REVIEWS


Reviewed by ROBERT MCCOLL MILLAR, University of Aberdeen

Given that English is unquestionably the most learned and studied language in the world today, there is considerable need for a grammar of the language that is as comprehensive in its scope as possible while also being both portable and affordable to the audience for which it is intended. Until very recently, the only available survey that matched these criteria was that of Quirk et al. (1985). I do not wish to criticize this work: It is relatively easy to use and fairly affordable (increasingly so in its more student-friendly offshoots, such as Quirk and Greenbaum 1974). It is no bad thing to see a likely competitor to its authoritative position, however, primarily because rapid changes at certain levels of both grammar and semantics have rendered some of the examples used in these works rather old-fashioned. The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language is, without question, just such a competitor.

Anyone involved in a task of this type must inevitably seek to serve and satisfy a number of audiences. The Grammar must be approachable to nonnative speaking students at a fairly elementary level, but must also be satisfying to scholars and other language professionals. This means that any theoretical basis for grammatical analysis must not be so pervasive as to discourage those who may be using the work largely as a reference source for “correct” usage. Moreover, a grammar of this type must be relatively straightforward to use, containing transparent means of cross-referencing.

At the same time, the diversity of the English-speaking world needs to be addressed. In their groundbreaking work, it could be argued that Quirk et al. (1985) were not entirely willing to carry this out, even if their introduction contains a discussion on just such variation. Naturally, it would be unrealistic to expect such an exemplification of diversity not to foreground both British and American usage, since these usages both account for a large part of the speakers of English in the world today and are the varieties that are most often taught to nonnative learners. It would be unjust (and also potentially confusing), however, if some cognizance of other major variants of Standard English were not taken. Given that so
few English speakers actually speak Standard English exclusively, some reference to colloquial and dialectal variation is also, arguably, necessary, even if, as might be argued, discussions of this type should not be allowed to disrupt comprehension for those who are learning the language.

This is a difficult set of tasks to accomplish. How well, therefore, does *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language* perform according to these criteria? In the first place, the grammar is highly useable for a range of audiences. It is relatively straightforward to work around, with a considerable degree of cross-referencing. With this in mind, it might have been easier if chapters could have been marked as such at the edge of the book, as is the case with a range of reference books; it may be that the length of the work, and the implications for cost that such provision might have produced, could have counted against this, however. Its division into chapters is logical and fairly transparent for an informed layperson.

It probably would not be the first point of reference for a learner of the language; nor is it intended to be, however. It would be very useful to advanced learners, nonetheless, particularly since its wide use of examples would extend such a user’s knowledge of idiomatic Standard English in much the same way that the excellent COBUILD series of dictionaries and grammars does. This is particularly the case with the chapter on punctuation. It would be of immediate use to native-speaking students of English language; it is highly recommended to all university and college libraries.

There is a theoretical basis to the *Grammar*. This is particularly noticeable in the treatment of the verb. But there are no occasions where this treatment would not be acceptable to scholars from a wide range of theoretical perspectives. It certainly feels more “modern” than does Quirk et al. 1985.

As has already been touched upon, the employment of examples is one of the most useful elements in the *Grammar*. These derive from a wide range of resources excerpted from a variety of genres. Although American and British (specifically, English) examples predominate, it is refreshing to see Australian examples in particular being given some prominence, as might be expected, since Huddleston lives and works there. Unlike many grammars, a strong sense of the variation inherent in Standard English is present, adding to its sense of vitality. It might have been preferable if more space had been given to the variation inherent in British varieties of Standard English and in particular the Scottish variety.
thereof, although this may be a personal gripe derived from being
informed by computer grammar checkers that structures that, to me, are
perfectly “standard,” are flagged as “incorrect.” There is little reference to
nonstandard usage. This may be inevitable, given the complications the
inclusion of such material would undoubtedly engender; nevertheless, the
loss of material that might illustrate the differences between national and
regional varieties of the language, whether standard or not, particularly,
perhaps, for learners of the language, is regrettable. The use of examples
derived from more casual, often spoken, registers is nevertheless to be
welcomed, particularly in the context of second language acquisition.

One of the most striking features of the *Grammar* is that, while
Pullum and Huddleston assume full editorial authority for the work, many
of the chapters have been written in consultation with other scholars who
are specialists in a given field. This might, of course, have resulted in a
patchy work; it does not, however, in this case. Indeed, it could be argued
that this combination of “voices” is an aspect of particular strength for the
book as a whole.

There can be little doubt that the *Cambridge Grammar of the English
Language* is a work of considerable importance that should become a
standard reference work for the language. It is to be hoped that it will be
disseminated widely.

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In this monograph, Glenn Levine explores what sociolinguistic variables may account for “incomplete acquisition” of a language even though a child speaker is exposed to it within the “critical (or sensitive) period” (Lenneberg 1967, Newport 1990). The participants in Levine’s study are ten adult English-Yiddish bilinguals (ranging in age from 63–83) who acquired both languages in the United States simultaneously. The acquisition context that Levine examines is a classic example of a dominant/nondominant language situation, with Yiddish being socially subordinate to American English, as its use was restricted to the participants’ immediate families. The main question that Levine addresses is the extent to which Yiddish acquired by his consultants in childhood diverges from the accepted norms (that is, from Standard Yiddish). The data used to answer this question come from the open-ended interviews between the author and the Yiddish-speaking adult bilinguals.

