

REVIEWS

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John Algeo (ed.), *The Cambridge history of the English language*, vol. VI: *English in North America*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2001. Pp. xxxii + 625. ISBN 0 521 26479 0.

Reviewed by Katie Wales, University of Leeds

This last volume in the monumental *Cambridge history of the English language* series of volumes from ‘the beginning’ (vol. I), under the general editorship of Richard Hogg, has been eagerly awaited. Here is a rich history spanning four hundred years of a variety of English which is currently one of the most politically prominent on our planet, but yet the development of which is still subject to much debate.

As is the pattern in the other volumes, specialists in particular areas have contributed very detailed accounts of different aspects of American English in fourteen chapters. To be welcomed are the separate chapters on Canadian English by Laurel Brinton and Margery Fee, and on Newfoundland English by William Kirwin. Interesting also is Suzanne Romaine’s chapter on ‘contact with other languages’, and Salikoko Mufwene’s on African-American English. The origins of African-American English (AAE) are clearly still disputed; and Mufwene delicately highlights the complexity of the issue. Surprisingly, the term ‘Ebonics’ is mentioned only once, and as having not gained ‘wide currency’ (p. 293). What is strikingly evident is that a lot of research still needs to be done on female AAE speech (see pp. 311, 324); and the impact of AAE, and also Spanish, on American dialects (Pederson, chapter 7, p. 264).

A particular emphasis of the volume overall is on the relations of American English with British English. One topic that has been much discussed, for instance, is the influence of British dialects on the formation of American English. The conclusion very much from this volume (see, e.g., chapter 2 by John Hurt Fisher and chapter 3 by Michael Montgomery) and repeated in John Algeo’s Preface (p. xxi) and his own chapter on the external history, is that the dialects were not ‘replicated’, but mixed with each other and with ‘indigenous’ developments. In this volume certainly, the ‘colonial lag’ hypothesis is not supported, but Montgomery argues persuasively for the influence of Ireland and Scotland to be taken more into account.

John Algeo’s opening chapter on the external history usefully sets the stage for the rest of the volume’s particular emphases, and must be required reading for those (many) students woefully ignorant of American history. He identifies three main periods: the colonial period (1607–1776); the national period (1776–1898); and the international period (1898 onwards). Not surprisingly perhaps it is the colonial period to which many of the contributors return: John Hurt Fisher (chapter 2 on ‘continuity and divergence’); Michael Montgomery in his discussion of ‘British and Irish antecedents’ (chapter 3); Lee Pederson (chapter 7 on dialects); Frederic G. Cassidy and Joan Houston Hall (chapter 5 on Americanisms); and Richard Bailey (chapter 14 on ‘American English

abroad'). If this reviewer has any quibble over the treatment of Algeo's external history, it is that opportunities to spell out the particular linguistic consequences of historical events are often missed: e.g. the problem of slavery (pp. 29f), the Civil War (pp. 31f) and the technological and social expansion of the early nineteenth century. One figure from the 'national period' certainly reappears frequently and prominently across the chapters: Noah Webster. His influence is discussed by Algeo, Hurt Fisher, Montgomery, Cassidy and Hall, Richard Venezky (chapter 10 on spelling), and Edward Finegan (chapter 11 on usage). Repetition of material, perhaps inevitable, is also apparent in the discussions of slang and Americanisms in chapters 5, 6, and 14. Overall, some interesting facts emerge from a consideration of American history, not all of them linguistic: that by the end of President Reagan's second term of office the United States had ceased to be a creditor nation and had become the largest debtor nation in the world (p. 50); that Thomas Jefferson proposed that Anglo-Saxon be a required subject in the curriculum of the University of Virginia (p. 67); that the Americans gave us *halitosis* at the end of the last century (p. 209); and that Americans are the villains in Conan Doyle's Sherlock Holmes stories (p. 489). Air conditioning apparently 'changed the population patterns and this affected the dialect patterns of America' (Algeo, p. 54) – but we are not told how.

Despite the apparent comprehensiveness of the volume, however, there are some areas and topics that, disappointingly, remain relatively unexplored. For example, here at the beginning of a new millennium it would surely have been appropriate to speculate on the hegemonic position of American English as a global force on the world's stage both now and in the future, but this is missing. So too is any discussion of the growing influence of Spanish in the US, despite a brief reference by Romaine (p. 175). There is no reference either to the debate about American English's contribution to the 'death' of what Algeo numbers as between 350 and 500 Amerindian languages once spoken in lands which became the US (p. xxi). The volume ends with just a quotation from Robert Burchfield that American English *has* become the 'dominant form of English' (p. 195). In general, there is a distinct lack of focus in any case on the second half of the twentieth century: little reference to the linguistic impact of either the film industry, rock 'n' roll or even computing technology. Microsoft and McDonald's are absent; as are Disney, Elvis, and even Watergate, let alone Haigspeak. Bailey in particular misses the golden opportunity of discussing late twentieth-century popular culture and politics in the concluding chapter on American English 'abroad'. His claim that the influence of American English 'is not easy to document' (p. 491) is contradicted by the rich sound and film archives from the 1930s onwards. The impact of feminism and the 'political correctness' movement is also undocumented, a striking omission in particular of Finegan's chapter on usage. We can be mindful of the words of Abigail Adams to her husband John in 1776 as he was drawing up the American Constitution: 'remember the ladies'. He did not. Moreover, unlike the other volumes in the series, there is here no separate chapter on 'literary language'. Algeo in chapter 1 simply lists authors and dates (pp. 36, 57) and summarizes their diversity of ethnic background, achievement, and influence in the vague 'they all reflect qualities of Americanness

through that English' (p. 57). Only one author (Mark Twain) is actually quoted in the whole volume. It would have been useful for non-American readers of the volume to know whether some of these well-known writers of repute were regarded as models of usage, especially in the nineteenth century. Finegan gives numerous quotations from pundits who extol 'the usage of the best', 'the practice of the best writers', and of the 'intellectually good' (pp. 389–90), etc. but makes no comment himself on notions of an 'elite' usage. Finally, in this period of global unrest and brinkmanship, there is, slightly worryingly, little recognition of outsiders' perceptions and images of American English (and Americans), despite Algeo's own acknowledgement (p. xxvi) that 'the response of foreigners . . . to the English of America is regularly confused with their response to other aspects of American culture'.

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Olga Fischer, Ans van Kemenade, Willem Koopman & Wim van der Wurff, *The syntax of Early English*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2000. Pp. xviii + 341. Hardback £42, US \$69.95, ISBN 0 521 55410 1; paperback £15.95, ISBN 0 521 55626 0.

Reviewed by Susan Pintzuk, University of York

This book (henceforth *SEE*) was written by four researchers in the field of English historical linguistics. Intended as a guide to the syntax of the earlier stages of the English language, it describes and analyses some of the major changes that have taken place between the Old English and the Modern English periods. Although the authors state that advanced undergraduate and beginning graduate students are the targeted audience, *SEE* will be useful to linguists of all levels who are interested in Early English syntax. The book is very clearly written, with a substantial number of examples to illustrate the phenomena under discussion; and it provides a solid introduction to selected aspects of the history of the English language. *SEE* was not intended to be an exhaustive survey of the structural characteristics of the early stages of English, and the topics of the book were chosen because they represent the authors' research interests. In spite of this (or perhaps because of it), *SEE* is remarkably coherent, and the authors do an excellent job in demonstrating how seemingly unrelated phenomena can be viewed as connected. *SEE* frequently presents alternative analyses for particular syntactic phenomena, so that the reader can understand the advantages and disadvantages of each analysis.

Chapter 1 is a general introduction to the study of historical syntax; it articulates the authors' approach to language change and grammar change, and discusses the relationship between change and language acquisition within a formal syntactic framework (Principles and Parameters). Chapters 2 and 3 provide an introduction to the basic syntactic characteristics of Old and Middle English. Chapters 4 and 5 discuss the loss of the verb-second (V2) constraint and the loss of object–verb word order. Chapter 6 investigates the syntax of verb-particle constructions; chapter 7, the syntax of and changes in infinitival clauses; chapter 8, the history of the 'tough'-movement construction. Chapter 9 presents case studies of two phenomena that have been analysed in the literature in terms of grammaticalization: the development of 'have to' as an auxiliary, and the development of sentential negation. It is convincingly demonstrated in this last chapter that careful investigation of the synchronic states of the language can lead to an analysis of discrete successive grammatical changes rather than continuous semantically driven diachronic processes.

