

**Summer Institute of Linguistics and  
The University of Texas at Arlington  
Publications in Linguistics**

**Publication 100**

**Editors**

Virgil Poulter  
University of Texas  
at Arlington

William R. Merrifield  
Summer Institute of  
Linguistics

**Volume Editor**

Wayne Leman

**Assistant Editors**

Rhonda Hartell

Marilyn A. Mayers

**Consulting Editors**

Doris A. Bartholomew  
Pamela M. Bendor-Samuel  
Desmond C. Derbyshire  
Robert A. Dooley  
Jerold A. Edmondson

Austin Hale  
Robert E. Longacre  
Eugene E. Loos  
Kenneth L. Pike  
Viola G. Waterhouse

# **A Reference Grammar of Southeastern Tepehuan**

**Thomas L. Willett**

**A Publication of  
The Summer Institute of Linguistics  
and  
The University of Texas at Arlington  
1991**

© 1991 by the Summer Institute of Linguistics, Inc.

Library of Congress Catalog No: 91-65341

ISBN: 0-88312-802-0

ISSN: 1040-0850

**All Rights Reserved**

No part of this publication may be reproduced, stored in a retrieval system, or transmitted in any form or by any means—electronic, mechanical, photocopy, recording, or otherwise—without the express permission of the Summer Institute of Linguistics, with the exception of brief excerpts in journal articles or reviews.

Cover design and sketch by Hazel Shorey

Copies of this and other publications of the Summer Institute of Linguistics may be obtained from

International Academic Bookstore  
Summer Institute of Linguistics  
7500 W. Camp Wisdom Rd.  
Dallas, TX 75236

# Table of Contents

List of abbreviations . . . . .	ix
Acknowledgments . . . . .	xi
Map . . . . .	xii
1 Introduction . . . . .	1
1.1 Background of Southeastern Tepehuan . . . . .	2
1.11 Geography . . . . .	3
1.12 Culture . . . . .	4
1.2 Theory and method . . . . .	5
1.21 Focus on meaning . . . . .	5
1.22 Use of data . . . . .	8
2 Phonology . . . . .	11
2.1 Segmental phonology . . . . .	12
2.11 Syllables . . . . .	12
2.12 Consonants . . . . .	13
2.13 Vowels . . . . .	14
2.2 Phonological processes . . . . .	15
2.21 Palatalization . . . . .	15
2.22 Voicelessness and deobstruentization . . . . .	17
2.23 Final vowel drop . . . . .	18
2.24 Rules involving [h] . . . . .	19

2.3 Morphophonological processes . . . . .	21
2.31 Accent placement . . . . .	21
2.32 Accent-induced vowel changes . . . . .	23
2.33 Reduplication . . . . .	24
2.34 Perfective stem formation . . . . .	25
2.35 Cross-boundary vowel deletions . . . . .	29
2.36 Cross-boundary vowel changes . . . . .	30
2.37 Deletion of [h] plus vowel . . . . .	31
2.38 Subject auxiliary changes . . . . .	32
2.39 Confirmation question formation . . . . .	34
2.4 Orthography . . . . .	35
3 Clause structure . . . . .	37
3.1 Major clause constituents . . . . .	37
3.2 Verb phrase . . . . .	40
3.21 Verb stem formation . . . . .	41
3.22 Verb prefixes . . . . .	44
3.23 Verb suffixes . . . . .	46
3.3 Noun phrase . . . . .	49
3.31 Determiners . . . . .	51
3.32 Noun affixes . . . . .	52
3.33 Pronouns . . . . .	53
3.4 Adverb phrase . . . . .	55
3.5 Linking particles . . . . .	57
3.6 Correlation to meaning . . . . .	57
4 Situations . . . . .	59
4.1 Static situations . . . . .	59
4.11 Resultant states . . . . .	60
4.12 States of being . . . . .	62
4.13 Copula of existence . . . . .	65
4.14 Copula of attribution . . . . .	67
4.2 Dynamic situations . . . . .	69
4.21 Processes . . . . .	69
4.22 Actions . . . . .	72

5 Entities . . . . .	79
5.1 Types of entities . . . . .	79
5.2 Countability . . . . .	83
5.3 Animacy . . . . .	83
5.4 Quantification . . . . .	84
5.5 Orientation . . . . .	86
6 Settings . . . . .	91
6.1 Location and direction . . . . .	91
6.2 Time . . . . .	97
6.3 Manner . . . . .	98
7 Tense . . . . .	101
7.1 Present tense . . . . .	102
7.2 Future tense . . . . .	109
7.3 Past tense . . . . .	112
8 Aspect . . . . .	119
8.1 Inception, termination, and realization . . . . .	119
8.2 Distinctiveness and simplicity . . . . .	123
8.3 Resultative . . . . .	124
8.4 Distribution, repetition, and extent . . . . .	125
8.5 Temporary and durative . . . . .	131
8.6 Motion and transfer . . . . .	134
9 Modality . . . . .	137
9.1 Modes of speech . . . . .	137
9.11 Indicative mode . . . . .	138
9.12 Interrogative mode . . . . .	138
9.13 Conditional mode . . . . .	143
9.14 Imperative mode . . . . .	147
9.2 Epistemic modality . . . . .	153
9.21 Judgments . . . . .	155
9.22 Evidentials . . . . .	161
9.3 Agent-oriented modality . . . . .	166
9.31 Intention, deliberate action, and objective . . . . .	167
9.32 Attempted and unintended action . . . . .	173
9.33 Desire and tendency . . . . .	175
9.34 Ability, obligation, and permission . . . . .	176