Levine’s hypothesis is that some divergences are to be expected, given that all but one of the participants stopped using Yiddish actively at the age of ten and their grammars were therefore likely to have undergone some attrition. In addition, Levine suggests that his consultants may have even failed to acquire some aspects of Yiddish grammar due to the extra-deficient nature of linguistic input. The challenge of an analysis, then, is to differentiate between those divergences resulting from language attrition and those that are a consequence of incomplete acquisition (the linguistic product of the latter is referred to as “fossilized child grammar”).

Levine observes that the language data from the ten consultants (“primary informants,” in his study) are insufficient to shed light on the issue, therefore he supplements his investigation with data from three other adult speakers of Yiddish (“secondary informants”), ranging in age from 20 to 55, who acquired Yiddish outside of the United States (Lithuania and Russia) and who maintained it into adulthood. These speakers serve as a control group in providing a baseline for comparison in the analysis. Levine views a more protracted period of use and exposure to Yiddish as the social conditions that bring about a more
complete linguistic knowledge (or at least, knowledge that is qualitatively different from that of his primary consultants). The assumption throughout the study is that the divergences in the secondary consultants’ speech are likely to result from language attrition, therefore whatever differences are to be found between the two data sets can be attributed to incomplete acquisition.

The structure of Levine’s monograph is as follows. Chapter 1 introduces the reader to the goals and theoretical framework (a sociolinguistic/ethnographic approach). Chapter 2 describes the data-collection procedures and profiles of the Yiddish-English bilingual consultants whose speech is analyzed in the study. Chapter 3 provides a description of the data from primary and secondary consultants and argues that the divergences common to the two data sets result from language attrition. In chapter 4, Levine presents his sociolinguistic model of incomplete acquisition and language loss and discusses how the two processes bear on the issues of language death. Chapter 5 centers on the discussion of the “h/z rule” (that is, the use of auxiliaries hobn ‘have’ and zayn ‘be’) in the data of adult bilinguals. The argument is that the primary consultants failed to acquire the usage rules for the two auxiliaries (in contrast to the secondary consultants) and therefore the h/z rule is a feature of the fossilized child grammar.

As Levine points out himself, his study is not “sociolinguistic in the traditional sense” (17). He does not focus on investigating variation in the Yiddish grammars of his primary and secondary consultants, but rather treats the two data sets as two separate grammars of sorts (one is a fossilized grammar and the other is a grammar that has undergone some attrition). Furthermore, an analysis of linguistic features of the two grammar types is based on descriptive statistics and, at times, also lapses into somewhat general and sketchy observations. Chapter 3 begins with the argument that the primary Yiddish-English bilinguals are not native speakers, a conclusion that would have been more credible had it actually been based on a linguistic analysis. The author claims, however, that his primary consultants’ speech “cannot be considered as fluent or spontaneous as that of secondary informants” (33), although it is more “fluent” than the speech of L2 learners of Yiddish (like himself). We are also told that the author’s primary consultants do not have a substantial memory stock of lexical items and also have a rather limited communicative competence. While the question of what kind of linguistic knowledge defines a native speaker is interesting in itself, the study is not
designed to address this question and so the reader is asked to take the author’s conclusions on faith.

The second half of chapter 3 is more scientific because Levine discusses the “divergent features” in terms of statistical tendencies. Levine’s error analysis is based on 100 consecutive utterances from the transcribed conversations with his primary and secondary consultants. The focus is on verbal and nominal morphosyntax, in particular, features such as subject-verb agreement, past participle formation, use of personal pronouns and determiners, and plural morphology. (The author does not motivate his choice of these linguistic features; however, one is immediately reminded of the study by Johnson and Newport [1989]). Levine argues that his two groups of consultants show quite comparable error rates on this set of features, with the bulk of errors concentrated in the domain of determiner use. All of Levine’s consultants demonstrate a tendency toward neutralizing gender and case distinctions in the definite article system, reducing the various determiner forms to one gender- and case-neutral variant, *de* ‘the’. Due to the similarities of errors in his consultants’ speech, Levine proposes treating the analyzed features as resulting from language attrition.

Chapter 5 is an inquiry into the acquisition of the present perfect tense by the two groups of speakers (referred to as the “h/z rule”). The present perfect in (Standard) Yiddish is formed by means of the auxiliaries *hobn* ‘have’ or *zayn* ‘be’ and a past participle. The selection of an auxiliary is governed by the aspectual and syntactic properties of the lexical verb that the past participle derives from. As in the case of the determiner system, there is an obvious tendency in the primary consultants’ speech toward levelling out the distinction between the two auxiliaries. The primary consultants overuse *hobn* and extend it to the environments where a speaker of Standard Yiddish would use *zayn* (namely, to change of location and change of state predicates). The secondary consultants, in contrast, appear to have maintained the h/z rule, a conclusion supported by infrequent occurrences of *hobn* in *zayn*-contexts. Levine states that the errors are so sporadic among secondary consultants that no statistical analysis is necessary. (Note that the same argument was not invoked when the minimal error rates were reported for the set of features in chapter 3.)

