REVIEWS

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Wada’s aim is to construct a new compositional theory of tense. It is based on five ‘theories and assumptions’ (p. 2): (a) the traditional distinction between finite and nonfinite predicates, (b) an AUX-as-main-Verb hypothesis based on a prototype analysis, (c) an English-as-Two-Absolute-Tenses-Language hypothesis, (d) a quadripartite temporal notation system, (e) a theory of modality. The theoretical framework itself contains two levels: the level of tense structure, at which a particular tense is represented by a temporal template, and the level of tense interpretation, which integrates semantico-pragmatic information that results in a temporal output.

In the first chapter, the underlying ‘theories and assumptions’ are explained. While the distinction between finite and nonfinite predicates is unproblematic, the evidence adduced in favour of the second assumption is less convincing. Wada argues that modal auxiliaries are nonprototypical main verbs. This claim is based on the observation that both modals and finite full verbs occur in the left-most position of the finite VP, and that they can both be ‘modified by time adverbials or negated’ (p. 13). Wada goes on to argue that dare and need are not only used as either an auxiliary or a full verb, but also as a hybrid form, whereby typical full-verb characteristics are apparent in the use of the modal auxiliary (e.g. By God, if he dares come here again). According to the author, this is another piece of evidence that shows that the distinction between modals and full verbs is fuzzy. Next, he points out that ‘auxiliary’ have and ‘copular’ be share more syntactic characteristics with full verbs than with auxiliaries (i.e. they are inflected for person and number), so they can also be called full verbs. The conclusion is that since modal auxiliaries, and have and be, have temporal reference and can be negated, they ‘represent situations’ (p. 16), which of typical of main verbs. All in all, despite the rather long list of arguments, the second foundation stone of the theory is not as solid as one would hope it to be. There are indeed relatively giant leaps between the observations made and the conclusion that is deduced. The third axiom is that English has only two absolute tenses, i.e. the present tense and the past tense. While Wada is not the first to make that point (the presence – past tense and present tense – vs. absence – in the case of will – of an inflectional morpheme is traditionally adduced as major evidence), again, the arguments he gives are not always convincing. He points out that the modals in You can come to my office this evening and I must leave for Paris tomorrow, just like will, can have future time reference, so that it is mistaken to assign

1 ‘It is a general understanding that what can be negated by one negative corresponds to one predicate from a semantic point of view’ (p. 16).
the role of marker of futurity uniquely to *will*. In fact, the modals in those sentences have present time reference, and there is a relationship of posteriority between the modal meaning expressed and the situation referred to, a gloss of the sentences being *I give you the permission now to come and see me this evening* and *I am under the obligation now to leave for Paris tomorrow* (cf. Depraetere & Reed, forthcoming).² Another piece of evidence Wada gives in support of the ‘two absolute tenses theory’ is based on the observation that it is sometimes hard to distinguish future (prediction) *will* from volitional *will*, as in *I will go camping next Sunday if the weather is fine*. Having observed this, Wada concludes: ‘Since no one may argue against the view that a modal element expressed by *will* is closely related to the present tense (in independent clauses), it is plausible to assume that the auxiliary *will* represents the present tense’ (p. 18). While this may seem very plausible to the author, it will not necessarily be that clear to other readers, especially as Wada has just pointed out himself (cf. supra) that *will*, like other modal auxiliaries, can have future time reference. The fourth ‘observation’ is the quadripartite temporal notation system: Wada distinguishes between the speech time (S), the event time (E), the time of orientation (O), and the temporal focus (TF). S and E are relatively straightforward notions. The time of orientation is the “‘base time’ from which the speaker and/or the addressee(s) evaluate or compute the position of the event time(s) when interpreting the temporal relation(s) in a given sentence’ (p. 20), i.e. the Reichenbachian R.³ The temporal focus is ‘the speaker’s focus which is fixed on the time point (period) of a situation on the time line to which the speaker pays or is paying special attention’ (p. 21). This is a functional time which is operative at the tense-interpretation level and which mostly coincides with E. Wada’s observations about modality constitute the fifth and final presupposition on which his theory is based. As pointed out in footnote 2, he distinguishes between the modality domain (constituted by the modal) and the proposition domain. What is sometimes called Subject-oriented root modality (volition and ability) is not subsumed under Wada’s notion of modality,⁴ the ‘mental state or attitude of a speaker’ being a necessary feature. The indicative (or what Wada calls assertion) is ‘regarded as the unmarked case of epistemic modality for declarative sentences’ (p. 23).⁵ Verbs can also be ‘neutral’ with respect to modality, as in *If you take over the job, you will be rich*, i.e. in conditional clauses and time clauses:

² Wada’s failure to distinguish the two kinds of temporal information contained in a modal utterance is strange, given that on p. 22, he explicitly points out himself that such an utterance is composed of two elements, i.e. the modality domain and the proposition domain.
³ As pointed out by Wada, Reichenbach’s R subsumes a number of meanings, the most common being the reference time inherent in the tense structure.
⁴ ‘Such root modals are seen as objective elements and thus belong to the proposition domain’ (p. 23).
⁵ It is rather controversial to claim that the indicative represents epistemic modality. Epistemic modality is an indication of the speaker’s judgment of the likelihood with which the situation referred to in the utterance is true. Since, strictly speaking, there is no explicit indication of the speaker’s assessment, the indicative seems to be outside the realm of epistemic modality. Cf. e.g. Lyons (1977: 797): ‘Facts are epistemically non-modal. It is only if the speaker explicitly qualifies his commitment to the truth of the proposition expressed in the utterance that it is epistemically modal.’ Cf. also e.g. Lyons (1977: 809).
like volition will and ability can, the verbs in conditional clauses and time clauses are ‘objective elements and belong to the proposition domain’ (p. 25).

