The morphosyntax of Una in relation to discourse structure. A descriptive analysis. By John Louwerse. Pacific Linguistics B-100. Canberra: Australian National University, 1988. ix + 211 pp. (incl. 3 maps). AUS$27.70.

Reviewed by Volker Heeschen
Forschungsstelle für Humanethologie in der Max-Planck-Gesellschaft, Germany

The speakers of the Una language live in the eastern highlands of Irian Jaya south of the central range. Una is a member of the Mek languages (formerly called Goliath languages). The western neighbours of the Mek people are the Dani, the eastern neighbours are the Ok people. The Mek language family was established by Bromley (1973). Wurm (1982:187), "in view of the apparent absence of classificatory verbs in the languages, and the only rudimentary development of sentence medial verb forms in them," decided only "to give the family provisionally the status of a subphylum" within the Trans-New Guinea Phylum languages. Louwerse (p. 5) assigns the status of a family to the Mek languages without discussing Wurm's findings.

The Mek languages themselves form a family of closely related members, the percentage of shared cognates never falling below 60%. Indeed, Eipo, spoken immediately north of the Una area, and Yale (Kosarek), the westernmost Mek language - both languages studied by the present reviewer - still share with the Una language more than 90%, resp. 75% of the basic vocabulary. Louwerse (p. 5) lists 17 Mek languages (or dialects?). His grouping of the Mek family suggests diversity, where close relationships prevail. On the one hand, according to the criterion of mutual understanding, Eipo, Una, Tanime, and Bime just form one area with four dialects, though Louwerse puts them into three groups; on the other hand, according to criteria from verbal morphology and different sets of connectives, Una, Eipo as well as all the eastern dialects (Tanime, Bime, Okbab) come close to being different languages. A discussion of the data sources and of the phenomenon of dialect-chaining would have been helpful (cf. Heeschen 1978).

The Una grammar is a most valuable contribution to our knowledge of the Mek languages. It is the first full scale grammar of one of these languages. Previous works on the grammar of other languages or dialects either were not published (e.g. Rule, Rule, & Cutting 1972) or appeared as sketches or first statements (Heeschen 1978

and 1985, Sims 1986, Sims & Jones 1986).

Chapter 1 "Introduction" (p. 1-13) offers maps and comments on segmental phonemes, pitch-accent, and some morphophonemic rules. Furthermore, the author explains his theoretical background: he follows one of the later versions of tagmemic theory. However, the grammar "is not an exposition of any tagmemic theory..., but rather a description of language data with comments on some theoretical issues" (p. 6), its main purpose being to present data "for purely descriptive and typological purposes" (p. 6). Chapter 2 "The morphology of the verb" (p. 15-68) is the most extensive. It fills 42 pages with paradigms, examples, and comments on the use of different verbal morphemes; p. 59-68 summarize "Una verb inflection." The next chapters illustrate wordclasses, phrase structure, clausal syntax and sentence structure. Chapters 7 and 8 ("Paragraph structure" and "Expository discourse," p.122-165) try to justify the title: morphosyntax in relation to discourse structure. He analyzes just one text and correlates clauses and sentences of this text with known units of discourse like opening, body, closure, condition, result, and reason etc. One half of this section is filled with rather schematic charts. Appendices A and B (p.165-198) bring the "Thurman-Grimes-chart" of the text and the free translation of "The story of the helicopter." The bibliography (p. 203-211) lists numerous manuscripts of the author up to 1988, but, otherwise, it seems to stop around 1980. Heeschen (1982 and 1985), Heeschen & Schiefenhövel (1983), Sims (1986), and Sims and Jones (1986) are not included in the list.

There are numerous statements on Una grammar which are contradicted by the present reviewer's own findings. I will restrict myself to comments on some, in my opinion, erroneous interpretations concerning the translation of the text, some single mistakes, and the interrelationship of verbal morphology and connectives.

