond spelling. In her article, Hagemann re-evaluates the vernacular glosses in the *Códice Emilianense 60*, a 10th-century manuscript from Northern Spain. Hagemann proposes a classification of the glosses based not on linguistic criteria, but on the function they have vis-à-vis the base text. The glosses can be divided into two categories: those which provide a synonym for a word in the base text (synonymous glosses), and those that are additions to the base text (supplementary glosses). As expected, the supplementary glosses are all Latin, as they were meant to become part of a new version of the base text. However, no unambiguously non-Romance glosses are found in the synonymous glosses. Hagemann therefore concludes that the glossator made a conscious effort to use two different registers for the two types of glosses. This new interpretation causes some glosses that were earlier considered to be Latin to be characterized as Romance instead. The question then remains as to whether these two are varieties in a diglossic situation, or "evidence of a complex monolingual community where the Latin glosses and the Romance glosses in essence belong

to the same language variety" (p. 164). In Hagemann's opinion, there is no evidence of diglossia, but the divergence between the varieties is "merely proof of a certain gap between the antiquated written language, much of it having been copied unchanged since the 5th century, and the spoken language" (p. 167).

Jan Erik Rekdal's paper, "Macaronic texts in the early Irish tradition" (pp. 169–178), does not deal with 'high' and 'low' varieties of the same language, but rather with the mixing of two different languages, namely Latin and Irish. The 'macaronic' texts referred to in the title are not humorous poems, which is the more well-known usage of this term,[6] but rather religious texts such as sermons in which code-mixing of two languages occurs. The paper presents six bilingual texts, the oldest of which dates from the seventh/eighth century, the latest from the ninth/tenth century. The texts show a shift from Latin to Irish as the dominant language for religious works. Rekdal identifies three types of language mixing: quotations, in which the original text is quoted as the authoritative voice or witness (most frequently in Latin in the early periods, but later either Latin or Irish); mixing as a rhetorical, stylistic function; and switching caused by Irish (place)names.

In "Czech code mixing 1990–2010: From domain specialization toward graded registers" (pp. 179–196), Karen Gammelgaard describes the diglossic situation in the Czech Republic, which is characterized by the vernaculars – Moravian spoken in Moravia and Common Czech (CC) spoken in Bohemia – on the one hand, and Literary Czech (LC) on the other hand. Because the dialectal forms in Moravia are often identical to LC forms, the term diglossia is only used for Bohemia. This diglossic situation dates from the 19th century, when Czech linguists codified the modern Czech standard language based on written sources from the Middle Ages, thereby ignoring developments in the spoken language. The fall of communism in 1989 and the following societal changes had a great impact in the form of new domains such as advertising, digital communication, public political debates, and new types of popular entertainment in the electronic mass media. "In the new domains, typically, distinctions were blurred between formality and informality, and between spoken and written" (p. 183). In most spoken language situations, CC is the matrix variety; only in certain kinds of prepared public speech such as newscasts and addresses by politicians does LC dominate

as the matrix variety. The question of codification is dominated by two camps: the 'prescriptivists', who regard LC as the general matrix variety for all speakers of Czech, and the 'descriptivists', who regard CC as the general matrix variety. Also under question is the appropriateness of the term 'diglossia' for the Czech situation: Czech linguists prefer to characterize the situation as displaying merely "properties of diglossia".

The last article in this volume, "'High' and 'low' in Norwegian? Dialect and standard in spoken Norwegian – a historical account of competition and language status planning" (pp. 197–208) by Ernst Håkon Jahr, explains in great detail the processes that led to the present situation in Norway, with *Bokmål* and *Nynorsk* as the two official written standards, and the dialects, which are used extensively in Norwegian society, including in situations requiring a more standard form in most other language communities. The process leading to this situation started with independence from Denmark in 1814. Until that time, Danish was the written standard, as well as the high-status, spoken standard used among the upper-middle class. During the Norwegian language struggle (19th century), there were two opposing language-planning programmes: that of Ivar Aasen, who promoted *Nynorsk*, a new written standard based on contemporary rural, low-status dialects, and the one of Knud Knudsen, who favoured a gradual change of written Danish in the direction of the high-status Dano-Norwegian spoken variety of the upper-middle classes. The high prestige accorded to the dialects in Norway stems from a decision of Parliament in 1878, when

> [it] ruled that the pupils' local 'low' dialects should form the basis of oral instruction in the primary schools, and teachers should as far as possible utilise the dialect of the region. This decision is of fundamental importance for understanding the current extensive use of dialect in Norway. It laid the foundation for considering all local dialects to be 'correct' and 'nice', since they were deemed appropriate for use in schools. (p. 200)

In 1885, Parliament awarded *Nynorsk* the status of an official language, alongside Danish. The two 'battles in the schools', of 1911–12 and 1924, evolved around the question whether the dialects or the 'high' spoken Dano-Norwegian variety were to be used for oral instruction in the schools. Since 1924, "most people have accepted the ruling that pupils are entitled to use their own dialects in school, and that the teachers should not 'correct' them when they do so" (p. 204). The language reform of 1938 reduced the importance of the upper-middle-class 'high' spoken variety; instead of being seen as standard spoken Norwegian, it is nowadays seen as just one of the many spoken varieties of Norwegian.

