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NAMAKIR

A DESCRIPTION OF A CENTRAL VANUATU LANGUAGE

AUCKLAND UNIVERSITY

by

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A thesis
submitted in partial fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
Doctor of Philosophy in Linguistics
at the University of Auckland

1991

NOTE

THIS VOLUME SHOULD BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH

REVISION SUPPLEMENT TO
NAMAKIR
A DESCRIPTION OF A CENTRAL VANUATU LANGUAGE

This separate volume contains revisions relating to the following chapters:

2.2.1.2. Labialisation
2.2.1.3. Stops, glottal stops
3.7. Consonant alternation
Chapter 4: Major Form Classes
Addendum to Chapter 5: Syntax

as well as a list of errata, addendum to bibliography and general comments.

ABSTRACT

This is a description of the phonology, morphology and syntax of Namakir, a language of the Oceanic subgroup of Austronesian, which is spoken on some six small islands of the Shepherd Islands, central Vanuatu.

My perspective on Namakir is that of a person trained in linguistics, who carried out linguistic fieldwork for the purpose of grammatical description. In addition I contributed to ethnographic work as well as compiling data for a dictionary, part of which is appended to the present description.

Namakir is a conservative language which retains many features that make Oceanic languages unique. Thus it is a valuable witness for comparative and reconstructive work in Oceanic linguistics.

The physical, social and historical setting of Namakir is detailed in the introductory chapter. A section on theoretical issues concerning the descriptive enterprise is included.

The chapter on phonology outlines the Namakir consonant and vowel inventories, with due emphasis on the glottal stop which, as a reflex of the Proto-Oceanic glottal stop, is a unique occurence in Vanuatu languages. Sections on phonotactics, stress and phonological processes add to the basic description of segments.

In the chapter on morphophonemics the dynamics of derivational processes are explored. A major section deals with consonant alternation, a phenomenon widely discussed in Oceanic Linguistics.

The major form classes are detailed in the next chapter. Nominals, determiners, adjectives, verbs and adverbs are established as word categories and paradigm tables are provided for comprehensive overviews.

The last chapter on Namakir syntax provides a systematic description of noun phrase and verb phrase. Possessive constructions receive special attention as they exhibit a number of unusual features. The verb phrase is discussed within the framework of the Oceanic definition of verb and periphery which include subject markers as well as pronominal objects. The Namakir mood and aspectual system is presented in detail. A major section deals with serial verb constructions in relation to current

descriptive theories. The concluding sections discuss selected items regarding complex sentence structures. Negation and question sentences, existential and comparative sentence types are included. Coordination together with direct and indirect speech is noted to use forms of a quotative verb, being especially significant in the organisation of narrative sequences. Relative and temporal clauses share a single overt marker.

A morpheme-to-morpheme glossed narrative is appended to demonstrate narrative style. A substantial Namakir-English-Bislama wordlist is added as a repository of data collected during fieldwork.

ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

There are many who contributed to this work in one way or the other. Special thanks go to my brother Dr Helmut Sperlich and his family who provided financial assistance without which my family and I could not have undertaken a year's fieldwork in Vanuatu.

A grant from the University of Auckland Grants Committee is hereby acknowledged. My doctoral supervisor Dr Ross Clark helped to cover a shortfall when the research fees increased dramatically.

On our arrival in Port-Vila we were welcomed by 'Rusty' Russell and his wife Ursula who put us up for the first week or so and provided every assistance during our whole stay in Vanuatu. Kirk Huffman and Willy Roy of the Vanuatu Cultural Center were instrumental in getting us to the Shepherd Islands. Chief Willy Timakura on Emae was our first gracious host. Song Marotia of Tongamea village provided his house for most of our time on Emae. He and his family looked after us very well. Harry Amos provided the first linguistic data for my present study. Chairman of the Shepherd Islands Council of Chiefs, Chief Edson Masoerip gave us every encouragement both on Emae and Makira island. In particular the Emae people of Tongamea, Sangava, Nofu and Makatea made our stay a most memeorable one and our gratitude to them is hereby acknowledged. On Makira we were under the care of Chief Joseph Tipoloamuri. Billy Mataravak was in charge of coordinating the linguistic work and to him I owe large parts of the present description of the Namakir language. There were many more people, both on Emae, Makira and Efate who contributed to both linguistic detail and cultural context. Others are further acknowledged by name in Sperlich (1986) as well later on in this work. Lack of space prohibits the long list of names to be continued here. To all of them we express our heart-felt thanks.

