

THIEBERGER, NICHOLAS. 2006. *A Grammar of South Efate: An Oceanic Language of Vanuatu*. Oceanic Linguistics Special Publication No. 33. Honolulu: University of Hawai'i Press. xxviii + 384 pp.: ill., maps ; 23 cm. + 1 DVD-ROM. ISBN: 13 978-0-8248-3061-8. US\$39.00, Paper.

Reviewed by ROBERT EARLY, *University of the South Pacific*

Nick Thieberger (T.) was a doctoral student in linguistics at the University of Melbourne and undertook periods of fieldwork on the South Efate (SE) language in Vanuatu over the years 1995–2000. SE is mainly spoken in Erakor, Eratap, and Pango villages, all close to the capital, Port Vila, and despite being used for mission purposes from around 1875 onwards, there is no previous or recent modern linguistic study of the language. T. and his family lived in a picturesque location on the shores of the Erakor lagoon, and the Erakor dialect, the subject of T.'s PhD dissertation, is now described in this Oceanic Linguistics Special Publication. Around 1400 of the 6000 speakers of the language are from Erakor (17). [Note in the following that page numbers are given as numbers only, and sequences like “22:123” mean “example number 22 on page 123.” Glosses below simplify some complex morphological categories and “TAM” covers a range of tense-aspect-mood markings. The equals sign “=” identifies a clitic, instead of a regular morpheme break “-”.]

SE is of particular interest as the southernmost language of the central part of Vanuatu, and of the generally accepted Northern and Central Vanuatu subgroup. However, Lynch (2000) has observed, and T. discusses further, some interesting features that link SE to the Southern Vanuatu languages and suggest a period of common history after SE separated from the other languages in the north. This substantial new description of SE should provide more information for further comparative work.

The grammar also represents further progress in the huge task of documenting Vanuatu's linguistic diversity. The peri-urban SE communities are the locus of significant urban drift and intermarriage with speakers of other vernaculars, and everyone speaks Vanuatu's national language, Bislama. Levels of education and use of English and French are also greater. Nevertheless, T. reports that SE shows remarkable vitality and there is “every reason to expect that South Efate will be spoken for the next generation at least and beyond that into the future” (44). However, as elsewhere, more active language maintenance and development efforts may be required, and some vernacular publications prepared in the course of T.'s studies should encourage SE literacy and language loyalty.

This grammar fits the mold of recent studies of Vanuatu languages, e.g., Hyslop 2001 for Lolovoli (Ambae), where the fieldwork focus is on building a corpus of natural language data and texts, and the analytical aim is to transparently present the features of the language following well-established structuralist conventions and descriptivist practice, without adopting the framework of any particular more recent syntactic theory. This approach results in a data-rich exposition of the phonology and morphosyntax of SE, described in a well-organized presentation. The grammar contains 330 pages of text, with 36 pages containing eight interlinearized texts, 13 pages of references, and 4 pages of index. Maps and photos enhance the book, and a novel feature is that all native speakers whose voices and stories were recorded are given copyright over their oral productions.

This grammar will always be noted for one distinctive advance over its predecessors, in that as with the PhD dissertation that preceded it, and in keeping with T.'s interests and expertise in digital presentation and preservation of language data, the traditional print grammar is accompanied by a DVD containing digitized audio and visual materials that can be readily accessed with any web browser. Producing this was genuinely innovative work, requiring the development of cutting-edge technical and computational mechanisms. T. is applauded for not only modeling this new paradigm in linguistic description and language documentation, but also for his subsequent ongoing efforts to refine the technical tools involved and to encourage more widespread adoption of digital documentation in language recording, description, and archiving. This grammar + DVD combo will make it difficult for future Oceanicists to step back from the challenge of producing "a well-described broad range of language usage data that is securely archived," and of achieving a better balance between "description" and "documentation" (6). Being done here for the first time, it was legitimate, for example, to discuss the problems associated with obtaining contextualized time-aligned transcripts of data at suitable sampling rates, but one hopes that the technical challenges are now overcome and such discussions need not be a part of any further published grammars of Vanuatu languages.

