

## Walking the line: Balancing description, argumentation and theory in academic grammar writing

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This chapter explores how to incorporate linguistic typology, argumentation, and theoretical innovation into a reference grammar. It provides recommendations on how to produce a balanced grammar that is firmly grounded in theory, responsible to the unique structures of the language, and comprehensible now and over time. Linguistic typology provides a set of widely recognized linguistic categories used in the classification of grammatical patterns. These can be taken as starting points from which the structures of the language can be compared, contrasted, explored, and explained, profiling the unique shapes of language-particular categories. Argumentation for particular analyses provides clarification and explanation, although excessive argumentation can obscure descriptive facts. Simply asserting facts is appropriate for lower-level linguistic features, simple canonical structures, or uncontroversial elements or their functions. Argumentation is appropriate when structures differ from typologically-expected patterns, when the analysis counters descriptions in the literature, and in cases of multiple interpretations of a structure. Grammar writing immerses researchers in the structure of a language, revealing new vistas of understanding and novel ways of interpreting structure. Theoretically innovative analyses that reflect these insights can be incorporated as long as they are motivated, well-explained, and balanced by a typologically-informed descriptive base.

**1. INTRODUCTION.** An academic reference grammar is a complex study which can be enriched by incorporating diachronic, ethnographic, and theoretical dimensions. The grammar writer must determine how much he or she can incorporate these dimensions and still achieve the primary goal of presenting the facts of the language in an accessible and interpretable way. For example, inclusion of excessive diachronic discussion can obscure the synchronic details and produce a study that is primarily historical; this is clearly a worthy endeavor, but one with a different function and goals than a descriptive reference grammar. The same is true for theory: a grammar that is devoid of deeper observations lacks richness and depth; on the other hand, grammars with too much theoretical machinery will be dated and obscure to anyone not trained within that theoretical paradigm. It is also true for argumentation: while argumentation provides invaluable depth to the analysis, excessive argumentation can be tedious and frustrating for the reader. This chapter thus addresses a practical question: how does one incorporate typological analysis, structural argumentation, and theoretical innovation into a reference grammar while still presenting the descriptive facts in a clear and accessible manner? Or, phrased differently, how can a grammar writer do justice to the language-specific richness and variety of structural categories without being either straight-jacketed by typological and theoretical convention or overrun by it? It is all about finding balance.

Section 1 of this chapter addresses linguistic typology. Specifically, it discusses how to balance the typological classification of linguistic forms with the imperative to describe

the unique and language-particular shapes of structural categories. Section 2 moves to the question of argumentation and discusses conditions under which incorporating argumentation is appropriate in contrast to conditions that call for the simple assertion and exemplification of descriptive facts. Section 3 then looks to theoretical innovation. Grammar writing allows one to view the complex interactions between grammatical subsystems with exceptional clarity, opening new vistas of understanding and novel ways of interpreting structure. Here the discussion considers how to balance conventional descriptive categories with new insights that push theoretical boundaries.

**2. BALANCING TYPOLOGICALLY ESTABLISHED PATTERNS WITH LANGUAGE-SPECIFIC CATEGORIES.** Linguistic typology provides us with an inventory of critical structural categories and relationships that guide the fieldworker and constitute the basis for the conception, analysis and presentation of linguistic structure. These categories include, for example, the following: linguistic units (e.g., segments, syllables, words, phrases); word classes (e.g., noun, verb, adjective, numeral); commonly coded meanings (e.g., plural, past tense, perfective, negative, hearsay); grammatical relationships that hold between words and phrases (e.g., subject, head, dependent, embedding); and construction types (e.g., serial verbs, complementation, imperatives, etc.). The grammar writer is thus faced with the question of how much of the grammar should be shaped by our understanding of linguistic typology. Logically, it is possible to provide two extreme answers to this question that represent opposing poles: ‘entirely’ and ‘not at all’. Of course, there is a continuum between these. I will discuss two approaches which can be placed on the continuum approximating these opposite poles: the ‘checklist’ model of grammar writing, and the ‘all is unique’ model. Balance is found at an intermediary point.

One approach to grammar writing is to take the identification of pre-established linguistic types as the primary goal of grammatical investigation. This is called the ‘checklist’ model of grammar writing since one goes down a list of typologically-defined categories and notes the presence or absence of features in the language in question, filling in specific details as appropriate. The obvious problem with this approach is that a language may have features that are not covered in the questionnaire. For example, the *Lingua Descriptive Studies Questionnaire* (Comrie and Smith 1977) has nothing on evidentials.

