REVIEWS


Reviewed by Christiane Dalton-Puffer, University of Vienna

The combinability and productivity of affixes as well as affix rivalry are central concerns in the study of derivational morphology. A relatively recent line of attack towards the solution of related problems has been to dissociate semantic and formal operations in the guise of separationist morphological models (e.g. Beard, 1995). This book adds to the discussion by proposing an alternative, strictly sign-based approach. While addressing several main themes in morphological theory, Ingo Plag also provides new descriptive facts about a number of seemingly well-known derivational processes of English, thus making the book equally interesting theoretically and empirically. With some readers this statement may raise the suspicion that this, then, cannot be a completely unified book (and they have a point), but attendance to empirical adequacy has always tended to ruffle seamless theoretical garments. The alternative is to practise a healthy eclecticism. As Plag’s decisions are without exception well informed and equally well argued, the book is exemplary of the advantages of such an approach. Unhampered by the requirement to explain everything with one type of formalism, the discussion is lucid and leads to innovative suggestions: word-formation rules should be conceived of as base-driven and output-oriented; the time-honoured central role of the word-class of the derivational base is doubtful; the extent of affix rivalry should not be overestimated since it is frequently an artefact of inadequate analysis.

The book has a concise introduction (carrying chapter number 1), a short conclusion and seven chapters in between. On the surface, chapters 2 and 3 contain the theoretical part, whereas chapters 4–8 are empirical (chapter 4 is on the combinability of affixes in general; chapters 5–8 represent an in-depth study of the verb-deriving processes of present-day English). However, theoretical interests over and beyond the notion of productivity are pursued throughout the book and innovative, possibly controversial, positions are developed in conversation with the data.

Chapter 2, entitled ‘Productivity: definition and measurement’, successfully stakes out a notoriously murky area. Plag identifies two positions: one assumes that productivity is an inherent, nonderivable property of morphological rules, that is, a theoretical primitive not susceptible to further explanation. The other takes productivity to be the result of other mechanisms and therefore a derived property, which is the position Plag adopts. Interlaced with the inherent/derived debate there is the debate concerning the question whether productivity is a qualitative or a quantita-
tive notion. Clearly, Plag does not see the qualitative/quantitative stances as mutually exclusive and he is able to show that they produce compatible results (p. 226). With regard to productivity as a quantitative notion, Plag outlines Baayen’s (1989, 1992, 1993) statistical, corpus-based approach, preparing the ground for its application in section 5.3. However, the main focus of the book is certainly on qualitative-structural factors and a precise mapping of these for a number of derivation patterns is undertaken in chapters 6 and 7. It is concluded that ‘the productivity of a given morphological process can largely be predicted on the basis of the process’s peculiar structural properties and restrictions’ (p. 244).

Chapter 3 consists of a broad discussion of these restrictions. In a shortish but interesting section Plag reviews the pragmatic dimension of productivity restrictions, but decides that structural concerns need to be addressed first. These, then, are the main focus of the rest of the book. The remainder of chapter 3 is dedicated to the discussion of general mechanisms governing structural restrictions. The ones most relevant to the empirical part and therefore discussed in most detail are the Unitary Base Hypothesis (discarded by Plag as too strong), the Unitary Output Hypothesis (which Plag accepts), and blocking (which emerges fairly bleached at the end of the book due to the evaporation of most ‘rivals’ that could block each other). Stratal constraints are also discussed in this connection and are discarded in favour of purely phonological ones. In this instance, however, Plag turns out to be somewhat undecided, as stratal constraints are invoked for explanatory purposes at later stages in the book (see below).