In reading a book for the purposes of review, it is easy to compile a list of assumptions and parts of analyses with which one disagrees. This is especially easy with a book that is intended for students, since the presentation may be somewhat simplified, and some interesting lines of research mentioned but not pursued. The fact that such a list can be compiled does not of course diminish the value of the book, and in this case the value of *SEE* is substantial. Nevertheless, there are instances where the authors of *SEE* have not taken all of the relevant data into account, and I will here briefly discuss two such cases. The first concerns the analysis of OV order in chapter 5: the authors follow van der Wurff (1997) in analysing preverbal objects in Old and Middle English as derived by overt movement of the object to Spec,AgrOP (with overt movement of the verb to AgrO) from a head-initial base; thus (1a) (= *SEE*, p. 156: (48)) is derived as shown in (1b), abstracting away from irrelevant details such as movement of the finite verb and the subject:

- (1) (a) þæt hi mihton swa bealdlice Godes geleafan bodian
 that they could so boldly God's faith preach
 'that they could preach God's faith so boldly'
 (ÆCHom I, 16.232.23)
- (b) þæt hi mihton swa bealdlice [_{AgrOP} [Godes geleafan]_i] [_{AgrO}' [_{AgrO} bodian_j + AgrO]
 [_{VP} t_j t_i]]

The authors point out the advantages and disadvantages of this analysis compared to one of grammatical competition between head-initial and head-final structure, and they state that their analysis accounts for most of the Old and Middle English data (p. 178). However, Pintzuk (2002) and Kroch & Taylor (2000) demonstrate that for both Old and Middle English, in clauses with postverbal elements that are diagnostic of head-initial structure (postverbal particles, pronouns, and stranded prepositions), only quantified objects appear preverbally; nonquantified objects must appear postverbally. In other words, the order in (2a) (where Vf is the finite verb; Vnf the non-finite verb; X a pronominal object, particle or stranded preposition; and YP a nonpronominal object)

is possible for all types of objects, but the order in (2b) is possible only if the object is quantified.

- (2) (a) ... Vf... Vnf X YP
 (b) ... Vf... YP... Vnf X

This constraint can be formulated within a uniform head-initial framework only if ad hoc stipulations are made; see Nunes (2002) for an attempt at analysing part of the data, and Pintzuk (2002: 299) for arguments against Nunes's analysis. The distribution of nonquantified objects lends support instead to an analysis of competing head-initial vs. head-final structure for both Old and Middle English, with preverbal objects derived from head-final structure, and postverbal objects derived either from head-initial structure or from head-final structure by postposition.

As a second case where the authors of *SEE* have not taken all of the relevant data into account, consider the analysis of negation presented in chapter 9. *SEE* follows van Kemenade (1999) in assuming the order of projections as shown in (3) (= *SEE*, p. 306 (20)); negation in Old English has its own projection, NegP, between FP and TP; personal pronouns (including subjects) move to Spec, FP, and nonpronominal subjects move to Spec, TP.

- (3) CP FP NegP TP... VP

Evidence for the position of NegP comes from the distribution of the second sentential negator *na* 'not'; in Old English negative clauses with postverbal subjects, *na* follows pronominal subjects but precedes nominal subjects, as shown in (4) (= *SEE*, p. 309 (26)):

- (4) (a) Ne het he us **na** leornian heofonas to wyrce^{ne}
 not ordered he us **not** learn heavens to make
 'He did not order us to learn to make heaven'
 (*ÆLS* (Memory of Saints) 127)
 (b) Ne sæde **na** ure Drihten þæt...
 not said **not** our Lord that...
 'Our Lord did not say that...'
 (*ÆLS* (Martin) 762))

Although it is clear that pronominal arguments occur in a different position from nominal ones in Old English (see van Kemenade, 1987; Koopman, 1997; Pintzuk, 1999), it is not at all obvious that there is a NegP projection between them, since the same difference in distribution can be found with other short adverbs, as shown in (5):¹

- (5) (a) Hwar is **nu** eower miht and eower mægen becomen?
 where is **now** your might and your strength gone
 'Where is your might and your strength now gone?'
 (*AelfLives*, + *ALS*_[Vincent]:130.7915)

¹ These examples are taken from the York–Toronto–Helsinki Parsed Corpus of Old English (Taylor *et al.* 2003).

- (b) Hu mæg ic **nu** gecyrran...
 how can I **now** turn...
 'How can I now turn...?'
 (AelfHom, + AHom_20:223.3073)

In fact Haerberli (2000) demonstrates that all types of adjuncts, not simply short adverbs, can be found after pronominal subjects but before nominal ones in clauses of this type, and that this position is an adjunct position rather than the specifier of NegP. The analysis of sentential negation in Old English presented in *SEE* chapter 9 must therefore be amended to account for the fact that the projection between pronominal subjects and nominal subjects is not restricted to negative elements, and it is not clear how this change affects the diachronic analysis and explanation of Jespersen's cycle presented there.

The one major shortcoming to *SEE* is the lack of quantitative evidence and argumentation. Although some quantitative data are presented and discussed, for the most part the analyses are supported on the basis of theoretical desirability and overall empirical coverage. One might be tempted to justify the omission in two ways: first, the data included in the book are sufficient to introduce the readers to the facts of Early English syntax; and second, quantitative argumentation may be too advanced for students at this level. But as I will make clear, quantitative evidence and argumentation are necessary because the historical data are often not sufficient to enable the linguist to choose between two potential analyses or frameworks.

I illustrate this point by discussing in some detail two proposed analyses of V2 in Old English. Under the analysis presented in *SEE* chapter 4, using the clausal structure for Old English in (3) above, topics in V2 clauses move to Spec,CP and the finite verb moves to F. Topicalization and verb movement to F occur in most root clauses; but in subordinate clauses, it is only unaccusative contexts that permit the fronting of non-nominative arguments to clause-initial position; the fronting may (but need not) be accompanied by verb movement. *SEE* does not state explicitly the position of the finite verb in nonroot clauses without unaccusative verbs; but clearly the verb must be no higher than T, since inversion with nominal subjects in Spec,TP does not occur. Because root and nonroot clauses differ in two ways (the possibility of topicalization and the position of the finite verb), the authors conclude that Old English is an asymmetric V2 language, although both the analysis and the asymmetry differ in interesting ways from what is generally proposed for modern asymmetric V2 languages like German or Dutch.

SEE's analysis goes against the analysis presented in Pintzuk (1993, 1999), where it is argued that Old English is a symmetric V2 language, with verb movement to I and topicalization to Spec,IP. Under this analysis, variation in the position of the finite verb in Old English is derived from variation in underlying structure, head-initial vs. head-final. V2 clauses, both root and nonroot, are clauses with head-initial IPs, and verb-final clauses, again both root and nonroot, are clauses with head-final IPs. *SEE*

chapter 4 argues against the symmetric V2 analysis on the basis of the following facts:² first, head-initial structure is more frequent in root clauses than in nonroot clauses; and second, topicalization outside of unaccusative contexts is rare in nonroot clauses. Since neither of these facts are accounted for by variation in phrase structure, they conclude that the analysis is flawed.

However, the assumption that variation in structure should account for variation in frequencies reveals a serious misunderstanding of the concept of grammatical competition and its role in the analysis of syntactic change:³ grammatical competition, whether it is analysed as variation in underlying structure or variation in the strength of features triggering movement, permits a particular view of the way change occurs; but there is no implication or requirement that different syntactic environments should exhibit the competition at the same frequency. Indeed, it is clear from quantitative studies of syntactic change, starting from the work of Ellegård (1953) on periphrastic *do* that was reanalysed in Kroch (1989a) in terms of grammatical competition, that different syntactic contexts favour innovating structures to different extents. When *SEE* objects that phrase structure variation does not account for the different frequencies of head-initial IPs in root and nonroot clauses, that is equivalent to objecting that *SEE*'s analysis of object–verb word order in chapter 5 does not account for the lower frequency of preverbal objects in root clauses compared to nonroot clauses. It is obvious that the proposed analysis in both of these cases has nothing to say about different frequencies in different contexts. The one trend common to all quantifiable instances of syntactic change is that the innovating structure is more common in root clauses than in nonroot clauses.