Making raw data available introduces a new level of accountability into linguistic description, and the linguist who is brave enough to do so risks intense scrutiny and challenge to their findings and conclusions. In SE, "stops are unreleased word finally" (47), but what is that word-final aspiration that is clearly heard in several words in 3:47-48 and 26:55, even where stops are marked as unreleased ([t̚] etc.)? Perhaps it's an artifact of the speaker being asked to produce citation forms, but it doesn't square with the statement in the text. Noninstrumental perceptions of stress can vary: where T. heard *met.ma.tur* (65), I heard *met.ma.'tur*, and where he heard *'nrae.na.tu* (66), I heard *nrae.na.tu*. Similar perceptual differences occur in identifying phonological juncture, which becomes an issue because many places in the grammar show different punctuations for a vernacular example and its accompanying free translation, and some analytical uncertainties were resolved only by listening to the oral versions (e.g., 43a:69, 12:228). In 3.151, text and translation both have a period in the middle of the example, but the oral version confirms that the intonational juncture is a comma pause, more appropriate for the construction type than a sentence break. In 54:240, the placement of pause suggests that the form *ga* is wrongly glossed as '3sgPOS', and should be the homophonous focal pronoun counterpart '3sg'.

Including the audio files may therefore help resolve uncertainty, but ensuring concordance of the content of the grammar with the DVD files adds another complex layer to the linguist's task, and synchronization problems can occur (e.g., 78:310). It is a huge advance "that all possible examples and all exemplary texts can be heard by the reader" (10), but how precise does the referencing in the written grammar need to be? Each individual language example has an index key as long as 36 characters, e.g., "(087:64)(98017a, 2459.2800, 2470.7801)" (268), sometimes longer than the text being cited (18:52). Do the start and end times have to be given to an accuracy of ten-thousandths of a second? The index keys are in fact redundant, because the catalogued DVD is readily navigated by chapter and example number for each item. Further work could be done to facilitate replaying the distinctive articulations of contrastive segments like *m* and *m̃* in

different environments, as these data were not easy to locate and replay, and some words listed in the contrasts in 18:52 with locator indexes were not found in the audio files.

Besides copies of most of the textual corpus on which the grammar is based, the DVD also contains T.'s lexicon of SE and an English reversal, suggesting that more extensive lexicographic work will follow. The alphabetical ordering follows English, and presumably reflects an established convention in SE, but the phonemic status of the labiovelar segments ( $\tilde{m}$  and  $\tilde{p}$ ) is not reinforced by giving them separate sections, and separate ordering after their *m* and *p* counterparts in all places. The DVD contains some other useful archived material.

After an introduction (Chapter 1), Chapter 2 collates a range of information placing SE in its geographical, sociocultural and historical context. Details from historical materials of over a century ago are interesting, but it's not clear that the discussion of, for example, traditional childbirth practices reported by the missionary in north Efate (outside the SE area), or the history of efforts to standardize the spelling of Bislama, are relevant to the synchronic study of the modern language of Erakor.

The phonology chapter (Chapter 3) gives full descriptions of the fifteen consonants and five vowels, along with good coverage of their contrasts and phonotactic distribution. Phonological processes and suprasegmental features are also discussed. The established orthography is said to be idiosyncratic (33), with *g* for [ŋ], and the use of tilde to represent the labiovelars  $\tilde{m}$  and  $\tilde{p}$ , but the former has long been established in some languages outside Vanuatu (e.g., Fijian and Samoan), and the latter have a long history in Vanuatu missionary and modern alphabets. One phoneme is represented as the digraph *nr*, and while described later as a "prestopped trill" (58), it is labeled more accurately in Table 3.1 as a "prenasalized alveolar trill." Phonetically, this is said to be [n<sup>h</sup>r], but while [d] can be an unavoidable transition feature between [n] and [r], the phonetic form is probably [n<sup>h</sup>dr], or, based on some examples in the DVD, just [n<sup>h</sup>r]. As the digraph *nr* is a unit phoneme, the form *nra* should not be given as evidencing a CCV syllable type (57). Consonant contrast includes labiovelars and bilabials, as in minimal pairs like *nap* and *na $\tilde{p}$* , and *m $\tilde{o}$ l* and *mol*, but these contrasts can be neutralized in other neighboring languages, so more study should be done on how perceptible and instrumentally verifiable the differences are. Instrumental analysis could also indicate what actually happens in the articulation of word-initial *m $\tilde{m}$*  (there is no instance of initial *mn*), or in the contrastive articulation of initial clusters *m $\tilde{m}$ l* and *ml*. A key feature of SE phonology is vowel deletion, which has given a high frequency of (especially heterorganic) complex consonant clusters, greater than in related languages to the north, but not too unlike that found in languages to the south. These processes are fully described, and the resultant consonant clusters are catalogued in Tables 3:4-6. However, the order of phonemes in these tables seems unmotivated, and suggests that the language has only 14 consonant phonemes, omitting /y/. Data are also missing from Table 3.7, which lists heterosyllabic C.CC clusters, because in the examples given the clusters *m.tl*, *t.nk*, and *m.tm* can be found, but not mentioned in the table. Overall, the presentation of SE phonology is highly informative, but as the author concedes, more work is required. For example, the factors governing insertion of semivowels in vowel sequences (e.g., *ua* sounding like *uwa*) are not fully understood (53), and "further investigation" is needed (54) on the relationship between semivowels and high vowel counterparts. Some uncertainty remains regarding syllabification (57), particularly for vowel sequences (64).

