

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 *po*, 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

“consulted everything previously produced on Fijian grammar,” and acknowledges his debts in critical discussion throughout the work. The *Grammar* should thus not be compared to a grammar of a previously undescribed language that is based solely on six-months’ fieldwork. Add to these Dixon’s own experience in writing grammars (1972, 1977), and his well-deserved reputation for insightful thinking and lucid writing (1979, 1982), and we are pleased to find we are not disappointed with this new work. It is a grammar of major significance, not only for the specialist in Austronesian languages, but also for the general linguist, at whom the work is aimed.

Boumaa is a dialect of the Eastern Fijian language spoken in eastern Taveuni. The *Grammar* is, in the words of Paul Geraghty, “the first extensive grammar of any non-standard Fijian language.” Boumaa speakers are bilingual to various degrees in Standard Fijian, with which Boumaa shares numerous inherent similarities.

The *Grammar* is both a model and a resource for others who are writing grammars, partly because of its innovative organisation. Instead of moving up or down a traditional hierarchy, Dixon’s *Grammar* moves in and out, much like a zoom lens

on a camera looking at things through wide angle to gain perspective, and then zooming in to look at detail. There are twenty-five chapters, with some sections broadly orienting the reader before plunging into detailed discussion of various topics. The work is data-packed, with numbered examples, additional unnumbered examples scattered throughout the prose, and the texts in the back. The *Grammar* is well cross-referenced in the text itself and this is supplemented by a fairly detailed table of contents, an index, and a glossary of the Fijian terms used in examples. Dixon’s uses of linguistic terms are, for the most part, carefully explained and illustrated. Typological issues are addressed throughout. A major contribution of this *Grammar* to Fijian (and indirectly to related languages) is in the discussion of the syntax of clause-level relations.

The reader is oriented initially to Boumaa culture, to the organisation and background of the study, and given a brief but to-the-point sketch of the language. The reader is referred to another work for “the language of ceremonies and presentations,” but unfortunately an uninitiated reader is left without even a minimal orientation to the language of ritual (who uses it when; how it is linguistically similar or different to the common register) to which references are made throughout the book (e.g. honorific uses of pronouns and titles). Ritual language also figures in some of the texts.

The description of the stress rule in the phonology is quite involved, requiring appealing the the notions of 'mora' and diphthong, yielding a very traditional (Western) notion of a Fijian syllable. Primary stress is said to fall on the penultimate mora of the phonological word, with short vowels being one mora, long vowels and diphthongs being two mora each. Surely it would be more economical to dispense with received tradition here (diphthongs were "recognised" by Hazlewood (1850)), throwing out the notions of both mora and diphthong. In return one could say that (emic to Fijian) each vowel is a syllable nucleus, that phonetically long vowels are phonemically sequences of two like vowels, and that diphthongs (or what have been called such) are emically sequences of two unlike vowels. Stress would then fall on the penultimate syllable of the phonological word. The data in the *Grammar* do not contradict this latter characterisation, with a few minor exceptions that also contradict the former.

The chapter on the "Word" is memorable both for its clarity of presentation and for its implications for studies of other languages (both Austronesian and others). Dixon points out there is often a discrepancy in Fijian between the notion of a phonological word and the notion of a grammatical word. Unless the mismatch is recognised, many other things (such as word breaks) cannot be properly sorted out. He spells out general principles for distinguishing between the two as well as giving criteria specific to Fijian. Such discrepancies are a major problem area in many other Austronesian languages, and most existing grammars neither recognise nor address this issue. If they did, it would account for many anomalies in their analyses. Other languages (such as English) also have mismatches between the different notions of 'word.'

Dixon observes that many verb roots in Fijian can be used either intransitively (just the root), or transitively (root plus a transitive suffix - of which there are several). Of those verbs that can be used both with and without a transitive suffix, much is made in the *Grammar* of whether they are A-type (intransitive subject [S] corresponds to transitive subject [A]), or O-type (intransitive subject [S] corresponds to transitive object [O]). However, "some verbs cannot be classified as A or O" (p. 187), and little is said of these.

In the world of splitters or joiners, it appears Dixon tends to make (etic) distinctions where it is not clear the language itself warrants the split. For example, "there appear to be two verbs *bak(-ta)*.. Some native speakers do identify these as two senses of a single verb...we prefer here to think in terms of two homonymous lexemes" (p. 162). Similarly, *dau*₁ "occurs with the meaning 'habitually, often', before a predicate head," while *dau*₂ "occurs with a verbal root and derives a noun with the meaning 'expert at'" (p. 195). "*Rawa* 'can' is a verb very close in meaning to the post-head predicate modifier *rawa* 'be able to'... There is, however, a degree of substitutability between them" (p. 282). Such splitting is not only lexical, but also grammatical. On pp. 224-245, for example, different subordinate clauses introduced by *ni* are presented with no formal difference other than the gloss, and admitting of ambiguity. One thus wonders if Dixon occasionally fell into the understandable trap of making his analysis on the basis of the gloss rather than the data, failing to remember that having the same form, with similar meaning, similar function, but different distribution does not require that two items be emically different.

A minor but persistent annoyance is Dixon's

preference for glossing certain items with a general form class, rather than with a gloss tagging its specific function. This pattern, combined with the tendency of questionable splitting noted above becomes particularly noticeable when going through the texts. One quickly notices (e.g. Text 6, pp. 331ff.) forms such as *sar qei*, *sar qei*, *sar mani*, *sa mani* all glossed identically as 'ASP THEN'. Tracing back to page 70 one finds that many earlier grammars "did not distinguish between" *sar* and *sa* but that Dixon follows Arms (1978) in claiming "*sa* contrasts this moment with a later one." Their use in discourse (i.e. Dixon's texts) does not clearly bear out such a distinction, with both *sar qei* and *sar qei* introducing event line clauses such as 'Then X went/came/left...' which develop the story, both following from previous events and setting the stage for following events.

Dixon acknowledges the organisation of Boumaa discourse is not explored in his *Grammar* (although many discourse-related issues are touched on), and recognised that there is much yet to be learned.

The criticisms noted above should be considered minor. The book is rich with semantic and functional insights (consistent with Dixon's 'priority of semantics' approach in his other works), with verbal subcategorisation discussed both in terms of their semantics and their shared morphosyntactic behaviour (pp. 204ff.). Clause juncture, subordination (with good discussions of complement clauses and relative clauses), pivots, fronting of different constituents, functions of semi-auxiliary verbs, and object incorporation are all discussed clearly, with introductions to the general concepts for those readers unfamiliar with Dixon's brand of (mainstream) terminology.

Of the several grammars of Austronesian languages written in the last twenty years that have been read by this reviewer, Dixon's *Grammar* is at once the most comprehensive, the most clearly written, and full of insights that are in turn the most helpful for writing the grammar of another language.

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