WHAT GOES INTO A GRAMMAR ESSENTIALS
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These are suggestions for the contents and outline of a grammar essentials with particular application to Papuan (NonAustronesian) languages of PNG.

1. Table of Contents. List of Abbreviations.

2. Introduction.

Where the language is spoken, its classification, a description of the corpus of data the description is based on and how much of it, when it was collected, who the principal language helpers were, etc., references to anything else written on the language, highlight the linguistically interesting features of the language.

3. Phonology.

Brief description of phonology: what the phonemes are, their orthographic representation, etc. If there are morphophonemic processes which will affect the reader's understanding of data examples then these should be described here too. If the morphophonemics is complex you could alternatively or additionally give two-level data examples showing underlying phonemic form and surface morphophonemic form.

4. Morphology.

Morphology is primarily concerned with the structure of words. The various word structures of the language need to be described, e.g. stem+suffix, prefix+stem, stem+stem+affix, etc. The two basic types of morphology need to be described, i.e. inflectional and derivational:

> Inflectional primarily creates new word-forms in a paradigm, does not change the word class, applies to all members of the word class, and expresses grammatical relationships between a word and its context, e.g. tense, number agreement, etc.

> Derivational primarily creates new lexemes with an independent meaning, usually changes the word class and does not apply to all members of the word class, e.g. deriving an adjective from a noun or verb.

The different forms of inflectional and derivational morphology need to be described, e.g. suffix, prefix, infix, postpositional cliticization, reduplication, compounding, verb serialization, verb incorporation, impersonal verbs, zero conversion, etc., as well as the different functions. For both inflectional and derivational morphology the basic forms could be described here and then a full description of functions and paradigms could be given in the Word Level section.

5. Word Level.

Describe the different word classes and the criteria used to distinguish them. Remember that morphological and distributional criteria are more helpful in determining word class status than semantic criteria. There are two basic types of word class, viz. open vs. closed word classes. The open classes are usually noun, verb, adjective and adverb and the membership of these classes are open-ended and do not need to be exhaustively listed. The closed classes include pronouns, postpositions, conjunctions, particles, etc. and need to be exhaustively listed since their membership is not open-ended and their function is grammatical rather than referential.

Open word classes:

A. Nouns:

Give noun classes (e.g. gender), paradigms of inalienable nouns, case marking, etc. Give some examples from each class.

B. Verbs:

Give verb classes, e.g. intransitive, transitive, ditransitive, tritransitive, semitransitive, causative, passive, reflexive, reciprocal, impersonal, stative, etc. Give some examples from each class. Give paradigms showing all possible verb forms. 70% of Papuan languages have a switch-reference system of some sort and a basic distinction between medial and final verbs. Usually different sets of categories apply to these two basic verb types. Describe and list them accordingly. Verb categories can be further divided in Papuan languages between 'inner' operators, i.e. those categories that can change the meaning of the verb and therefore be considered to be derivational rather than inflectional morphology, and 'outer' operators, i.e. those categories that do not change the basic meaning of the verb. Outer operators have scope over the whole clause whereas inner operators only have scope within the VP. These categories are:

Inner Operators:	Outer Operators:
Agreement (within VP): direct and indirect object, locative object, etc.	Agreement (intra/inter clausal): subject agreement, switch-reference, anticipatory subject agreement
Voice: active, passive, reflexive, reciprocal, impersonal, causative, etc.	Tense: absolutive: past, present, future relative: sequential, simultaneous
Aspect: perfective, imperfective, progressive, habitual, iterative, durative, punctual, directionals, inceptive, completive, stative, etc.	Modality: realis vs. irrealis: future, imperative, conditional, counterfactual, doubt, probable, possible, habitual, evidentials, etc.
	Illocutionary Force: assertion (declarative), command (imperative, prohibitive, hortative), question (interrogative), desire (optative), obligation, abilitative, permissive, etc.
	Negation
For example, object agreement and reflexive and reciprocal voice would only apply to transitive verbs, progressive and iterative aspect would only apply to nonstative verbs, and so forth.	In contrast, these outer operators would apply to all verb classes.

C. Adjectives:

There is usually some difficulty in Papuan languages in distinguishing formally a class of adjectives distinct from nouns. There may only be a small set of adjectives. Give any classes, e.g. animate vs. inanimate, describe any inflection, e.g. nominal gender or predicate inflection. Can adjectives be derived by cliticizing of postpositions to nouns or verbs?

D. Adverbs:

Can they be distinguished formally from the class of adjectives or nouns? There may be just a small class of adverbs, e.g. limiters, emphasizers, etc., that only function as modifiers of adjectives or verbs. Negator adverbs could also be described here.

