

**Samoan reference grammar.** By ULRIKE MOSEL and EVEN HOVD-HAUGEN. Oslo: Scandinavian University Press, 1992. Pp. xxii, 819. Cloth \$65.00.

Like most Austronesian languages, Samoan (Polynesian subbranch) is of great interest for language typology. It lacks inflection; its weak distinction between major word classes is syntactically based; and case marking is ergative, but there is neither a passive nor an antipassive, and are there no obligatory core arguments.

M&H's book is a detailed description of Samoan grammar (over 800 pages in small print!); in its amplitude and thoroughness it stands in the philologically-inspired tradition of structuralist grammatography. The grammar's theoretic

cal framework is functional typology, although the authors are very cautious with typological generalizations. Even in their conclusion (Ch. 18.11; 'Some remarkable characteristics of Samoan syntax'), they refrain from correlating obviously related characteristics in a functional perspective (e.g. the correlation of verbal 'lability' with ergativity and predicate prominence, or with the syntactically-based aspect system.)

M&H's approach is data-oriented, with preference for modern Samoan of the *tautala lelei* register ('the good language'). Although both authors have done extensive fieldwork, published data was preferred, so that other researchers can go back to the indicated sources and check contexts and usages. The examples (they are legion!) are scrupulously analyzed, glossed, and translated. When the English translation risks disfiguring the characteristic structure of the original, a literal translation is added. The orthography of quoted examples is left unchanged. This is understandable from a philological point of view, but it has the inconvenience that very often the reader has to check vowel length and diacritics in the glossary.

The first part of the book (1–65) begins with background information about the language, its history and varieties, Samoan linguistics, and the genesis of this particular grammar (Ch. 1). This is followed by a descriptive analysis of the language's phonology and orthography (Ch. 2) and a preliminary view of its syntactic organization (Ch. 3). This overview reveals the organizational principles of the book, inspired by Georg von der Gabelentz's ideas on grammatography, e.g. the dichotomies of 'form to function' vs. 'function to form', or of the internal structure of a grammatical unit vs. its external relation to other units on a higher hierarchical level.

The second part of the book (67–774) is a detailed description of Samoan morphosyntax. Starting from the discussion of word classes (Ch. 4) and morphology (Ch. 5), the authors treat phrasal units (Chs. 6–8), clauses (Chs. 9–14), complex sentences (Chs. 15–16), and co-ordination (Ch. 17). In a sort of summary, the last chapter takes up the question of case marking and grammatical relations. The book also contains an indexed word list, a subject index, and a detailed bibliography.

The grammar addresses typologists and linguists of any theoretical background who are unfamiliar with Samoan. It is also intended to help in the development of teaching materials

and school books in Samoa. Because it challenges some of the basic concepts of universal grammar, however, its main benefit will lie in the advancement of language typology and functional linguistics. [MARTIN HAASE, *University of Osnabrück*.]