No study is ever without shortcomings. The main problem with Levine’s investigation lies in the assumption that his secondary consultants acquired Yiddish fully in childhood. There are a few reasons to question this assumption. First, the families of his two secondary
consultants came from Lithuania and Russia, where Yiddish was certainly not a socially dominant language, and it is most likely that the consultants’ parents were bilingual speakers before they arrived in the United States (naturally, there is no way of knowing whether they were balanced bilinguals). Furthermore, one secondary consultant was a U.S.-born speaker of Yiddish and was included in the control group based on her length of language use. (This consultant reported that she learned Yiddish primarily from her grandparents.) Thus it is quite possible that the secondary consultants were also acquiring Yiddish under the same conditions of extra-impoverished input to which the primary consultants were also exposed. If so, the divergences discussed in chapter 3 may well have resulted from “fossilized” competence as opposed to language attrition. Second, one is left to wonder whether the obliteration of the h/z rule in the primary consultants’ speech might be simply a characteristic of the Yiddish vernacular dialects that these participants were exposed to as children. Levine mentions that some dialects of Yiddish do not show the h/z distinction, unlike Standard Yiddish, and therefore the consultants may have acquired the vernacular forms of the present perfect. Future studies of acquisition of Yiddish should address this issue.

Levine’s study makes an important point by linking fossilized child grammars and language attrition to the process of language loss. The dominant/nondominant language settings in immigrant families certainly create a kind of linguistic discontinuity between younger and older generations of speakers. Children of immigrants (at least, in the United States) in many cases do not appear to view their parents’ language as a social asset and therefore do not often make an effort to continue using it throughout adulthood. Levine’s study also brings into focus the issue of incomplete child acquisition and opens up new directions for the studies of bilingual development. One obvious line of potentially exciting inquiry is a comparison of fossilized child grammars with fully developed child grammars. This is why Levine’s discussion of his consultants’ speech will be of interest to language acquisition researchers of various theoretical orientations.

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Roger Maylor (henceforth, M) presents a book about German verb prefixes like those seen in 1. These exhibit various interesting phenomena. 1a,b shows alternations between prepositions and be-. 1a is a typical instance where be- acts as an overt signal of the locative alternation. 1c illustrates cases where prefixes appear with verb stems that appear elsewhere only as nouns or adjectives. All the prefixes are rampantly polysemous/polyfunctional; I cannot survey their uses here. The essence of M’s book lies in two things: a theory of how the prefix verbs are generated, and the claim that the figure-ground relationship1 and other

1 The terms FIGURE and GROUND may be unfamiliar to some linguists. In i, the cat is variously said to have the role of FIGURE, TRAJECTOR, THEME, LOCATUM, LOCATED OBJECT, while the entity appearing as complement of P answers to terms like GROUND, LANDMARK, REFERENCE OBJECT, RELATUM.

(i) The cat is on/under/at/near the bed.

The cat came from/toward/into/out of the house.

The ground is an entity whose relative salience and immobility enables it to serve as a landmark with respect to which the figure’s location can be ascertained. Ground is also a useful cover term for LOCATION, SOURCE, and GOAL when they are used with reference to a complement of P rather than a whole PP.
features associated with the semantics of prepositions also find exponents in the German prefixes. I have to say that flaws in argumentation and presentation do M’s claims a signal disservice.

(1) a. den Garten mit Rosen bepflanzen
   ‘plant the garden with roses’
   (cf. Rosen im Garten pflanzen ‘plant roses in the garden’)

b. eine Frage beantworten
   ‘answer a question’
   (cf. auf eine Frage antworten ‘answer a question’)

c. das Auto bereifen; den Kuchen verzuckern; erblonden; das Wasser entsalzen
   ‘put tires on the car; sugar the cake; go blond; desalinate the water’

Chapter 1 reviews the literature on prefixes (mainly that on be-; further accounts are discussed in later chapters; the review of Lieber and Baayen 1993 on ver- on pages 30–31 is repeated verbatim on pages 124–125). The treatment of earlier literature is sometimes unacceptable. Some important relevant studies are not mentioned at all (Koch and Rosengren 1996, Wunderlich 1997). Stiebels’s (1996, 1998) excellent and comprehensive work on German complex verbs is cited but once: in the bibliography. This is odd given that Stiebels discusses much of the same data as M, sometimes coming to similar conclusions, and given that her work has a grounding in the literature on morphology, syntax, verb semantics, aspect/aktionsart, argument structure, and preposition semantics missing in M’s work. Moreover, M sometimes criticizes others for things he does himself. He dismisses the use of thematic roles (171), but appeals to figure and ground, also thematic roles. He dismisses lexical decomposition as a fruitless exercise lacking methodological boundaries (37), yet himself decomposes prefixes into features, often informed only by nebulous intuitions about what a synchronically opaque morpheme might mean in localistic terms (see below).

I discuss chapter 2 in detail since it is at the heart of the book, describing the mechanics of M’s theory of Germanic prefixation, as applied to be-. That be-verbs alternate with verbs with prepositional complements (cf. 2a,b) recalls applicative constructions, often analyzed since Baker 1988 by appealing to head movement of a preposition to a verb. M accepts a syntactic generation of applicatives, but forms German prefix verbs in a nonsyntactic component with templates like 2. The SCS
("State and Change of State") features [L] and [→] basically encode aspects of prepositional meaning; more on this below. 2b is possible because an operation called foregrounding moves the ground leftwards (60–61); mit is inserted as a case marker for the figure. (Accusative is given to the ground because it is complement of the verb [61]; apparently verb adjacency in the template produces syntactic complementhood.) If no lexical verb is inserted into the template in 2b, a denominal be- verb like beflaggen 'put flags on' or bereifen 'put tires on' can be generated by substitution of the figure argument into a null verb. M notes that German denominal be- verbs incorporate figures, never grounds. (This observation might have been discussed as a problem for the influential assumptions of Hale and Keyser 1993, but M cites them only in an aside about "multiclausal deep structures" [25].)