The chapter on word classes (Chapter 4) outlines identified form classes. The definition of adjectives is always interesting, and they are described as “a subclass of intransitive verbs that can function attributively with no verbal morphology” (81), and this precludes the possibility of there being any “classic” adjectives, i.e., forms which are genuine nominal modifiers but which cannot also occur as predicates. Unfortunately, data given to exemplify this raises questions, as 23:82 is supposed to demonstrate the use of *top* ‘too much’ as an adjective occurring attributively, but in the noun phrase that occurs (*mane sespal top* ‘money small much’), the adjective is actually *sespal* (although in the accompanying Table 4.3 it is *ses* ‘small’), and *top* is not a modifier of the head noun, but has a limiting function in relation to the adjective, i.e., is a constituent of an adjective phrase embedded within the noun phrase. The uncertainty continues when *top* is described as an adverb ‘much’ (90). The occurrence of *sikskei* ‘each, individually’ in the list of manner adverbs makes us wonder if reduplications of the numerals for ‘two’, ‘three’, and possibly others could also occur to mean ‘in pairs, doubly’ etc., as is commonly found in other languages. Directional/locational adverbs are listed (91), but the form *e-sap* ‘place, thingamy’ (113), probably meaning ‘wherever’, should also be included. These forms are regarded as bimorphemic, beginning with the locative prefix *e-*, but in most examples they are written as monomorphemic words. This chapter also tabulates the set of interrogatives (94), but there are quite significant discrepancies between this list, a later list when content questions are discussed (Table 11.2), and forms found in the data. For example, *tfale* is ‘which’ in the list, but is ‘how’ on the same page (66:94) and in Table 11.2. Another word glossed ‘how’ is *teflan* (79:310), but never accounted for. The first list has *swa* ‘where’, but the example for this (65:94) writes *sua*, and later it is *eswa(n)* (99), while Table 11.2 has it as *(e)swa/wa*.

Chapter 5 deals with nominals and the noun phrase, and a key feature is a complex arrangement of free pronouns and pronominal affixes. Expected categories of person and number are found, as well as the indication of grammatical role (Subject, Object, Oblique, Benefactive and Possessor), but some portmanteau forms allow for the expression of TAM categories (Realis, Irrealis, and Perfective) as well. The class of pronouns is said to include demonstrative pronouns (103), but no paradigm or listing of these is ever given. The tabulation of pronominal forms is somewhat confused, as Table 5.1 should contain the full paradigm set for “all pronominal forms” (103), but in fact just contains free pronouns. Table 5.2 contains all bound forms, but much of the information is repeated a few pages later in Table 5.3 (and later again in Table 6.2), but with inclusive and exclusive forms reversed. Table 5.2 shades out cells where dual number forms would occur for some bound pronouns, but this is somewhat misleading, as forms do occur with these meanings, but they are the same as the plurals. The tables show quite a degree of underspecification of subject forms, with those for 1d(ex), 2d, and 3d being identical, as well as those for 1p(ex) and 2p. Some of the cells in Table 5.2 contain more than one form, and the conditions under which the supposed allomorphs surface are not always clear. One crucial example of this, in relation to transitivity and verb classification, is the variable marking of the 3sgO suffix as  $-\emptyset$  (zero morpheme) or *-n*. This is discussed in §5.1.3.3.1.1, but the claim that it is apparently lexically conditioned by the verb to which it attaches is somewhat unsatisfactory, as the fact that these two allomorphs occur in various locations as prepositional objects on the preposition *ki* would have to be accounted for: in 38:276, *ki-∅* occurs in a sentence

