HALIA VERB MORPHOLOGY:
from morpheme to discourse

by

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PREFACE

Halia is an Austronesian language spoken or understood by some 13,000 inhabitants of the North and East coasts of Buka Island, the North coast of Bougainville Island and the Cartaret Atoll, all areas included within the North Solomons Province of Papua New Guinea.

The data used in this paper are the result of research in Halia carried out by the author and his wife from 1964 to 1977. Field work has been done primarily in the central Hanahan (East Buka) dialect. Other dialects of Halia are: Tuloun (Cartarets Atoll), Hangan (South Buka), Hakō (North Buka), and Selau (North Bougainville). All research has been conducted under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics.

Of considerable value in the basic research was a morpheme by morpheme concordance produced by computer under a joint project of the Summer Institute of Linguistics and the University of Oklahoma Research Institute and partially funded by National Science Foundation Grant GS-934. Research for Chapters 6 and 7 was also partially supported by a grant from the National Science Foundation.

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Many Austronesian (AN) languages of Melanesia present problems to linguists because they do not readily lend themselves to a neat subclassification of AN. Features considered atypical for AN as a whole are often found in AN languages of Melanesia. Halia is one of these languages.

While there are many characteristics of Halia that are undoubtedly AN, the verb morphology presents patterns that are very unusual for AN languages. For example, the Subject is marked by morphemes both preceding and following the verb. The verb phrase has six orders of preverb units, three orders of prefixes, the potential cooccurrence of four postverb adverbs, and eleven orders of postclitics. This complex agglutinative structure of the Halia verb contrasts with AN languages which have an analytical struc-
ture and are assumed thereby to be more typical of AN.

Mode, aspect and other functions within the verb phrase are marked by both particles and affixes. But the postclitics indicate relationships on the clause, sentence and discourse levels. Postclitics mark clause level case relations such as Subject, Object, Referent and Associative in both independent and dependent clauses, but dependent clauses exhibit more complex patterns of postclitics than the more normative independent clauses. Postclitics which mark case in the clause also mark propositional relations between clauses, such as cause, purpose, condition and quotation.

Though relations within the verb phrase are generally explicit, the marking of relations beyond the verb phrase must be interpreted in the light of the larger linguistic context. This indicates that clause, sentence and discourse must be analyzed to fully account for relations which are marked in the verb morphology.
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