Even if none of the features in the language were to be absent from the list, there is a more fundamental problem with this approach. Each language has not only a subset of the world’s linguistic structures and categories, but also elements that may be unusual or unique, have fuzzy boundaries, be ‘bistructural’ (Genetti 2007), or be shaped to allow participation in larger language-particular systems in reference to other elements. Identifying types on a checklist can prevent one from seeing both the fine detail and the bigger picture. While a checklist can be a useful starting point for guiding field research, a more balanced, richer, and accurate grammar is produced when one seeks to elucidate the unique shaping of structures and categories that interact with each other in complex ways. Figure 1 contains a visual metaphor for this idea, representing grammar as a multi-dimensional puzzle of differently-shaped, interlocking elements that fit together to create a cohesive whole:

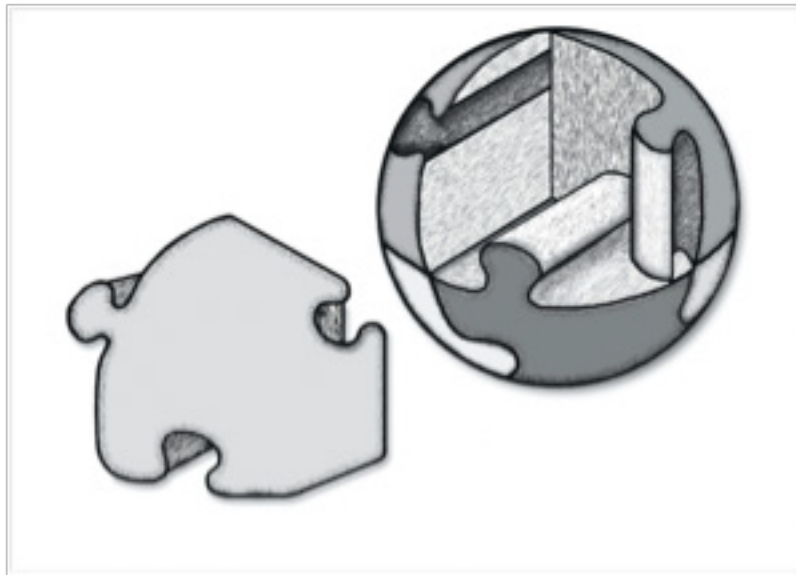


FIGURE 1: Grammar as a set of interlocking, uniquely shaped categories

Only a nuanced approach to representing grammatical categories will provide the data and analysis to expand our set of typological classifications and allow our understanding of linguistic typology to continue to grow.

If going down a checklist to identify whether or not a language has a particular category represents one end of a continuum of incorporating typological theory into descriptive grammars, the other end is then represented by producing a grammar without any reference to cross-linguistically established categories. Such a grammar would be uninterpretable (possibly even impossible to write, e.g., without reference to categories such as noun and verb) as one would need to invent an entirely new, yet comprehensive, set of language-specific terminology. Some grammars go further down this path than others. Consider, for example, the following quote from James A. Matisoff's *Lahu Grammar*:

The simplest  $vC$ 's are binary, with a single  $vV$  preceding the  $Vh$ . We have been using ' $\beta$ ' to symbolize the verbal nucleus of a  $VP$ ; this is, the obligatory  $Vh$  plus any versatiles that may optionally be juxtaposed to the head. We may then generate binary  $vC$ 's by some such rule as the following:  $\beta \rightarrow (vV) + Vh$ . (Matisoff 1972:211)

Matisoff was writing in the late 1960's, the heyday of Chomskyan generative grammar and the infancy of modern linguistic typology (i.e. Greenbergian and its antecedents). In addition, he was writing about a language that is, in typological terms, vastly different from the Western European languages that were the focus of the early (and much of the later) work in Generative Grammar. Without the tools of contemporary functional-typological linguistics, he had to take a unique, and frequently idiosyncratic, approach. Matisoff's grammar is extraordinary in its richness, depth, and insight; however, it takes commitment

on the part of the reader to learn the terminology sufficiently enough to understand the text. In short, it is not a grammar for the casual browser.

