

A Morpho-Syntactic Sketch of Hewa

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The following is a preliminary sketch on the morphosyntax of Hewa ¹. This sketch is incomplete; it does not contain certain aspects of the grammar which I have not had time to analyze or which I have not collected data on as of the writing of the present sketch.

1 The noun phrase

1.1 Introduction

Nouns in Hewa are not marked for number, noun class, or case. The noun can appear as the head of the noun phrase followed by the article or by a numeral. It is not yet clear whether the determiner follows or precedes the numeral. Adjectives follow the noun. Thus, a canonical, non-possessed NP is formed as shown in (1).

(1) [N ADJ DEM/NUM]

1.2 Number

1.3 Possession

1.3.1 Nominal possession

There are two different strategies for expressing nominal possession in Hewa. They both implicate the use of the possessive marker *-n*.

In pronominal phrases, the possessive marker appears on the pronoun, as in (2).

¹The following abbreviations have been used in this sketch: 1 = first person, 3 = third person, poss = possessive, sg = singular.

- (2) a. *Lima a'u-n blara*
 hand 1SG-POSS hurt
 'My hand hurts'
- b. *Ahu nimu-n gëran wëngi golo'*
 dog 3SG-POSS bark loudly very
 'His dog barks very loudly'

When the possessor is a full nominal, two different strategies are possible: the possessive marker can go either on an extra pronominalized possessor, as in (3a), or on the possessed noun, as in (3b).

- (3) a. *Alejandro_i lima nimu_i-n blara*
 Alejandro hand 3SG-POSS hurt
 'Alejandro's hand hurts'
- b. *Alejandro lima-n blara*
 Alejandro hand-POSS hurt
 'Alejandro's hand hurts'

The latter strategy, that of adding the possessive marker on the possessed noun, is phonologically constrained: only nouns ending in a vowel or a nasal may take a possessive suffix. In the latter case, the possessive marker is assimilated to the nasal, as in (4). For all other nouns, possession is marked by adding a third person pronoun with the possessive marker, as seen in (5): *bapa'* 'father' ends in a glottal stop, and thus cannot take the possessive suffix.

- (4) *Meong-(n) kekor blara*
 cat-(POSS) tail hurts
 'The cat's tail hurts'
- (5) *Alejandro bapa' klian 'ia uma*
 Alejandro father work LOC rice.field
 'Alejandro's father works in the rice field'

1.3.2 Predicative possession

1.4 Numerals

1.5 Comparisons

2 Basic clausal syntax

2.1 Constituent order

As mentioned in section 1.1, nouns in Hewa are not marked for case. Argument structure is apparently determined by word order, which is AVP in transitive clauses, as in (6) and SV in intransitive clauses, regardless of aktionsart of the verb, as in (7) ².

- (6) *A'u lapot manu' 'ia*
1SG hit chicken DEF
'I hit the chicken'

- (7) a. *'Au ulun*
2SG speak
'You speak'

- b. *A'u tēri*
1SG sit.1SG
'I sit'

In ditransitive clauses the benefactor, which is not marked in any particular way, appears before P, as in (8).

- (8) *A'u bēli Saskia buku 'ia*
1SG give Saskia book DEF
'I give Saskia the book'

In main clauses, the subject, either an independent pronoun or a full noun phrase, has to always be pronounced. Sentences without an explicit subject, even when the verb is inflected for person (see Section 2.5).

²In this sketch grammar I am using the terms *A* for the grammatical subject of a transitive clause, *P* for the grammatical object of a transitive clause, and *S* for the subject of an intransitive clause

2.2 Valency changes: causative constructions

Intransitive verbs can change its valency, that is, be made transitives, with the use of the verb *bëli* ‘to give’, which forms together with the main verb a causative construction. This is illustrated in (9).