This relatively long survey of the underlying foundations of Wada’s compositional theory of tense probably shows that some of them look rather like axioms, i.e. they are posited rather than based on convincing evidence. This is not to say that the author does not adduce evidence, but the deductive process through which he arrives at some of his conclusions is rather mind-boggling, as may be clear from the preceding paragraph. Having said this, as the developer of a new theory, the author has every right to define a number of starting points that he takes for granted. In what follows, I will try to assess the validity of his compositional theory, given the background or framework constituted by the ‘theories and observations’ that the author chooses to work with.

In chapter 2, we get a general outline of the building blocks of the compositional tense theory. First, there is the tense-structure level. Finite predicates consist of an absolute tense component (the A-component, which is represented by an inflectional morpheme) and a relative tense component (the R-component). Nonfinite predicates only consist of an R-component. For instance, in Hitomi is happy, the present-tense morpheme (A-component) evokes present time and the event time, which is properly included in the time sphere evoked by the A-component, constitutes the R-component. The latter component is relative because it is interpreted in relation to the time-sphere established by a finite tense morpheme. There are five nonfinite forms (the bare infinitive, the to-infinitive, the present participle, the past participle, and the gerund), and at the tense-structure level each of them is potentially capable of expressing a number of relationships (anteriority, simultaneity or posteriority) with another situation. In case there is more than one option, it is at the tense-interpretation level that the actual temporal relationship gets specified.

Table 1. *Temporal schemata associated with non-finite forms at the tense structure level*

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>Anteriority</th>
<th>Simultaneity</th>
<th>Posteriority</th>
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<tbody>
<tr>
<td>The bare infinitive</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>To-infinitive</td>
<td>X</td>
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<tr>
<td>The present participle</td>
<td></td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The past participle</td>
<td>X</td>
<td></td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>The gerund</td>
<td>X</td>
<td>X</td>
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6 This kind of ‘abrupt concluding’ is present throughout the book. Cf. e.g. pp. 32–3 on why there are five rather than three nonfinite forms, cf. also the statement without further ado that ‘the present participle itself expresses simultaneity and the past participle itself expresses anteriority because of the lexical properties of the morphemes -ing and -en’ (p. 37). And, on p. 44, it is posited that the infinitive is ‘semantically under the direct control of the finite predicate’ in I asked Mana to play the koto for me and it is ‘not semantically under the direct control of the finite predicate’ in He grew up to be rather selfish, but it is not explained why this is the case.
The tense-interpretation level consists of two stages, the ‘first’ and the ‘last’. While in the first stage, the basic semantic, temporal structure of a given tense is established; in the last stage, the temporal value of the tense is established. Both finite and nonfinite verb forms can be interpreted deictically (i.e. in direct relation to the speech time) or nondeictically (i.e. in relation to another event functioning as a time of orientation or an implicit time of orientation). Let us quote the author to show how the system works. This is how Wada accounts for the temporal processing of his example (12a), *If you come with me, you’ll certainly enjoy the party.*

The finite predicate *come* in (12a) represents its event time as being located somewhere in the present time-sphere established by the A-component at the level of tense structure. It is at the tense-interpretation level that the event time of *come* is interpreted as almost simultaneous with (more precisely, just coming before) the event time of the addressee’s enjoying the party, which is interpreted as posterior to the event time of *will* that is simultaneous with the speech time. (p. 41)

Such an account in terms of tense-structure level and tense-interpretation level adequately describes the facts. However, it is not entirely convincing, because it seems to be a bit ‘post hoc’, it being – in my view – too obviously inspired by what we know is the output in terms of the temporal interpretation, without independent evidence supporting the additional claims that are made about the tense-interpretation level. Especially in his discussion of the ‘complicated examples’ (section 2.2.2.2), the author appeals to many additional claims which seem to appear a bit out of the blue, and which are not generated by theory-internal processes, and this is not beneficial to the solidity of the theory. Quite a lot of provisos are drawn in, and all in all, this flaws the argumentation somewhat. Let us quote the author once more when he explains the temporal interpretation of (22a), *Rieko seems to be sick.* The problem engendered by this sentence is that the *to*-infinitive complement is simultaneous with ‘the situation’ of *seems*, an option which is not available at the tense-structure level (cf. table 1). Wada argues:

To answer this question [of the temporal interpretation of (22a)], we should notice the fact that both the finite and the nonfinite predicate are stative. Stative predicates are usually viewed as unbounded and limitless, and the situations represented by them are homogeneous. Recall that in my system, especially with stative predicates an event time does not necessarily correspond to the time of the whole period of a given situation... Thus, I can argue that at the first stage the *to*-infinitive represents a relation of posteriority between two event times, and a reanalysis is carried out at the second stage at which we can recognize an overlap between the two situations. At the second stage, the finite situation stretches forward in time, while the nonfinite situation stretches back in time, and thus they create that overlap. (pp. 50–1)

Wada claims that his approach enables him to work with a small number of elements at the tense-structure level, which is enriched at the tense-interpretation level. He does not seem to be aware that the latter level becomes quite heavily loaded, and
the imbalance might lead to the base structure being suffocated by the weight of the tense-interpretation level.