Chapters 4–8, then, represent several test-cases for the theoretical assumptions laid out up to this point. The first test case is the general combinability of English derivational suffixes (chapter 4) and the theoretical point addressed concerns the question whether derivational processes should be considered as affix-driven (as is most widely assumed) or base-driven (which is the solution Plag adopts). Plag is sympathetic with Fabb’s (1988) criticism of Level Ordering as a strictly stratal, affix-driven model of suffix combinability, but he also considers Fabb’s own solution with affix-driven selectional restrictions as unsatisfactory. Analysing a large number of examples from Lehnert (1971) and the OED on CD-Rom, Plag demonstrates the empirical and theoretical inadequacy of Fabb’s approach. He concludes that the widespread failure of suffixes to combine with already suffixed forms can be best accounted for by phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic constraints that are driven mostly by the derivational base in combination with the general morphological constraints discussed in chapter 3. (This is the first instance where the Latinate Constraint rises from the dead.) What the full-scale formulation of such process-specific constraints might look like is then demonstrated on the basis of verb-deriving processes in chapters 6 and 7.

Before doing that, however, Plag takes a quantitative look at the productivity of verb-deriving processes by means of the methods introduced in section 2.3. His treatment, however, includes not only corpus data as advocated by Baayen (Plag uses the COBUILD Corpus), but also data from dictionaries, mostly the OED.
result of the measurements is the following productivity ranking: the most productive verb-producing process is conversion, followed by -ize (the most productive overt suffix by far), followed by -ify/-ate. ‘All other processes examined [eN, be-, -en] are practically dead’ (p. 117). Later in the book it is shown that this cline parallels the semantic generality of these processes (p. 226). The most interesting aspect of this chapter, however, is Plag’s up-front consideration of methodological questions: with commendable openness he discusses decisions which are inevitable in empirical work but which tend to be brushed over in the presentation of research results. Concerning the relative merits of dictionaries and corpora as data-sources for the measurement of productivity, he argues that only a combination of the two can balance the bias necessarily involved with each measure. One important argument for dictionary data is the fact that they make derivation without formal exponents (conversion) accessible, something which corpora still don’t do satisfactorily or don’t do at all.

The largest chunk of the book (chapters 6 and 7, or 108 pages) is dedicated to the in-depth study of qualitative constraints governing verb-deriving processes. This happens on the premise, of course, that -ize, -ify, -ate do indeed represent one morphological process each. The data-basis for this part of the book are the OED’s twentieth-century neologisms — under the assumption that the most recent formations best reflect the characteristics of a productive process. That the period 1900–1985 is ‘small enough to exclude major diachronic developments’ (p. 101) is a mere assertion, but shortening the sampling period would narrow the database and curtail the power of explanations in a different but equally undesirable way. I therefore have no battle with Plag’s decision.

Plag first tackles the question of how the meanings of the -ize derivatives are related. Using Jackendoff’s Lexical Conceptual Semantics (e.g. Jackendoff, 1990), he progressively builds a common ‘general LCS of -ize verbs’ which leaves only four items of his data unaccounted for – and at least one of those (cannibalize) could be treated as a regular case had he considered metaphorical extension of the base-meaning. I find the model of -ize semantics very satisfactory in that it explicitly relates the different meanings of -ize formations and also accounts for the ambiguity of individual -ize words. Because the ‘semantic-categorial interpretation of the arguments [in the LCS] largely depends on the inherent semantics of these arguments’ (p. 132), the intriguing theoretical consequence is that the syntactic category of the base turns out to be a by-product of the semantics of the process. This not only runs counter to general morphological practice (cf. the familiar labels ‘denominal verbs’, ‘deverbal adjectives’ etc.), but also has an important consequence for the architecture of word-formation rules since it suggests they should be more output- and less input-oriented.