(2) a. N ____ V F [+L, +→] G
    'He loaded hay onto the cart.' (ex. 57 on p. 62)

   Er lud Heu auf den Wagen.

    'He loaded the cart with hay.' (ex. 58 on p. 62)

    Er be-lud den Wagen mit Heu.

The approach has some originality and elegance, but it is unclear if it is an advance. We are told little about the relevant level of grammar except that it is a "(morphosyntactic) component of grammar distinct from the syntax” that feeds syntax and the lexicon (47–48). It is not rich enough to be a real semantic or conceptual level. It seems more like a mix between a morphological component and a level of argument structure, but it goes beyond this to the point of being a type of d-structure or lexical syntax, since it is said to obey some principles also operative in syntax, such as van Riemsdijk’s (1998) distinction between substitution and (adjacency-constrained) adjunction. Having the foregrounding operation (which inverts figure and ground) at this level means that the level has information-structural displacements akin to scrambling or predicate inversion. What the order in the template notation is actually iconic of, we are not told, but surface order in (unscrambled) verb-second clauses seems to be the criterion for determining this order. Nothing is said on how the theory could generate clauses with scrambling or verb-final order.
There is a large literature comparing morphological with syntactic derivations of complex verbs (for example, Ackerman and Wehelith 1998, Miller 1993) that M does not draw on in designing his templates and supporting his choice to reject a syntactic approach for German prefixation. What we get instead is a set of differences between be-verbs and genuine applicatives. These may exclude a generation by syntactic mechanisms identical to those assumed for applicatives, but not necessarily a generation by some other syntactic mechanism. The difference that comes closest to being relevant to the level question is that be-verbs are more likely to be lexicalized and semiproductive, but such arguments are known to be flimsy because clearly phrasal units can be idiomatic and semiproductive (He {loves/*adores/*admires/*hates} her to bits).

The description of and notation for the SCS features—a central aspect of the book—is not a blessing. To follow the analyses, one must return to page 53, only to be reminded of the fact that the features are never defined properly. The comments below show the problems and will spare readers the chore of having to exegete the meaning of the features from the analyses. On in the hay is on the cart is said (53) to be a realization of “(i) some lexical content (in this case the notion ‘superior’) and (ii) the three abstract features [cited verbatim in 3 below]”. 3c becomes clear when we read that off or not on are [→ –]. “Identifying” in 3a seems to mean that the item bearing the feature has a semantic ground argument, under the assumption (not made explicit) that figures are in no sense arguments of P. “Locational” in 3a is not used in the same way as in the literature on prepositions, viz. ‘statal, nondirectional’. The statal-directional distinction is coded in the feature in 3b (thus, onto is [+ →]). However, the → in 3b later turns into ↓ in formalizing down/up (138), at which point we wonder, first, whether the 3b feature is iconic of not just change of state but also the “lexical content” excluded from the SCS features in the above quotation, and second, how M would handle the difference between statal and directional down (the blind is/went down). M’s confusing notational innovations were unnecessary. The same information (and far more) could have been expressed with greater perspicuity and less annoyance to the reader by a more conventional notation in the prepositional semantics literature (say, Jackendoff 1990, Wunderlich 1991). Beyond discussion of the figure-ground schema, the literature on prepositions fails to figure in M’s numerous analyses of prepositional items.

(3) a. [+L] The P on is locational, and therefore identifies the Ground.
b. [→] The P on indicates –CHANGE OF STATE.
c. [→ +] The P on is positive with respect to the Ground.

In subsequent chapters, the theory and notation described above are applied to other sets of data. Chapter 3 analyzes verbs with ent- and argues that oblique cases (in Proto-Indo-European and in various daughter languages) instantiate different SCS features. A discussion of adjectival case assignment is provided. Chapter 4 examines prefixes with a non-overt ground, including ver-, er-, and ge- (ge- as used in nominalizations and participles is also discussed). M argues (127) that the ground is actually the figure in such cases, the idea being that the reference point is the figure’s original position. This interesting idea could also be supported by cases like expand, spread out, where an object is arguably conceptualized as moving out of itself, but makes no sense for many particles (in put a record on, the implicit ground is clearly a record player, and in put one’s false teeth in it is the subject’s mouth). Chapter 5 discusses deadjectival complex verbs. Result state APs and comparatives are also given a localistic analysis involving a silent P. Chapter 6 briefly discusses the dative and locative alternations. Chapter 7 offers an interesting hypothesis about why the Old English cognates of the German prefixes have not survived into modern English. The idea is that English lost a level of word structure called X\textsuperscript{−1} (the bound syllabic morpheme), a level also responsible for Old English case inflection and adjectival agreement, which went missing at roughly the same time as the prefixes.