translated as ‘... tell you about it’, and two examples later, in a very similar syntactic context, *ki-n* occurs in a sentence translated as ‘... ask them about it’. Pronominal forms are found which do not occur in Table 5.2, such as *=es* ‘3sgO’ (21:160) and *=os* ‘3sgOBL’ (72:193). One interesting feature shown for SE is the presence of an echo subject marker, which is clearly exemplified but seldom seen elsewhere, so may be low frequency. The occurrence of a so-called locative “affix” is unusual, as the locative *e-* “can also appear as a directional particle following the locational NP” (125), giving forms like *e-suṃ-e* ‘LOC-house-LOC’. One interesting feature—or lack thereof—in SE is that there is only one paradigm of possessive pronouns, in contrast to most other Vanuatu languages to the north, where there are separate possessive markers for usually three or four different kinds of possessed items, such as edibles, drinkables, personal effects, and general items. One of these categories often stands to mark a “part-whole” relationship as well, but there is only the slightest trace of this, where a particle *knen*, discussed in §5.3.1.3, is translated as ‘of it’, in contrast to the normal 3sgPOS form *nega*. The meaning of *knen* is not fully evident (note that in 144:325 it is considered to be *k-nen* ‘PREP-that’), but the ‘part-whole’ meaning seems to capture what it stands for in many of the instances where it occurs. One possessive pronoun *nakte* ‘my, mine’ is noted as occurring before the head noun, but more often the postposed form *neu* is used, and all other possessive pronouns are said to be postmodifiers, but 329:153 contains an apparent counterexample, where *tu-o-k gag ṃit* ‘give-TR-2sgO 2sgPOS mat’ ‘give you your mat’ occurs. It is possible that *gag* here is in fact 2sgBEN, and the sentence means ‘give you a mat for you’, but if so, this would then be a counterexample to the claim that the benefactive always occurs preverbally, so this example still remains problematic. Possession by nouns (§5.3.1.2) is marked by the genitive preposition *ni*, but no account is given at this point for the form *nig* on the next page in the phrase *nanre nig ntan* ‘side of land’ 78:129, and later, e.g., *naṃer nig Erakor* ‘people of Erakor’ 55:278. SE has nominalization involving both a preposed and postposed marker, but there is confusion over the form of latter, with three different formulations of its allomorphy given in the space of two pages: the section heading for §5.4.2 has *-wen/ien/-an*, which should be *-wen/-ien/-an*, but in the following paragraph the nominalized verb is said to be followed by *-wen* (and its variant *-uen*)/*-ien/-an*. The next page gives four forms of the nominalizing suffix: *-n*, *-(i)en*, *-wen*, and *-(i)an*, but only a few general tendencies are noted to account for the allomorphic distribution. An interesting approach to NP structure is adopted, whereby the structural formula for the noun phrase in 140:113 doesn’t seem to contain any slot for possessive pronouns to occur following the head noun. However, the discussion that follows states that the head of the phrase, a “lexical noun,” can be made up of nouns (including of course directly possessed forms), compounds, but also indirectly possessed forms. Rather than regarding the possessive pronouns as the first of a string of postmodifiers, the phrasal construction (head noun + possessive pronoun) is regarded as a more close-knit unit functioning as the head of the phrase, which has the advantage of avoiding the need to specify that directly possessed heads are incompatible with postposed possessive pronouns.

A set of verb-oriented chapters follows. Chapter 6 covers the expression of “cross-cutting categories of mood and aspect” (149). The stem-initial consonant alternation pattern found marking mood pervasively in other languages to the north finds only minimal occurrence in SE, on just a restricted set of forms where the /p/-initial form is realis, and the

/f/-initial form is irrealis. However, separate paradigms of pronominal proclitics express three distinct categories of realis, irrealis, and perfect as portmanteau morphemes with subject number and person, so that all predicates are obligatorily marked for one of these three available types. While these subject proclitics may attach directly to verbs, there may also be another preverbal mood or aspect particle to which they attach. There are five members of this second rank of markers, indicating 1. Perfect, 2. Prospective (realis), 3. Prospective (irrealis), 4. Habitual/Stative/Progressive, and 5. Durative. Sorting out the interactions of these forms with the subject proclitics that mark mood and aspect would have been a considerable challenge, and requires extensive discussion, drawing some insight from a survey of TAM typology by Dahl (1985). While the occurrence of overt objects would not usually have any bearing on whether events involving the objects are considered to be realis or irrealis, T. shows some correlation between the occurrence of realis and irrealis marking and degrees of transitivity, but allows that further investigation is required into the interplay of factors involved in determining mood marking (166).