As for the second argument discussed in *SEE* against the analysis of variation in phrase structure, there are two possible ways of accounting for the low frequency of topicalization in nonroot clauses: one option is to suggest that for pragmatic and discourse reasons, nonroot clauses do not have nonsubject topics; note that even in Yiddish, a language that is normally analysed as a symmetric V2 language, topicalization of nonsubjects is not common in nonroot clauses. A second option is to analyse topics as moving to Spec,CP, a movement not possible in nonroot clauses, with pronouns cliticized to the left periphery of IP and finite verbs moving to (clause-medial

² The authors raise one additional objection: variation in underlying structure doesn't on its own derive all possible constituent orders in Old English, and therefore the analysis leads to 'a degree of indeterminacy that is quite substantial' (p. 123). But if the underlying structure of Old English is uniformly head-initial, then the *SEE* analysis needs to build in a great deal of optional movement and is therefore open to the same criticism.

³ The misunderstanding of grammatical competition is echoed in other passages in the book. For example, on p. 19 it is stated that 'it [the framework of grammatical competition] has very little to say about the motivations that push any particular change forward'. A true statement, but one that can be applied to most analyses of syntactic variation and change that have been proposed within a generative framework in the last two decades (but see Kroch (1989b) and Sprouse & Vance (1999) for a discussion of 'differential parsing success' driving change forward in an S-shaped curve). Attributing the increase in the use of the innovative form to processing constraints or extralinguistic/sociolinguistic factors or economy does very little to explain the gradual increase in the innovating structure over a period of several hundred years that we see in such changes as the loss of V2 or the loss of OV order in the history of English.

or clause-final) I in both root and nonroot clauses. This is one version of the analysis proposed in Kroch & Taylor (1997) for Old English and for the southern dialect of Middle English.

So we now have two analyses for V2 in Old English: under the *SEE* analysis, topicalization is to Spec,CP and the finite verb moves to F in most root clauses and to T in most nonroot clauses. Under the grammatical competition analysis, topicalization is to Spec,CP but the finite verb moves to the same position in both root and nonroot clauses. There are advantages and disadvantages to both analyses, and both can account for variation in the position of the finite verb. But the authors of *SEE* neglect to discuss the quantitative evidence presented in Pintzuk (1999), chapter 5, where it is demonstrated that during the Old English period, the frequency of finite verbs in second position increases at the same rate in root and nonroot clauses. This fact is predicted by an analysis in which the finite verb is in the same position in all clause types. But if second position in root clauses is F, and second position in nonroot clauses is T, this fact is a remarkable coincidence and cannot be accounted for.

This then is one clear case in which quantitative evidence plays an important role. One might argue that the quantitative analysis in Pintzuk (1999) is flawed, or that the sample size is too small, or that the categorization of the data is done incorrectly. But at this stage of our knowledge of Old English, quantitative evidence cannot be ignored, since it is perhaps the only way to determine which analysis of V2 is supported by the data.

Having voiced my views on some of the analyses and content of *SEE*, I will now state that the book has been used successfully for two years in my undergraduate and MA course in syntactic variation and change, as background reading to prepare students to read the primary literature. It is well written, well edited, and well worth reading.

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Alan Partington, *Patterns and meanings: using corpora for English language research and teaching*. Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 1998. Pp. 162. Paperback £8.99, ISBN 90 272 2271 1.

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Corpora, as Jan Svartvik noted quite some time ago (1996), are becoming mainstream. The methodology is now increasingly used by scholars from various schools, including for instance systemic functional grammar, functional grammar and grammaticalization

studies. Consequently a number of textbooks in the field have been published recently: McEnery & Wilson (1996); Biber *et al.* (1998); Kennedy (1998); Tognini-Bonelli (2001); Meyer (2002). These all have different focuses and strengths, but are mainly aimed at undergraduate or graduate courses in corpus linguistics.

There is however also a fairly long tradition of using (simple) corpus techniques in the second language classroom; witness for instance papers from the series of international TALC and PALC conferences (the latest collections being Ketteman & Marko (2002) and Lewandowska-Tomaszyk & Melia (2000)) and national conferences like the one reported in Byrman *et al.* (2000). A more recent development is the compilation of multilingual corpora and their use for pedagogical purposes (Botley *et al.*, 2000). Very important in this field are also the websites of some pioneers and enthusiasts, notably Tim Johns in Great Britain and Michael Barlow in the United States.

There are also some books dedicated to corpus pedagogy. Aston & Burnard (1998), for instance, although written as a guide to the BNC corpus, functions as an excellent guide to investigations of linguistic problems of increasing complexity.

The book by Alan Partington reviewed here is a more material-independent guide to the pedagogical application of corpus studies, although the author's background in Cobuild dictionary circles has influenced his choice of corpora, programs, and theoretical framework.

In the introduction Partington discusses the role of corpus methodology in language description and language pedagogy, pointing out the two main ways of using corpora in language teaching: (a) the teacher uses the corpus for the preparation of material and (b) the teacher lets the students explore corpus materials, usually with fairly detailed guidance. Both approaches have their advantages but it seems clear that there must be a strong element of instruction in the early stages. The introduction also includes a brief but clear description of KWIC concordances and some technical details regarding the case studies presented in the book. Partington used the concordancing programs MicroConcord and WordSmith Tools, and as material mainly newspaper text from the MicroConcord package supplemented by British and Italian newspaper CD-ROMs.

The main body of the book contains a theoretical background chapter on collocation and phrase patterns, seven case studies, and a brief general conclusion. In the following I will treat each of these chapters in turn, and then make an overall evaluation of the book.

Chapter 1. *Collocation and phrase patterns*. Collocation is a central concept in corpus linguistics, which well motivates a special chapter. Partington here displays his knack of covering a lot of ground in a succinct and easy-to-follow manner, something which is characteristic of the whole book. Starting with Firth, he discusses both statistical and psychological aspects of the concept, stressing that collocation has to be related to register and style. The importance of collocations/idioms/prefabs for all language use and, consequently, for language acquisition is made eminently clear with support from Bolinger and others. The chapter is too short to go deep into the complex area

of idioms and fixed phrases but gives a good overview and many references for those who want to pursue the question further.

Chapter 2. *Collocation and synonymy*. The case study in this chapter deals with the adjective *sheer* and some of its near-synonyms as given by dictionaries: *pure*, *complete*, and *absolute*. By searching for the word and sorting the concordance lines after the word to the right (the right-collocate) Partington is able to give a much more detailed picture of the collocational meaning of *sheer* than is given in current learners' dictionaries. He then goes on with a similar analysis of the near-synonyms, demonstrating that they in fact collocate with other sets of nouns. In this and many concordancing exercises Partington shows ingenuity and perseverance, and it is illuminating to follow the analysis carried out step by step. The information gained from such exercises is certainly useful for advanced learners of English.

Chapter 3. *True and false friends*. In this chapter Partington enters the area of translation studies. Using comparable English and Italian corpora, he shows that cognate words in the two languages like *correct* and *corretto* may have different frequencies and also collocate differently. Here Partington also uses dedicated collocation searches which list all words appearing within a span of three words to the left and three words to the right of the key word. It turns out that the English and the Italian words collocate with words from different lexico-semantic fields, which implies that they will seldom be the most natural translation of each other. Or, in other words, they are not such true friends as one might suppose.

Chapter 4. *Connotation and semantic prosody*. Semantic prosody is the term used by Sinclair to describe the fact that certain lexical items spread their semantic colouring across whole clauses or sentences, so that for instance *set in* is normally associated with unpleasant events and therefore influences the way we interpret the subject of the verb phrase. Partington here studies a number of current dictionaries and shows that information of this type is only presented in a rather sketchy fashion.