In chapter 3, the basic temporal templates are described. The notion of temporal focus (TF) is now explained in more detail. It is necessary to explain the possible interpretations of stative present-tense examples of the type Hitomi is happy. If there is reference to a specific situation or a particular moment of Hitomi being happy, then the focus is on the present NOW; if there is reference to a general situation, TF need not be appealed to. Wada offers a description and a schematic representation of the present tense and the past tense, both simple tenses, and of the perfect tense and the future, both complex tenses. This chapter also contains a temporal representation of the progressive. While it is no doubt logical that the progressive, within this theory, should have a kind of basic, underlying meaning which may then be interpreted in several ways, it remains a bit disturbing that the author does not clearly point out that we are now moving to aspect rather than tense.

Having explained the theory in part 1 (chapters 1 to 3), the author applies the framework in part two (‘Applications’). The latter part deals with the present perfect (chapter 4), the past perfect (chapter 5), temporal adverbials (chapter 6), future time reference (chapter 7), and tense in indirect speech (chapter 8). In all the chapters the author shows how available descriptions can either be improved by his theory or how the existing knowledge is generated in a far more natural way in his framework. I will refrain from commenting in detail on each of these chapters. They obviously contain a lot of useful examples and observations, and survey the basic problems inherent in each of the topics covered, but I find that they suffer at times from a certain lack of solid argumentation, as described earlier on.

In the final part (chapter 9), Wada criticizes existing theories: those inspired by Reichenbach (Reichenbach, 1947; Hornstein, e.g. 1990; Smith, e.g. 1978), that of Comrie (e.g. 1985), that of Declerck (e.g. 1991), and that of Klein (e.g. 1994). While it appears likely that any theory has some weak spot(s), I have not been convinced by Wada’s book that his approach is the perfect answer to possible flaws in other work.

My personal reticence notwithstanding, it remains a fact that this book is a serious attempt to offer a full-fledged analysis of the temporal interpretation of utterances, which is in itself not an easy undertaking. One of the major merits of this ambitious book is that the author definitely shows that there are many semantic and pragmatic factors that influence temporal interpretation. A purely formal account of tense is therefore bound to have a reductionist effect: we need a system which posits a basic temporal structure, which is then enriched at a different level.

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A landmark in the prolific authors’ Sociolinguistics and Language History project, *Historical Sociolinguistics* aims to describe ‘the processes of language change’ (p. 6) and specifically to assess the historical applicability of modern generalizations about the role of social factors in linguistic change. The data derive from the 2.7 million-word Corpus of Early English Correspondence (CEEC), completed in 1998 and compiled to approximate as closely as practicable ‘the informal spoken language’ (p. 28) of ‘the entire language community from the fifteenth to seventeenth centuries’ (p. 49). Linguistically, these centuries were to see the continuing demise of inflections and the concomitant rise of analytic constructions as well as the emergence of a southern protostandard containing supralocalized features. While the text’s tracking of fourteen linguistic variables enriches our picture of Early Modern English, its primary purpose is to assess the linguistic relevance of social variables: gender differentiation, social stratification, and regional variation.

Merely in its consistent methodology and its sole focus on the sociolinguistics of Early Modern English this is a groundbreaking work. Ultimately concluding that ‘external variables’ do ‘correlate with the changes in progress’ and that ‘the two most important . . . were region and gender’ (p. 208), the authors decisively supersede some recent scholarship – for instance, their own collection of pilot studies (1996), some deemed ‘tentative’ or ‘largely descriptive’ (Austin, 1998: p. 185, Fitzmaurice, 1998: 411; Romaine, 1997: p. 434), and Görlich’s survey of ‘Regional and social variation’ in the *Cambridge History of the English Language*, which laments the scarcity of
sociohistorical studies (1999: pp. 470–2) and the lack of ‘new information’ (p. 538) yet which assertively inferred from ‘rare’ ‘explicit comment’ by contemporaries that in comparison to factors like education ‘Sex can hardly be considered an independent Early Modern English variable’ (pp. 514–17; cf. Fitzmaurice, 2002: 189). Complementing and compensating for occasional, often biased and self-conscious contemporary sociolinguistic comments, the data in the large, well-designed CEEC allow the authors to draw conclusions from a splendidly contextualized and systematic series of empirical studies. In a final chapter, multivariate analysis measures the relative independence of variables like gender and region.

The volume’s structure coherently reflects its authors’ focus on social factors. For readers new to the field, two introductory chapters and a lucid table characterize and contextualize their variationist paradigm. Rejecting a nonempirical approach, while demonstrating the inaccuracy of modern assumptions and of contemporary perceptions, the authors simultaneously sketch some of the linguistic differences and controversies characteristic of the period. Sensitive to historical particularities and social complexities, they also acknowledge the difficulty of accurately categorizing social status and social mobility in both modern and historical empirical studies. These chapters also mention some of the ‘sociolinguistic universals’ whose relevance to Early Modern realities is a major theme of this monograph.