This output orientation is then pursued in strict consequence in the phonological part of chapter 6, where Plag uses the formalism of Optimality Theory. The thorough analysis of his comprehensive data enables him to show that there is indeed a system behind the allomorphy found in -ize derivatives and that it consists
of a ‘peculiar interaction of the segmental and metrical make-up of the base or the derivative’ (p. 167) – in other words, the constraints are purely phonological. This has an interesting consequence once we turn to the analysis of the neologisms ending in -ify (chapter 7). Not only do -ize and -ify have identical semantics (same LCS), they are also governed by the same phonological constraints: the complementary outcome derives from the fact that the two suffixes themselves have different prosodic properties, one being monosyllabic, the other disyllabic. This, in effect, makes -ize and -ify a case of phonologically conditioned suppletion. This is not the only instance where Plag has a strong case for arguing that, on closer inspection, affix rivalry is frequently an artefact of insufficient analysis (cf. the concluding sections on affix rivalry (sections 8.1–8.5)). The -ate data, on the other hand, are more problematic, as they seem to fall into two overall categories. The majority appear to be semantically dependent on action nouns ending in -ation (e.g. perseverate < perseveration), which suggests they are back-formation, though the phonological arguments for this view are less convincing (pp. 209–10). A very restricted subgroup (only chemical substances as bases) can be given a restricted LCS and is governed by the same phonological constraints as -ize/-ify. As before, the OT analysis is well-argued and appealing in itself (the variable rankings used to explain stress alternations in the output are very low in the hierarchy, which is neat) but a certain amount of puzzlement remains: the analysis of the verb-deriving processes involves a fixed repertoire of constraints plus affix-specific rankings. Presumably, if more affixes were analysed more such rankings would arise. This, then, raises the question of how exactly these affix-specific rankings are related to the overall language-specific constraint ranking which, I understand, is a central postulate of Optimality Theory.

What is the role of conversion in this game? Given that there are few if any structural constraints on it, it is not surprising that there is relatively little to say about it in a book focusing on structural constraints (section 7.4; pp. 219–25). The interesting question in this context, as Plag points out, is why, given the huge constrainedness-differential between conversion and affixation, affixed forms should exist at all. He mentions various reasons (preponderance of conversion in some semantic domains, suffixed bases are excluded from conversion, suffixes have perceptual advantages), but a principled discussion of this would be interesting and leaves room for further research.

In chapter 8 it is shown that Plag’s conclusions regarding affix rivalry have far-reaching theoretical implications as they seem to pull out the plug from ‘split-morphology’. There, the strict separation between meaning and form crucially rests on the assumption of absolute synonymy between processes. Plag’s findings, however, are that derivational affixes are only ever quasi-synonymous (like any other ordinary lexeme) and that each class of derivatives has its own semantic and phonological properties. In short, he makes a strong case for a sign-based conception of morphology.

In sum this is a clearly written, empirically thorough, and conceptually rich
treatment of major questions in English derivation – morphological theorists and descriptivists alike will find it highly interesting. Someone should persuade the author to carry out the research programme he has laid out here on a broader scale. More than thirty years after the second edition of Marchand’s Categories and types, the time is ripe for an empirically and theoretically founded up-to-date coverage of English word-formation and here is a good example of what such a treatment could look like.

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The monograph under review is based on the author’s 1994 University of Düsseldorf dissertation. It has two goals. The first is to show that inversion is a marker of subjectivity, and the second is to test this semantic analysis of inversion in modern English against its use in various kinds of discourse, mainly in written, nonfictional
discourse. Dorgeloh situates her study within functional approaches to syntax. The book consists of six chapters. The first chapter outlines the overall goal of her study; chapter 2 introduces some basic functional concepts such as topic and focus, and characterizes English within word-order-based typologies; chapter 3 reviews the literature on inversion which has appeared within the past twenty years; chapter 4 deals with the semantics of inversion; chapter 5 contains the corpus study of selected inverted constructions, and chapter 6 summarizes her results.