1. The reader cannot always rely on the correctness of the word-for-word-translation and on that of the free translation. On page 168 we read:

Eyliykobter asiy, nunci   ersiy ara:
helicopter   NOM we-ERG her-DAT

"Kobor Ner" eramowbwa.
"Kobor wife" we-called

The free translation runs like this (p. 195): 'We used to call the helicopter the Wife of Kobor'. Louwerse (p.107-114) presents Una as a language with a Latin like case system. One of the suffixes of the 'ergative' case is *-ci*. However, the author says nowhere that the indication of an ergative case is not obligatory and that case-marking proceeds rather pragmatically. In the same text we find examples in which the ergative is not marked (cf. e.g. sentence 16, p. 170, and sentence 160, p. 189). Thus *-ci* in *nunci* has more the nature of a particle stressing contrast ('we in contrast to you white people'). Why should the nominative (undergoer?) be marked, if there is an ergative? Because *asiy* is not at all the suffix for the nominative case, as Louwerse claims (p.110), but it is a thematizing device: 'with regard to the helicopter', cf. page 187:

Isa   asiy   miyliybmarimdo' ebmay
ghosts NOM do-you-help   they-said

The free translation (p. 197): 'They said, "Are you (really) helping the ghosts?"' This 'nominative' is again the theme. In the first example *ara* is another thematizing device, which immediately precedes the rheme. Louwerse never translates it and does not

mention *ara* in the grammar proper (cf. sentences 19 and 20, p. 170). Furthermore 'dative' case-marking is not obligatory (cf. p. 109 and the second example), and *ersiy* could well consist of *er* 'he, she, it' and *siy* 'name'. Thus the first example could be translated: 'But we, with regard to the helicopter, with regard to her name: "Kobor's wife," we called her.' This discussion shows that Louwerse sticks too much to the received idea of a case system (the sentence introducing interjection *se* 'hey' is taken to mark the 'vocative' case, cf. p. 107 and 89) and he does not recognize that case pragmatics, a one-NP-constraint-per-clause and the theme-rheme-structure override case marking.

The narrator quotes direct speech of the Una people by using the following formula.

sun ato ebnay
they like they-said

Louwerse translates: 'They said thus or this'. However, *ato* is constructed with *sun*, *sun ato*, 'the likes of them', 'thus' would be expressed by a serialized verb meaning 'thus doing'. The narrator, apparently already baptized, sets himself apart from the old people, who still believe in ghosts. One time, having used this formula, he says (sentence 126, p. 185):

Nuram kum.
my-talk not

The Mek people carefully name the participants of an event, and especially in fairy-tales they introduce them by such formulas (cf. Heeschen 1990:334-6). This in itself is a minor point, but it shows that grammar and discourse analysis cannot be based mainly on one's own "constant use of the Central Ey river dialect" (p. v) and on just one text. I do not

detect any trace of what Louwerse claims in the preface (p. v): "The narrower base for the study is a collection of transcribed texts, including folk tales, myths, exposition of local cultural activities and narratives..."

2. Map 2 erroneously places Omban and Okbab outside the Mek language area, the languages spoken there are clearly Mek languages (cf. e.g. Heeschen 1978, Sims 1986).

Verb stems end in *-k-* or *-b-*. If these consonants change into *-n-*, the verbs mark "an action covering a short period of time. The verbs of motion always are momentaneous and therefore already have a verb root final *-n*" (p.28, cf. p.20). All my examples with *-n-* indicate an action which is repeatedly done or which affects a plurality of objects. I do not think that *yan-* 'to come' and *bin-* 'to go' indicate a momentaneous action.

There are no clear 'causative voice suffixes' (p. 23-4) in the Mek languages. The suffix *-dob-* indicates that one does something only for one's own sake or in one own's interest (cf. sentence 114, p. 183). The sufix *-lob-* indicates that something is not done carefully or completely.

The 'aptative aspect suffix' (optative?) *-ti-* (p. 27) is always constructed with a proper set of tense-person-number suffixes, which I cannot find in Louwerse's paradigms. The forms are not only "homophonous" with the 'mode 1 suffixes' p. 33), but identical. These forms constitute the contrafactual (cf. p.155: The Una sentence should not be translated: 'When I say I don't know that fellow, then I am a liar', but: 'If I said I did not know that fellow, I would be a liar').