It is possible to find a balance between these poles by taking the linguistic categories identified by typological studies as a starting point for deeper exploration, rather than having the mere identification of the categories be the goal and endpoint of the investigation. For example, one might write:

*These are serial verb constructions.*

This sentence only identifies a set of examples as belonging to a particular structural type. Argumentation for the analysis could be provided, which would take the grammar to a deeper level, e.g.:

*These are serial verbs because they have the following properties that define the serial verb category in the typological literature...*

However, one goes even further if one looks beyond the horizon of constructions identified by typologists. There may be considerably more to say about the precise details of the language-particular construction that suggest shades of meaning, relations with other structures, or other conceptualizations. Returning to our example, if one takes the statement above on serial verbs as the starting point of the discussion, it can then be followed by more complex observations, e.g.:

*However, some examples suggest that: this is actually clause linkage / some of these verbs have grammaticalized to auxiliaries / some of these verbs function as true prepositions / etc.*

This approach allows the emergence of a grammar that is firmly built on linguistic typology—and so is typologically relevant—but that also explicates the nuances and complexities that fully shape linguistic categories. Only with this grammar can one explore those fascinating interfaces between categories in all their messy glory.

As an example, consider the case of Dolakha Newar ‘adjectival verbs’. Linguistic typology traditionally provides us with two distinct lexical classes: adjectives and verbs. Dolakha Newar has both of these classes, each with their own characteristic phonological and morphosyntactic features. Some of the properties that distinguish them are given in Table 1:

<b>Adjectives</b>	<b>Verbs</b>
Closed class	Open class
Multiple phonotactic shapes	CVC structure of root
No inflection	Inflect for multiple categories
Occur with copula in predicate	Occur independently in predicates
Modify nouns directly	Must be nominalized to modify nouns
Used referentially with clitic	Must be nominalized for referential use
Occur with intensifiers	Do not occur with intensifiers

TABLE 1: Properties of adjectives and verbs in Dolakha Newar

If we were limiting our investigation to a typological checklist, we may decide we had successfully identified and distinguished these categories and stopped at that. However, closer investigation reveals a third category, which I have called ‘adjectival verbs’; these are a hybrid category, with the syntactic properties of adjectives, but the phonological and morphological properties of verbs. The seven features presented in Table 1 are distributed for adjectival verbs as shown in Table 2:

<b>Like Adjectives</b>	<b>Like Verbs</b>
Closed class	CVC structure of root
Occur w/ copula in predicates	Take verbal inflections
Occur with intensifiers	Must be nominalized for referential use
	Must be nominalized to modify nouns

TABLE 2: Features characteristic of Dolakha Newar adjectival verbs

We can capture the hybridity of this category with the Venn diagram in Figure 2.

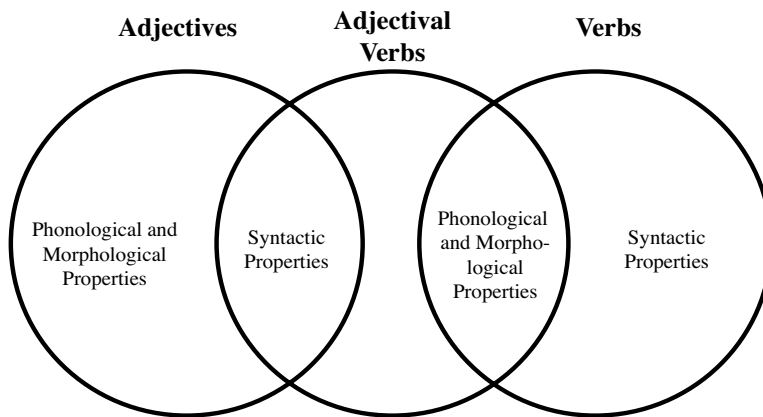


FIGURE 2. Venn diagram illustrating the hybrid nature of adjectival verbs

So while the standard categories of basic linguistic theory provide an important starting point for identifying lexical categories, deeper investigation allows us to identify an additional class with distinct patterns of behavior. This fact, in turn, allows for the enrichment of our typologies and the development of linguistic theory.

In sum, taking typology as the entryway to the investigation provides balance to a grammar, as it (1) allows for the exploration of the language-particular shapes of grammatical categories, (2) incorporates theoretical notions without constraining the description and (3) allows for a continuous feedback loop between linguistic description and the development of linguistic theory.