Chapter 7 describes verbs and verb classes. Four distinct syntactic environments are identified (SV; SV with OBL postclitics; SVO; and SVO<sub>1</sub>O<sub>2</sub>), and on the basis of the distribution of verbs among these environments, it is necessary to set up five verb classes: intransitive, semitransitive, ambitransitive, transitive, and ditransitive. As well, there is a set of auxiliary verbs, and a copula verb. A process of object incorporation is identified, although it appears to be restricted to a very few potential verb-noun collocations, and might be able to be handled by modifying the description of, say, the ambitransitive verb category. Of all verbs, only 22 are genuinely transitive, and of these, two are said to have ditransitive counterparts, although only one of these is identified in 44:187 where they are listed, but then does not occur when ditransitive verbs are listed on 189. Some of these verbs can be detransitivised by reduplication. The discussion of ditransitive verbs is of interest, as genuine two-object verbs are few and far between in Oceanic languages. It is said on 189 that there are four ditransitive verbs, but if we include the one mentioned on the previous page, there are five, and they are: *nep* ‘to throw’, *nrik* ‘to tell’, *tu* ‘to give’, *sos* ‘to call someone’, and *til* ‘to tell’. Ditransitive verbs encode their two objects in a fixed order: the recipient/goal/addressee (the “indirect” object, or O<sub>1</sub>) comes first, following the verb, and then the “direct” object (called O<sub>2</sub>) encoding the theme or instrument. However, the second object may occur as an object on the preposition *ki* (which, to add to any potential complication, is homophonous with the widely occurring transitive suffix *-ki*), giving forms V O<sub>1</sub> *ki* O<sub>2</sub>. The six text examples given in this section are inconclusive, and while the grammar is corpus-based, some elicited material might have helped here. Data are given for only three of the five verbs, and it seems that *tu* and *nep* never use *ki* to include the O<sub>2</sub>, while *nrik* always does, and tracking the arguments in some cases is problematic: 56:190, with the verb ‘to throw’, now in the form *np*, does not have two objects in its translation: ‘He kept on throwing shellfish’; 57:190 has *nrik* ‘to tell’ with a 1p.exc suffix, and the verb *til* ‘to tell’ with a 3sg suffix, but both are translated ‘... tell us’; and 59:190 contains zero 3sgO suffixes on *nrik* ‘to tell’ and the preposition *ki*, with no indication of a second person pronominal form, but the translation is ‘... the story which I want to tell you’. The chapter includes discussion of expected features like “inherent object verbs,” and a good discussion of the various “meanings” of verbal reduplication. All examples given are of CVC and CV stems fully reduplicating, with no partial reduplication evident.

Chapter 8 covers transitivity strategies, and notes the problem of distinguishing the transitive suffix *-ki* from the preposition *ki*, which is used to mark certain arguments. The transitive suffix appears mainly as an unpredicable lexically conditioned single vowel or diphthong between the verb root and the object suffix, which could only be explained by reference to earlier forms of verb roots. Some valency-reducing strategies, which are not really productive, result from an anticausative *ma-*, and a detransitivizer *ta-*.

Chapter 9 looks at verb combinations, where sequences of items regarded as serial verbs in other modern descriptions of Vanuatu languages are accounted for as verbs plus auxiliary verbs, adverbs, or directional particles. T. acknowledges that SE displays traces of relic serial verb constructions (SVCs), and is well aware of the Vanuatu-specific and the general literature on serialization, including Crowley 2002, but ultimately dispenses with the concept of serialization in the analysis of SE. By this stage, the reader has encountered on numerous occasions the claim that the absence of verb serialization is a typologically distinctive feature of SE grammar distinguishing it from other closely related languages, and T. has subsequently pursued this claim in a later publication (Thieberger 2007). However, it could be that this is not a matter of typology, but of descriptive preference, as serialization is first defined out of existence, and then, to account for the multi-verb sequences that do occur, a series of interacting structural alternatives is constructed—such as classes of auxiliary verbs, directional particles, different types of clause-taking predicates, various types of clausal juxtaposition, linkage, chaining, and so on. All the while, the tokens being handled in this way are barely distinguishable from those which analysts have no hesitation in describing as SVCs in other languages. SE is replete with examples whose parallel forms in Lewo have been regarded as classic instances of nuclear-layer and core-layer serialization (Early 1994). If T. is correct that a serializing analysis is not valid for SE, then the same claim would have to apply to other so-called serializing languages, and this prospect needs to be evaluated more thoroughly.