- (9) a. *A'u bëli mate manu"ia*
1SG give die chicken
‘I kill the chicken’
- b. *A'u bëli ga manu"ia*
1SG give eat chicken
‘I feed the chicken’
- c. *Au bëli dedi nurak ia due ia tepi ia*
1SG give baby DEF lie LOC cot DEF
‘I put the baby to sleep on the bed’ (lit. ‘I give the baby lying on the bed’)

2.3 Equational clauses

Equational clauses are created by using a subject followed by its attribute, with no copula present. (10) is an example of a nominal attribute. (11) is an example of an adjectival attribute, and (12) is an example of a prepositional attribute.

- (10) *nimun e'on bi'an du'at iwa*
3SG NEG person woman NEG
‘He is not a woman’
- (11) *dedi du'at 'ia gëhar*
woman DEF tall
‘The woman is tall’
- (12) *A'u 'ora nimu*
1SG with 3SG
‘I am with him/her’

2.4 Existential clauses

Existential constructions are formed with the verbs *noran* ‘to have, to exist’, as illustrated in (13), and *’ëra* ‘to stand’, as seen in (14).

- (13) *Noran napun*
 exist river
 ‘There is a river’

- (14) *Saskia gëra ia kamar higun*
 Saskia stand.3SG DEF room corner
 ‘Saskia is in the corner of the room’

2.5 Verb conjugation by person

While no verbs inflect for tense or mood, there is a certain subset of verbs that do inflect for person, namely verbs that in their first person singular form begin with a voiceless plosive followed by a vowel. In this type of verbs, the initial voiceless plosive alternates with its voiced counterpart (in the case of the glottal stop /ʔ/, it alternates with the voiced velar plosive /g/, it being its closest voiced counterpart). In this paradigm, first person singular, first person plural inclusive, and second and third person plural forms are pronounced with the voiceless plosive, and second and third person singular and first person plural exclusive forms are pronounced with the voiced plosive. Table 1 illustrates this grouping with the example of the verb *’ita* ‘to see’. Some other verbs that follow this paradigm, given here in the first person singular (unvoiced) form, are *tëri* ‘to sit’, *pano* ‘to walk’, *tëna* ‘to make’, *’ëra* ‘to stand’, and *’aro* ‘to scratch’.

Table 1: Conjugation of the verb *’ita* ‘to see’. Conjugation forms are grouped by color.

1SG	<i>’ita</i>	1PL.EXCL	<i>gita</i>
		1PL.INCL	<i>’ita</i>
2SG	<i>gita</i>	2PL	<i>’ita</i>
3SG	<i>gita</i>	3PL	<i>’ita</i>

There is also one verb attested so far which appears to be completely irregular with regards to its person conjugation: *’oa* ‘to eat’. Table 2 shows its paradigm.

2.6 Tense

Verbs in Hewa are not inflected by tense, so the time at which an action takes place is expressed syntactically.

For past sentences, adverbs of time are used.

Table 2: Conjugation of the verb *'oa* ‘to eat’, according to person.

1SG	<i>'oa</i>	1PL.EXCL	<i>gea</i>
		1PL.INCL	<i>'ea</i>
2SG	<i>goa</i>	2PL	<i>'a</i>
3SG	<i>'ea</i>	3PL	<i>'a</i>

Sentences with a future meaning seem to combine tense with mood, as the word *ga'i*, presumably the same word as the modal verb *ga'i* ‘want’, is used, as seen in (15). This construction is similar to the English future constructions with *will*.

- (15) *Nimu ga'i nani wahat*
 3SG want swim tomorrow
 ‘He/she is going to swim tomorrow’

2.7 Aspect marking by reduplication

Some verbs may be reduplicated to mark a continuous aspect. (examples)

2.8 Negation

Predicative negation is expressed with the use of a double particle *e'on ... iwa* wrapped around the verb, as shown in (16-17).