**2. ASSERTION AND EXEMPLIFICATION VERSUS ARGUMENTATION.** Another choice facing the grammar writer is just how much argumentation to incorporate in order to justify the presented analyses. The answer ranges logically from providing no argumentation to providing arguments for every point. The former would entail simply asserting descriptive analyses, presumably providing illustrative examples. An example of assertion and exemplification would be:

*Complement clauses have structure X.*

*[Example 1]*

*[Example 2]*

*[Example 3]*

The latter would be to provide argumentation for each claim, informing the reader why one has analyzed the structure in that way. Continuing our hypothetical example, the argumentation approach might look something like the following:

*Complement clauses are clauses that function as noun-phrase arguments of a complement-taking predicate. In this language, complement clauses have the following structure...*

*There are three facts that confirm that these clauses function as arguments of a complement-taking predicate:*

*[Argument 1 with examples]*

*[Argument 2 with examples]*

*[Argument 3 with examples]*

Argumentation clearly enriches the grammar by allowing the reader to understand the grammar-writer's reasoning; on the other hand, there are problems with arguing for every point, just as there are problems with providing no argumentation at all.

There are three problems with providing insufficient argumentation. First, the given analysis is likely to be unconvincing; readers have no means by which to follow the grammar writer's reasoning and might not see the logic of the analysis, even though it may be obvious to the grammar writer. Second, a grammar without argumentation lacks descriptive richness. Argumentation naturally incorporates a deeper level of discussion and the assertion and connection of facts that might not otherwise be made. Finally, the absence

of argumentation results in a grammar that is less interesting to read, as it does not engage the reader in the analytical process.

On the other hand, excessive argumentation can be tedious and runs the risk of obscuring the descriptive facts. In principle, one could present spectrograms that would provide evidence for the phonetic value of every consonant in the language. While this might delight a small number of phoneticians, most people would find this excessive in a grammar and better suited for publication in a phonetics journal. Also, taken to its limit, providing argumentation for every fact of the language would require extensive discussion of non-occurring patterns. For example, if a language has a maximal syllable template of CCV, one might have to argue for this by demonstrating that certain syllable shapes are not attested or accepted by speakers (e.g., that there are no syllables of shapes CCCV, CCVC, CCVV, CCVVC, etc.). An analogous example from syntax would be to list all the possible ordering permutation of noun phrase elements, including those that are ungrammatical to an absurd degree (like *\*black three bears big the* in English). It makes more sense to simply state what is found, rather than providing long lists of what is not found.

One can find balance between these two extremes by determining which types of phenomena are better served by the two approaches. In my own practice, I found assertion and exemplification to be appropriate for the following types of phenomena (I have illustrated these with examples from *A grammar of Dolakha Newar* (Genetti 2007) where appropriate):

#### **A. LOW-LEVEL DESCRIPTIVE FACTS**

- Phonetic values of segments
- Simple phonological processes
- Allomorphic variation (e.g. stem classes)
- How verbs are borrowed
- Phonotactic structures of verbs
- Verb paradigms
- Ordering of elements in the noun phrase

#### **B. DEFINITIONAL STATEMENTS**

Non-finite verb forms differ from finite verb forms in that they do not convey information about tense, person, or number, and in that they do not have separate suffixal paradigms which indicate negation or mood. (Genetti 2007:186)

#### **C. EXPECTED PATTERNS AND STRUCTURES**

- Proximal and distal demonstratives
- Numeral systems
- Casemarkers
- Simple clause structure
- Interrogative pronouns

#### **D. USAGE OR DISTRIBUTIONAL PATTERNS**

- The uses of the present tense
- The sets of nouns classified by numeral classifiers

- The uses of the various demonstratives
- The distribution of the allative case marker
- Conditions under which noun phrases have post-verbal placement
- Different uses/meanings of two imperative constructions

On the other hand, argumentation enriched the discussion in the following circumstances:

#### **A. CASES WHERE MORE THAN ONE STRUCTURAL ANALYSIS IS POSSIBLE**

The adverbs of location are distinct from locational nouns in that they cannot occur within a noun phrase... (Genetti 2007:230)

These alternative views of the syllable structure have different descriptive goals. One describes the syllable structure as it is likely to be understood by the speakers... The second describes the syllable structure as revealed by patterns of distribution... (Genetti 2007:62)

#### **B. CASES WHERE ILLUSTRATING THE COMPLEXITY OF THE PHENOMENON IS MORE IMPORTANT THAN DEFINITELY CHOOSING ONE ANALYSIS**