The third chapter introduces the ‘Primary data: background and informants’. The CEEC is large, spanning about 270 years (c. 1410 to 1681) and containing over 6,000 letters from almost 780 informants. One of its most powerful features is its ‘Sender database’, containing codes corresponding to a full social profile of each informant: for instance, ‘rank’ and ‘father’s rank’ (p. 52 n22). Familiar to readers of earlier findings but hidden in a note is a description of the ‘social aspirer’, a key category referring to socially and presumably linguistically attentive individuals ‘who climbed more than two rungs on the social ladder’ (p. 155 n3). Thirteen pages (and the characteristic tables) outline key developments in the social, economic, and cultural history of the period; current references complement what the authors acknowledge as the inevitable simplification of complex phenomena like the Reformation and the Civil War. Particular attention is paid to the drawing and crossing of social and geographical boundaries and to issues relating to the acquisition and extent of literacy in the period. Indeed, an inevitable and repeatedly acknowledged weakness of the CEEC as a resource for representing the language of English speakers is the lower literacy rates characteristic of the lower ranks and of women; another is the obvious and inevitable lack of correspondence between written letters in modern editions and the informal speech in which ‘most linguistic changes’ are assumed to originate (p. 28). The chapter puts into the foreground various methodological issues raised in compiling the corpus: tables and graphs illustrate the representation of women and of lower ranks in terms of the number of informants, the number of letters, and the number of words in twenty-year units. For readers skeptical about the authors’ later identification of ‘the leading roles played by women and the capital region, the Royal Court in particular, in the
processes of change’ (p. 208), the information that the number of female and court-based informants constitute respectively 26 per cent and 8 per cent of the total is readily accessible here (pp. 45, 49).

The fourth chapter, ‘Real time’, introduces the fourteen linguistic features selected for study – an assortment of variables whose common denominator is that they are reasonably frequent morphosyntactic ‘developments that have been investigated before’, ‘most’ in the context of ‘some general drifts in the history of English, such as morphological simplification and the introduction of the SVO word order’ (pp. 58–9) and many by the authors themselves. These comprise: the strikingly rapid replacement of subject ye by you; my and thy versus mine and thine; the introduction of possessive determiner its; the prop-word one; the direct object and the noun subject of the gerund; the replacement of -th by -s as the present indicative third-person singular suffix; periphrastic do in affirmative statements and in negative statements; the decline of multiple negation; inversion after initial adverbs and negators; the rivalry between the relative pronouns which and the which; the shift from synthetic relative adverbs (wherewith) to analytic prepositional phrases (with which); and the grammaticalization of indefinite pronouns with singular human reference like somebody and anyone.

Notes and references lead the reader to the linguistic history of these variables. Although the authors obviously attempt to give a systematic sketch of each, chapter 4’s aim is to assess the extent to which the time courses of their spread through society accords with the ubiquitous S-shaped curve that has become ‘a stock-in-trade for sociolinguists describing the spread of linguistic innovations’ (pp. 53, 57) and with the findings of a few more sophisticated studies of rates of change. Cumulatively the developments ‘suggest some temporal clusterings’ that interestingly ‘do not follow the traditional period boundary between Middle and Early Modern English’ (pp. 78–9); the authors more confidently describe the ‘genuine diversity in the way linguistic changes diffuse in speech communities’, with some developments not obviously approximating the S-curve. The design of the corpus also allows the authors to question the relevance of another sociolinguistic universal: chapter 5’s assessment of ‘Apparent time’ analysis challenges the assumption (drawn from phonology) that one’s morphology does not change after adolescence and that a variant more frequent in the speech of younger people will become more common. Figures and tables here allow readers to track the adoption of new variants like you and third-person -s by generations and by individuals, some idiosyncratic. The role of (e.g.) pragmatic factors, perhaps along with the intrinsic interest of personal letters and the authors’ knowledgeable interest in their informants, has led their reviewer Fitzmaurice to wish for more ‘micro’ studies of their data (1998: 412).

Chapters 6 through 8 consider the correlation with linguistic change of gender differentiation, social stratification, and regional variation, using methodology that is consistent across the chapters. Chapter 6 seems to substantiate the sociolinguistic universal that ‘women are the more active party in promoting linguistic innovations’ (p. 112), leading (subsequent to the incipient stage) both changes ‘diffus[ing] from the upper and middle ranks to the lower’ such as the speedy spread of you (pp. 118–19) and
also changes ‘emanating from the lower ranks’ such as the diffusion of determiners *my* and *thy* and third-person verbal *-s* (pp. 119–20, 122–4, 131). In contrast, such other changes as the decline of *the which* and of multiple negation were ‘promoted by male professionals and systematically led by men in the upper and middle sections of society’; women were excluded from ‘the world of learning’ (p. 131).

Indeed, because most literate women belonged to the upper ranks, the writings of female informants had to be excluded from the studies of ‘Social stratification’ (chapter 7). Some linguistic variants are clearly socially stratified: multiple negation and *ye* persist in the language of the lower strata of society, for instance. More complex is the story of third-person verbal *-s*: continuing and complicating the old story of a long-lived regional rivalry leading to a register difference, the authors describe a two-wave, socially stratified pattern with the newcomer initially favoured by the middle ranks but retained mostly by the lower until its adoption by the upper echelons. The studies here confirm that ‘stratification may emerge at any stage of diffusion’ (p. 147) and that ‘changes from below can be introduced by any social class’ (p. 149); of period-specific interest is the necessity for a variant to be adopted by the upper ranks if it is to diffuse more widely in the population (p. 154). Such patterns, and the distinctive ‘linguistic behaviour’ of socially sensitive social aspirers, might begin to help scholars navigate what Görlach describes as the ‘impasse’ of ‘social interpretation’ (1999: 470–2).

