

Maurice Boxwell; Jean Goddard; Malcolm Ross; Arden G. and Joy Sanders; Joy and Arden G. Sanders; Arden G. and Joy Sanders; H.J. Davies *Papers in New Guinea linguistics* No. 20. *Pacific Linguistics*, A-56, 1980. v+214pp.(incl 4 maps).

Reviewed by Carl R. Whitehead

The volume includes seven articles having in common only the fact that all the languages discussed are located on the Papua New Guinea mainland. With the exception of the article by Davies, they are all oriented to description of specific languages rather than theory.

Boxwell (Identification and movement of participants in Weri narrative discourse) describes how participants, props and background information are introduced in such a way as to identify to which category they belong, how participants are subsequently removed and reintroduced, and how the interaction between them is encoded while they are on the scene. The introduction gives the distinguishing features of the various discourse types in Weri and the specific features of narrative discourse. The final section presents formulae whereby participants or groups of participants are expanded and contracted so that two or more participants or groups may begin acting as one and later separate.

Throughout the paper, he presents the norm, then explains some of the variations and apparent exceptions. A few problems appear to remain in the analysis, however. The expansion and contraction of participants is stated as being to prevent the presence of three participant groups on stage simultaneously, but frequently the participants are reduced to one group in the sample text given. The alternative devices for introduction, removal and reintroduction of participants and those for expansion and contraction are frequently the same. In the sample text, two items ('sun' and 'grass') are introduced with participant devices but Boxwell refers to them as background information and they do not reoccur in the text. Also in the sample text, one participant group is not formally removed but is not present on the scene for the final third of the text.

Goddard (Notes on Agarabi grammar) gives a brief description of the phonemes of Agarabi (Eastern Family of East New Guinea Highlands

Stock) and a tagmemic description of the grammar from stems through clauses. As the title suggests, it is not an exhaustive description, so there are several questions left unanswered.

Ross (Some elements of Vanimo, a New Guinea tone language) states that "the purpose of this paper is to broaden the available description of the Vanimo language, a member of the Vanimo Family of the Sko phylum-level Stock" (77). The paper is not, therefore, an attempt at a complete description but the presentation of observations made regarding the phonology, grammar and semantics. "The most pervasive feature of Vanimo grammar is the repeated distinction in both noun phrases and verb phrases between masculine and feminine gender" (83). In the semantics section, he describes how the very restricted number of morphemes are combined to "expand the semantic resources" (101). Throughout the paper, he appears to be making an effort to make the comments understandable to the non-specialist.

Three papers by Sanders and Sanders deal with the Marienberg Stock/Family of the Torricelli Phylum in general and the Kamasau language in particular. The first (Phonology of the Kamasau language) is a hierarchical, classical phonemic description of Kamasau from discourse through to phoneme levels. The presentation is clear and thorough except for the absence of any discussion of syllable distribution. The second (Dialect survey of the Kamasau language) describes the methods and results of the survey and the problem of determining the best single orthography for all dialects. Both lexico-statistics and sound correspondences are taken into consideration. The final member of the trilogy (Defining the centres of the Marienberg language family) sets out to determine the central language of the family and the central dialect of each family where relevant. Lexicostatistics, grammatical typology, geographical location, speaker attitudes, number of speakers, and the presence of institutions are all taken into consideration. The data was gathered by means of word lists and a sociological survey.

Davies (The phonological status of the semivowel in Kobon) is a re-evaluation of some of the decisions made in his earlier paper (*Kobon phonology*. *Pacific Linguistics*, B-68). Sequences /ai/ and /au/ are reinterpreted as /ay/ and /aw/ respectively, even though there

are no non-suspect syllable patterns on which to base this. The advantages of the re-interpretation are that it allows a more symmetrical distribution of /y/ and /w/ and a simpler statement of vowel sequences and syllable patterns (four are eliminated). He concludes that /i/ and /u/ cannot be reinterpreted as /y/ and /w/ as has been done in the related Kalam because the phonemic status of the two central schwa phonemes prevents the positing of complex consonant clusters which were the basis of the Kalam decisions. Finally, he questions the classification of the Kalam Family as part of the East New Guinea Highlands Stock. The phoneme inventory is much closer to that of the nearby Ndu Family of the Middle Sepik Stock, especially if the non-central vowels are interpreted diachronically as sequences of the central schwa vowels and the semivowels.