10 Valence . . . . .	181
10.1 Applicative . . . . .	181
10.2 Causative and benefactive . . . . .	183
11 Deixis . . . . .	187
11.1 Spatial deixis . . . . .	187
11.2 Person and number . . . . .	189
11.21 Subject . . . . .	190
11.22 Object . . . . .	195
11.23 Reflexive and reciprocal . . . . .	198
11.24 Demonstratives . . . . .	201
11.25 Possession . . . . .	202
12 Specification . . . . .	205
12.1 Plurality . . . . .	205
12.2 Definiteness . . . . .	206
12.3 Precision . . . . .	207
12.4 Status and diminutive . . . . .	210
13 Coordination . . . . .	215
13.1 Additive coordination . . . . .	215
13.2 Augmentative coordination . . . . .	223
13.3 Interjective coordination . . . . .	229
14 Subordination . . . . .	233
14.1 Relative subordination . . . . .	234
14.2 Spatial-temporal subordination . . . . .	238
14.3 Logical subordination . . . . .	240
14.4 Complement subordination . . . . .	245
15 Continuity . . . . .	251
15.1 Participant continuity . . . . .	252
15.2 Propositional continuity . . . . .	258
16 Conclusion . . . . .	265
16.1 Typological comparison . . . . .	265
16.2 Meaning and form . . . . .	267
Appendix: A Myth About Creation . . . . .	271
References . . . . .	277

# List of Abbreviations

AFF	Affirmation	MOT	Motion
ALT	Alternative	NEG	Negative
ANT	Anticipation	NPS	Nonpresent static
APL	Applicative	OBJ	Objective
ART	Article	OWN	Ownership
ATR	Attributive	PC	Polite command
ATT	Attempt	PE	Perceived evidence
AWY	Away	PI	Past imperfective
BEN	Benefactive	PL	Plural
CAUS	Causative	POS	Possessor
CFR	Confirmation	PP	Past punctiliar
CLM	Climactic event	PRE	Precision
CLR	Clarification	PRF	Past perfective
CND	Conditional	PRX	Proximal
CNTF	Counterfactual	RCP	Reciprocal
CON	Connected action	RDP	Reduplication
CRE	Creation	REK	Reported evidence known
DA	Deliberate action	REM	Remote
DBT	Doubt	REP	Repetition
DC	Direct command	RES	Resultative
DEM	Demonstrative	REU	Reported evidence unknown
DES	Desiderative	RFL	Reflexive
DIM	Diminutive	RLZ	Realization
DIR	Direction	RP	Result of process
DIS	Distal	SC	Strong command
DP	Developing process	SG	Singular
DSC	Disclaimer	SIM	Simplicity
DST	Distinctiveness	STA	Static
DUR	Durative	STS	Status
EMP	Emphasis	SUB	Subordinator
EXH	Exhortation	TEM	Temporary
EXS	Existential	TERM	Termination
EXT	Extent	TND	Tendency
FUT	Future	TRNS	Transfer
IA	Interrogative alternative	TWD	Toward
IMP	Imperative	UNI	Unintended
INC	Inception	1p	First-person plural
INF	Inference	1s	First-person singular
INJ	Interjective	2p	Second-person plural
INSTR	Instrument	2s	Second-person singular
INT	Intent	3p	Third-person plural
LIT	Literally	3s	Third-person singular
LOC	Location		

## **Acknowledgments**

I wish to express my sincere appreciation to the following people who have helped me bring this volume to successful completion:

Many Southeastern Tepehuan friends, for helping me learn their language, especially Alberto Flores Soto, Cornelio Ramirez Solis, and José Trinidad Solis de la Cruz, who provided most of the data upon which this grammar is based.

My wife, Elizabeth Willett, for tackling the phonological analysis of the language and for her continual support throughout my graduate study, including valuable suggestions to improve this manuscript.

The members of my doctoral committee in the Linguistics Department of the State University of New York at Buffalo—Joan Bybee, Madeleine Mathiot, and David Zubin—for the things they taught me during the coursework I took with them and for their encouragement during the preparation of this dissertation.

Joseph Grimes, for encouraging me in my first attempts at grammatical analysis in Southeastern Tepehuan, and for serving as the outside reader for my dissertation.

My parents, Edward and Ruth Willett, who have always believed in me and always prayed for me.

Map of the Southern Tepehuan region