Some vexing questions underlie chapter 8’s consideration of ‘Regional variation’. What social motives underlie such changes from below as the supralocalization of northern verbal *-s* into the economically and politically powerful south? Can we construct sociolinguistic universals about urban dialects? What is the relationship between present-day standard English and the still rather variable southern English of the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries? A magnet for migrants, London with its many weak social networks was like other urban centres a fruitful site for faster linguistic change than elsewhere; London, and sometimes the Court, was in the vanguard of ‘most of the linguistic processes . . . examine[d] in th[e] volume’ (pp. 171, 182). The language of London apparently acquired the third-person *-s* and the determiners *my* and *thy* from the north before East Anglia, such ‘dialect hopping’ qualifying the traditional ‘wave model’ whereby linguistic changes diffuse ‘gradually outwards from a centre’ (p. 165). Such supralocalizing convergence occurred without normative enforcement. Recalling Milroy’s complaint that ‘the history of English since about 1550 is often presented as . . . a “single-minded march” towards RP and modern standard English’ (1992: pp. 50–2), the authors present their representation of supralocalization as neutrally descriptive rather than as ideologically biased (p. 207). Such findings continue to challenge assumptions that a standard cannot emerge ‘naturally’ (summarized by Pennycook, 2000: 120) and must be consciously cultivated in statusful Chanceries (p. 161).

The last of the core chapters consolidates some earlier topics and introduces a new one. As well as ranking the relative effects of region and gender, multivariate analysis assesses the effect of register variation – here defined according to the relationship
between writer and recipient. The absence of social stratification from this analysis may lead readers unfamiliar with the statistical methods to wonder how the female gender of a letter-writer can be an independent variable, but of course the authors carefully and characteristically note that it is ‘among the literate ranks’ that ‘women are more likely… to favour a process of supralocalization’. The importance of the capital region has also become clear by this point: gender is secondary when a change – such as the supralocalization of northern my or -s – has not originated in the capital (pp. 199–200). But the concluding chapter emphasizes that while region and gender strongly correlate with changes in progress, there is no uniform pattern: of the ultimately successful variants, you came from the south, my from the north; -s was promoted by women, which by men (p. 208).

This monograph’s methods are clear, consistent, and copiously documented; its conclusions are specific but always cautious: charts, tables, references, and generally outstanding presentation make the material accessible to students and allow readers of all levels to assess much of the evidence themselves. Historical happenings with potential linguistic relevance (Davis, 2001: 220) are mentioned tentatively if occasionally ad hoc (e.g. pp. 211–12). The ‘historical’ component of this sociolinguistic study is well researched and – especially for a ‘macro’ study – the human interest is high: we are left wanting to know more about Sabine Johnson, the wife of a London wool merchant. The authors incidentally rewrite the linguistic history of some very familiar variables like verbal -th/-s, or at least give the reader the resources to do so with the book’s well-structured chapters and rich endnotes, indexes, and impressive bibliography; they are obviously aware that their focus on social variables has been at the expense of a full and coherent history of each linguistic variable (p. 59). The obvious limitations of the corpus will inevitably contribute to the modification and qualification of some of the methods and conclusions presented here; since 1996, for instance, the authors have altered their analysis of social stratification (pp. 136–7). But this innovative and accessible book contains much (in addition to the perplexing photograph on its front cover) to absorb, stimulate, and no doubt provoke its readers. It deserves a wide audience.

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This book is the result of the author’s six-month trip to the South Atlantic island of Tristan da Cunha in 1999. Tristan da Cunha English is one of the youngest nativized varieties of English. The only major description of the language prior to Schreier (2003) is by Arne Zettersten (published as Zettersten, 1969), which was based on interviews done in 1962, when the entire Tristan da Cunha community took refuge in the UK, due to the eruption of the Tristan volcano. The Tristanians were temporarily housed in a disused RAF camp at Calshot near Southampton, where members of University College London and the BBC, amongst others, went to interview them. Zettersten’s analysis remains invaluable, but it does not focus on sociolinguistic variation, which is Schreier’s approach and main interest.

Schreier’s aims are primarily twofold: to discover whether Tristan da Cunha English is a transplanted form of English, or whether it is a mixed dialect resulting from language contact; and also to look at the effects of isolation on language change. As Tristan da Cunha is of almost unparalleled remoteness it forms an ideal test-bed for an examination of the effects of isolation. There is no airfield on Tristan, and only about eight to ten ships visit annually. The nearest human settlement is on the island of St Helena, which is 2,300 km distant.
Chapter 2 sets out the theoretical background and discusses recent sociolinguistic work to do with demographic movement. Concepts described include dialect mixing, koineization, focusing, pidginization, creolization, creoloidization, decomplexification, and enclave communities. All this is competently and efficiently presented.

Chapter 3 is about the history of Tristan da Cunha, including geophysical details, who owned the island when, who lived on Tristan when, and what kind of language background they came from. There is a table of the founders from the 1817 settlement, and a detailed consideration of the population over the nineteenth and twentieth centuries. This is interesting in itself, and also essential for Schreier’s argument about the contact-language influences on Tristan da Cunha English. Settlers came from England, St Helena, the USA, Denmark, Holland, Italy, and Ireland, and there has also been contact with South African English speakers. Schreier notes that there have only ever been dense, multiplex networks on the island, as there is only one settlement. His conclusion, presented throughout the book, is that Tristan da Cunha English is a contact variety rather than a lineal descendant of a territorial British dialect. His argument is entirely convincing, both on historical/demographic grounds and on linguistic grounds, which subsequent chapters go on to discuss. The main linguistic influences are Southern British English nonstandard dialects, and, he speculates, St Helena English. This is because in 1827 a group of five St Helenan women migrated to Tristan da Cunha, as the fledgling settlement at that time consisted almost entirely of men and contained no marriageable women. All children born on the island throughout the nineteenth century were descended either from one of these St Helenan women, or from Maria Glass, the wife of the original founder, William Glass, who was herself a ‘Cape creole’.