The 'near past tense continuous aspect' (p.42, e.g.

bukabuetok 'I was sitting a while ago') and the 'exclusive aspect' (p. 57, e.g. *yanmay-tok* 'only they came') are identical. The suffix *-tok* is a relativizing particle referring to the pronominal subject and adding the meaning of exclusiveness. A second clause should follow or should be implied by the speech situation, e.g. *bukabne-tok yinman* '(only) me, who has sat down, am eating'. This example illustrates that the non-final suffix *-ab-* (or *am-*) does not indicate 'continous aspect', but it indicates an action which starts prior to the moment of speaking or to the time another action starts. It overlaps temporally with this second action or has some causal relationship with it.

3. At the beginning of his grammar Louwerse says (p. 15) that one of the most characteristic features of Papuan languages "is also true for Una: the occurence of a clause containing an independent sentence-final verb preceded by one or more clauses containing dependent sentence medial verbs marked to indicate switch reference... This phenomenon of stringing together clauses was labelled 'chaining'..." At the end he writes (p. 156): "Participant orientation in Una usually does not cause any problems due to the fact that the agent obligatorily is encoded not only in the verb, but also optionally, but frequently, in the form of a personal pronoun, proper noun or descriptive noun or noun phrase." The second statement implies that switch reference plays no role in Una and that clauses are linked together more by connectives, verb serialization, and the consecution of tenses than by sentence medial verbs. The discrepancy can be explained by three inadequacies in Louwerse' descriptive analysis.

a) The structures consisting of a finite verb plus a connective are treated as 'dependent aspect sufixes',

e.g the connective *-bok*, which is a means of contrasting two utterances and which only implies switch reference, is treated as a 'simulfactive aspect suffix' (p. 49) in sentences like *buknim-bok, er yinmar* 'we two have sat down, however, you are eating'. Louwerse translates 'he eats while we two sit' not taking into account the presence and absence of the *-ma-* suffix. The example should be: *buk-manim-bok, er yinmar* 'we two are sitting, but he (alone) is eating', where simultaneous actions contrast and are likely to be done by two (sets of) of agents. Analogous critical remarks apply to the other dependent aspect suffixes. Louwerse simply neglects the category of connectives. Thus two important connectives, which the reader can find in the text, are not treated in the grammar: *ani* and *-ba*. The first connective is postponed to non-final clauses, the sentence-final verb is placed before the background of the clause(s) ending with *ani* (cf. sentences 5 and 22, p. 168 and 171). The other connective has about the same meaning as *-bok* (cf. sentence 166, p. 177).

b) True sentence medial verb forms characterized by a proper set of tense-person-number-suffixes are not analyzed as such and are hidden in the 'dependent anticipatory aspect suffix' (p. 50) as well as in the 'causal mode suffix' (p. 55, cf. Heeschen 1985: 40); the verbal forms are the same, only the connectives are different. The suffix *-ay* characterizes the 'avolitional mode' (p. 54), but it is nothing else than the postposition *-ak, -aye, ayi* 'to, at'. This morpheme is one of the few means of word formation (cf. chapter 3.4 "Adjectives," p. 79-80: *malyi* 'bad', *malya* 'non-edible', properly speaking, 'that which is bad or non-edible'). The derived forms are either nominalized finite verbs or are subordinated to a performative verb.

c) The means of linking together clauses, which have the same subject ('verb serialization'), are either described at different and even unexpected places or completely neglected ('continuous tense suffix', p. 20, 'impersonal voice suffix', p. 21, 'infinite verbal clause', p. 119). One of these means shows up in an example, which happens to be found in the chapter on cases (p. 111): *...iyngkiyriyngde kuranowbwa*, 'searching we were'. The very important structures consisting of series of infinitives or series of participle-like forms plus a clause-final finite verb are not systematically described in Louwerse's grammar.