Chapter 5. *Syntax*. In this chapter, the author argues for the view, based on Halliday, that syntax cannot be studied in isolation from lexis. A well-known problem for syntacticians using unparsed corpora is that they have to get at syntax through searches for lexical items, for instance conjunctions or prepositions. Partington's case study looks into conditional sentences with *if*. He found that out of 100 such sentences, only 17 corresponded to the three typical conditional constructions given in pedagogical grammars. Although it could be confusing for learners, Partington's conclusion is that it will be good for them to see that the constructions in the grammar book are 'a *model for*, rather than a *constraint on*, natural language production'. Although it is still true that in most pedagogical situations the teacher and student will not have access to a parsed corpus (one of the rare possibilities being ICE-GB with ICECUP; cf. Nelson *et al.*, 2002), it seems clear that there are still enough problem areas that can be reached via searches on lexical items to keep learners busy for a long time.

Chapter 6. *Cohesion in text*. The use of corpus methods for textlinguistic investigations is probably one of the least developed areas as yet. Partington here

presents exercises studying what Halliday and Hasan call *general nouns* like *people*, *thing*, and *stuff* which function as pro-forms in the system of deixis in English. Partington suggests that we should rather talk about *general noun phrases*. He also extends the idea to verbs like *occur* and *happen*, which he calls *general verbs*. The results gained from the study of these verbs are not without interest, but this chapter is one of the least convincing in the book.

Chapter 7. *Metaphor*. This chapter is largely inspired by Lakoff and Johnson, but Partington criticizes them for not using authentic data and for not taking genre into account. One of the case studies looks for evidence that there are two systematic metaphors, THE SPORTSMAN IS A MAGICIAN and SPORT IS A FAIRY-TALE. By concordancing *magic** and, in a series of further steps, near-synonyms and related words, a number of authentic instances could be gathered. The results showed that such metaphors were fairly numerous, and that they were especially frequent in sports journalism. Partington also made a more extended investigation of metaphors in business journalism, but although this resulted in masses of interesting authentic examples, we do not come much closer to an understanding of metaphors than we were before. However, Partington does demonstrate that corpus methodology, including key-word studies using programs like WordSmith Tools, can be used in the study of style and genres.

Chapter 8. '*Unusuality*'. *Unusuality* is Partington's term for the results of wordplay and other types of creativity in language. One would think that such things would be impossible to search for in a corpus, and to some extent that is the case. However, likely locations for such inventions can be identified and automatically called up for subsequent manual analysis. Newspaper headlines constitute one such location, while fragments of idioms, proverbs and sayings are other starting points. In the conclusion to this chapter, Partington considers the most interesting results to be psychological: how do readers recognize these modified or truncated quotations, etc.? Another strength of this chapter is that it shows how corpora can be used to demonstrate how modified ready-mades are used in authentic language use.

Chapter 9. *General conclusion*. In his general conclusion, Partington carries out a balanced discussion of some of the criticism that has been levelled at corpus linguistics and some general problems related to this field, such as the question of representativeness. His final word is that the case studies he has presented provide predictions which must be tested and contrasted with results from different text types. 'This book is essentially a set of suggestions for further research.'

As can be seen from the chapter headings, the book covers a number of central areas in linguistics. Thanks to Partington's theoretical introductions to each chapter, it can in fact serve as a sort of introduction to (English) linguistics. For synonymy, we get semanticists like Lyons, Cruse, and Kempson; for true and false friends, translation theorists like Sager and Baker; for connotation and semantic prosody, Leech and Sinclair; for syntax, Francis and the Birmingham school; for cohesion, Halliday and Hasan; for metaphor, Lakoff & Johnson and Sperber & Wilson.

Although Partington often bases his arguments on the relative frequency of linguistic items, he never goes into advanced statistical methods. Rather, he uses common-sense

interpretation of the figures as support for qualitative analyses of the phenomena, warning against over-reliance on the figures when they are small. This brings the linguistic aspects of the investigations into focus in an attractive way.

Partington teaches English as a foreign language in Italy and his pedagogical experience is evident throughout the book. His suggestions about how to integrate small corpus investigations in the classroom sound workable, and his comments on the implications of his findings for second language pedagogy are interesting. Areas for further research are often suggested.

Finally, Partington writes in an elegant, clear, and informal style, putting forth his ideas and comments in a balanced, understated way which makes the book very pleasant reading.

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Linda C. Mitchell, *Grammar wars: language as cultural battlefield in 17th and 18th century England*. Ashgate Publishers, 2001. Pp. 218. Hardback £45, ISBN 0 754 6 0272 9.

Reviewed by Charles Jones, University of Edinburgh

This is a strange book which seems to have an unclear idea of its subject, presenting it in a noncohesive way, and would appear to be a product of a school of Cultural rather than Linguistic Studies. There can be little doubt that the period under investigation probably sees the birth of the scientific study of language in all its aspects, formal as well as social, a period which produced grammars, treatises on language, and dictionaries unequalled in quantity and, indeed, quality until recent times. That the period might therefore throw up conflicting views of linguistic modelling, descriptive techniques, and the interconnection between language and society is hardly surprising, nor is it novel. But such are not the core concern of the author, whose ‘interest, however, lies in the grammarians who are not conventional. Those grammarians who deviate from the norm tell us most about the issues being fought in the name of grammar in the seventeenth and eighteenth centuries. These grammarians try to change language paradigms by attempting to change ideas about grammar. Grammar texts are in fact argumentative statements about controversial issues.’ She goes on to set out her approach, claiming that she will ‘attempt to look at definitions of grammar in five categories (standardisation, pedagogy, writing instruction, universal language, and social position), although the distinctions blur’. Without any attempt to justify her position, Mitchell defines ‘normal’ grammars, as those which discuss the ‘art of speaking and writing well’, and wishes us to accept a distinction between grammars and what she labels ‘grammar texts’. By conflating these types, she argues, ‘we lose sight of the innovations and advances grammarians made in the teaching of language and the separation of individual subjects from the grammar itself. We also do not take into account the social, political, and economic factors that influence the content of these books, we overlook such things as the emergence of and final separation of “rhetoric” from “grammar”; . . . we also lose sight of the important merger of communication skills with the discipline of grammar . . . It is easy to overlook the riches of seventeenth and eighteenth century textbooks.’ This is a disingenuous claim since one would have thought that the long tradition of scholarly work on the description and functioning of language in these two centuries had addressed just such issues and could hardly be accused of ‘overlooking’ the kind of subjects she lists. A distinction between ‘grammar’ and ‘grammar text’ is totally unjustified, and only serves to reflect the author’s own uncertainty about how to define grammar itself. The vast bulk of seventeenth- and eighteenth-century grammars and related works are essentially concerned with descriptions of syntax, morphology, phonology, and orthography, relating these, on occasion, to wider social and pedagogic issues.

Chapter 1 – *Vernacular claims victory* – addresses the controversy of the supremacy of English over Latin in classroom teaching of grammar. Most of the points raised are well known and there is much appropriate contemporary quotation. While she correctly emphasizes that for many of the authors of pedagogic grammars, the teaching of Classical languages (not just Latin) was seen as an entry pathway to the teaching of vernacular grammar itself, she tends to underplay the argument commonly put forward by the ‘vernacular-first’ strategists, namely that, in ancient times, grammatical structure and rhetorical device were themselves taught through the vernacular medium: a ‘what’s good for the ancients is good for us’ principle. Of course, in an age where the freezing of language development in some kind of ‘perfect’ state was seen as desirable (many eighteenth-century commentators viewing the language of Queen Anne’s court as the best exemplar of this condition), the attraction of the Classical languages was strong, since they were seen as instances of ‘perfect’ languages fossilized in their optimal state. James Elphinston is quite adamant that it is the duty of the grammarian to arrest language change, once a recognized level of excellence has been achieved; when language ‘has achieved her Summit, it then becomes [man’s] province to preclude, if he can, further change; nor can such preclusion be effected but by fixing her in Orthography’ (1786: *Preface*: x). He rejects out of hand the claim by others that language is ‘all chance and caprice’: ‘Directly the reverse is Language: . . . Opposite again to vulgar idea, so steady is living language. Once matured by Time, and deposited in Orthography, that it afterwards admits very little variation: witness the Latin tongue, from the days of Augustus; and the French, from the reign of Lewis XIV’ (1786: *Preface* xi).