Chapter 4 describes Schreier’s methodology and fieldwork, and, like chapter 3 on theoretical background, this chapter is presented so competently and efficiently as to constitute a textbook discussion on the issues involved. Because the present Tristanian society is so small (284 people in 2000), any visitors are immediately identifiable and any questions that they ask, either for research or journalism purposes, become common knowledge. The Tristanians – like most humans – don’t like criticism, and so even comparatively mild comments, such as a newspaper criticism of their culinary culture, are not forgotten, and continue to resonate long after the perpetrator has departed from the island. The islanders even try to impose a right of veto on anything published about the island by any visitor. As a result, Schreier had to be particularly sensitive when tape-recording speech. Of course, this merely reflects a heightened awareness of the situation that always pertains when undertaking fieldwork, and Schreier explains how he worked around this ethical problem.

Schreier makes a valuable contribution to sociolinguistic methodology by introducing the variable of mobility (that is, focusing on its potential centrality as a speech-community variable). As he points out, the variables of ethnicity and region are not salient on this island, where everybody shares the same ethnicity and there is only one settlement. However, whether speakers have been off the island, and for how long, does have an effect on their speech. Accordingly he sets up a mobility quotient
and explains how he quantifies the time his informants have spent off the island. This turns out to be one of the most salient factors influencing the standard-to-nonstandard cline of Tristan da Cunha English, with higher mobility resulting in less basilectal speech.

The second half of the book is concerned with investigating four grammatical constructions: third-person present-tense indicative suffix zero versus -s, the patterning of the five be allomorphs was/is/am/are/were, completive done, and useta + past participle. For all other components of Tristan da Cunha English – apart from a brief, highly interesting phonetic survey given in the appendix – Zettersten (1969) is still the authority.

Chapter 5 is about present-tense concord in Tristan da Cunha English. Schreier is interested in the processes by which the emergent Tristan dialect selected its concord system, and whether younger Tristan da Cunha English speakers differ from their parents and grandparents. With regard to third-person singular concord, Schreier claims that -s was universal or at least standard in spoken Southern British English by about 1650. This is based more or less on one metacomment from a contemporaneous witness. Nevalainen and Raumolin-Brunberg (2000) have shown that this conclusion is not safe, and that -th continued to be an operative third-person present-tense indicative suffix well into the seventeenth century. This finding does not materially affect Schreier’s argument, but it is important to realize that variation per se in earlier states of English has not been sufficiently studied. It is not adequate to say that, for example, London English marked the third-person present slot with -s, when in fact it also used zero as a minority indicative-mood variant, and as a subjunctive variant. Actually present-day Tristan da Cunha English is discovered to be variably -ful – as was Early Modern London English (although the ratios would differ, as they are individually marked for each speaker on Tristan and almost certainly were in early modern London too). Because Schreier does not take minority variables into account, this leads him into concluding that East Anglian English is the only potential British donor dialect for the presence of zero in the third-person slot, and there is no evidence that there were any East Anglian settlers on Tristan. In fact, this (as I see it) erroneous conclusion does not matter because he goes on to dismiss it as a possibility, and to suggest instead the presence of St Helena English as a potential donor of third-person zero. Because his informant numbers are low, Schreier can separate out his tokens by speaker, which means that we get a breakdown-picture of variation. For example, the variable third-person indicative zero is shown to range from seven speakers with categorical zero, all the way through the cline to one speaker who is categorically -ful. When scrutinized by age, it is found that the older speakers lack -s, and the mobile younger speakers are -ful. Further, the -s marking can be VP-final, i.e. it do follows, which Schreier attributes to hypercorrection.

Chapter 6 is about be-regularization. In terms of contextualization, Schreier notes that UK-territorial varieties level to both was and were; that was-generalization is more widespread; that the past-tense paradigm is regularized more generally than the present-tense paradigm, that many places show levelling to was but not is, and
that the present-tense paradigm resists levelling. Existential subjects and NPs favour regularization, but personal pronouns don’t. In Tristan da Cunha English, *is* and *was* occur with all persons and both numbers, but essentially Tristanian speakers don’t use *am/are/were* very often. In terms of distribution, 27 speakers out of 35 have categorical *was*, that is, 75 per cent lack *were*, and 25 per cent are variable. Tristanian men are was-users with no variation at all, and older speakers of both sexes have categorical *was*. In other words, *were* is used by non-old women, with mobility a highly salient conditioning factor. Tristan da Cunha English seems to be levelling to *is*, which is unusual globally – the second-person pronoun takes *is* at a ratio of 100 per cent (*you is*). The highest ratios of levelled *is* are found in speakers of low mobility, who are also the oldest speakers. Tristan da Cunha usage of *is* is probably not of UK transmission as the personal pronoun patterning is different. It seems to be closest to the St Helena distribution. Schreier speculates that near-categoricalization is found in Tristan da Cunha English precisely because it is an enclave isolate.

