

Frantisek Lichtenberk, A Grammar of Manam. Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1983 [Oceanic Linguistics Special Publication No.18].
xiii + 647 pp. \$25.00 (pb).

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The question "ʻaiʻo manám pʻile ʻu-ʻáwa?" ("Do you know the Manam language?") must be answered with "e" ("Yes") by every linguist having read Lichtenberk's excellent descriptive grammar of Manam. Manam is a member of the Oceanic sub-group of the Austronesian language family with SOV word order. It is spoken by about 6,300 people¹ living on Manam and Boesa Islands off the north coast of New Guinea.

Lichtenberk's book is based on data collected during a field trip to Manam Island in 1976-77 in connection with the Oceanic Comparative Linguistics Project conducted by the University of Hawaii. It is heavily data oriented.

Before Lichtenberk's grammar appeared only three other published descriptions of Manam and a few brief word lists were available.² Lichtenberk's grammar provides a comprehensive view of the structure of Manam. According to the author it is intended for linguists working in Oceanic and, more generally, Austronesian linguistics. Moreover Lichtenberk hopes - with good reason - that the grammar will be of interest to general theoretical linguists as a source of data from yet another language.

The book contains eleven chapters besides a detailed Table of Contents, a concise Preface in which succinct summaries of the eleven chapters of the book are given, Acknowledgements and Abbreviations and Conventions sections. Chapter 1 is an introduction that not only provides general information about the language, the speech community, and previous studies of Manam, but

also outlines Lichtenberk's approach to the language. The grammar proper starts with Chapter 2, a description of the phonology of Manam. This chapter discusses the segmental phonemes, phonotactics, morphophonemics, "buffer elements", and stress. Lichtenberk not only provides the reader with an abundance of interesting data that includes amongst other things a fascinating discussion of a sound change in progress - i.e., a change from voiceless uvular stop to glottal stop - but also succeeds in presenting and illustrating rather complex linguistic facts clearly and convincingly. About the only criticisms that one could make about the author's description here are: (a) that he uses impressionistic expressions like "stressed vowels are longer than their unstressed counterparts" (p.17; see also p.29) without the qualifying observation that they are not based on any objective measure of vowel length -- indeed there is no mechanical way of making such a measurement as far as I know -- and (b) that Rule 21 (p.72), for example, could have been formed a bit more elegantly (for example, by introducing common bracketing conventions). But these are very minor criticisms indeed and do not detract from the value of the chapter.

Chapter 3 deals with the basic sentence structure of Manam. Lichtenberk argues that the schematic sentence structure is more adequately viewed in terms of the elements "predicators", "arguments", and "circumstantials" than in terms of the traditional subject-predicate dichotomy. Again, his arguments are based on excellent and convincing examples. Thus Lichtenberk prefers to describe the basic word order of the Manam simple sentence as "Su-X-Pred, where X is anything that is not the subject or the predicator"(p.101). The chapter ends with a few remarks on intonation. Here as well as in all instances where he refers to intonation contours (see e.g. pp. 392, 399, 412, 488, 521, 562), Lichtenberk - like most other linguists - does not emphasize that these "intonation contours" are only impressionistic and not based on any objective mechanical measure -- that there may be striking

differences between a hearer's impression and the actual physical-phonetic facts is one of the more recent insights of ongoing intonation studies.

Chapter 4 describes the structure of the verb phrase. The topics covered here are "Number and person indexing", "Indexing of subjects and objects", "Number marking on verbs", "Moods and aspects", "Other verbal suffixes and prefixes", "Reciprocal constructions", "Types of verbs", "Verbal derivational processes and valencies", and "Gerunds and verbal nouns". Here as well as in the following chapters on phrase and sentence structure the advantages of Lichtenberk's general approach of assuming that sentences (just) realize semantic structures become quite evident (see e.g. p.121).

Chapter 5 presents the structure of the simple, the compound, and the appositive noun phrase. Here Lichtenberk corrects some of Böhm's analyses (see e.g. p.290f.) and emphasizes among other things the difficulties grammarians have describing language specific and inherent facts in technical terms - terms that quite often are only "crude approximations"(p.306) to what is really 'going on' with respect to certain language structures. What remains unclear to me here are two things: firstly, I have no idea at all how Lichtenberk comes to equate "noun classes" and "genders" in the following sentence: "...it is therefore the case that three noun classes (genders) have to be recognized..."(p.299); secondly, concerning his description of cardinal numbers I wonder whether Manam may have a kind of rudimentary (?) system of numeral classifiers (see e.g. p.340f.).

Chapter 6 discusses types of postpositional phrases.

Chapter 7 describes the various sentence structures and sentence types. I want to emphasize here that the clear definitions of the terms "theme, rheme" and "topic, comment" and their usage is especially meritorious (if one keeps in mind the rather confusing use of these terms).

Chapter 8 deals with "the structures of various types of complex sentences and also with the ways in which the relationships between the events or states encoded by clauses in complex sentences are expressed"(p.513). Here Lichtenberk's definition of "ellipsis"(see p.9) must be criticized as being too general to describe the linguistic problem properly. Thus, it remains unclear whether Lichtenberk may also mean "deleted" when he uses "ellipted" in sentences like "...in the case of postverbal elements, all but the last one are ellipted"(p.520; see also e.g. p.442). Here a sound definition on the basis of Bühler's ideas on ellipsis (Bühler 1934: 88, 155ff, 166f., 285, 310, 358) would have been most desirable.

Chapter 9 presents a fascinating description of aspects of temporal and spatial deixis in Manam. Moreover, the information given in the note to this chapter is an excellent example of how to do field research properly.

Chapter 10 deals with the types and functions of Manam reduplication. In connection with this chapter Lichtenberk's observation that the "set of Manam color terms is quite open-ended"(p.610) certainly deserves special emphasis.

The final chapter of the grammar deals with Tok Pisin forms that are incorporated as loan-words in the Manam language. All the interesting "mechanisms of interference" (Weinreich 1953: 1&7) that can be observed are described here in detail.

After the references, the book ends with a very useful index.

To sum up, Lichtenberk's book is an excellent descriptive grammar of Manam. It offers the reader an enormous amount of data and presents sound descriptions of the grammatical structures of the language that can be checked by the reader against the data presented. The book can be recommended as a model of exemplary didactic organization. Except for a very few cases the technical terms used are clearly defined. This results in linguistic descriptions that are as unequivocal as possible. A must for

linguists working in Austronesian linguistics, Lichtenberk's grammar of Manam offers rich data and insights to any student of language.

NOTES

- 1 Lichtenberk emphasizes that with the exception of little children, all Manam speakers are bilingual in Tok Pisin and that a few people have some knowledge of English, too.
- 2 Lichtenberk refers to these publications on page 4 of his book. The most useful of these publications is probably Böhlm (1975) which, it should be noted, is also available in an English translation (Böhlm 1983). See Laycock (1987) for a critical review of this book.

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