Sadly, the book is replete with unsubstantiated or factually incorrect analyses; here is a sample. The subject in er bekochte die Gruppe / er kochte für die Gruppe ‘he cooked for the group’ is seen as a figure (68), but clearly the for-relationship (if it does conform to the figure-ground schema) subsists between the group and the cooking event (not the agent), witness diese ständige Kocherei für die Gruppe ‘this continual cooking for the group’. The (pretheoretically) pejorative character of certain ver-verbs (vergeigen ‘botch up’, sich verfahren ‘get lost’) is said (142) to be a connotation of the downward feature [↓+], but the feature’s applicability to ver- receives no independent support. The analysis (136) of ver- in verbs like verbauen ‘obscure by building’ shows the vacuity of the feature [→], which is now defined as ‘before’. (The idea that ver- = ‘before’ here was considered by Stiebels 1996:107–108.) The analysis of ditransitive constructions assumes that German zu + dative is a possible translation for to in he gave the book to his brother (215). This is false; recipients can
only be linked by *an (er (über)gab es {an mich/*zu mir} ‘he gave it to me’). M also argues (220) that to/zu “are associated with a Goal argument that represents a destination or end-point, but not a Ground.” It is unclear how a goal in this sense cannot be a ground (as defined on page 49). More unsupported analyses could be cited, but the above observations suffice to justify a plea for greater stringency in refereeing and proofreading, as befits books of this price range.

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1. Aim of the Book.

German has both “strong” and “weak” reflexive forms. For example, the strong form of the third person reflexive pronoun is the complex *sich selbst*, whereas the weak form consists of just *sich*. The latter form not only occurs in reflexive clauses, but in a number of different constructions as well. Steinbach’s main aim in the book under review is to give a unified account of the various constructions requiring the occurrence of the weak reflexive marker in German.

Steinbach (henceforth S) collectively labels these constructions the “middle voice,” although the construction coming closest to the traditional notion of middle voice in Indo-European studies, with a benefactive-like reflexive as in 1, does not really play a role in the discussion.

(1) a. Er kaufte sich ein neues Auto.
   he bought REFL a new car
   ‘He bought himself a new car.’

b. Sie hörte sich die Sonate an.
   she heard REFL the sonata PARTICLE
   ‘She listened to the sonata.’

Instead, S focuses on the following three constructions. First, he considers “real” reflexives, in which *sich* is referential according to S; more particularly, it is coreferential with the subject, as in 2.

(2) Herr Rossi rasiert sich.
   Mr. Rossi shaves REFL
   ‘Mr Rossi shaves.’
Second, S looks at middles, in which the verb’s logical subject argument is semantically present but not syntactically expressed (at least not obligatorily and not as a subject), whereas the verb’s logical object argument is syntactically expressed as the subject (see 3). Moreover, a middle sentence is a generic statement that expresses that the subject argument (the logical object argument), or events denoted by the verb or the verb-argument combination, generally have a particular property.

(3) Dieses Buch liest sich leicht.
   this book reads REFL easily
   ‘This book is easy to read.’

The third construction analyzed by S involves sentences known alternatively as anticausatives or inchoatives. As with middles, the verb’s logical object argument is the syntactic subject in such sentences. The main differences with middles are twofold. In anticausatives, the logical subject argument of the verb is not present, even semantically; unlike the example in 3, there is no implied agent in 4. Second, anticausatives can express an event, so they can be episodic and nongeneric sentences.

(4) Die Tür öffnete sich plötzlich
   the door opened REFL suddenly
   ‘The door opened suddenly.’

S rejects analyses of middles that derive them either in syntax or “presyntactically,” at a conceptual-semantic level at which a verb’s syntactic argument structure is determined, because in his view such accounts fail to unify middles with the other constructions containing the weak reflexive. Instead, S proposes what he refers to as a “postsyntactic” analysis. In this view, the three constructions mentioned have the same syntax with respect to the position and properties of the reflexive, but differ in how the syntactic structure is semantically interpreted.

S’s basic analysis is as follows. The weak reflexive pronoun is not inherently specified for referentiality (contra Reinhart and Reuland 1993, who argue that it is nonreferential in nature), so it can be either [+R] or [−R] ([±R] is a feature indicating “referentiality”). When [+R], the reflexive pronoun must head its own chain in syntax, although semantically it can be bound by an antecedent. In this case the “real” reflexive reading, as in 2, results. When it is [−R], the reflexive pronoun must form an A-chain with an antecedent in syntax, as chains only
containing [–R] elements are not allowed. This has an effect on how the verb’s arguments link to syntax.

In the normal pattern the first argument is linked to the specifier of VP (or vP), while the second argument is linked to the complement of V. This is impossible, however, when the reflexive in complement position forms a syntactic A-chain with the subject, because an A-chain is supposed to be assigned one thematic role only. S argues that the first role of the verb cannot be linked to syntax now, as VP,Spec is an intermediate link in the complex A-chain formed between the surface position of the subject (SpecIP/AgrsP) and the reflexive (206). The syntactic subject therefore is in a non-theta position in this case. The reflexive, merged in the regular object position, receives the verb’s second argument role. Given that it forms an A-chain with the subject and that the subject is the only [+R] (referential) element in this chain, it is the subject that will end up being interpreted as the verb’s second argument.

What happens, then, to the verb’s first argument (the logical subject)? Following Reinhart (2000), S argues that if this argument is not linked to any syntactic element, two things can happen in the semantic module: The argument variable can either be reduced or saturated. Reduction is an operation that deletes an argument variable in a predicate’s argument structure. Thus an a-structure results that contains only the second (and any lower) argument variable(s). The resulting interpretation is that of an anticausative, as in 4. (See also Chierchia 2004 and Reinhart 2000, who analyze all unaccusative verbs in this way.) Saturation is an operation by which any unlinked (but nondeleted) argument variable gets bound by some quantifier. For example, it can get get bound by an existential quantifier, in which case a passive reading results. But it can also be bound by a generic quantifier, and in that case the middle reading results, as in 3. (S further argues that the generic quantifier also binds the “situation variable” of the verb, leading to the non-episodic reading of middles, compare also Condoravdi 1989.)

