

Abstract: A Grammar of Hup  
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This dissertation is a comprehensive description of the grammar of Hup, a language of the Nadahup (Maku) family. Hup is spoken by about 1500 people living in the Vaupés region of the Amazon rain forest, located on the border of Brazil and Colombia.

The grammar begins with an introduction to the cultural and linguistic background of Hup speakers, as well as to the unique sociolinguistic situation of the Vaupés and the intense language contact that this has fostered. It then proceeds to a description of Hup phonology and the ‘architecture’ of the Hup word. The bulk of the grammar is devoted to the morphosyntax of Hup, including nouns and nominal morphology, verbs, verb compounding, and Hup’s mechanisms for expressing tense, aspect, modality, evidentiality, and affect marking. The dissertation concludes with chapters on negation, the simple clause, and clause combining.

Hup’s phonological inventory includes nine vowels and twenty-one consonants, as well as the contrastive prosodic features of nasalization and tone. Its morphology (especially verbal) is relatively agglutinative, predominantly suffixing, and involves considerable compounding of multiple stems. Hup has nominative-accusative alignment, employs morphological case marking, and favors dependent marking; its constituent order is verb-final, best characterized as AOV. Its grammar shows sensitivity to an animacy hierarchy; this is particularly evident in its systems of differential object case marking and ‘split’ plural/collective marking, which reflect the animacy of the referent. Hup has also developed a complex evidentiality system and an incipient system of noun classification, largely motivated by areal diffusion. A further intriguing aspect of Hup

grammar is the significant and even exuberant polyfunctionality of many morphemes, which in most cases reflects traceable historical processes of grammaticalization.

Several aspects of Hup grammar are typologically unusual, and the heavy effects of areal diffusion on Hup grammar are also interesting from both a cross-linguistic and a regional point of view. Hup is an illustration of the value of research on little-known and endangered languages, which can provide us with new ways of thinking about languages in general.