Chapter 10 describes the preverbal complex (PVC), an integral and complex part of the SE clause. Lack of understanding of its function complicated the reading of earlier chapters, so it might have been better described earlier, say before Chapter 7, in an order that reflects the actual linear order of constituents. PVC structure includes the AUX verb component in 2.243, which itself is made up of four or five ordered ranks, and in negatives, the NEG element actually breaks into these ranks, occurring after the first of them. Sections 10.1.5.1–13 give good examples of each of the auxiliary verbs, including those showing them occurring before the benefactive phrase, which in turn precedes the main verb, reinforcing the special distributional qualities of this set of verbs. The auxiliary verbs are regarded as having been “grammaticized” into the slot before the benefactive and the main verb, but their lexical meaning seems to be largely retained. It is unusual that combinations of them are allowed, and so one could wonder why this is regarded as grammaticization. Contrary to the earlier formulation of PVC structure in 2.243, the formula in 31:252 locates AUX as separate from, and following, the PVC. This chapter also describes the bipartite disjunctive negative construction. The first particle occurs following the subject proclitic, in many cases as the first component of the PVC, but the second particle *mau* is specified as occurring “sentence-finally.” The one and “only” example of it not occurring sentence-finally is noted (15:247), with the explanation that the material that follows is an afterthought. One other example of *mau* occurring non-sentence-finally

is actually recognized (117:318), but footnote 97 specifies that again, the sentence-final form meaning ‘long ago, before’ occurs as an afterthought. However, other unrecognized examples of *mau* do occur non-sentence-finally, where material that follows is not likely to be an afterthought (62:73, 35:164, 4:174, 4:244), so this statement needs to be revised. Another interesting component of the PVC is a reciprocal/reflexive (RR) marker *tme/tmo*. It looks like a directly possessed (DP) noun, but it is never discussed as such or glossed as ‘self’. As the first component of the PVC it takes the subject proclitic, e.g.:

*i=tme-n preg-i-Ø*  
 3sg=RR-3sgDP make-TR-3sgO  
 ‘He made himself ...’ (94:101)

By the end of this chapter, the reader is not confident that the relative ordering relationships and combinatorial possibilities of the benefactive, the reciprocal, the ranks of AUX verbs, the negative particle, and the quantifiers that may follow AUX (one of which occurs within sequences of AUX) have been thoroughly specified.

Chapter 11 gives a straightforward description of simple sentences, although if there is no serialization in SE, by which single clauses can be allowed to have more than one verb, the inclusion in the examples in this chapter of sentences like 10:270 cannot be justified, because while the English translation has a single main verb, the SE sentence contains, by definition, two “clauses.”

1sg=TAM be.unable talk-TR-2sgO 3sg=much  
 ‘I can’t talk to you very much.’

Equatives and existentials use the copula verb *pi*. Syntactic criteria allow for topicalization, left-dislocation, and clefting to be distinguished. However, many of these constructions use the same subordinator *kin*, and this is variously glossed as REL and COMP(lementiser) following NPs, COMP following the conjunction ‘because’, REL following the question word *fei* ‘who’, and as SUB(ordinator) following the question word *iku* ‘why’. The section on polar questions includes some instrumentally-generated pitch tracks showing the distinctive intonation pattern of interrogatives, but contrasting patterns for declaratives are not given for comparison. Tag questions use *ko* ‘or’, *a/e* ‘eh’, and *go* ‘and’, and while explanation of sentence-final meaning is given for *ko* (information-seeking?) and partially for *a/e* (confirmation-seeking?), it is not possible to obtain a reading of the epistemic or pragmatic functions of *go*. This chapter also contains the most extensive discussion of the distinctive encoding of possessed beneficiaries between the PVC and the main verb, and the author proposes a grammaticization path that could account for this development.