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6 See for instance the entry for 'macaronic' in the *Encyclopaedia Britannica*, <http://www.britannica.com/EBchecked/topic/353660/macaronic> (retrieved 29 March 2013).

The theme connecting all of the contributions is the notion of 'high' versus 'low' language varieties and their interaction. Most of the authors take as their reference point the definition of diglossia as first described by Ferguson in his pioneering article. As Mejdell notes, it is common in most language communities to use several languages and/or varieties. For Arabic, the various aspects of diglossia have been discussed during the three conferences of the AIMA[7] and in several monographs.[8] However, what was missing until now was a comparative outlook in which researchers from different languages profit from each other's expertise, or, as Den Heijer expresses it,

> [...] it is obvious that no language-related problem can be studied fruitfully without a comparative framework that covers similar situations found in different geographical and cultural contexts. Whereas individual studies on modern sociolinguistic phenomena comparing Arabic to other languages are by no means lacking, Gunvor Mejdell's and Lutz Edzard's initiative to gather a small group of specialists in historical or philological as well as in modern sociolinguistic approaches to mixed varieties of several languages, can be considered truly innovative and exceptionally helpful. (p. 53–4)

It is therefore to be hoped that this will not be a one-off event, but will have a follow-up, in which perhaps also more comparative links will be made between the different languages. This hope is also expressed by Mejdell:

> a next step would be a systematic follow-up across languages and time, testing the theoretical hypotheses and applying analytical tools developed in mainstream code-switching and code-mixing research (some of which have been mentioned here) to these diverse sets of languages and varieties. (p. 22)

The book is well-prepared and edited, and the contributors, most of whom have impressive publication lists in their respective fields, have taken great pains to make sure that the papers are easy to understand for linguists who are not familiar with the languages under discussion. The text samples in the book are fully transliterated (in the case of a different script, e.g. Arabic, Hebrew, and Hindi) and translated. However, in some of the examples, it would have been useful to provide some additional information for those unfamiliar with the language. A case in point is p. 125 of Brendemoen's article, where the Turkish passages have been underlined, but it is unclear which passages these correspond to in the translation. A subject index would have been a welcome addition to facilitate the comparison of certain features in the different languages presented. This book is a must-have for both researchers studying aspects of linguistic variation within the languages presented here, as well as for general linguists interested in aspects of diglossia, code-switching and -mixing, and multilingualism.

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Die Semitistik entstand bekanntlich als eine Hilfswissenschaft der alttestamentlichen Theologie. Um die hebräische Bibel besser verstehen zu können, weitete man den Blick und beschäftigte sich mit Texte aus der Umwelt des Alten Testaments. Die zahlreichen neu entdeckten Schriftzeugnisse in Phönizisch, Moabitisch, Aramäisch, Akkadisch und anderen Sprachen waren anfangs nur teilweise verständlich. Schnell setzte sich jedoch die Erkenntnis durch, dass die verschiedenen verwandten Sprachen sich gegenseitig erklärten. Die schiere Menge des zu überblickenden Materials führte zur Etablierung der Semitistik als eigenständige akademische Disziplin, die sich mithilfe philologischer und sprachwissenschaftlicher Methoden mit den Texten in unterschiedlichen semitischen Sprachen auseinandersetzt und im Laufe der Zeit noch weiter in verschiedene Teildisziplinen aufspaltete, darunter die Aramaistik. Das ursprüngliche Erbe blieb lange Zeit auch für diese Teildisziplinen bestimmend: Aramaisten konzentrierten sich vornehmlich auf die Erforschung der „klassischen" Sprachstufen des Syrischen, Biblisch-Aramäischen, Jüdisch-Babylonischen und anderer alter Dialekte mit Bezug zu kanonischen re-

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[7] Louvain-la-Neuve 2004, see Lentin-Grand'Henry (2008); Amsterdam 2007, see Zack-Schippers (2012); and Florence 2010, proceedings in preparation.
[8] E.g. Mejdell, Gunvor, *Mixed Styles in Spoken Arabic in Egypt: Somewhere between Order and Chaos*, Leiden: Brill (2006); Bassiouney, Reem, *Functions of Code Switching in Egypt: Evidence from Monologues*, Leiden: Brill (2006); Bassiouney, Reem, *Arabic Sociolinguistics: Topics in Diglossia, Gender, Identity, and Politics*, Washington DC: Georgetown University Press (2009).