The primary reason to consider the plural morpheme to be a clitic rather than a suffix is ... in the absence of a head noun, it can be bound to a genitive phrase or relative clause ... On the other hand, [the morpheme] is not always bound to the final element... [and] it can occur on both elements of a conjoined NP... (Genetti 2007:97-98)

#### **C. CASES WHERE THE LANGUAGE DIFFERS FROM TYPOLOGICALLY-EXPECTED PATTERNS**

In this chapter, I have described two classes of 'adjectivals'... Adjectival verbs still can inflect... The class of simple adjectives, by contrast, has no inflection. This is a major difference in morphological behavior and argues that the two adjectival categories are lexically distinct... (Genetti 2007:212)

In many languages one can grammatically distinguish between classes of objects... direct and indirect objects... [or] primary objects and secondary objects... However, in Dolakha Newar neither of these patterns is in evidence. Instead, all O and R arguments appear to constitute a single grammatical relation of object. (Genetti 2007: 315-317) (The text goes on to present three distinct arguments for this point.)

#### **D. CASES WHERE THE LANGUAGE DIFFERS FROM AREALLY- OR GENETICALLY-EXPECTED PATTERNS**

In the Himalayan area, one typically sees significant split ergativity, however that is not true for Dolakha Newar. To argue for this unexpected pattern, Genetti (2007:109-110) provides examples of consistent ergative marking even in the presence of features which typically condition splits. Hence the following examples are given, each arguing that the designated feature does not affect ergative marking:



- (55) ergative case w/ negated verb and non-volitional agent
- (56) cognate-object verb *talk a talk* where the object is not differentiated from the action of the verb itself
- (57) highly unaffected object
- (58) continuous, imperfective aspect
- (59) non-active verb, unindividuated object, non-agentive agent, and future imperfective

#### E. CASES THAT COUNTER EXPLICIT CLAIMS IN THE LITERATURE

Other restrictions, of the type commonly found on related constructions in other languages (see e.g. Haspelmath and König 1995), are not in evidence in this language...the participial construction does not impose constraints on anaphora, control, the scope of interrogative or imperative mood, or the scope of negation... The argumentation...will be summarized briefly here. (Genetti 2007:446)

It should be noted that both relative clauses and nominal complements constitute modifiers of nouns within a single unified noun phrase and do not occur as independent noun phrases in appositional relations with the heads (cf. DeLancey 1999; Noonan 1997). This can be seen from... (Genetti 2007:389)

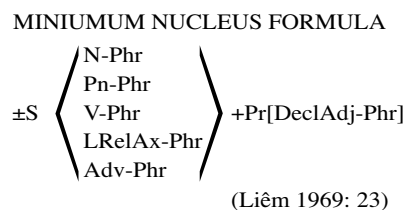
In sum, the best balance can be reached by judiciousness as regards the inclusion of argumentation. Argumentation should especially be included when illustrating multiple analyses is beneficial or in cases that are surprising or go against expected claims or patterns. In other circumstances, simply asserting and describing a given grammatical structure, with plenty of illustrative examples, is likely to be sufficient.

**3. THE ROLE OF THEORETICAL INNOVATION IN A REFERENCE GRAMMAR.** There is no such thing as an atheoretical grammar, as theory is implicit in all of our terms and concepts, and undergirds how we conceptualize linguistic structures and the relationships among elements. A grammar necessarily reflects the writer's contemporary theoretical orientation, as practically every statement is imbued with assumptions about the nature of language and with current conventional understandings about linguistic structures and categories. As noted above, a grammar that eschewed contemporary theoretical conceptions of language would be very difficult to write and probably impossible to interpret. On the other hand, grammars that are based too heavily on a specific instantiation of an idiosyncratic theoretical paradigm are also problematic due to the fact that narrow linguistic theories can change rapidly and new generations of linguists are not trained in the older theoretical paradigms. This is especially true of formal theories and their representational apparatus. As an example, consider the tagmemic grammars written (primarily) in the 1970s. Statements such as the following necessarily require specific training in tagmemics to interpret:

The Identificative Adjective Declarative Clause Type has the following identificational-contrastive features:

it is not a division-subclass of the Submissive passive Complement filler class in the Submissive Passive Clause Type 6;

its minimum nucleus structure is composed of an obligatory, and an optional, nucleus tagmeme.