S further argues that elements that are involved in syntactic A-chain formation, so in particular the [–R] reflexive pronoun in the anticausative and middle constructions must be assigned structural case. This is expressed by his General Condition on A-chains (203). An A-chain, in S’s definition, consists of “syntactic arguments” of the verb, and syntactic arguments are defined as those that receive structural case. (This means the subject-reflexive chain contains two case-marked positions, which is allowed by a further definition according to which an A-chain must
contain exactly one position that is both [+R] and case-marked; hence it may contain any number of case-marked [–R] positions additionally.) Under the further assumption, motivated in detail by S, that accusative is a structural case in German, while dative is not, this condition ensures that dative reflexives will not participate in A-chain formation. This accounts for the absence of middles derived from verbs taking dative objects like *helfen,* as shown in (5).

(5) a. Er hilft dem/*den Mann.
   he helps the-DAT/*the-ACC man
   ‘He helps the man.’

   b. *Ein solcher Mann hilft sich schwer
   a such man helps REFL difficultly
   ‘Such a man is not easy to help.’

The same holds for the impossibility of “promoting” the indirect object in a double object construction under middle formation, as this too is a dative-marked element.

3. Comparison with Other Analyses.

Although S devotes a chapter to arguing against previous treatments of middles in German and other languages, we are not convinced that there is a very substantial difference between his analysis and so-called “presyntactic” analyses. “Presyntactic” accounts typically say that “if the semantic properties of the predicate and its arguments are such and such, then the syntactic realization of the verb and its arguments will be such and such. Under S’s account, “if the syntactic realization of the verb and its arguments is such and such, then their semantic interpretation will be such and such”. For example, looking at what happens with the logical subject, a “presyntactic” account would state that “if the external argument is generically quantified, you need not link it to the syntactic subject position,” whereas S’s “postsyntactic” account says that “if the first argument of the verb is not linked to the syntactic subject position, you can interpret is as being generically quantified’. In other words, the main difference is one of directionality: from semantics to syntax, or from syntax to semantics. (Note that this issue is independent from what one thinks the proper semantic characterization of middles ultimately is.)

The question is whether this is a substantive issue, or merely a terminological one. In a representational theory, with nondirectional
principles that regulate the mapping between the various modules of grammar (compare Jackendoff 1997), there are just principles of the type “this particular syntactic structure corresponds to this particular semantic structure,” making this a non-issue.

The main differences between S’s analysis and most other nonsyntactic accounts seem to be the following. The first is its focus on the connection with other constructions with a weak reflexive, which we discuss in the next section. A second difference is the assumption that the grammatical subject is not linked to the verb’s second argument variable directly, but only indirectly, namely by A-binding the reflexive in object position that does receive the role in question. However, exactly such an analysis has in fact already been proposed for English, namely by Massam (1992). Massam’s analysis of English middles involves a case-marked empty reflexive that receives the internal theta-role of the verb and is A-bound by the subject, which is itself in a nonthematic position. This appears to be equivalent to what S proposes for German (where the reflexive is overt). Not including this paper in the discussion on previous accounts therefore must be regarded as something of an omission, as it remains unclear now what the innovative aspect of S’s approach is.

4. Unification.
Central to S’s study is the attempt to give a unified account of middles and other constructions involving a weak reflexive in German. The unification applies to the syntactic structure of the three constructions mentioned in section 1, not, of course, to their semantics. S’s aim is to argue that the constructions do not differ syntactically with respect the position and behavior of the reflexive, and that the differences between them follow from independent semantic factors. This goes beyond the ambitions of most other treatments of middles. It is not entirely clear, however, whether such unification is desirable as such. At least the claim that middles and anticausatives have the same syntax is dubious in our view.

In German at least, middles display the behavioral properties of unergative verbs (that is, their syntactic subject behaves like an external argument), while anticausatives behave like unaccusatives (their subject behaves like an underlying object); see Ackema and Schoorlemmer 1995 for discussion. S notes this, but denies the syntactic relevance of the unergative-unaccusative distinction, at least for German (see also Fagan 1992). Unfortunately, he does not offer any alternative nonsyntactic
account of the relevant differences between the two (for example, why only unaccusatives can appear as prenominal past participles, as well as differences with respect to verbal and adjectival passive formation—and indeed with respect to middle formation itself; see section 6.2). Semantic generalizations concerning these phenomena indicate that the unergative-unaccusative distinction probably has a semantic basis, but such generalizations in and of themselves do not explain the syntactic differences just mentioned. As far as we know, no principled semantic account exists of the difference in syntactic behavior between unergatives and unaccusatives (compare also Hoekstra 1999).

The denial of the syntactic relevance of the unergative-unaccusative distinction is also problematic when comparing the constructions under discussion with others. Under S’s account, the difference between middles and passives is that in middles the verb’s first argument variable (as well as the event variable) is saturated via binding by a generic quantifier, whereas in passives it is saturated via binding by an existential quantifier (12–13; 270), a semantic difference. Nevertheless, middles and passives behave entirely differently with respect to their syntax, as well as with respect to the restrictions that apply on their formation (see Ackema and Schoorlemmer 2002 for an overview). A salient difference from the point of view of S’s account is that German passives do not contain an instance of the weak reflexive.

