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- 1 This presentation of 37 glossed, translated and annotated texts is based on field recordings made by van Breugel from 2004 to 2007, while he was a PhD student at LaTrobe University. They are presented here in a distinct volume which completes the trio made up of the previously published dictionary (2009, rev. 2015) and grammar (2014) of the endangered language Atong, which van Breugel is the first linguist to document. Atong is a Tibeto-Burman language of Northeast India and Bangladesh, classified by Burling as belonging to the Bodo-Garo branch. It has 4,600 speakers in India, although there is no official count available for either Bangladesh or India, given that Atong is not considered an official language in either country. The variety described here is spoken in Meghalaya (Northeast India).
- 2 The 582-page book is structured in three main parts: **preliminary material**, made up of an introduction, followed by short chapters on the methodology behind text

collection, Atong orthography, the presentation of the texts, and glossing. These introductory chapters are followed by the main content of the book, namely the glossed, translated and annotated **texts**, each of which is accompanied by metadata, including, for most texts, a photo of the teller and considerable analytical material. The analysis that serves as an introduction to each text contains consistent categories: type of text, setting, point of view, cultural background information, themes, characters, plot, and occasionally even a moral. Tables 1 and 2 present a summary of the metadata for the texts and their speakers (with approximate ages, as these were often not known by the speakers themselves). The section presenting the texts is followed by an appendix of 40-odd photos, with descriptive captions, providing additional contextualization on the language, its speakers and their physical environment. The book is accompanied by a number of **indices**, some of which can be considered part of the analytical apparatus provided by the volume. They include: a linguistic index enabling the reader to look up a number of linguistic notions and formatives, either by gloss, linguistic term, or transcribed formative. As a result, this index functions somewhat like the table of contents for a sketch grammar, listing the linguistic concepts that are found in the Atong materials. Readers are referred to the author's 2014 grammar for definitions and additional explanations; a literary index, which lists topics related to the narrative content of the texts, such as character traits, ways of dying, situations that narrators find themselves in. This is based on the analyses that introduce each of the texts, and the index is certain to be a useful tool for comparative ethnographic research. Other indices are the list of authors, a list of Atong lexical items, and a list of English words found in the texts. It is somewhat unfortunate that the Atong and English indices were not combined, as they may have served as a glossary, useful for readers not in possession of van Breugel's 2009 dictionary.

- 3 While the recordings associated with the texts are not available through an oral archive, as is nowadays standard practice, enabling others to compare the sound files with the transcriptions, van Breugel states that he plans to deposit them in either ELAR or PARADISEC, two well-known oral archives for linguistic materials, at a later date. One of the appealing features of this volume, in addition to the rich narrative materials presented, is the insight that the preliminary materials allow us into the author's process of collecting and curating narrative materials on an endangered and previously unwritten language. We learn, for example, specifics of the data collection methodology practiced in the early 2000's at the Research Centre for Linguistic Typology, led by R.W.M. Dixon and A.Y. Aikhenvald and based at Latrobe University at the time, down to the models of recorder and microphone that were used.
- 4 The author raises a number of questions of significant methodological interest in the annotation (in the wider sense of providing an oral text with a transcription, gloss and translation) of material: Van Breugel helpfully provides his definition of annotation ("any further observations [in addition to glosses and translations] are made in footnotes, also called annotations", p. 20), especially as the term 'annotation' is sometimes used in documentary linguistics to refer to the process of providing glosses and translations for material (see eg. *The Handbook of Linguistic Annotation*, Ide, Nancy, Pustejovsky, James, eds, 2017), rather than notes on the data. Van Breugel devotes a (short) chapter to changes to glosses from his 2014 grammar to the present volume, reflecting the author's growing understanding of Atong. This is a useful and somewhat rare glimpse into the realities of curating narrative materials on endangered languages, ungoverned by any standardized orthography, and of adapting one's annotation as

one's analysis evolves. Additionally, the author details some modifications made to standard annotation practices in order to indicate additional features of the material: among them, an extra tier to signal the language, when code switching occurs, and a tier to provide a lexical gloss for a compound, when its component formatives do not have transparent semantics.

- 5 On the question of the free translations that accompany the texts, van Breugel provides an explicit example (p. 21) of a sentence of transcribed and glossed data which can be translated in three different ways. He explains how the narrative context ultimately leads him to one of the options (he does not mention that it would also have been possible, and perhaps even tempting, to provide a translation more literal in nature in order to attempt to convey the morphosyntax of the sentence in question, especially as the texts are published separately from the grammar), revealing just how complex the task of annotating oral material can be. As with comments about transcribing and glossing, this allows us insight into the process of handling materials such as these, and shows interesting self-awareness about the importance of decisions that have potential implications for linguistic analysis and use of the material by other scholars, given the unique nature of the data.
- 6 One feature of the interlinearization which stands out is the unusual spacing of the material in the transcription and glossing tiers: every formative (not only clitics but also suffixes) is written as a distinct entity. An illustrative example is provided below, from Text 6, Sentence 8.

<i>Ha!</i>	<i>Ra·</i>	<i>-ang</i>	<i>-syrang</i>	<i>ma</i>	<i>-syrang"</i>	<i>no</i>	<i>=ai</i>
take.this	get	-AWAY	-COMPLETELY	lose	-COMPLETELY	say	=ADV
				take.it.all			
<i>=myng,</i>	<i>te·e</i>	<i>=do</i>	<i>jahas</i>	<i>=taw</i>	<i>chaw</i>	<i>-pat</i>	<i>-ang</i>
=SEQ	now	=TOP	ship	=ACC	go.by.boat	-CROSS	-AWAY
							=COS
							=no.
							=QUOT

- 7 While this arrangement simplifies the alignment of material across transcription and glossing tiers, it can also result in a sense of confusion about word boundaries, as these are usually signaled by spaces (note that the book contains a section discussing the phonological word, section 3.5, and explicit descriptions of the boundary symbols for compounds, clitics, affixes and reduplicated elements, which resolve the potential confusion). The adopted presentation style does not follow the widely adopted Leipzig Glossing Rules, which advocate left alignment at the word level of material across the transcription and glossing tiers. The takeaway is that even with a set tools that are relatively standardized for the annotation of materials, the application of such tools remains riddled with challenges at the level of the individual practitioner and language.
- 8 An additional feature that comes through strongly in the introductory material accompanying this collection of texts is the importance of the speaker community and van Breugel's commitment to respecting to their wishes. After a first publication of texts as recorded in the field (in 2009), speakers pointed out a number of mistakes and requested that the texts be edited. The volume presents the result of this editing process, carried out with the help of speakers, who were also involved in transcription

of the texts into notebooks (p. 8). What van Breugel does not say is that editing the texts in this way, to respect the speaker community's (necessarily somewhat prescriptive) linguistic ideals and thus distancing them from the sound recordings that were made, is not standard practice in documentary linguistics: revision of the material from its original, spontaneous form renders the material less valuable for the purposes of linguistic analysis. It is possible that the distance between the edited texts and the recordings is one of the reasons behind their not yet having been deposited in an oral archive, as of the publication of the volume.

- 9 In sum, *Atong* texts is a very rich volume of texts from a minority language, presented with analyses and indices allowing greater accountability and readability than usually found in a paper edition of texts. The volume presents an example of good practices for consistent annotation along with some innovative traits, such as the additional tiers for non-transparent lexicalized compounds and for contact language information, and the decision to align transcription and glossing by formative rather than by word. The inclusion of photos of the speakers of the texts adds a human dimension to the project and evokes the author's sensitivity to the fact that collecting and editing stories is a collective enterprise.

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