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Despite the recent fervor with which linguists have sought to improve the documentation of the world's languages, many languages remain woefully under- or even undocumented. In Papua New Guinea (PNG), where the vast linguistic diversity is still poorly understood, this is quite common (Palmer, 2017). Cultural shift and the widespread adoption of Tok Pisin and English as *lingua francas* in PNG has upset cultural transmission in many communities (Aikhenvald, 2004). Pondi (ISO 639-3 lnm, Glottocode [lang1328]), a language of the Keram language family, is one such threatened language. It is a small language, spoken by approximately 300 people in Langam village in the Sepik region of northern Papua New Guinea. Before Barlow's work, the only existing documentation on the language was 21 pages of handwritten notes and a wordlist of about 200 words archived in PARADISEC (Laycock, 1971). Thus, simply by improving the documentation and description of Pondi, Barlow has provided the academic and language communities with an invaluable resource.

This grammar is organized into nine chapters and three wordlists. In order, chapter topics include (1) an introduction to the language and people, (2) phonetics and phonology, (3) nominal morphology, (4) verbal morphology, (5) word classes, (6) phrase-level syntax, (7) clause-level syntax, (8) the syntax of complex sentences, and (9) Pondi-to-English and English-to-Pondi lexicons. These are followed by three wordlists: (1) the Swadesh 100-wordlist, (2) the Swadesh 200-wordlist, and (3) the Standard SIL-PNG wordlist.

Chapter 1 serves to familiarize the reader with the Pondi language and people and with life in northern interior PNG. It is organized around what appear to be the three main goals of this book. Throughout the chapter, Barlow conveys a sense of urgency in documenting and describing the Pondi language. He uses several language endangerment scales to show that Pondi is a highly endangered language. Due to influence from Tok Pisin, intergenerational transmission seems to have ceased over two decades ago. He additionally expands the knowledge of the region's languages by offering a tentative subgrouping of the Keram language family. Finally, he contributes to the typological knowledge of the world's languages by contextualizing notable Pondi features—such as word order and phonological inventory—within common typological patterns.

Chapter 2 is a phonological description of Pondi. The Pondi phonological inventory consists of thirteen consonants and six vowels. Each segment is addressed in turn, beginning with consonants and following with vowels. Possible syllable structures include V, CV, VC, CVC, CCV, and CCVC. Complex CC codas and VV sequences are rare. Barlow also briefly notes a lack of phonemic stress and details morphophonemic processes through traditional rule notation. Although he leaves the reader with a good idea of the phonology, some areas warrant further explanation or definition. How does the author identify stress? What criteria does he use to

distinguish a diphthong from a vowel + glide sequence? Such inclusions would have increased the comparative potential for the data.

Chapter 3 is entirely focused on nominal number agreement—the only way that nouns are inflected and an interesting comparative subject for languages in the Sepik area. Pondi number exhibits a mismatch that is common in the languages near the Sepik and Ramu rivers; pronouns and determiners distinguish singular, dual, and plural while nouns contrast non-plural (1-2 persons) versus plural (3 or more persons). Barlow describes the morphophonological and morphosyntactic features of plural affixes and often offers historically-rooted conjectures pertaining to certain word form anomalies which beg for future research. At the end of the chapter, Barlow quantifies the number of occurrences of each type of plural form which is an immensely useful summary of the chapter content. It evidences that certain plural forms—nouns ending in -al or -e—are vastly more common than the others.

Chapter 4 outlines verbal morphology including aspect; mood; nonfinite, simultaneous, and conditional suffixes; and the only two prefixes in the language—a perfective and a detransitiviser. Verbal suffixes mark perfective and imperfective aspect as well as irrealis and imperative mood. The perfective (or perhaps completive) prefix, *a-,* appears to be cognate with *ta* 'already' from Pondi's sister language, Ulwa. While it often co-occurs with the perfective and imperative suffixes *-apï* and *-ngapï,* it may also disambiguate verbs that do not distinguish perfective from imperfective. The detransitiviser prefix *l-* appears to lower the valency of the verb, but it also has additional functions that require further investigation. Verbs that have irregular forms such as the locative verb *p-* 'to be' and the motion verbs *i-* 'come' and *mal-* 'go' are also discussed. As in chapter three, the author often compares features of Pondi verbs to those of nearby languages, which helps disentangle murky phenomena or fill out incomplete data.

Chapter 5 details other word classes including adjectives, pronouns, determiners, postpositions, adverbs, negators, question words, conjunctions, and numerals. Barlow recognizes that some may not be true word classes in Pondi (e.g. adjectives and negators), but he organizes them as such for the purpose of typological comparison. Adjectives may modify nouns and exhibit number agreement (non-plural or plural) with the noun, or they may act as predicates. Adverbs are optional, and though they usually follow the subject, they are the only elements that may occur before the subject. For closed classes, such as determiners, negators, prepositions and others, the author presents the words that belong to the class and then discusses each word individually with a plethora of examples.