Chapter 7 is about completive *done*, in the semantic sense of ‘already’, ‘really’, ‘be finished’, and simply completive past tense. Schreier notes that this construction is found in the rural South of the United States, in English-based Caribbean creoles, in St Helenan English, and in fifteenth-century UK written MSS. In considering its origin Schreier reports the following distributions: there is a difference between African American Vernacular English *done* (‘I done eaten’) and Southern White Vernacular English *done* (predominantly ‘I’ve done eat’ – presumably /et/). Caribbean creole Englishes lack an auxiliary, whereas Middle English and Early Modern English tokens did take an auxiliary. Caribbean creole Englishes take the bare form only, and *done* can be VP-final (‘me dis eat don’). AAVE and SWVE both use the bare form plus the past participle. Tristan da Cunha English *done* occurs with auxiliary *be*, *have*, -*s*, and zero. It usually occurs with an auxiliary, mostly *be* allomorphs, with -*s* most common at 65 per cent (no token numbers given). The main point to grasp is that Tristan *done*-usage is unlike any other world variety. Schreier weighs the relative likelihoods of multiple origin and independent causation, and notes that no firm conclusion can be reached on the origin of auxiliary *be + done + V*, with St Helenan English probably being the most likely contender. I found this section to be the least clear in presentation and style.

Chapter 8 focuses on another feature that Schreier claims does not originate in a UK variety and that is unique to Tristan da Cunha English: the use of *useta went*, *useta had*, and *useta done*. Schreier notes that the Tristan use of *useta* means all the things it does in Standard English, plus it can occur in contexts when neither the meaning ‘formerly’ nor ‘habitually’ fits, and it can occur referring to events that happened once or twice only. Schreier speculates that such double-marking is an L2 phenomenon.

Chapter 9 is the concluding chapter, and here Schreier appeals to the nautical background of all the founding males, speculating that Ship English could have had a lexical effect. The importance of the St Helena females is reiterated, with a consideration of their probable social role. Schreier emphasizes his finding that usage of local norms correlates with age and mobility. There is a list of Tristan da Cunha features also found
in many other non-Standard Englishes; a list of arcaisms (the \(v \sim w\) interchange or merger, what Schreier calls ‘hypercorrect \(h\)’ (that is, \(h\)-insertion), perfective \(be\), \(for\ to\) as a complement, and levelling of \(be\ to\ is\)); and innovations (\(uset\ went\)). An appendix gives a list of phonological Tristanian variants.

Overall, there is little to cavil at. Some minor points of disagreement: Schreier claims (p. 88) that ‘a community under the size of 300 is not sufficient for social stratification and does not favour the maintenance or creation of different socio-economic groups’. That Tristanian society is ordered nonhierarchically may be so, but it is not inevitable. For instance, Dorian’s work on the Scottish East Sutherlandshire coastal villages also scrutinizes the speech of small communities, but these are socially stratified, with discernible linguistic manifestations of that stratification. Chapter 9 (p. 202) mentions the addition of /h/ to words etymologically beginning with a vowel (as occurs in other extraterritorial Englishes and historically in London English); Schreier terms this a hypercorrection. Word-initial /h/ has been variable in English since the Norman Conquest, and hypercorrection implies that speakers have a sense of correctness; that they know that some words start with /h/ and some don’t, and are unsure about which are which. I would suggest that this is imputing too much consciousness on the part of speakers, and that this is simply traditional word-initial /h/ variation. Finally, in the bibliography, the reference to my own work is wrongly attributed. Very few people are going to be incommoded by this, but I now have to live with wounded vanity.

To conclude: Schreier obviously possesses the kind of personality that enables good fieldwork – informants are happy to talk to him. This book is both an exemplar in socio-linguistic variation investigation, and a real contribution to our knowledge of the world’s Englishes. Rarely have I enjoyed reading a linguistic treatise as much as this one.

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The gradual move towards democracy in Scotland from the 1990s on has led to a number of reinterpretations of the historical record as taught previously in schools and universities in relation to the culture and languages of the country. This has been particularly aimed towards Gaelic and its accompanying culture, which has been seen, perhaps, as an iconic representation of the separateness of Scotland. One of the earliest actions of the autonomous Parliament was to conduct a symbolic debate in that language, with simultaneous translation for the great majority of MSPs who do not speak Gaelic. As this review is being written a major supermarket chain has begun to use Gaelic signs in all of its shops in Scotland (and in the ‘Scottish’ parts of Northamptonshire in England), rather than, as was previously the case, only in the Ghaedheltachd.

What has been less prominent has been institutional support for Scots, the other autochthonous vernacular of Scotland, despite the fact that, by even the most conservative estimates, its speakers can be numbered in the millions (Murdoch, 1995). Indeed, neither the British Government nor the Scottish Executive were willing, despite considerable pressure from a variety of sources, to place a question about the use of Scots on the 2001 census (Macafee, 2000). A cynic might suggest that this was done to avoid the large outflows of cash which would then be institutionally necessary for the maintenance and promotion of the language, in comparison to Gaelic, where the low number of native speakers (around 60,000) make it a relatively cheap national symbol. To be fair, years of attrition and neglect have made it very difficult to get people to define their local language as anything other than that, so that the results might not have been representative. That does not mean that there is no interest in the native vernacular, however, as the impressive sales figures of the Concise Scots Dictionary prove. An interested audience of laypeople can be expected for any moderately approachable work on the language. The publication of Charles Jones’ s most recent work is to be welcomed therefore.