Closed classes:

A. Pronouns:

Give exhaustive lists of classes, e.g. personal, interrogative, demonstrative, indefinite, focus, emphatic, relative(?), etc. Give paradigms of cases, e.g. nominative, accusative, genitive, dative, reflexive, reciprocal, comitative, etc.

B. Pro-forms:

Are there any other pro-forms in the language, for example, pro-verbs, e.g. 'do', interrogative verbs, negative verbs, etc. or pro-adverbs, e.g. 'thus', 'there', 'then', 'like that', etc. or pro-adjectives, e.g. 'such', 'like that', etc. or pro-clauses, e.g. 'yes', 'no', etc.? List them and give their functions.

C. Postpositions (Prepositions):

Cliticized postpositions need to be distinguished from nominal inflection. List them and give their functions. Are there any compound postpositions? Can any postpositions take any inflection?

D. Numerals:

Numerals or quantifiers will form a closed class. What is the mathematical base, e.g. two, five, ten, etc.? Is it a system based on body parts? Give an exhaustive list.

E. Conjunctions and Complementizers:

List and give their functions, e.g. subordinate vs. coordinate, phrasal vs. clausal, relativizer, etc.

F. Verb Auxiliaries:

There may be a closed class of words that express the tense, aspect, mode, voice or polarity of the verb. List them and give their functions.

G. Particles and Clitics:

There may be some words which have a fixed position in the clause, e.g. first word or second word in the clause. These are sentence clitics. There may be copula particles which indicate a predicate nominal or adjective, etc. List any such particles and give their functions.

6. Phrase Structure.

Some things apply generally at the phrase level, such as coordination and negation of constituents. Describe this where it applies.

A. Noun Phrase:

Can the NP be postmodified, i.e. Head+Modifier, or premodified, i.e. Specifier+Head, or both? Indicate the items that can be modifiers or specifiers. What is the normal order in the postmodified NP? e.g. noun - adjective - numeral - demonstrative. A constituent comprising noun+noun can be analyzed as a NP or a compound noun. How are NPs coordinated? e.g. by simple apposition or by a coordinating conjunction. Can the NP contain a relative clause? Give examples of all NP constructions.

B. Verb Phrase:

Does the verb form a VP constituent with the object NP delimited by negator adverbs, for example, or do you have a flat clause structure of NP[Su] NP[Ob] V? Can a series of verbs form a serial VP having the same subject and object arguments? Are there verb+verb constructions where one of the verbs supplies the aspectual meaning? Are there compound VPs comprising Noun+Verb where the noun carries the meaning and the verb merely carries the inflection? Give examples of all VP constructions.

C. Adjective Phrase:

If adjectives can be modified by emphasizers or limiters then this would justify a separate AdjP constituent.

D. Postpositional Phrase:

Describe the different constituents that can function as object of the postposition, e.g. NP, PP, clause, etc. Give examples.

E. Numeral Phrase:

Give a full description of the possible combinations of numerals for the NumP.

7. Clause Structure.

A. Order:

Give the normal unmarked order of constituents in the clause, e.g. Time Su Loc IO DO V, etc. How rigid/free is this ordering? Which items are optional/obligatory? When the basic order is SOV are there special sites for movement rules, e.g. XSOV (frontshifting), SOXV (preverbal focus), SOVX (endshifting).

B. Grammatical relations:

What grammatical relations are distinguished in the clause, e.g. Subject and Object? Is this by word order, postpositions, case inflection, nominal agreement on the verb or a combination of these things? What system of case agreement is employed, e.g. nominative- accusative, ergative-absolutive, active-nonactive or other?

C. Topic and Focus:

What syntactic devices (e.g. movement, particles, intonation) are available for indicating that an item in the clause is topicalized or focussed.

D. Clause types:

Are there different clause types based on ordering restrictions, obligatory/optional constituents, distributional criteria, intonation patterns, etc. e.g. relative clause, interrogative clause, imperative clause, medial vs. final clause, etc.? Are there verbless clauses such as stative/equative clauses. Can they have an optional stative verb? Can nonverbal items functioning as the predicate, e.g. nouns and adjectives, take special predicative morphology?

E. Clause Operators:

 If any of the clause level operators, such as tense, modality, negation and illocutionary force, are marked by free particles rather than by verbal affixation then their functions could be described here.

F. Conjoining:

How can clauses be conjoined - by simple juxtaposition, by conjunctions, by clause chaining with switch-reference?