Chapter 6 describes phrase-level syntax. Barlow defines a phrase as a set of one or more words which together function as a syntactic unit. However, the chapter is focused on multi-word phrases in NPs, VPs, and PPs with particular attention to word order and the non-head elements of the phrase. Notable features of NPs include possessors that precede the head noun, and nuances in number agreement between determiners, numerals, and nominal morphology. Serial verb constructions, in a strict sense of the term, are uncommon in Pondi VPs, but auxiliary and compound verbs occur often. Finally, all adpositions in Pondi are postpositions; the PP (or PPs) usually precedes the verb, and several prepositions may occur in a single PP. The formulaic word

orders that are presented in this chapter for each type of phrase serve as useful prototypes, and the discussion reveals the ways in which word order may vary.

Chapter 7 is focused on clause-level syntax. According to Barlow, a clause minimally consists of a verb and a subject (overt or covert). In this chapter, Barlow introduces the basic clausal word order—SV in intransitive and SOV (APV) in transitive—and offers preliminary evidence of a lack of ergativity and split intransitivity. Obliques are often marked with an -*n* suffix and tend to directly follow the subject. Finally, Barlow observes a lack of ditransitivity in his dataset by identifying verbs that are commonly ditransitive cross-linguistically and demonstrating their monotransitivity in Pondi.

Chapter 8 describes the syntax of complex sentences which includes coordination, relative clauses, questions, negation, commands, reported speech and conditionals. Most of these tasks are achieved through parataxis or juxtaposed clauses. Coordination rarely occurs in Pondi and in part seems to be a product of Tok Pisin influence. For instance, the coordinating conjunction *o* 'or' is borrowed from Tok Pisin. Content questions are produced in-situ; yes/no questions are indicated by a rising intonation. Imperatives can be formed using an imperative suffix on the verb, -*ï,* or an irrealis suffix.

Chapter 9 provides both a Pondi-to-English and an English-to-Pondi lexicon which include 600 Pondi forms. The Pondi-to-English lexicon gives the base form, the definition, grammatical function, other forms or allomorphs, etymologies where known, the loan language when known, and synonyms when known. Nouns are presented in their singular forms, and plural forms are noted in the definition. Verbs are organized based on their stems, and suppletive forms receive separate entries. Lexical items that have the same form but different meanings each receive separate entries. The author also occasionally includes Tok Pisin definitions when deemed helpful. Though the English-to-Pondi lexicon is less-exhaustive, including only word forms and stems, readers can use it to find Pondi forms and then find more information in the grammar or the Pondi-to-English wordlist.

Finally, for purposes of typological comparison, the Swadesh 100, Swadesh 200, and Standard SIL-PNG wordlists are provided. Like the English-to-Pondi lexicon, they are not exhaustive, but they provide the word form and the root, and additional information can be found elsewhere in the grammar. It is curious, however, why only verbs are marked as such. Nouns and other word classes are identified throughout the grammar, but they are not labeled here. While the caution is warranted when the word class is unclear, this information may have been useful for readers.

As previously noted, overall, the book seems to be written with three goals in mind: improving the documentation of Pondi, providing more information on an understudied language family, and contributing new language data to the broader understanding of the world's languages. It is well organized to achieve these goals. The book is data-focused; examples are plentiful, and Barlow seeks to avoid theoretical assumptions. When he provides his own conjectures or analyses, he acknowledges this, though as previously mentioned, some topics—such as stress and diphthongs—could benefit from further theoretical and definitional grounding. The author supports his analyses with typological and historical evidence, situating Pondi's features in

comparison to better-known languages and phenomena in the region. Further, the book is organized in a way that is useful beyond the context of PNG. For instance, although Barlow is unsure whether there is a class of adjectives in Pondi, he dedicates a section to adjectives for the sole purpose of typological comparison. Similarly, he discusses ditransitives even though Pondi does not have any ditransitive verbs. In this way, the book transcends its usefulness for just scholars of the non-Austronesian languages of PNG in order to be valuable for linguists working anywhere.

As well as its merit for academics, this sketch grammar is also an asset for community members. The working orthography developed by Barlow is simple and resembles the orthographies of nearby languages which may maximize accessibility as speakers adopt and modify the orthography for their own purposes. Similarly, the language description may serve as a valuable resource for future Pondi generations to learn about and reclaim their ancestral language. Unfortunately, this sketch grammar is based is entirely on elicited words and sentences. Nevertheless, the data, though preliminary, are an invaluable contribution in itself. Audio recordings of wordlists, sentence elicitation, and a few stories are archived publicly in PARADESIC at http://catalog.paradisec.org.au/repository/RB6 (Barlow, 2016), offering the community an additional means through which to explore and share their language. Thus, while this sketch grammar merely scratches the surface of the wealth of information available in Pondi, it is a timely contribution that may inspire future language work.

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