On our return to Port-Vila we received further encouragement from Terry Crowley and Jeff Siegel from the Pacific Languages Unit as well as from staff of OSTROM. George Pakoa and Apia Taripoawia, both noted amateur linguists, were pleased to see their Namakir language as the subject my linguistic research.

Back in Auckland, New Zealand I received every possible encouragement from my doctoral supervisor Dr Ross Clark. His vast analytical expertise accounts for any flashes of descriptive insight in my present work. My former linguistics teachers Dr Frank Lichtenberk and Professor Andrew

Pawley kept a professional and pastoral eye on my (sometimes slow) progress. They are not to blame for any of my shortcomings. My colleague and friend Mathew Fitzsimons was kind enough to read and comment on various drafts. Valuable discussions on matters linguistic with Jonathon Lane and Atsuko Kikuchi improved my perceptions. John Bowden who combines professional proof-reading and linguistics corrected the final draft, thereby raising standards considerably. Any remaining errors and awkward turns of the phrase are my responsibilty entirely.

Finally the many other friends and comrades - we know who you are - who dropped in over the years to inquire about my thesis and how much longer it would take, they provided many a good reason for not giving up even when full-time employment as a college teacher and family commitments made the going tough.

The ultimate dedications go to my wife and partner Susan and to our children Samantha and d'Arcy. They had to put up with endless hours of an inattentive, word-processing husband and father. Now they look at the outcome with a mixture of pride and relief. *Abohalam,* as they would say in Namakir.

ABBREVIATIONS

A/ASP	aspect
ADJ/Adj.	adjective
ADV/Adv.	adverb
AN	Austronesian
AP	predicative adjectival phrase
ART	article
C	consonant
COMP	complementiser
COMPL	completive
COND	conditional
CONJ	conjunction
COP	copula
CV	Central Vanuatu
DEM	demonstrative
dl	dual
DO	pronominal direct object
DUR	durative
EXCL	exclamation
excl.	exclusive
FUT	future
IMP	imperative
incl.	inclusive
INT	intentional future
INTENS	intensifier
IRR/IRREAL	irrealis
LIM	limiter
lit.	literal translation
LOC	locative
M	mood
N	noun
NEG	negation
NMK	Namakir
NON-F	non-future
NOM	nominaliser
NP	noun phrase
NUM	numeral
OBJ	object

OSV	object-subject-verb
OV	object-verb
ORD	ordinal
PCP	Proto Central Pacific
PCV	Proto Central Vanuatu
pl	plural
PNCV	Proto North Central Vanuatu
PNP	possessor noun phrase
POC	Proto Oceanic
POSS	possessive
POSSED	possessed
POSSOR	possessor
PP	prepositional phrase
PREP	preposition
PRO	pronoun
PROG	progressive
PRO-INDEF	indefinite pronoun
PRO-Q	interrogative pronoun
PROPOSS	possessive pronoun
Q	question marker
REAL	realis
RECIP	reciprocal
REdup	partial reduplication
REDUP	reduplication
REFLEX	reflexive
REL	relative
REP	repetitive
S	sentence
s	singular
SEQ	sequencer
SUB	secondary subject marker
SU	subject marker
SV	subject-verb
SVO	subject-verb-object
T	tense
TMA	tense, mood, aspect
TRANS	transitive marker
V	vowel
V	verb
VN	verb nucleus

VO	verb-object
VSO	verb-subject-object
VP	verb phrase
1, 2, 3	first, second, third person
≠	rewrite as
+ or -	morpheme boundary
$	syllable boundary
`	stress
/ -	in the environment of
#	word boundary
/ ... /	item(s) between slashes are under discussion
____	all Namakir data is underlined

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