For this reason, it is best to avoid theory-specific formalisms and to describe the linguistic structures using terms and categories on which there is broad consensus, such as those defined by basic linguistic theory (e.g. Dixon 2010) and used broadly in the literature on linguistic typology.

On the other hand, writing a grammar provides the author with an understanding of the language that is broader and sometimes deeper than can be achieved by analyzing single constructions or subsystems. The very act of explicitly describing the structure in prose necessitates the conscious consideration of every grammatical fact and brings into view structural and semantic nuances, unanticipated connections, and novel ways of conceptualizing the relations between grammatical elements. It is thus a natural venue for proposing unconventional analyses and theoretical innovations. In addition, readers have within the volume deep background information on the relevant grammatical phenomena, so can easily follow the author as he or she lays out the new terrain.

To exemplify this point, I will refer to a portion of the discussion of complex sentences in Dolakha Newar given in Genetti (2007). In Dolakha Newar, the sentence is a central unit of grammatical and discourse structuring. Sentences are bounded by the production of a non-embedded finite verb, and the clauses preceding the main clause link up via a wide variety of constructions. Properties of sentences (both syntactic and prosodic) were the topic of Chapter 21, the final chapter of the grammar, which could refer back to facts that had already been established in the preceding chapters, from casemarking to grammatical relations to the various clause-combining constructions.

The discourse of typological linguistics and basic linguistic theory include the combinatorial principles of subordination and coordination. However, these terms have a number of implications that do not map well onto the descriptive facts of Newar. Similarly, the structures found in this language are not quite perfect fits to terms like ‘clause-chaining’ (e.g. Longacre 1972, 1985), ‘converbs’ (Haspelmath 1995), and ‘co-subordination’ (Foley and Van Valin 1984:256-263; Van Valin and La Polla 1997:454 *inter alia*). The theoretical issues surrounding this were fully discussed in an earlier journal article (Genetti 2005) and, to a lesser extent, in Chapters 19 and 20 of the grammar. The embedded structures found in relative clauses and complementation were described previously.

Due to an inexact fit between the facts of Newar and the terms *subordination* and *coordination*, I found it more insightful to conceptualize clause combining as involving two ‘design principles’ of chaining and embedding. Chaining is the linear ordering of units at the same level of syntax, whereas embedding entirely incorporates one clause into an-

other. The chaining structures in Dolakha Newar include what are typically analyzed as adverbial clauses, converb clauses or clause chains, as well as multiple sentences that are embedded into a direct quotation. These structures are not typically categorized together within linguistic theory. One of the atypical claims of my grammar is that the final clause in a chained structure, which most would consider to be the ‘matrix’ clause, lacks the syntactic or rhetorical privilege implied by this term. In my view, the final clause has no such privilege in this language, but is simply the last unit in the chain (Genetti 2007: 452-453). For this reason I represent chaining structures as simple linear strings, and diagram them as in Figure 3:<sup>1</sup>

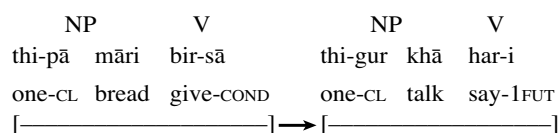


FIGURE 3. A chaining structure diagrammed

Free translation: If you give me a (piece of) bread, I will tell you one thing.

Embedding then comprises the remaining clause-combining strategies: relativization and complementation. Whereas chained clauses were diagrammed on the same horizontal plane, reflecting the symmetrical relation between units that I argued for, embedded clauses were diagrammed on a lower horizontal plane. An arrow was included indicating the noun phrase of the matrix clause which contained the embedded element. An example is given in Figure 4:

#### Embedding Structure

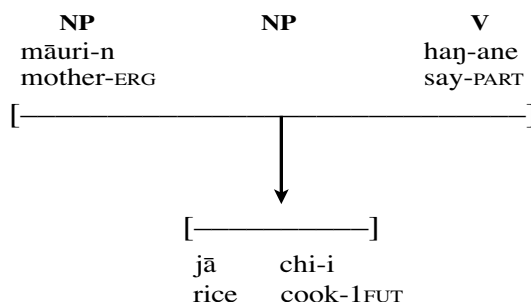


FIGURE 4. Diagram of an embedding structure

Free translation: The mother said: “I will cook rice.”