However, given the length of time she assigns to matters pedagogic, Mitchell might have stressed more the varying reactions of sixteenth- and seventeenth-century observers to the effectiveness and intellectual prowess of schoolteachers themselves. Sheridan, for instance, is particularly adamant on the ineffectiveness of schoolteachers in providing a model for what he sees as the best pronunciation, describing them as ‘some of the most ignorant’ and the ‘lowest of mankind’, while ‘it is universally allowed that there are hardly any who speak or write [English] correctly’. Although most of these criticisms probably stem from his regret that Latin receives dominance over English (for schoolteachers, ‘the language of the illiterate vulgar’) in the classroom. He even goes as far as to claim (1756: 197): ‘If any one among us have a facility or purity more than ordinary in his mother tongue, it is owing to chance, or his genius, or anything, rather than his education, or any care of his teacher.’ Even the Newcastle radical, Thomas Spence, argues that his *New Alphabet* will be of help ‘especially for those who are but indifferent readers, from not having been taught to pronounce properly’ (1775: *Preface*). Buchanan’s view of schoolteachers is on the one hand positive: ‘the most necessary and useful Members of Society’ (1762: xxxv), but still he notes that (1757: 6): ‘Great numbers set up for teachers of English (when they fail in the business they were brought up to) without a preparative education, or being the least qualified for the execution of such an important trust’ and that ‘It is common with the vulgar and illiterate to imagine, that anyone who can read tolerably well, is

surely a person proper enough to teach little children. But the learned and judicious part of mankind know better; and that it requires the utmost skill and ability in a teacher, to lay the foundation of a child's education.' He is full of praise for the excellence of teachers 'north of the Tweed', who have had the benefits of a liberal education, 'a qualified teacher of English being as much esteemed as those who teach Latin or Greek' (1757: 6).

It is when she is dealing with matters purely linguistic (i.e. syntactic/morphological) that Mitchell completely fails to convince the reader. Discussing the possible influence of Latin 'rules' on the syntax of English, she avers 'examples of applying Latin rules were plentiful. *It's me*, which was considered correct for centuries, was now considered incorrect since the Latin construction *ego sum* made use of the subject form of the pronoun *ego* rather than the object form *me*. If one were to follow this reasoning, one would have to say in English, *It's I*. This question of usage is still hotly debated in university grammar classes and newspaper columns today.' While it is at least questionable whether such an issue forms a core concern of university linguistics departments, one could have expected something a little more theoretically significant than this trite observation. This statement is followed by a print-out of Noun Phrase and Pronoun paradigms, with 'case' designations (nominative, accusative, vocative, etc.) appropriate to Latin syntax/morphology, taken from Dilworth's *New Guide to the English Tongue* (1751), the only point of which seems to be to claim that 'a quick browse through eighteenth century grammar texts will attest to the fact that Dilworth's text is not an anomaly'. While one wonders how a 'quick browse' through the grammars of this period is possible, given the extent of the data, one would have expected at this point, and indeed as a major theme of a book like this, some idea of the importance and consequence of accepting a Latinate model for the description of English syntax/morphology. How was such a paradigm developed, modified, criticized, or rejected by grammarians in the period and what is its relationship to the evolution of grammatical categorization, not only in the eighteenth century but in the present day? The historical syntactician will find little of interest in this book, and the reader is left to wonder whether the author is *au fait* with current scholarship of language change when he reads: 'Another example of forcing Latin onto English can be seen with the Anglo-Saxon word *sceal* (shall), a modal verb meaning "be obliged". Latin had a verbal inflexion to mark future tense, but Anglo-Saxon did not, and when scholars had to find a way of translating Latin future tenses into English, they used "shall". Problems arose when grammarians forced rules from Latin to fit whatever rule in English they were teaching. For example, "will" a modal verb in English, does not carry tense in English as it does in Latin. Grammarians in favor of applying Latin rules to English grammar reasoned that Latin forms were inherently better than the corresponding ones in English.' There are surely more convincing explanations for the evolution of the pre-modals *will* and *sceal* than this, while the developments she illustrates had all taken place some time before the sixteenth century. Any reader at all versed in linguistics must surely balk too at statements such as: 'Latin grammar was attractive to eighteenth-century grammarians because it was no longer spoken, but

only encountered in written form, it was a fixed, codified language safe to transfer to English (i.e. it was not going to do anything surprising).' The book contains too many theoretical naiveties of this kind.

Her treatment of matters relating to the language academy issue is particularly disappointing. There is little in-depth study of the pros and cons for the setting up of a British Academy, next to nothing on Continental institutions of this type, while unsupported crass generalizations like the following pepper the discussion: 'Most grammarians wanted the language to develop naturally and not to be bound by an academy that would dictate language decisions.' While there were many voices raised against the setting up of a language academy in England, arguments like this do not figure prominently from these sources. Interestingly too, Mitchell never attempts to discuss or illustrate the many contemporary discussions which relate to linguistic 'Custom' and what was understood by that term in the period. There is also an all-too-brief discussion of that central plank of linguistic concern in the eighteenth century – lexicography. We are informed that lexicographers, who had 'assumed the task of improving dictionaries', were 'keeping abreast of linguistic change', with Kenrick (for some reason singled out) citing as the basis of his pronunciation suggestions 'the correct pronunciation according to the "present practice of polished speakers in the Metropolis"'. While this is indeed the case for Kenrick, it is far from being the universally accepted criterion in his time, but to conclude from this that Kenrick's criterion for 'proper speech' provides 'further proof of the increased focus on communication at that time', if it means anything at all, is simply a *non sequitur*.

Mitchell's discussion of matters pedagogic in chapter 2 is perhaps overworked, as is the emphasis there on the architecture metaphor used to describe the structures and aims of education in the period. While her chapter on treatises on rhetoric, writing companions, and good-writing guides is well set out, there is little new here and it is not always clear how the materials relate to the rest of the book's objectives. We would have needed to see a more closely argued case made for the inclusion of both linguistic and occupation-related topics like book-keeping and joinery in Tyro's Guides in the eighteenth century in particular. What socioeconomic forces were at work to make linguistic and work competence figure so highly in the agenda of grammar writers? While the role of rhetoric and composition (especially in the classroom) is explored in detail, she misses Sheridan's point that the best way to learn and teach good writing and achieve a 'proper pronunciation' was through the osmotic process of listening to the best oratory (it was, after all, the availability of the latter in such abundance in Classical times which, he and others like him claimed, was the basis for the 'perfection' and 'immutability' of Latin and Greek themselves). However, without producing anything by way of empirical justification, she takes the view that 'Schoolmasters, charged with preparing hordes of students to function in a working-class environment, knew that eloquent, fanciful styles would not be appropriate to vocational needs. Consequently, grammarians focussed their instruction on practical writing assignments to teach students how to accomplish simple,

practical tasks, assignments that required a plainer style appropriate for brief essays, themes, meditations, letters, bills of sale, business correspondence, and receipts.’ Here she betrays her own preference for current fashionable (and some would argue extremely damaging) pedagogic treatments of the enhancement of writing skills: ‘As one would expect, these utilitarian writing assignments did not leave much room for creativity.’

Following a full and informative discussion in chapter 4 of the various schemes proposed in the period for the construction of a Universal Language, she turns, in her final chapter, to a topic where it might justifiably be argued that some kind of linguistic ‘battle’ was being waged in the two centuries under investigation and particularly in the latter. There is a rehearsal of the well-known materials prepared for the instruction in English language skills for foreigners, although one could argue that her emphasis on the phatic, social-inclusiveness intention of such works is overstressed. Many grammar writers, especially in the eighteenth century, justify their endeavours on a host of criteria, only one of which is ‘as a help for foreign learners’. Indeed, eighteenth-century writers in particular underpin their concerns for orthographic reform quite specifically with the belief that spelling changes would make English pronunciation easier for non-native speakers to learn. But there is nothing of this here. Indeed, this book totally ignores what can only be described as the overarching concern of grammarians in both centuries: the description and promotion of ‘good’ pronunciation. It is difficult to understand how a monograph dedicated to a discussion of early and late Modern English can almost completely ignore orthography and orthoepy. One result of this is the author’s failure to realize that many contemporary complaints about the detrimental effect of foreign-language influence on English more often than not stem from perceptions that some pretentious speakers of English are giving French and Italian pronunciations and stress assignments to individual items in the lexicon, rather than from any tendency to ‘Naturalizing Foreign Words’ as she claims Mieke suggests.