- (16) *Nimu e'on nani iwa*
 3SG NEG swim NEG
 ‘He/she is not swimming’

- (17) *dedi du'at 'ia e'on gëhar 'iwa*
 womn DEF NEG tall NEG
 ‘The woman is not tall’

There seems to be a distinction between two types of existential negation. The first one, expressing the absence of something in a given place or at a given time, shown in (18), uses the two particles referred to above. The second one, seen in (19), makes use only of the first particle *e'on*, and seems to be used for expressing the nonexistence of an entity in the world.

- (18) *E'on noran i'an iwa 'ia napun*
 NEG have fish NEG LOC river
 ‘There are no fish in the river’

- (19) *Manu' meran e'on*
 chicken red NEG
 'There are no red chickens' ('red chickens do not exist')

Negative imperatives are expressed by preposing *opo* to the verb, as illustrated in (20). The verb is still, in the verbs which inflect for it, in the second person, as can be seen in (20b).

- (20) a. *Opo nani!*
 PROH swim
 'Don't swim!'
- b. *Opo goa!*
 PROH eat.2SG
 'Don't eat!'

2.9 Questions

Polar questions seem to be expressed by simply changing the intonation of the sentence to a rising one, which peaks on the last stressed syllable, after which it drops slightly.

In polar questions, the particle *ko* may be added to express disbelief in the questioned proposition. An example of this is (21).

- (21) *Lëpo rimu-n gëte ko?*
 house 3PL-POSS big DISB
 'Is their house actually big?'

For open ended questions, interrogative pronouns are used. These may appear at various points in the sentence. In fact, word order is flexible in this kind of questions, as exemplified in the variation in (22). This order is possibly subordinate to the structuring of the information within the sentence.

- (22) a. *'Umur meong 'au-n pira?*
 age cat 2SG-POSS how.many
 'What age is your cat?'
- b. *Meong 'au-n umur pira?*
 cat 2SG-POSS age how.many
 'How old is your cat?'
- c. *Umur pira meong 'aun?*
 age how.many cat 2SG-POSS
 'How old is your cat?'

For questioning the identity of a person, the interrogative pronoun *hai* ‘who’ is used, as illustrated in (23). So far only utterances where the subject is asked have been collected.

- (23) *Hai pala' natar 'ia?*
 who leader village DEF
 ‘Who is the head of the village?’

Inanimate entities are questioned with *apa* ‘what’, as illustrated in (24).

- (24) *'au dëna apa?*
 2SG do what
 ‘What are you doing?’

Quantity is questioned with the pronoun *pira* ‘how many/how much’.

- (25) *Umur meong 'au-n pira?*
 age cat 2SG-POSS how.many
 ‘What age is your cat?’

Places are questioned with the pronoun *upa* ‘where’, as illustrated in (26).

- (26) *Natar 'au-n upa?*
 village 2SG-POSS where
 ‘Where is your village?’

Manner is questioned with the composite pronoun *ganu upan* ‘how’, as seen in (22) above. This double term might be analyzable as ‘manner’ + ‘where’, as *upan* bears resemblance to *upa*, the pronoun exemplified in (26) above. Nonetheless, the term for ‘manner’ has not been obtained as of the writing of this sketch, and there is no evidence to support this analysis.

Time is questioned with the composite pronoun *rama pira* ‘when’, as illustrated in (27). This double pronoun might also be analyzable, this time as ‘time’ + ‘how much/how many’, but the term for ‘time’ has not been obtained yet.

- (27) *rama pira 'ia wulan pasak i'an*
 when LOC month fish(v) fish(N)
 ‘When is the fishing season?’

2.10 Imperatives

Imperatives are expressed by using the second person form of the verb, without the pronoun, as in (28). Reduplication of the verb form seems to also be possible for some verbs, with rude connotations.

- (28) *Goa!*
eat.2SG
'Eat!'

- (29) *Ninu~ninu!*
drink.2SG~RDP
'Drink!'

Negative imperatives are formed with the particle *opo*, as described and illustrated in Section 2.8.

3 Coordination and subordination

4 Pronouns