

Preface

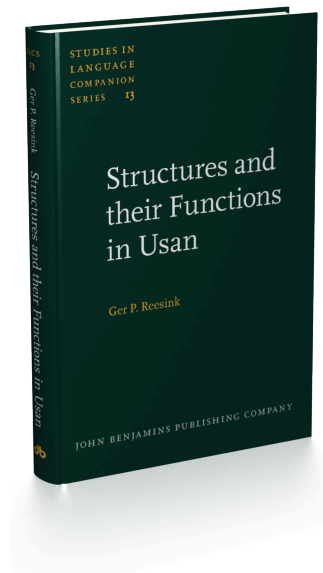
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Pages xi–xii of
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Ger P. Reesink
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PREFACE

This description of structures and their functions in Usan has been submitted as a doctoral thesis to the Faculty of Arts of the University of Amsterdam.

Usan is a Papuan language spoken by approximately 1400 people in the Madang Province of Papua New Guinea. I would like to express my deepest appreciation to numerous Usan speakers who taught me their language and their culture, and who extended their friendship to me. My main teacher has been Piniâu Manat, who for years has been my friend and colleague. Any field-linguist would be fortunate to have a teacher like him.

After a study of psychology and general linguistics I came to Papua New Guinea to work under the auspices of the Summer Institute of Linguistics. My understanding of language through fieldwork with Usan has been greatly enhanced by discussions with various colleagues of whom I would like to mention in particular: Dr. Les Bruce, Dr. Karl Franklin, Dorothy James MA, Dr. Ray Johnston, Dr Robert Litteral, and Dr. Ken McElhanon.

After reading Professor Dik's Functional Grammar, I was convinced that this approach would help me further towards an integrated description of Usan facts. Professor Dik was kind enough to supervise the writing of this thesis. His critical questions and comments based upon his knowledge of language typology and functional explanations have sharpened and polished my first attempts. His stimulating interest has helped me to bring this work to completion during my year of studyleave in the Netherlands. Mr. N. Smith MA, has kindly contributed some improvements to the brief sketch of Usan phonology.

Although I have benefitted from many publications, special mention deserves Dr. John Haiman's work. As will be clear from the reading of this book, his publications on Hua have had a great influence on my understanding of Usan and Papuan languages in general.

My wife Lidy has been my unfailing partner, not only in our marriage, but also in the work we do in a little hamlet of the Usan village Wanuma. In many ways she has helped in the preparation of this thesis.