/∅/, /h/ and /∅/, and so on; my original reading was that /∅/ represented some kind of front rounded vowel, and it was only on closer inspection that I realised that /∅/ represents zero, and would have been better written as ∅, without slashes.

But these are minor quibbles. My reaction on completing the book was not only that it provides a very good description of a particular language, but that it is also a model to which I would like to refer my students: this, I would say to them, is how to write up the phonology of a language.

REFERENCE

Pike, Kenneth L. 1947. Phonemics: a technique for reducing languages to writing. University of Michigan Press, Ann Arbor.

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Stokhof, W.A.L. Woisikà II: Phonemics.
Pacific Linguistics, Series B, No. 59,
Canberra, 1979; xi + 188 pp.

As the title implies, this is the second study of Woisika, a Papuan language on the island of Alor of East Indonesia. The first study was an ethnographic one published in Pacific Linguistics D 19 in 1977   (reviewed in Kivung 11:1, 1978, by Stephen Ranck).

1.   Introduction

Woisika is located in the central part of the island of Alor and is classified as a stock-level family within the sub-phylum-level

Timor-Alor-Pantar Stock of the Trans New Guinea Phylum. There is only one Austronesian language on the island. The author states his impression that the distinction between non-Austronesian (Papuan) and Austronesian coincides with the religious boundaries: non-Muslims and Muslims. There are 10,000 speakers in 10 "geographical variants" or dialects.

This book gives a fairly complete treatment of the phonology of Woisika. It includes the sound system, both consonants and vowels with a discussion of some of the interesting and significant features, plus contrasts and variants. The author also discusses stress and intonation; the treatment of loanwords; syllable patterns and the distribution of phonemes; an orthography and the differences in the dialects. He also includes appendices of selected spectrograms, palatalograms, linguograms, lip photographs and maps.

2. Theoretical Matters

The author states that the "main object of this paper is to establish the distinctive features ... and to find out how they are combined into units; i.e. phonemes " (p.1). He is using for a framework the theories of Trubetzkoy, Martinet and Ebeling. Since these theories are not as well known as some others, Stokhof discusses some of the lesser known concepts. He says, "It is the task of the linguist ... to ascertain as accurately as possible those elements which have functional value and which are or seem to be invariant in the flux." This can only be done using the criterion of distinctiveness, with articulatory data and an informant to interpret them. In trying to find these functional or invariant elements, pairs or more of words are given to informants, changing one distinctive feature to see what their reaction would be to the difference. This is called a "functionality test". The process then brings to light the important or "distinctive" features.

The author found that the following phenomena could skew the distinctions: 1) neutralization
2) doublets (as in 'wobâ, 'wubâ)
3) optionalities
4) idiolectal and regional variations
5) affective forms
6) configuration features (boundary   signals)

A "heavy phoneme" is a term used for a phoneme which consists of the basic distinctive features plus one or more optional features. A heavy phoneme can be established if suppression of the optional features never leads to misunderstanding by the hearer.

3. Woisika Sound System

The Woisika sound system consists of 16 consonants and 12 vowels. In addition there are five archiphonemes.

Consonants: /p,b,P,t,d,T,k,g,K,r,m,n,ŋ,f,s,l,w,j,h/

The archiphonemes P,T,K are unreleased variants of both the voiced and voiceless stops. They occur 1) word finally before pause, 2) before a voiceless obstruent, and 3) before a voiced obstruent.

/g/ is a heavy phoneme in Woisika with the optional features of palatalization or velarization, this is /g~w/ before rounded vowels and /g~j/ before unrounded vowels.

Vowels:

	Front		Central	Back	
	Lax	Tense	Lax		Tense
High	i	î		u	û
Mid	e	ê		o	ô
Low	ae		â	a	ao
	Unrounded			Rounded	

The phonemic distinction of "lax" and "tense" becomes a very interesting section of this book. These terms are used similarly to traditional phonetic use and refer to the "muscular tension of the tongue and lips" (p.59). Stokhof says,

"It took me a considerable amount of time to find out what exactly the distinguishing feature is between such pairs as

(1)   (2)

/sâk/   'old'   /sak/   'grass'
/tôn/   'bamboo'   /ton/   'breadfruit'
/sû/   'heavy'   /su/   'three'
/wê/   'blood'   /we/   'to go'
/kîl/   'quiet'   /kil/   'to stab'

The following features seem to play a part:
          (1)   (2)
a) relatively longer duration   vs. relatively shorter
                                        duration
b) relatively more open   vs. relatively more closed
c) increasing muscular tension vs. decreasing muscular
                                        tension
d) relatively lower tone level vs. relatively higher tone
                                        level

... Studying and repeating these oppositions and their realizations it became clear that although lip opening and jaw position may be an important concomitant phenomenon, the real physiological parameter is the muscular tension of tongue and lips " (60-61).

He includes in the appendix lip photographs showing the difference between lax and tense vowels in lip position. This distinction may be more widespread in the Papuan languages of the area and should be investigated more fully.

4.   Evaluation

First, a trivial comment. The author implies that words can change their meanings and gives the following example:

/joU/ means 'yes' and /'beInâ/ means 'no' but in answer to the question /a 'beI jâ 'pâsarmidahnâ ?/ 'Didn't you go to the market?' "/joU/ may mean 'no' and /beInâ/ 'yes' depending on the attitude of the speaker" (8). I believe that this particular example illustrates not a change of meaning but the Melanesian practice of responding to the negative in a question and not the positive.

I found this book to be very thorough in its treatment of the phonemics of Woisika. Because I was not familiar with the theoretical framework, I appreciated the preliminary discussion. I think this is a valuable contribution to the linguistic studies of the area and to the theories of Trubetzkoy and others.

                        Eileen Gasaway
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                Maribelle Young, Bwaidoka Tales. Pacific
                Linguistics D16, 1979. Pp. viii + 136.

This is a book of Bwaidoka folk-tales with interlinear morpheme-by-morpheme translation, followed by a grammatical English translation. These English translations take up about fifty pages.

There are nineteen tales, all except one narrated by women. There is an introduction, a map showing the position of Bwaidoka in the D'Entrecasteaux Islands of Papua New Guinea, and two photographs.

There has been no editing of mistakes in the stories. They are transcribed as they were originally given, including the narrator's apologies for mistakes when she said things which were wrong.