These critical remarks do not restrict the value of the pure data Louwerse presents. On the whole, the analysis establishing too many 'mode' and 'aspect' suffixes and a rigid case-marking system, and the description of elicited clauses with more than one NP should be replaced by a better treatment of connectives, of clause-chaining, of case pragmatics, of the theme-rheme-structure, and of the consecution of tenses. The gap between a first statement and theoretical claims has to be filled by an analysis of genuine utterances and native speech genres.

References

Bromley, H. Myron. 1973. Ethnic groups in Irian Jaya. *Irian* 2(2): 1-37.

Heeschen, Volker. 1978. The Mek languages of Irian Jaya with special reference to the Eipo language. *Irian* 7(2): 3-46.

Heeschen, Volker. 1982. Some systems of spatial deictics in Papuan languages. In *Here and there. Cross-linguistic studies in deixis and demonstration*, ed. Jürgen Weissenborn and Wolfgang Klein, 81-109. Amsterdam: Benjamins.

Heeschen, Volker. 1985. Die Yale-Sprache, eine Papua-Sprache. *Studium Linguistik* 16: 35-45.

Heeschen, Volker. 1990. *Ninye bún. Mythen, Erzählungen, Lieder und Märchen der Eipo im zentralen Bergland von Irian Jaya (West-Neuguinea), Indonesien.* Berlin: Reimer.

Heeschen, Volker, and Wulf Schiefenhövel. 1983. *Wörterbuch der Eipo-Sprache. Eipo-Deutsch-Englisch.* Berlin: Reimer.

Rule, W. M., Rule, J. E., and R. Cutting. 1972. Hmanggona language of the Naltja area, Irian Barat (a member of the Goliath family of languages and previously called Kimyal by Mr. S. Sadlier). Statement of the alphabet and grammar. Manuscript.

Sims, Andrew. 1986. The use of tense and aspect in foregrounding and backgrounding in Ketengban narrative discourse. *Workpapers in Indonesian Languages and Culture* 2:1-36.

Sims, Anne, and Linda Jones. 1986. Participant reference in Ketengban narrative

folktales. *Workpapers in Indonesian Languages and Culture* 2:37-56.

Wurm, Stephan A. 1982. *Papuan languages of Oceania*. Tübingen: Narr.

Received 6 December 1991

Pacific Island Languages: Essays in honour of G.B. Milner. Ed. by J.H.D.S. Davidson. London: School of Oriental and African Studies, University of London, and Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1990. viii+196 pp. pb. US$18.00.

Reviewed by Malcolm D. Ross
Research School of Pacific Studies,
Australian National University

This volume contains eleven papers presented to George Milner, with a biographical note by Ratu Sir Kamisese Mara and a bibliography of Milner's work compiled by Helen Cordell. As befits their honoree, the papers are largely concerned with languages of eastern Oceania, but there is much here for readers of this journal whose interests are centred in related languages spoken further west.

All the papers except Jeff Siegel's (on Fiji Pidgin Hindustani) are concerned with languages belonging to the Oceanic language family. This is a subgroup of the Austronesian family and includes all Austronesian languages spoken east of a line roughly bisecting Irian Jaya. Its members are demonstrably descended from a single earlier Austronesian language usually labelled 'Proto Oceanic' (POC), and they may be divided for convenience into Western (Ross 1988) and Eastern (Geraghty, in the paper reviewed below) subgroups, although the genetic unity of both would be disputed by some scholars. Within Eastern Oceanic, a Central Pacific subgroup is recognised: it comprises the languages of Fiji, Rotuma and Polynesia.

The volume's papers can be divided into three groups. First, Robert Blust, George Grace and Paul Geraghty deal with topics in the reconstruction of the prehistory of Oceanic languages. Secondly, Albert Schütz, David Arms and Andrew Pawley/Timoci Sayaba present refinements of the description of Fijian. The remaining papers deal with a variety of topics. The collection as a whole is rich in information and analysis, to which the brief summaries and very limited comments in this review do but curtailed justice. The papers are summarised below in the three above-mentioned groups, rather than in their sequence of occurrence in the book.