A grammar of Ashéninka (Ucayali-Pajonal)
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Summary

This thesis describes the Ashéninka language as it is spoken in the Gran Pajonal plateau and the Upper Ucayali River in the Selva Central region of Peru, where the last Andean foothills give way to the Amazonian lowlands. The number of speakers is estimated at around 10,000. This language forms part of the Ashé-Ashá dialect continuum, which is part of the group of Campan languages, a subgroup of the Arawak language family, the most widespread family in South America. The Ashéninka people live in so-called *comunidades nativas*, indigenous settlements with official authorities that are legally recognised in Peru.

The grammar follows a traditional layout in that first phonology, then morphology and then syntax are described.

Chapter 1 is introductory and is divided into four main sections. The first one is devoted to the Ashéninka people with a description of their geographical setting, a historical sketch and an account of their present situation. The second section deals with general aspects of the language, such as its genetic affiliation, the previous works, the sociolinguistic situation and a typological sketch. This section contains a summary of the relations within the Ashé-Ashá dialect continuum based on my article on this matter (Pedrós 2018). The third section explains details about the fieldwork and the process of writing the thesis. The fourth section concerns the organization of the thesis and its conventions.

Chapter 2 describes the phonology of the language including the morphophonological processes. It is worth remarking that the affricates are not contrastive, but distinctive. The complex and non-contrastive stress placement is studied in detail by grouping words according to their number of syllables.

Chapters 3 through 6 are devoted to the morphology. Nouns, adjectives and verbs each cover an entire chapter due to their longer descriptions, while the rest of the word classes are described in Chapter 3: these include pronouns, demonstratives, quantifiers, indefinites, interrogatives, adverbs, affirmative and negative particles, adpositions, conjunctions, ideophones, and fillers. Adpositions deserve a special mention since

they have not been previously described for a Campan language and I contend that a set of them has developed from adverbs in Ucayali-Pajonal Ashéninka.

Chapter 4 studies the morphology of nouns and also how the noun phrase is formed. Typical nominal categories such as number and gender are described, and a section dealing with the complex kin system is included. Ashéninka nouns can act as predicates and express nominal tense, which is handled in a dedicated section. Ashéninka onomastics, a field rarely discussed in an Amerindian grammar, is described in a separate section. The section on the noun phrase deals with the strategies of nouns as heads combined with other word classes to form noun phrases.

Chapter 5 is devoted to the study of adjectives. The description of their grammatical properties and semantic tasks draws from the theoretical proposals set forth in Dixon (2010*b*). Ashéninka adjectives belong to the type that have grammatical properties of both verbs and nouns, and a small number of them can be inflected with gender. A remarkable occurrence are the long adjectives denoting forms. Some adjectival suffixes are described.

Chapter 6 deals with verbs, and it comprises roughly half of the grammar due to the complex verbal morphology. This chapter starts with a section devoted to reality status and includes an article of mine (Pedrós 2019), which compares the reality status systems in the different Campan languages and shows the partial loss of this system in Ucayali-Pajonal Ashéninka. The second section presents the pronominal affixes and discusses the occurrence of the subject cross-referenced with a suffix instead of the usual prefix; the conclusion is that this special construction expresses immediacy in time (concurrency with the speaking or narration time, immediate past or immediate future). The third section treats aspect and tense; it proposes the existence of a future suffix in the entire Ashé-Ashá dialect continuum, even though previous descriptions have not identified it as such. These languages do not have a tense system, but some morphemes can express a position in time. Sections 6.4, 6.5 and 6.6 are devoted to broad categories such as mood and modality, directionals and associated motion, and valency-changing morphemes, respectively. The seventh section describes verbal suffixes that do not belong to the broader categories discussed in the previous sections. The eighth section shows the order of the 59 identified verbal affixes and enclitics

within the verbal complex only when their order with respect to other affixes or enclitics has been attested. Sections 6.9 and 6.10 are devoted to existentials and copulas, respectively. The language has three positive and one negative existentials, and also three positive and one negative copulas, each of them carrying some specific nuance. The copulas are used in most cases with functions different from canonical copulas. This long chapter on verbs ends with two short sections on invariable words with a verbal function and incorporation, which occurs very seldom.

Chapter 7 is devoted to syntax. It starts with key features of the language such as the dominant constituent order and the alignment system (sections 7.1 and 7.2), and sections 7.3 and 7.4 describe the broad categories of the simple clause and the complex sentence, respectively. The section on the simple clause is divided into four subsections on declarative, imperative, interrogative and negative clauses. The section on the complex sentence has two main subdivisions: coordination (conjunctive, disjunctive, adversative and causal) and subordination, which in turn is divided into adverbial, relative and complement clauses. The fifth section of this chapter deals with discourse connectors.

Besides the grammar, the thesis has three annexes. Annex 1 contains a list of grammatical morphemes. Annex 2 is a collection of eleven texts of different genres (conversations, tales, stories…) glossed and translated into Spanish and English. The examples in the grammar are mostly taken from these texts, so that their context becomes clear. Annex 3 is a list of all the words that have appeared at any stage of my fieldwork.