This relatively brief and generally well-written and approachable book has much to be said for it as an introduction to the subject of the Germanic vernacular of Scotland. It is lucidly organized and written, moving through a discussion of what Jones means in his use of the term Scots (a point to which I will return in the following), before discussing, in succeeding chapters, the syntax, phonology, and lexis of the local varieties. This is followed by two rather longer chapters dealing with the present use of language in Scotland analysed from a basically sociolinguistic viewpoint and a treatment of the regional varieties (including, somewhat surprisingly from many Scottish linguists’ point of view, Highland English). There is also a very brief section discussing the literary representation of the vernacular in its various forms. Given the past scholarly
work with which Jones has been associated (for instance, Jones, 1997), it would be surprising not to find an outline history of Scots and its relation to English; indeed, this is the final chapter. Suggestions for reading follow each chapter; further reading is detailed at the end of the book.

All of this is admirable, even if other potential authors of a book of this type might have been tempted to place the historical section first, in an attempt to explain the peculiar state of language in Scotland today. There are, inevitably, minor points which might have been mentioned in Jones’s linguistic discussion. It was strange, for instance, not to see mention in the syntax section of the book of the characteristic Northern Scots feature of the use of surface singular demonstrative forms in the plural (for example, _that loons is throw the bows_ ‘those boys are out of control’), as discussed recently by McRae (2000). It also seems strange that Jones (p. 68), when discussing pronunciations of the equivalent of _boot_ as /bɪt/ in the North-East and /bɪt/ or even /bɪt/ (as it is in my dialect) in the South-West, makes no reference to the fronting to /y/ or /ø/ of Old English, Old French, and Old Norse /oː/ in Middle Scots, and its subsequent unrounding. Instead the process is described as the fronting of ‘the back rounded vowel in words like “foot” and “boot”’, as if Scottish pronunciation was an aberration from some ‘standard’ Southern English norm, rather than derived from (eventually) slightly divergent dialectal sources. In fact, there are practically no dialects of Scots which possess a back rounded vowel along the lines of /u/; the feature is actually recessive in all dialects which had it even recently, as Johnson (1997) points out. There are also a number of relatively minor factual errors in the text. It might come as something of a surprise for Orcadian readers to hear about ‘Skara Brae in Shetland’ (p. 92), for instance.

What is a little worrying about the book, however, is Jones’s association of all Germanic varieties spoken today in Scotland with the term _Scots_. Of course he is correct to note that a continuum exists today between the ‘broadest’, or, as McClure (1979) prefers, ‘densest’, dialects found in Scotland today and various forms of Standard English spoken with a local accent. This continuum is not dissimilar to that found in other literate societies; it is necessary for all Scots language activists to recognize this, rather than indulging in various levels of elitist or ethnographic purism as defined by Thomas (1991: 82), as many – not all – do. What is different about Scotland is that a written vernacular was moving towards standardization in the Early Modern period, producing a focused written variety which borrowed independently from other languages. This is unlike anywhere else in the English-speaking world. What Jones essentially describes in his book is the end product of the failure of this process and its replacement by the use of an exonormic standard.

Nevertheless, a literary and folk tradition of the language’s essential unity has continued since the Early Modern period, albeit tenuous at times. Whilst it is good that Jones focused in his chapter on literary materials in the vernacular upon modern, urban, writing, it was worrying that there was no mention made of the great Scottish literary renaissance of the twentieth century, one of whose goals was an implicit attempt to implement language planning for the country, or of some of the work recently published by writers and activists such as Matthew Fitt who use contemporary Scots in an entertaining manner which also has an ideological purpose.
By the same token, his discussion of the dialects of Scots, whilst accurate and most interesting, is also troubling at times in the way that it stresses differences between dialects, rather than similarities. It is significant, perhaps, that he treats the two most divergent dialects of Scotland – from the far north and south – comparatively, before discussing the dialects in between. I do not wish to downplay the differences between the dialects of Scots, but there is also much that unifies them. I, for instance, as a speaker of West Central Scots, had to make very few adjustments when I first moved here to the North-East; strangely, it was the lexis, rather than the phonology (upon which Jones mainly concentrates), which I found most striking at that time. The linguistic distance between dialects in Scotland is in no way as great as that between dialects in Norway; yet Ivar Aasen and his successors were still able to frame a viable national variety from them.

Part and parcel of this is Jones’s regular association of the varieties found in Scotland with those found in North America, Australia, and New Zealand, among other places, where an endonormic variety of Standard English has developed. It is true that Scotland has its own variety of the Standard, acting as one pole in the linguistic universe of the country. The analogy is not entirely accurate, however, since practically nowhere else in the English-speaking world possesses the wealth of historical and contemporary use of an often esteemed alternative variety in speech and writing. Having said that, a case might be made for a more Scots variety of Scottish Standard English being a more achievable goal for language planners in Scotland. To continue the Norwegian allusion: instead of an all-or-nothing Scots equivalent to nynorsk, unlikely to be acceptable to many speakers to any degree in a country which has had mass literacy in English for well over a century, we might engineer a move from a Scottish Standard English riksmål to a Scots bokmål. It would be interesting to see this debate come into the open, however, rather than be promoted by implication.

This book is both persuasively written and flawed. It is to be highly recommended to anyone interested in the linguistic situation in Scotland, so long as it is read alongside works whose ideological basis is different, such as McClure (1997), so that a fuller understanding of the present debate in Scotland might be achieved.

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