Chapter 5 also sees an examination of ‘Grammar for the “Weaker Sex”’ and is replete with contemporary anti-female views of every kind. All of these are well known and could perhaps have been accorded less space. In particular, one is disappointed to see such a skewed view of contemporary attitudes towards women and grammar. Not all of these were by any means negative nor even patronizing, and Buchanan’s contribution to the debate should have been given greater emphasis. We know that there were female grammar writers in the eighteenth century – notably Fisher and Devis – but we also need to have seen a discussion which dealt with proactive groups like the *Edinburgh Fair Intellectuals Club* and others like them. It is very disturbing to see the author cite an extremely important quotation from *The Pleasing Instructor*, concerning the role of women and grammar writing, and attribute the work to ‘an anonymous author’ and worse still, a male author at that. *The Pleasing Instructor* was the work of Ann Fisher of Newcastle. Indeed, my personal copy of the work (the first edition of 1786) boasts her signature at the end of the *Preface*.

What might have been the central concern of a book purporting to deal with ‘language as a cultural battlefield’, namely the obsession – particularly in the late eighteenth

century – with norms of language both in pronunciation and syntax/morphology, is accorded a relatively brief section at the end of the book. It is hard to understand why the sociology of language is treated in such a perfunctory fashion especially in the face of the overwhelming interest shown in the subject in both centuries under discussion. Indeed, the book says almost nothing about phonetics/phonology at all, while the bibliographical materials show a huge gap in reference to recent scholarly studies of social class in the eighteenth century in particular. Mitchell's references to social class are everywhere trite: 'Foreigners and women had an identity thrust upon them; the middle class, by contrast, conspired in generating its own identity. The aspiring class stressed two [sic] emphasize these two elements because they saw themselves already as moral and literate. Members of the middle class, however, were responsible for educating children of middle class parents.' What is the evidence on which such assumptions about social class division and functioning is based? And surely, one can do better by way of provision of sociolinguistic patterning in the eighteenth century than bland claims like the following: 'Members of the middle class . . . rejected "power coding", that is, indicating through speech another person's social status. They adopted the use of the *you* of the mannered upper class people rather than the *thou* of working class people. The rejection of a term of inequality marked the desire of the middle classes to have a more democratic voice. What is interesting in this shift is that the middle classes did not designate any distance from the lower classes, perhaps reacting to an egalitarian ethic. The rejection of *thou* also safeguarded against offending people. With the increased material status of some middle-class entrepreneurs, one did not wish using a lower status term of address to someone of a higher socio-economic standing.' Typically, the historical syntactic evidence is unsupported by research reference (and in this instance is particularly peripheral when set against other major contemporary syntactic changes), while the sociological theorizing can only be described as imaginative.

On the whole, this is a book that will interest the historian of language teaching and its relationship to the evolution of theories of Universal Language. Yet, by ignoring the importance of 'normal' grammars and grammatical treatises, this book singularly fails in its main aim of demonstrating and assessing the extent to which the early and late Modern English obsession with linguistic description, linguistic analysis, and the social function of language in any way constitutes some kind of 'battlefield' either for competing paradigms of language or for models for language change itself.

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Christopher Williams, *Progressive and non-progressive aspect in English*. Fasano: Schena Editore, 2002. Pp. 243. Paperback €13, ISBN 88 8229 287 8.

Reviewed by Gunther Kaltenböck, University of Vienna

The progressive aspect is a topic that has been extensively discussed in English linguistics with various theories trying to account for the semantic differences between progressive and nonprogressive. Contributing new theoretical insights to this field, while certainly desirable, is not an easy task. Yet this is precisely what Williams sets out to do. His main aim is that of ‘providing a theory . . . which . . . differs in certain respects from all those provided so far and which . . . helps to account for certain phenomena more comprehensively than other theories to date’ (p. 18). While the main concern of the book is of an essentially theoretical nature, it also contains a more practical second part which is aimed ‘not only at specialists in the field of tense and aspect but also at teachers of the English language and all those who are interested in linguistic phenomena in general’ (p. 19).

The first part of the book presents the theoretical background, providing, first of all, a concise overview of aspectual features (section 1.2) and a discussion of Aktionsart (section 1.3) based on the dichotomies of durative vs. nondurative, stative vs. nonstative, telic vs. nontelic. Here, Williams achieves a high degree of clarity by dividing both aspect and Aktionsart into different components and subcategories, albeit at the risk of oversimplification which does not do justice to the, admittedly highly complex, interplay of these neatly separated categories. This is particularly obvious, for instance, in the case of iterativity (treated under aspectual features), where there is no explicit reference to the interaction of aspect with Aktionsart (semelfactives). On the other hand, Williams succeeds in clearly delimiting the concept of ‘habituality’ by restricting it to iterativity and rejecting Comrie’s (1976: 26–9) inappropriately broad view which includes the *used to* form (e.g. *The Temple of Diana used to stand at Ephesus*; p. 63).

The discussion of Aktionsart (section 1.3) presents a somewhat fragmented picture as there is no explicit mention of the interrelationship and indeed overlaps between the different dichotomies discussed (durative–punctual, stative–dynamic, telic–atelic). Rather than pointing out the links between these partly crosscutting categories or the hierarchical relationships between them (e.g. stative–dynamic as the most basic category subsuming the others; cf. e.g. Quirk *et al.*, 1985: 201; Michaelis, 1998: 62–3) the three dichotomies are presented very much as independent categories of equal rank. Moreover, there is no reference to the scale of gradience linking stative and dynamic verbs (cf. e.g. stance verbs). Instead they seem to be taken as clearly separable, mutually exclusive labels with the latter being somewhat insufficiently described as requiring ‘a certain amount of “energy” of some kind in order to continue’ (p. 81).

After this general overview of the various features of the progressive aspect and Aktionsart, section 1.4 turns to the central concern of the book, which is that of identifying ‘a single criterion that is capable of accounting for the choice of the non-progressive form or the progressive form in English’ (p. 87). The underlying criterion suggested is that of ‘susceptibility to change’. Accordingly, ‘the progressive form is used when there is the idea of a situation being susceptible to change, while the non-progressive form is used when the situation referred to is not perceived as being susceptible to change’ (p. 213). From this underlying general meaning Williams derives the secondary meanings of ‘incompleteness’ and ‘continuous change’ (p. 89), conceding, however, that the idea of ‘susceptibility to change’ does not apply with progressive statives as in *This painting’s been hanging on the wall for years*, where, in spite of the progressive, the situation appears to be totally static and unchanging (p. 89). For all other uses of the progressive, however, he insists the theory holds and sets out to discuss some potentially problematic areas, namely future time reference and the ‘indefinite’ present perfect (sections 1.4.1 and 1.4.2 respectively).

With regard to progressive forms referring to the future, Williams points out that these fall into two categories: either they refer to some situation which will be in progress at some point in the future (i.e. some cases of future progressive such as *This time tomorrow I’ll be lying on some beach in Greece*, and some cases of the progressive imperative, e.g. *When your Mum comes back this evening, be washing the dishes*) or else they presuppose the idea of some plan, arrangement or intention (i.e. present progressive, *be going to*, some cases of future progressive and progressive imperative). In the latter category it is the prerequisites for the performance or actualization of the future situation, i.e. the plan, arrangement, etc., that are seen as already in progress at the moment of speaking (e.g. p. 95). Thus, what forms the common basis of both types is the notion of an activity/event ‘in progress’, which seems to be taken more or less synonymously with ‘susceptible to change’ (e.g. p. 95). In the case of the ‘indefinite’ present perfect progressive (discussed in section 1.4.2), where the situation referred to has already come to an end before the moment of speech, what is seen as being ‘in progress’ is some kind of “result” which is a direct consequence of that situation’ (p. 111) and which lasts up to the moment of speech. While all this is plausible enough, the discussion of the progressive imperative is less convincing. Williams observes that in these cases the situation necessitating action has already come into existence before the moment of speaking (i.e. is in progress) and somewhat inconclusively equates this with ‘requiring immediate action’ (p. 104), giving the following example: *Come on. The match starts in half an hour. Let’s be getting a move on*. However, a slight adaptation of this example (cf. *Come on. The match starts any minute. ?Let’s be getting a move on/Let’s get a move on*) shows that ‘immediacy of action’ is a problematic notion: very urgent situations requiring instantaneous action seem to be considerably less compatible with the progressive owing to its inherent durativity.