The literature on inversion has been growing over the past two decades, and Dorgeloh has taken good advantage both of formal and functional studies of inversion in modern English. In functional linguistic terms, she relies on European, British, and American approaches to language. Functional notions of the Prague School (especially the work of Jan Firbas), of Halliday’s systemic functional grammar, of Givón’s cognitive-functional syntax, of Langacker’s cognitive grammar, and of Chafe’s work on consciousness and the flow of speech (to name a few) figure prominently in Dorgeloh’s linguistic thinking. Typologically, she follows the tradition of characterizing English as an SVO language with largely grammatical word order. English has formal means to deviate from this basic word order, one of which is inversion. She restricts her analysis of the latter to inversion in declarative sentences. As has become common, Dorgeloh further differentiates between full inversion (FI) and subject–auxiliary inversion (SAI). The former she subdivides into lexical verb inversion, e.g. ‘Above the notice board hung a huge flag’, and be-inversion, e.g. ‘Very extraordinary indeed is the human mind.’ She distinguishes five types of FI. Subject–auxiliary inversion is said to fall into four subtypes, which Dorgeloh would like to restrict to SAI (pp. 26–9). She should say clearly that all four types of SAI distinguished also occur in full inversion, especially in be-inversion, e.g. Pro[form]-inversion (‘I am sorry and so are you’), Corr[elative]-inversion (‘So fierce was the heat that we stayed inside.’), Add[itive]-inversion (‘She has no children but neither have we’), and Neg[ative]-inversion (‘No longer was the house her responsibility’).

Dorgeloh separates inversion constructions from related syntactic phenomena such as there-insertion, preposing, and left-dislocation. Among formal approaches to inversion she singles out generative treatments of it as a root transformation, and syntactic analyses concerning the subject status of the sentence-initial constituent in FI. As far as functional theories are concerned, she discusses analyses of inversion as a focusing or defocusing device, and its treatment in terms of the information-packaging function of word order. The point she makes is that inversion is not only to be understood as a result of discourse-pragmatic principles like theme–rheme, but that inversion as a marked word-order choice has a construction-inherent meaning, which she sets out to characterize in chapter 4.

When Dorgeloh talks of meaning, she does so in the framework of Halliday’s three macro-functions of language, i.e. the ideational, interpersonal, and textual functions of language. Thus she attributes to the semantics of inversion an interpersonal and a textual meaning. The latter has been pointed out before in a
number of functional studies, some of which get mentioned in the text. Inverted structures can be used to introduce major or minor topic shifts, they are means of textual cohesion, etc. Dorgeloh covers the same ground using generous portions of authentic material to illustrate her points. What is new is her attempt to make an interpersonal meaning part of the semantics of inversion constructions. What could this interpersonal meaning be? Her answer is based on the observation that viewpoint and subjectivity play an important role in the semantics of inversion. She hypothesizes that inversion constructions signal to a hearer the way a speaker views an event. The speaker does not dissociate himself from the content expressed but guides the hearer through an event from his point of view when using an inversion construction. This subjective element is said to be part of the semantics of all types of inversion discussed in her monograph. I find this hard to accept. There are uses of inversion in which a speaker develops a scene for the hearer from his point of view. And Dorgeloh repeatedly gives such examples to justify her thesis.

Inverted constructions are variations of an assumed basic SVO word order, i.e. speakers must have a choice between using and not using this construction. In chapter 4, Dorgeloh underlines the importance of this choice for the speaker at the beginning of her discussion. It is well known that inversion in English moves along a continuum from optional to obligatory constructions. So one would expect Dorgeloh to base her argument on inversion types where there is a choice. Surprisingly, she uses an odd collection of FI and SAI structures, some of which are obligatory, like negative (additive) inversion. Her way out is to argue that in inversion types where there is no choice, or where the meaning changes when non-inverted structures are used, the subjective meaning has been grammaticalized. Dorgeloh introduces a fourfold typology of FI to detail her semantics of inversion. Again, setting up classifications like these is risky. She distinguishes between a lexical presentative type of FI and a type she calls lexical predicative FI. An example like . . . at Hamley’s. There, on the fourth floor, was a rocking chair (p. 77) is said to be an illustration of the former; examples such as On the walls of his office hung pictures of sporting celebrities . . . (p. 79) are supposed to represent the lexical predicative type of FI. Having argued for this distinction over almost fifteen pages, she draws the following conclusion: ‘lexical presentative and lexical predicative inversion do not on principled grounds constitute separate classes’ (p. 88).

