

REVIEWS

A grammar of Awtuw. By Harry Feldman. Pacific Linguistics B-94. Canberra: Australian National University, 1986. v + 225pp. AUS\$30.60.

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This grammar is another welcome addition to the slowly growing collection of descriptions of the languages of Papua New Guinea. Awtuw is the language of approximately 400 people living in the southern foothills of the Torricelli Ranges in the West Sepik Province. It is classified as a member of the Ram Family of the Sepik-Ramu Phylum.

Feldman's aim is "to present a comprehensive, even if not exhaustive, description of the morphology, syntax, and morphosyntax of Awtuw" (p.1) identifying "the formal classes, categories, and structures of a language on empirical, language-internal evidence" (p.2). Being a basically descriptive work, it is free of the assumptions and formalisms of any particular theoretical framework, though the author does at times make use of generative formalisms as "a handy and familiar convention for schema-

tising certain types of generalisations" (p.2). Within the limits of the aim set forth, Feldman has done the linguistic world and the people of Papua New Guinea a valuable service in presenting his data and analysis.

One of the distinctive characteristics of the presentation is the use of binary features and relative markedness to categorise and describe parts of speech, the tense-aspect-modality system, verb classes, verbless predications, and kinship terminology.

There are twelve chapters, of which the first and last two go beyond the limits of the primary aim to provide other useful information. The first covers the usual necessary background information concerning the scope of the work, and a brief description of the history, culture and sociolinguistic situation of the Awtuw. The second provides an overview of the phonology and some of the major morphophonological rules which apply to the verb forms. The rules use traditional generative formalisms, again for descriptive convenience; many of them are specific to particular verb affixes. Unfortunately, the rules do not always agree with the prose descriptions so it is necessary to consider both carefully. For example, the *s*-deletion rule (2.2.8) and the exemplification show the rule optionally applying word-finally but that environment is omitted in the prose description. Conversely, the first part of the vowel harmony 3 rule (2.2.10) shows [-syl, +rnd] (= /w/) as the last segment in the preceding environment, but the prose statement and exemplification allow for either /w/ or

/m/ in that position. Chapter 11 describes some of the lexical fields: kinship terminology in most detail but also colour, counting, time, body parts and biological taxonomy. The final chapter gives a brief overview of the paralinguage (greetings, gestures, grunts, etc.) used by the Awtuw.

Chapters three through eight provide the grammar as specified in its aims. The third chapter, lexical morphosyntax, covers the classification of parts of speech, the formal properties of nouns and pronouns, compounding, and derivation. The classification is made on the basis of distribution of the lexeme within the sentence and its potential to accept certain affixation. There are however some confusing contradictions within this chapter, especially regarding the dual and generic suffixes. The ability of nouns to occur with the generic suffix is used to separate them from quantifiers, which don't accept it; examples *Takiy-GEN* 'people named Takiy' and *father-GEN* 'fathers', among others, are given (p.29). Later however (p.40), it is stated that "The generic suffix occurs only on nouns whose referents are not human and on adjectives;" examples parallel to those above are marked as ungrammatical. Regarding the dual suffix, its potential to occur is the criterion used for separating kinterms (which accept it) from other common nouns, including *ɬik* 'woman' (which do not accept it). Again on page 40 however, it is described as "occurring on nouns, proper and common, whose referents are human" (emphasis added). Are Awtuw women not human?

The verbal morphology of Awtuw is one of its most intriguing aspects, and it is well described in chapter four. Feldman proposes eight prefix slots and six suffix slots, though co-occurrence restrictions exist such that the longest example he supplies has

only(!) ten morphemes. The greatest complexity is in the tense-aspect-modality system which he analyses in detail using binary features. The first order suffix is for 'compound' morphemes, of which there are at least 30 with functions ranging from grammatical (benefactive) through lexical (consecutive action).

In chapter five, grammatical relations and verb classes, Feldman first defines subject, direct object, and indirect object on the basis of formal criteria. Since word order is fairly free and person/number agreement on the verb minimal, the main criteria is the occurrence potential of the object marker: obligatorily absent for subject, obligatorily present for indirect object, and optionally present for direct object. Certain syntactic features also serve to define the subject. He then describes twelve verb classes on the basis of the number and nature of core NPs that occur with them and their potential for derivation.

Chapter six elaborates on the use of the object case marker, as well as the other four case markers that exist in Awtuw (instrumental/comitative, possessive, locative/direction, and vocative).

The structure of the noun phrase is presented in chapter seven, using generative-type expansion rules as "a convenient schematic representation of the basic structure" (p.116). The argumentation in this chapter is neither as clear nor as convincing as it has been up to this point. Part of the confusion is caused by such inconsistencies as using the term 'common noun' to refer to one of the lowest subclasses of nouns, whereas in chapter three that term was used for the higher-level subclass that included kinterms and 'other nouns.'

Chapter eight presents the analysis of verbless predications which is followed in chapter nine by a

discussion of special clause types: questions, negation, reflexives and focussing. It is a little disconcerting in these chapters to find some references to intonation but no elaboration; in some sections (e.g. alternative questions) no statement is made at all. 'Focussing' is used in a very wide sense to include the use of stress, the postpositional particle *pa*, and any of several structural deviations from the normal sentence structure. No attempt is made to specify how these focus-strategies differ in function, even between order variants such as right and left dislocation, and topicalisation to right or left.

Chapter ten provides a relatively extensive description of interpredicate and interclausal relations covering verb-root compounds, serialisation, relative clauses, complement constructions and the various forms of subordination and coordination. Several examples given in the serialisation section seem to contradict the earlier statement that "Verbs that have Past tense marking or are unmarked for tense must take a Factive stem" (p.58) but no mention is made of this inconsistency.

Overall, the analysis is quite thorough and clearly presented. In addition to the few inconsistencies mentioned above, however, there are a number of errors that should have been caught in the copy-editing process. These include omissions from the abbreviations list, changes in abbreviations used, inaccurate cross-references, and (on at least one occasion each) morpheme glosses appearing in the Awtuw line of an example and +/- signs being reversed in Tables.

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A Grammar of Boumaa Fijian. By R.M.W. Dixon. Chicago: University of Chicago Press, 1988. xix + 375 pp. US\$30.95.

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Although Fijian is one of the best described of the numerous Austronesian Oceanic languages, Dixon's *Grammar* has much to offer. The *Grammar* is the result of a masterful combination of six-months' fieldwork, a careful evaluation of previous literature, and consultation with leading authorities on Fijian, such as Paul Geraghty and Father David Arms. The fieldwork focussed primarily on text collection and glossing (three texts of which are reproduced from pages 305-352 with interlinear annotations), and on an examination of 460 verbs in their extended morphosyntactic networks. His several informants were "all monolingual in Fijian," although Dixon acknowledges being heavily dependent on his assistant, Josefa Cookanacagi, for acting as a sounding board for sorting out and understanding the data he was collecting, as well as for evaluating grammaticality and for supplying further examples. Dixon