The main achievement of this study lies in Williams’s attempt to develop a unitary explanation for the various uses of the progressive, including all forms of the progressive

with future time reference. Identifying a single underlying criterion for the use of the progressive is certainly most welcome from both a linguistic and a didactic point of view (one of Williams's explicit objectives) and seems to reflect Comrie's (1976: 38) search for a 'more general basic meaning which includes both progressive meaning and the various other meanings that the English Progressive has'. It is obvious that, as the 'smallest common denominator', such an underlying meaning has to be of the highest generality. Williams's concept of 'susceptibility to change' is clearly just that. It is also compatible with the even more abstract notion of 'viewing a situation from the inside' and is reminiscent of Hirtle's (1967: 27) view of the progressive expressing an event 'which gives the impression of lacking something, of leaving room for something to come'. However, Williams seems to use the concept as a synonym of 'being in progress' and it may be wondered whether the two meanings are indeed on the same level or whether 'susceptible to change' is not derivable from (and as such subordinate to) the more general 'in progress'. In any case, such a link of synonymy would need to be explicitly argued rather than just tacitly assumed. Moreover, Williams fails to show the shortcomings of any other potential candidates for the role of 'basic underlying meaning' such as '(limited) duration' or 'dynamicity' (cf. e.g. Leech, 1987: 19; Huddleston & Pullum, 2002: 167), or at least show how they are linked to a more fundamental concept of 'susceptibility to change'. What is lacking is a clear separation of primary underlying meaning and derived (secondary) meanings (e.g. by way of pragmatic inference or implicature) and a discussion of the type of relationships between them.

The lack of an explicit discussion of the link between the underlying meaning of 'susceptibility to change' and its more concrete actualizations in the various uses of the progressive is particularly obvious in part II of the book, which is meant to 'test the theory'. It presents a systematic and very comprehensive overview of the different uses of the progressive aspect in all the tenses, which is interesting in its own right but fails to establish a clear link to the theory outlined in part I (1.4). Thus, for instance, the discussion of the verb *be* (as in *She's being very unreasonable about the divorce*; 2.1.3.1) contents itself with the rather vague explanation that 'one of the meanings of the progressive form of "be" is sometimes that of acting in a way that is abnormal with respect to the general situation' (p. 174) without attempting to specify how this notion of agentivity can be derived from the concept of 'susceptibility to change' except for the somewhat inconclusive suggestion that this is 'because we are dealing with an activity that is temporary and cannot be viewed as a permanent feature of a given situation' (p. 174). The result of this 'missing link' to the theory is a rather detached second part which disrupts the overall coherence of the book. This is regrettable for the additional reason that tracing the different uses of the progressive to a common underlying meaning would provide essential support for the theory.

To conclude, the main objective of the book of providing a unified account of all the uses of the progressive by identifying a single underlying criterion is clearly a valuable one, and Williams makes a convincing case for the common semantic basis of progressive forms with future time reference. What would have been welcome, though,

is a more careful exploration of the relationships of the different semantic notions generally attributed to the progressive (e.g. duration, dynamicity, imperfectivity) to the proposed underlying criterion of ‘susceptibility to change’ as well as a clearer separation of the various levels of meaning involved (i.e. inherent meaning of the progressive form, pragmatic inferences, lexical meaning/Aktionsart, and the role of co(n)textual factors). Overall, however, Williams’s study provides a stimulating contribution to the study of the progressive and, despite its shortcomings, presents an original perspective on a much discussed but by no means fully exhausted topic in English linguistics.

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Folded unobtrusively into the conclusion of chapter 2 of this book is a most eloquent statement about how philologists and historical linguists, many of whom view each other’s work with deep suspicion, if not explicit disdain, would benefit mutually from closer cooperation and a better understanding of how combining the two approaches yields significant insights that neither on its own can attain. The point, of course, is not a new one, as the rift between linguistics and philology has often been remarked

in recent years. Yet probably no one in the field of English language studies is better qualified than Donka Minkova to speak for and to both camps. Anyone who doubts this may look to this book itself, since possibly there is no better demonstration of how the particularities of philological investigation, which always keeps one eye focused on historical and material contexts, can be made to interact fruitfully with the more abstract concerns of both phonetic science and linguistic theory. The point is illustrated in each chapter devoted to data, since each adheres to a scheme of thorough philological investigation followed by a demonstration of how Minkova's conclusions are illuminated by formulation within the framework of Optimality Theory reinforced by experimental phonetics. Many lament the rift down the middle of historical English language studies; few can bridge the gap so effectively.

Because of this dual focus, the first two chapters are not the sort one usually finds in publications in a linguistics series. The first lays out the historical and cultural backgrounds of Old English verse production and reception, with particular emphasis on the oral nature of the alliterative context, in part (and quite rightly, I think) to discount the influence of writing as a major factor in the establishment of alliterative patterns. In some recent studies, scribes have been given undue credit for alliterative phenomena at the expense of oral tradition, and one of Minkova's aims is to show that there is a plausible phonetic rather than graphemic basis for most of the alliterative patternings recoverable from medieval manuscripts. The first chapter also deals with the extent to which alliterative texts of the Middle English period can be said to stem from a continuous oral tradition, and Minkova finds that the so-called Alliterative Revival is better regarded as a renewal. This is sensible, and it is congruent with what I take to be the prevailing opinion now, though not so long ago the poems of the Revival were thought to have little historical connection to Old English verse. (An important paper by Geoffrey R. Russom dealing with this issue will appear in the proceedings of the second Studies in English Historical Linguistics conference, a series that Minkova co-founded.) Chapter 2 is chiefly an account of Old and Middle English prosody, along with the basics of the alliterative meters of the two periods and remarks on the interface between meter and prosody.

Since the book concerns the linguistic information conveyed by the alliterative patterns of verse, its focus is almost exclusively on the onsets of stressed syllables. The first alliterative problem is addressed in chapter 3: why is it that both varieties of <c>, those producing MnE /k/ and /tʃ/, continue to alliterate with each other to the end of the Old English (OE) period, while <g> undergoes a split, so that before the end of the tenth century, <g> as the reflex of Germanic /j/ and palatalized /ɣ/ no longer alliterates with the reflex of nonpalatal /ɣ/? Minkova perceives a direct phonological cause: palatalized [kʲ] did not develop to [tʃ] until quite late. The seeming counterevidence – the fact that [kʲ], appearing before original front vowels, did not fall together with the sound that resulted when /k/ appeared before a front vowel produced later by *i*-umlaut – may be obviated by the assumption that the latter sound was [kʲ], a less strongly palatalized variety distinct from both [kʲ] and [k]. The three sounds were able to maintain their allophonic status because the difference between [kʲ] and [kʲ] was conditioned by the

umlauted vowel following the latter, which remained round, at least in the non-Saxon dialects. Full palatalization in umlaut environments may also have been inhibited by the avoidance of allomorphy in transparently related stems, e.g. *cemban* ‘to comb’ beside *camb* ‘comb’. As for the varieties of <g>, when nonpalatal initial [ɣ] developed to [g] in the tenth century, it no longer alliterated with the palatal varieties due to an inviolable alliterative constraint on identity of manner of articulation. The palatal varieties – the approximant derived from Germanic /j/ and the fricative derived from /ɣ/ – remained distinct until that time, alliterating on the basis of phonetic similarity. In an OT analysis, the alliterative patterns for both the voiced and voiceless velars may be captured by four ranked constraints, demanding that alliterating onsets have identical features for continuancy, voice, and place, and that underlyingly contrasting entities contrast also in the output. Finally, [sk] is argued not to have developed to [ʃ] during the OE period. Counterevidential forms like *sceacan* ‘shake’ < **skakan*- are assumed to have <e> not to indicate palatalization of [sk] but as-yet-unphonemicized assimilation of non-coronal [k] to coronal [s].