The advantage of this method of diagramming is that it provides one with a simple tool to visually represent the complexity of sentences that arise when the two design principles

1. Full discussion of these structures is beyond the scope of the current chapter. Readers are referred to Genetti (2007; 2011); the latter is a journal article that followed from the new conceptualization of the structure. The abbreviations found in the surrounding examples include: 1 first person; ABL ablative; CL classifier; COND conditional; DAT dative; ERG ergative; FUT future; IND individuation; IMP imperative; LOC locative; NR nominalizer; PART participle (converb).

are recursively applied: any chain can contain embeddings and any embedded element can in turn contain chain. This creates structures such as that in Figure 5:

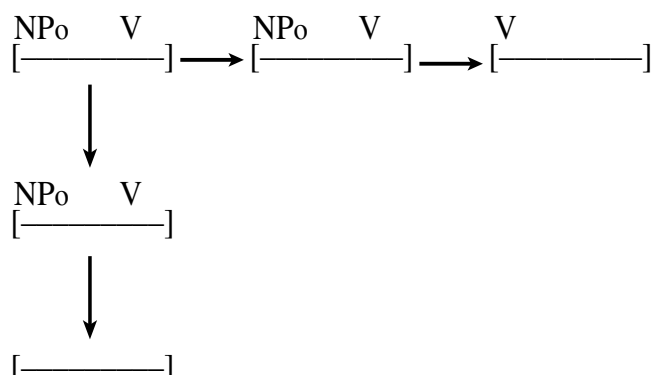


FIGURE 5. Diagram for a relative clause embedded into an object NP, which is within an embedded object complement, which is within the first clause of a participial chain<sup>2</sup>

The innovation in both the conception of the relationships and the diagramming conventions allowed for a richer and more accurate presentation of the facts than would otherwise have been possible.

It is important to note that although this analysis does not follow other theoretical paradigms directly, it clearly draws on them, a point which was made in Chapter 21 of the grammar, which directly cites theoretical work, especially that of Role and Reference Grammar (Foley and Van Valin 1984; Van Valin and LaPolla 1997). Readers are able to understand the new analysis because they share this theoretical base (or can access it, if they do not share it), and because the entire grammar is at their fingertips; I was able to explore the new approach without space limitations or the need to explain all the details from scratch.

In sum, it is best to avoid presenting the analysis using a narrow theoretical model that is likely to go out of date; it is preferable to use terminology from basic linguistic theory that has come into widespread international use, then explain any terminological deviations with reference to this work. Writing a grammar provides the author with the depth of insight and the opportunity to understand grammatical categories and constructions in new ways and to present the language to others in these terms. However it is important to provide

2. The sentence this diagrams is the following (Genetti 2007: 500-501; Genetti 2011):

- (15) [[[*chē=ku=ri=na* *chanta bi-e*]<sub>REL</sub> *māsāku māsāku cijbij*]<sub>NP.O</sub>  
house=LOC=IND=ABL 2SDAT give-NR untasty untasty things  
*sumake na-e*]<sub>NP.O</sub> *sukā-en janta hā-en bi-u*  
silently eat-NR pretend-PART 1SDAT bring-PART give-IMP  
‘Silently pretend to eat the not-tasty not-tasty food that they give you from in the house and bring and give it to me.’

argumentation that supports innovative analyses, and to explain, justify, and be explicit as to precisely how the analysis is innovative. However, it is also critical that the innovations be clear and easily understood by the reader; analyses that are excessively idiosyncratic will cause many people to stop reading. Balance can be found by building on the bedrock of conventional structural description and argumentation and moving upwards from there.

**4. CONCLUSIONS.** Academic reference grammars are squarely theoretical works and it is helpful to think through precisely how theoretical terminology, conceptions, argumentation, and innovations are best incorporated. To write a grammar that will be interpretable for centuries to come requires incorporation of the set of theoretical terms and conventions that have emerged internationally through the practice of grammar writing (i.e. basic linguistic theory). At the same time, however, the grammarian's insights into the uniqueness of a particular language are invaluable for our collective understanding of linguistic diversity, the cognitive sciences, and anthropological linguistics. Here I have attempted to present some guidelines for finding balance in the incorporation of theory and argumentation into a reference grammar. I hope that these will be useful to others who look to find their own balance in grammar writing, and that this approach can be fruitfully applied to historical, ethnographic, or other domains in the production of these complex works.

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