8. Complex Sentence Structure.

Describe the various means of conjoining clauses in either subordinate or coordinate relationships.

Note that there are three basic types of subordinate clause, i.e.
- (a) relative clauses: function as an adjectival modifier to a noun in the NP
- (b) nominalized clauses: function as a noun in the clause, e.g. as subject or object
- (c) adverbial clauses: function as an adverbial element in the clause - they can be relative clauses modifying a temporal or locative noun for example.

Relative clause should be described under NP and clause types and nominalized clauses should be described mainly under complementation below.

A. Complementation:

Is a clause that functions as an argument of another clause. The common semantic types are:

He knows	X happened/will happen	Cognition
He thinks	X happened/will happen	Cognition
He says	X happened/will happen	Indirect Quote
He said	"You do X."	Direct Quote
He told	me to do X	Manipulative Predicates
He wants	to do X	Complements of Desiderative Predicates
He wants	someone to do X	Complements of Desiderative Predicates
He is able	to do X	Complements of Modal Verbs
He is permitted	to do X	Complements of Modal Verbs
He caused	someone to do X	Complements of Causative Predicates
I am afraid	that X will happen	Predicates of Fearing

B. Adverbial Clause:

Is a clause that either functions as an adverbial element within another clause or as subordinate to another main clause. The main semantic functions are:

Temporal:	in the time of	did X/to do X
Location:	in the place of	did X/to do X
Instrument:	with the instrument Y	did X/to do X
Manner:	in the manner of	did X/to do X
Purpose:	for	to do X
Cause:	because of	did X
Condition (potential):	if	did X/to do X
Condition (counterfactual):	if	had done X
Concession:	although	did X
Equivalence:	the same way as	did X

What is the unmarked order in each case Subordinate-Main clause or Main-Subordinate clause? Can these orders be reversed?

C. Coordination:

Clauses can be coordinated with a range of semantic functions. The common ones are:

Temporal:

sequential vs. simultaneous

Addition:
    'and' Contrast:
    'but' Alternation:
    'or' Comparison:
    'more than'

9. Discourse Considerations.

Some aspects of discourse structure could be considered at the grammar essentials stage if they have relevance at the clause level but indepth study of discourse structure would normally be left until the grammar sketch stage. Such features of discourse structure that would be relevant might be:

(a) Text Genre.

Do different types of text genre have different lengths or types of clauses? Are any particular verb classes or verb forms prominent in different text genre?

(b) Anaphora.

When clauses are in sequence is any kind of recapitulation (tail-head linkage) employed? Is there any syntactic means of indicating flashback to a previous clause? What anaphoric devices are used for referring backwards or forwards in the text?

(c) Ellipsis.

When clauses are conjoined and the identity of one or more of the elements is the same across the clauses, what elements can be omitted while preserving the sense?

(d) Paragraph Structure.

Is there any syntactic device, e.g. tense sequencing, or particle that would indicate that a sequence of clauses form a higher level paragraph structure?

(e) Topic Tracking.

What are the means of identifying main participants across clauses, e.g. switch-reference, or changing time and place setting?

(f) Written vs. Oral Style.

Is there any difference in clause or text structure between written and oral style?

10. Lexical Considerations.

Much of the grammatical analysis done at the essentials level feeds into your vernacular-English dictionary. However, some other aspects of lexical semantics also need to be considered at this stage since they are important for translation. How are the following expressed lexically?:

(a) Abstractions

    e.g. love, faith, thought, joy, fear, etc.

(b) Implied Speech

e.g. forbid, command, deny, rebuke, etc.

(c) Figures of Speech:

simile (e.g. the man's heart is like stone)
metaphor (e.g. he is a dog)
euphemism (e.g. he passed away, meaning: he died)
hyperbole (e.g. everybody does it, meaning: many do it)
metonymy (e.g. X village came, meaning: the people of X village came)
apostrophe (e.g. O Death! O Jerusalem!)
personification (e.g. the mountain ran) Is this a feature only of legendary accounts, or also of factual reports?
irony (e.g. you are clever, meaning: you think you are clever, but you really are not)
synecdoche (e.g. my stomach believed, meaning: I believed)

(d) Idioms.

Are there expressions where the meaning of the whole cannot be constructed from the meaning of the parts, e.g. did you come by land or by sea? meaning: are you hungry or not?

(e) Slangs, Jargons, Argots, etc.

Are there different or particular forms of the language used by different social groups or in different social contexts. Is a different form of the language used for folk tales or religious ceremonies? Is there a taboo language?

11. Bibliography.

Give accurate references to any works cited in the text.