It seems unlikely that a mere difference in the nature of the quantifier that binds the verb’s first argument can account for these differences. Middles and passives must differ along other lines as well, but this is left unclear by S. Perhaps passives differ in that the subject is directly linked to the verb’s second argument. But if such noncanonical linking were possible after all, it could occur in middles as well, which would undermine the role of sich in the analysis. Or perhaps passives differ from middles in there being object-to-subject movement. But in that case passives instantiate a case of syntactic unaccusativity in German after all, so the question reappears of whether middles and anticausatives fall into the same class with respect to unaccusativity.

Similarly, inherent reflexives are treated syntactically on a par with anticausatives and middles, at least in terms of linking: It is the second argument that gets linked to the reflexive (which is bound by the nonthematic but referential subject), not the first. This “unaccusative” analysis of inherent reflexives is heavily disputed in the literature (see, for instance, Reinhart and Siloni 2004), but S does not discuss this.
In short, S presents an interesting analysis, but leaves open many of the problems it creates for the different syntactic phenomena involved in the various valency-changing operations. In the final sections we discuss some issues that concern the details of the analysis itself.

5.1. The Choice of Argument That Remains Unlinked.
In S’s analysis it is crucial that in middles as well as anticausatives the first argument of the verb remains unlinked. It is not clear, however, why it is the first argument that cannot be linked to syntax. S reasons that “[t]he verb’s first argument cannot be linked to syntax because VP,Spec is only an intermediate link of chain 3” [= the composite chain between subject in SpecIP, trace of subject in SpecVP, and reflexive] [206]). The question arises why it is not an option to regularly link the verb’s first argument to the subject trace in SpecVP and then, instead of suppressing this first argument, suppress the linking of the second argument to complement position to ensure that the composite chain carries only one role. In other words, by analogy to S’s reasoning above, we could just as well claim that “the verb’s second argument cannot be linked to syntax because the complement to V position is only a link in the A-chain 3.” The only difference is that the complement position is not an intermediate link in this chain but the lowest, but why this should be relevant for the linking principles remains unclear. After all, the option just mentioned also yields a well-formed chain that is assigned one theta-role and contains a [+R]-element as its head. The desired result only follows if it is stipulated that only the lowest position in an A-chain can be assigned any theta-role, even when this chain is composite and does not involve illicit raising from one theta-position to a higher one. S does indeed make this assumption (208), but does not motivate it.

5.2. Dative Reflexives and the General Condition on Chains.
S excludes dative reflexives in middles by means of a “general condition on chains” (203). This condition states that an A-chain contains exactly one link that is both [+R] and case-marked. Moreover, an A-chain consists of a sequence of “syntactic arguments,” which in turn are those constituents that are assigned structural case by the verb (see section 2). This condition on chains is based on a similar condition in Reinhart and Reuland 1993 (henceforth R&R). S deviates in some crucial respects from R&R’s version, however, with the result that his version specifically
excludes dative reflexives in middles, without much empirical coverage beyond this.

We already noted that S differs from R&R in assuming that a weak reflexive can be [+R]. This means that in those cases where R&R assume that this element forms a syntactic chain with its antecedent, S assumes that it does not. As a result, the chain condition in S’s theory is not relevant for reflexives in general (in particular, it does not apply to argument reflexives), but only for [–R] reflexives in middles and anticausatives. Moreover, S redefines R&R’s concept of “syntactic argument” as applying only to elements receiving structural case (whereas in R&R’s version it includes theta-marked as well as case-marked elements, thus including dative objects). The upshot of these two alterations to R&R’s chain condition taken together is that this condition now only states that in middles and anticausatives the reflexive must be assigned structural case. So, if dative case is not structural, no dative reflexives are allowed in middles. Thus the modifications to R&R’s theory just describe the undesirable situation (dative reflexives in middles) that is to be excluded, whereas the empirical coverage of R&R’s version of the chain condition is lost: Since the condition no longer says anything about “ordinary” binding, it does not exclude bound pronouns. Instead, S argues that binding (different from his “syntactic binding” in A-chains) is not a syntactic issue at all, but a semantic one that is regulated by different principles altogether. S’s account of the impossibility of dative middles therefore boils down to mere stipulation, and we must regard the matter as problematic as it was before.

6.1. Middles of Unaccusatives.
In section 4 we discussed S’s view that there is no syntactic distinction in German between unergative and unaccusative verbs. A difference between these two we did not mention there concerns middle formation itself. Whereas (impersonal) middles from unergatives are fine in both German and Dutch, unaccusatives usually resist middle formation; compare the Dutch examples in 6a–c with their German equivalents in 6d–f.

6 a. *Het groeit prima op in dit weeshuis.
   it grows fine up in this orphanage
   ‘It is fine to grow up in this orphanage.’
b. *Het schrikt gemakkelijk van een spook.
   it frightens easily of a phantom
   ‘One easily gets scared by a phantom.’

c. *Het blijft prima als het gezellig is.
   it remains perfectly-well when it cozy is
   ‘It is nice to stay when things are comfortable.’

d. *Es wächst sich prima in diesem Waisenhaus.
   it grows-up REFL perfectly-well in this orphanage

e. *Es erschreckt sich leicht vor einem Gespenst.
   it frightens REFL easily of a phantom

f. *Es bleibt sich gut wenn es gemütlich ist.
   it remains REFL well when it cozy is

If the unergative-unaccusative distinction is not syntactically instantiated, as S claims for German, this difference must receive a semantic account—or be denied to exist. S argues that the latter is the case, quoting a number of “real life” examples of middles from unaccusatives, such as that in 7 (from a health care study).