The time-worn question why alliterating vowels need not be identical is taken up in the fourth chapter, and of the explanations that have been proposed, the one advocated is that vocalic initials in OE were preceded by a glottal stop that was the actual basis for alliteration. Minkova presents a variety of philological evidence that has not previously figured in the scholarly dialogue, centering chiefly on the rarity of elision and the use of inorganic initial <h> to signal the presence of nonphonemic [ʔ]. She posits an ONSET constraint that lost its obligatory status in Middle English (ME), as evidenced by a lower frequency of vocalic alliteration, frequent *Stab der Liaison* (alliteration of a preceding final before an initial vowel, e.g. *n* in *an oper* ‘another’), development of OE *ēa* to /jɛ:/ in Middle Kentish, nunnation (insertion of inorganic final *n* before a vocalic initial, e.g. *ich hæten eou* ‘I command you’), and false junctures like *my nuncl* for *mine uncl*. The change in the status of ONSET is accomplished by re-ranking it after the faithfulness constraint DEP_{IO} (‘Every segment of the output has a correspondent in the input’).

Chapter 5 turns to the question why each initial cluster /sp, st, sk/ is required in OE to alliterate only with itself. The author offers a persuasive rebuttal to the argument that the phenomenon is attributable to /s/-adjunction, a rule inherited from Proto-Indo-European that permits affixation of initial /s/ (cf. Lat. *tego* ‘cover’ beside Gk. στέγω ‘cover’). This analysis demands a certain inessentiality for /s/ in such clusters that is hard to reconcile with the alliterative facts: e.g., we might thus expect /sp/ to alliterate with /p/. So, too, sonority scales that represent such clusters as highly marked, with decreasing sonority in the direction of the syllabic nucleus, are unhelpful in this regard and seem at odds with the high incidence of the clusters in natural languages. Minkova’s position is that tauto-alliteration in these clusters is attributable both to the involvement of the stop consonants and to positioning in the onset of a stressed syllable. Compliance with four well-formedness constraints renders these clusters more cohesive than other candidates for cluster alliteration in OE – though groups like *br-*, *sn-*, and *fr-* are tauto-alliterative in OE more frequently than has been supposed.

These matters are pursued into ME in chapter 6, where much greater variety in cluster alliteration is encountered, though alliteration in the clusters comprising *s* + voiceless stop (as opposed to *sw-*, *pr-*, *gr-*, etc.) is still commonest. A wide-ranging survey of the data reveals that early ME poets felt free to violate the cohesiveness of the OE alliterating *s*-clusters. By contrast, a hierarchy of alliterative constraints is evident in the fourteenth century from the frequency of different types encountered: cluster CONTIGUITY (e.g. *sp-* : *sp-*) > SPLITTING (e.g. *sp-* : *sep-*) > SKIPPING (e.g. *sp-* : *s-*).

The final chapter deals with the loss of the first element in clusters beginning with a velar consonant (*cn-*, *gn-*), with *h* (*hn-*, *hr-*, *hl-*, *hw-*) and with *w* (*wr-*, *wl-*). Alliterative evidence regarding the first group is thin, due to these clusters' noncohesiveness (rather than a syllable structure deficiency defined on a universal scale), and it tells us nothing firm about when *g* was lost. Minkova's argument is that the voicing distinction between these two clusters was eliminated, due to lack of aspiration in antecorsonantal [k], and the resulting initial clusters began to be reduced in the mid-fifteenth century. In the second set, *h-* comes to represent [h] (rather than [x]) in the tenth century, and loss of [h] in the first three clusters was relatively rapid after the Conquest, except in Kent. Contrary to predictions derived from sonority hierarchies, reduction of /hw/ began as early as, perhaps earlier than, other *h*-cluster reductions, at least in the South, where the cluster was realized as [hw]. In the North, by contrast, it gave [x_M], producing spellings like <qu-, qhu-, qw->, etc., and a contrast with /w/ is maintained to this day in Northumberland. This is natural enough, as the phonetic properties of [x_M] render it more resistant to reduction than [hw]. In RP, [hw] is a bookish restoration dating to the Early Modern period, as evidenced by examples of hypercorrection. The loss of *w*- in the third group is quite a bit later than the other reductions.

In a very gracious preface, the author acknowledges intellectual indebtedness to several colleagues (among whom I am numbered) whom she does not expect to agree with her analyses. To the contrary, I find most of her conclusions highly persuasive and clearly superior to prior research. Only some of the arguments in chapter 3 about OE voiceless velars and their developments left me unpersuaded. Here the attempt to give the OE alliterative patterns a firm phonetic basis is prompted by the desire to obviate 'some as yet undescribed abstract level of representation' at which identity of the velars might be posited. The usual assumption, it seems, has been that alliteration of the different velars has simply been a matter of poetic convention. Minkova implicitly acknowledges the viability of this analysis when she concedes that it is a possible, even a likely explanation for aspects of cluster alliteration (see pp. 221, 236, 307). The ability of poetic tradition to override synchronic structure in OE verse is undeniable, e.g. in the use of uncontracted and nonparasited forms, especially in late poetry. Thus if a phonological explanation for the alliterative patterns of velars is to be preferred, there should be strong reasons for this. Yet the phonological explanation has its weaknesses. Either [tʃ] or a sound very close to it has to have developed as a separate phoneme in noninitial position fairly early in OE in order to account for divergent developments like *tācan* : *wreca* > MnE *teach* : *wreak*, as well as for the OE developments *fetian* > *feccan* and *ortgeard* > *orceard*. The assumption of the maintenance of the allophones

[k^j, k', k] in alliterating position would accordingly be strengthened by independent evidence that the phonemicization for some reason did not occur initially, and by a clear rationale for the divergence. Certainly allophony is not required for alliteration; Minkova's analysis of the initial voiced velars, in any case, is not a purely allophonic one. Her argument that [sk] remained bisegmental and that [ʃ], if it existed, at least remained allophonic as late as 1100, in turn, depends in no small measure on the persuasiveness of the argument about [tʃ]. (The metrical evidence of nonresolution across <sc> seems to me irrelevant, I should say, since presumably medial [sk], when palatalized, developed to [ʃ:], just as *fetian* gives *feccan*.)

A few minor corrections may be offered. The verse pair *XXIII, frēolic wealdend* (*DEdw* 6) is not alliteratively defective, as the numeral stands for *fēower ond twēntig* (see p. 32). The suffix *-hood* derives from OE *hād*, so it is not an example of divergent treatment of identical vowels compared to *-dom* < OE *dōm*, which, after all, underwent the Great Vowel Shift and, subsequently, shortening: in Drayton, for example, it rhymes with *room*, in Constable with *tomb*, and in many other Tudor poets with *come*, indicating either [u:] or its post-GVS shortening [ʊ] (see p. 53). Although manuscript *fergendra* at *Beo* 2881 is a scribal error, it is nonetheless a good OE word: other case forms are attested in the spelling *ferigend-* in Ælfric and in *Solomon and Saturn* (see p. 87). OE *Scottes* does not necessarily (if ever, at least in the South) have initial [sk], as the spelling *Sceott-* is common from Alfred's day on; cf. also ME *Schot-* in place-names (see p. 248). OE *hraþe* certainly alliterates on *h* in *hilderince, ac hē hraþe wolde* (*Beo* 1576; see p. 341).

Minkova's analyses are all coherent, and even when one remains unpersuaded by them, they are certainly possible. Indeed, many of her innovations are both brilliant and thoroughly convincing: her accounts of cluster alliteration and vocalic alliteration are particularly fine. It is in itself a remarkable accomplishment to have developed new explanations in regard to material as well thumbed as this, and to present to us an OE that does not look quite so much like Modern English as has generally been supposed – and yet, at the same time, one that in many respects better resembles living languages in its phonetics than has thus far been shown. When Minkova's fine and extensive philological spadework are added to these virtues, it becomes clear what a significant contribution this well-written and very accessible book makes to English historical linguistics.

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