The final chapter, 12, deals with complex sentences. The discussion of relativization is largely repeated, occurring first in §12.2.1, where the roles of several different subordinators and relativizers (*kin*, *na(g)*, and *nen*) are discussed, and again in §12.2.4. The different grammatical relations that can be relativized onto are noted, with regard to subject, the two objects, and a temporal adjunct, but the formulation for the benefactive is not correct. The complex sentence given for this (315:106) exemplifies an extended benefactive phrase, but the head of the embedded relative clause is the subject argument of that clause. Rather than a sentence like ‘He took the chiefly line for his brother who



was the big chief’, what is needed here is a sentence like ‘His brother, for whom he took the chiefly line, was the big chief’, in which the NP that hosts the relative clause has a benefactive role in relation to the embedded predicate, and it is not clear that SE would be able to construct this. The thorough discussion of complementation is informed by an overarching typology developed by Noonan (1985), but the analyst also has to ensure that the typology does not drive the description. Noonan’s typology includes complements that express subjunctive meanings with some specific morphological marking, but this does not make it necessary to appeal to subjunctivity as a grammatical category in SE, or to describe SE as having a special identifiable type of complement described as a “subjunctive-like predicate.” Languages like SE that mark irrealis mood will simply use that to express these kinds of meanings, without the need for any special kind of construction type. This chapter includes further crucial treatment of other multiverb structures in SE, and again, T. is at pains to avoid embracing a serializing analysis. Various kinds of clause linking devices and a clause chaining construction type are discussed, but some explanations of the structural types involved are only partially satisfactory, as the subject deletion that defines clause chaining doesn’t always occur where it could, and there is no discussion of the conditions under which it may or may not occur. The chapter concludes with a noncontroversial discussion of the complex sentence structures involved in the formulation of direct and reported speech, as well as the standard tail-head linkage paragraph-level feature.

While a review such as this should focus on the substantive content of the publication, it should be noted that throughout this volume, frequent errors and inconsistencies cannot fail to distract the reader. There are errors of fact, such as on 1, with an incorrect representation of Vanuatu’s language situation as having “three official national languages, Bislama, English, and French,” and some bibliographical references are missing (e.g., “Layard 1915” in a footnote on 16) or have incorrect names (e.g., “Sima” on 41 and in references should be “Simo”). On pp. xiii and xiv, the page numbers for all pictures and the first two maps are out of order, and the reference to pictures on “pages xii and xiv” (22) is incorrect. Page 30 describes the coastal location of SE villages, and refers to a shaded area on Map 4, which designates uninhabited areas, but the shading is not found on the map (32).

There are some spelling and typographical errors (e.g., the double negative in footnote 92 on 279), and while American spellings are used throughout, *analyzes* 172 is a noun and should be *analyses*. Punctuation would assist in places like line 7 on 23, and the headings of §2 and §2.3.7. Considerable problems occur with the representation of the labiovelars  $\tilde{p}$  and  $\tilde{m}$ , with the tilde hanging over the side of the base letter (e.g., Table 3.3), or being almost indiscernible (e.g., 51), or being followed by spurious spaces (Table 4.4). The overbar representing phonetic coarticulation for the labiovelars (46) looks like underlining in places (e.g., 13:50), and gets broken on different levels (e.g., 21:53), and sometimes covers the following vowel (9:49) or just the second segment and the following vowel (11:50). In Tables 3.2 and 3.4–6, characters in a whole column seem to be cut off. Font size is noticeably smaller whenever a glottal stop or velar nasal appears (23–25:53; 59:72), or irregular for certain forms (e.g., “TS” in 72, 75:309). Other formatting problems involve headings of tables sitting on top of the first row of the table (e.g., Table 4.5), missing page numbers for pages with charts, tables, and maps (e.g., 31, 32, 105, etc.); and footnote 61 from page 175 not occurring until the end of 176. Material borrowed in SE is represented

using English, Bislama, and mixed spellings, and some Bislama words occur (e.g., *karong*, 143:325) without clarification.