(7) In welchem Bezirk stirbt es sich am frühesten?
   in which district dies it REFL at-the earliest
   ‘In which district do people die youngest?’

In Dutch, too, one may encounter middles of verbs like *sterven ‘die’, as in 8.

(8) ??Het bejaardenhuis sterft rustiger dan het slagveld.
   the rest-home dies more-quietly than the battlefield
   ‘It is quieter to die in a rest home than on the battlefield.’

Examples like these have a status similar to examples of passives formed from unaccusatives, which is to say that they have an “intentionally-playing-with-language” effect, which is entirely absent in middles from unergatives. We are told that the same effect holds of the German example in 7, and it is observable in other examples of middles from unaccusative as well (9a is Dutch, 9b is German).¹

¹ Thanks to Susi Wurmbrand for discussion of the German data.
(9) a. Een judomat valt beter dan een betonnen vloer.
    a judo-mat falls better than a concrete floor
    ‘It is better to fall on a judo mat than on a concrete floor.’

    b. In Schiphol komt es sich leicht an.
    in Schiphol arrives it REFL easily PARTICLE
    ‘It is easy to arrive at Schiphol airport.’

What is crucial is that examples such as these have exactly the same status as examples of active (nonmiddle) sentences in which the unaccusative verb in question is deliberately used agentively, in contrast to its normal usage, thus giving rise to the “funny” effect. If such a forced agentive reading of the verb is not possible, the relevant examples become entirely unacceptable, as is the case for 6a–f. Obviously, any account according to which middles from unaccusatives should be just fine cannot deal with this difference between unaccusatives and unergatives.

6.2 Language Variation.
S mainly discusses German in his study. It can, of course, be perfectly justified to focus on one language, but nevertheless we find it unfortunate that the analysis immediately seems to run into problems when we try to translate it to German’s close neighbor, Dutch. In contrast to English (for which S can assume that the weak form of the reflexive pronoun is empty; compare Massam’s (1992) analysis mentioned above), there is an overt weak reflexive in Dutch (zich). This weak reflexive does occur with some inchoative verbs, but its presence actually leads to ungrammaticality in middles, as shown in 10.

(10) Dit boek leest (*zich) als een trein.
      this book reads (REFL) like a train

Hence, an analysis in which the presence of a weak reflexive is crucial in deriving the properties of the middle construction cannot work for this language. Nevertheless, the restrictions on Dutch middle formation are largely similar to those observed in German. For instance, middles from double object constructions are bad in both languages, but in Dutch this cannot be due to the impossibility of having a dative-marked reflexive in an A-chain, since no such reflexive appears (apart from the fact that Dutch does not show any form of case either). S considers it “ironic” that many analyses of middles with a reflexive have been based on analyses concerning languages in which no reflexive appears in the middle. Without wanting to claim that this is a good strategy, we fail to
see what is particularly ironic here, because we do not think that the number of languages in which a certain form appears reveals any profound insight about the proper analysis of the relevant construction. The proper analysis should account for both types of languages, regardless of their relative frequency.

The situation with respect to inchoatives in Dutch is also interesting. There are pairs with exactly the same meaning, one with the weak reflexive and one without. Despite there being no difference in meaning, the variant with *zich* behaves differently from the variant without *zich* with respect to the diagnostics of unaccusativity (see Ackema 1999), as illustrated by 11–13. The variant with *zich* (the unergative variant) can, of course, be analyzed along the lines of S’s proposal for German. However, given that the unaccusative variant without *zich* has exactly the same semantics, it is hard to account for its different syntactic behavior under S’s “postsyntactic” account of inchoatives.

(11) De situatie wijzigt (zich).
    the situation changes (REFL)

(12) a. De situatie is/*heeft gewijzigd.
    the situation is/has changed

   b. De situatie heeft/*is zich gewijzigd.
    the situation has/is REFL changed

(13) de (*zich) gewijzigde situatie
    the (REFL) changed situation

A different type of language variation may also be hard to account for in S’s theory. There are languages in which middles have properties that are much more like those of passives. In the Romance languages, for example, middles need not be generic. The differences between middles in these languages and middles in languages like Dutch and English may plausibly be analyzed in terms of a syntactic (object-to-subject raising) versus a non-syntactic account of the two (see Lekakou 2002, Marelj forthcoming). If all middles are derived post-syntactically, there is no obvious way to state this distinction.

7. Conclusion.
There is much of value in this book. S provides a wealth of data on German middles and related constructions, and the work will be an
important source for anyone working on the topic. Moreover, S does not hesitate to address related issues, with the result that the book covers topics such as the status of dative case in German, binding theory, topic and focus structure, and word order in the German inner field (“Mittelfeld”). This thoroughness unfortunately also backfires in places. S has a tendency to discuss every topic that is remotely connected to the core issues, so that the reader has to go through some rather long-winded elaborations. Another consequence is that the text is interrupted by a prodigious amount of footnotes (chapter 3, for instance, has sixty-five footnotes for forty-three pages of main text). These are often important, but just as often report on someone’s opinion about something that might possibly be connected to some side issue in the main text, and S’s opinion about that. Much of this space could have been devoted instead to a more thorough discussion of the implications of S’s analysis for the different syntactic behaviors of unaccusative versus unergative verbs, to a discussion of how to account for language variation in middle formation, to an account of what the differences are between S’s analysis and that of Massam (1992), and perhaps to some discussion on points such as those mentioned in sections 5 and 6 above.

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