Frequent problems arise with interlinear formatting. Starting with 16–17:52, many glosses do not align vertically with the text above (e.g., 38b:118, 37:165 and many others), and some forms have a different number of morphemes than in the gloss (e.g., 16:110). The glosses for many particles are inconsistently represented, e.g., reduplications of the verb *pan* ‘to go’ are variously handled as: *pan pan* ‘go go’ (42:90); *panpan* ‘until’ (30:233); *ru=pan pan pan* ‘3d=go:RED’ (79:262); *panpan* ‘go:RED’ (45:301); *pan pan pan* ‘until:RED’ (68:308); and *ru=panpan* ‘3p.=go.go’ (143:325), and other representation of reduplications is variable (e.g., 144). In 60:94, *mro-sa* is first ‘think-bad’, and then *mrosa* ‘think.bad’; the preposed possessive *nakte* is both ‘my’ (106) and ‘1sgPOS’ (312); *iskei* is ‘one’ (7:269) or *i-skei* ‘3sgRS=one’ (17:271), and there are many other such cases. This problem is exacerbated with forms like *to*, which is analyzed as a verb, an auxiliary, and a directional particle, but glosses such as ‘stay’ (53:92), ‘STAT’ (62:94), ‘HAB’ (in Abbreviations), ‘HABIT’ (68:95), ‘PROG’ (149), and ‘at’ (74:97) don’t seem to correlate with this analysis. For example, *to elau to* is glossed ‘stay sea stay’ (‘at sea’, 60:241), but *to elag to* is glossed ‘at high at’ (‘up high’, 69:260). There are many errors in glosses, which would not be expected with the use of an automated interlinearizing program like Shoebox. For example, *-kit* ‘1p.inO’ is ‘1p.inclO’ in 13:270, and ‘2p.O’ in 9:227, translated ‘you’ instead of ‘us’. The form *gamus* is glossed as ‘2p.O’ (32a:252), but it should be ‘2p.POS’, and ‘1p.lincRS’ (59:258) is clearly wrong, as is ‘1p.exR’ (66:259). The marking of inclusive and exclusive on 1<sup>st</sup> person plural pronominal forms is sometimes omitted, e.g., *-mam* ‘1p.O’ (57:190), and *nigmam* ‘1p.POS’ and ‘1p.BEN’ (36:299). Glosses ‘2p.in’ and ‘2p.inRS’ occur (63:215), but ‘inclusive’ is not a category in the second person. A lack of precision with free translations causes confusion at times, such as the lack of translation of the relative pronoun *kin* in 123:142; in the meaning of the verb in 19:177; and translations like ‘... whip you with a stock whip ...’, where there is no 2sg pronominal form in the text (79:219). Some free translations contain material not in the text (2:268), don’t complete the meaning of the text (54:240, 63:242), or don’t make sense (33:253).

Overall, the range and volume of the problems exemplified here leave the impression that the grammar reflects varying stages of the progressive development of the author’s understanding, analysis, and documentation of the language, but that changes and improvements implemented in one place have not been reflected as required through the totality of the description. Complete freedom from error and internal consistency are elusive goals, but they remain key hallmarks of quality in language description.

Nevertheless, the publication of the first grammar of a language is always a great achievement and a significant milestone, and as noted, this grammar of South Efate will stand as a landmark volume in the description of Oceanic languages because of its commitment to best practice in digital documentation and archiving of the corpus on which it is based.

REFERENCES

- CROWLEY, TERRY. 2002. *Serial verbs in Oceanic: A descriptive typology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.
- DAHL, ÖSTEN. 1985. *Tense and aspect systems*. Oxford and New York: B. Blackwell.
- EARLY, ROBERT. 1994. A grammar of Lewo, Vanuatu. Australian National University PhD dissertation.
- HYSLOP, CATRIONA. 2001. *The Lolovoli dialect of the North-East Ambae language, Vanuatu*. Canberra: Pacific Linguistics, Research School of Pacific and Asian Studies, Australian National University. Pacific Linguistics 515.
- LYNCH, JOHN. 2000. South Efate phonological history. *Oceanic Linguistics* 39(2):320–38.
- NOONAN, MICHAEL. 1985. Complementation. In *Language typology and syntactic description*, vol. 2, ed. by Timothy Shopen, 42–140. Cambridge and New York: Cambridge University Press.
- THIEBERGER, NICHOLAS. 2007. The demise of serial verbs in South Efate. In *Language description, history and development: Linguistic indulgence in memory of Terry Crowley*, ed. by Jeff Siegel, John Lynch, and Diana Eades, 237–51. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Robert Early

early\_r@vanuatu.usp.ac.fj