Dorgeloh bases her descriptive study of inversion patterns on fifteen subcorpora of the LOB and Brown Corpus. She finds no noticeable differences in the various uses of inversion between British and American English. Her discussion of the textual relations observed and the categories of discourse distinguished takes into account the discussion of this topic in European text linguistics. To bolster her semantic claims about inversion, she looks at the (non)occurrence of the majority of inversion types established in chapter 4 in the following text categories: reportage, editorial, review, belles lettres/biography/essays, and learned & scientific writing. In her detailed analyses of many corpus examples she finds her thesis about the semantics of inversion vindicated. To give just one illustration: in newspaper genres, inversions are
almost nonexistent when the speaker acts as a reporter trying to get the facts across, while they are much more frequent when he takes over the role of commentator on events. The final chapter reviews her arguments and summarizes her results.

Dorgeloh sets out to show that inversion is a marker of subjectivity, and that it can be used as a constructional device to help organize a discourse. The latter claim has been debated and demonstrated many times before, and she is fully aware of this. The use of inversion as a means for a speaker to look at an event from his point of view has been noticed before. Dorgeloh succeeds in placing these observations within the wider context of more recent research into formal means of expressing subjectivity in language. Her central thesis that all forms of inversion are markers of the speaker’s subjectivity has to be tested against a wider variety of textual categories. Still, this book is a welcome addition to the growing literature on functional aspects of inversion in Modern English.

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Until relatively recently the syntax of nonstandard dialects of English was neglected by sociolinguists and dialectologists alike, who instead focused their attention on phonetic/phonological and lexical variation. This attitude is summed up by Wakelin (1972: 125): ‘Syntax is an unwieldy subject which dialectologists have fought shy of.’ The 1980s and 1990s saw a recognition of the need for research into the ‘grammar’ of nonstandard dialects of English, which is reflected in the titles of, for instance, Edwards, Trudgill & Weltens (1984) and Milroy & Milroy (1993). These works set out to provide an overview of research on British dialect grammar and ‘accurate and up-to-date information on regional variation in the use of grammatical constructions of English’ (Milroy & Milroy, 1993: xi), but emphasize the need for further research. Milroy & Milroy’s book includes a chapter on ‘the grammar of Scottish English’, at the end of which the author, Jim Miller, concludes: ‘clearly much work is still to be done on the grammar of Scots’ (1993: 137).

Martina Häcker has taken up this challenge to produce a corpus-based study of adverbial clauses in Scots. In doing this, she has chosen an area of syntax which has
been the subject of much theoretical debate, as is demonstrated in her chapter on ‘definitions and classifications’, but which is covered only sparsely even in accounts of Scots syntax such as Miller (1993) and Beal (1997). As Häcker explains (p. 4), adverbial clauses tend to contain ‘covert’ Scotticisms rather than the ‘overt’ Scotticisms on which these more general accounts have tended to concentrate. Such ‘covert’ Scotticisms, features which are present in Scots and absent from Standard English, but which do not have the salience (within Scotland) of more ‘overt’ Scotticisms such as the subordinator gin, are likely to be revealed by the systematic examination of a corpus.

The database for Häcker’s study is made up of two corpora, of written and spoken Scots respectively, each consisting of 100,000 words, and each providing a fairly comprehensive geographical coverage of Scotland. Häcker is thus able to address questions of regional and stylistic variation in adverbial clauses. The corpora are large enough to provide an overview of the system of adverbial clauses in Scots, but, perhaps inevitably, there are times when the absence or scarcity of a particular usage may be a matter of chance. For instance, now that as a subordinator combining temporal and causal meanings occurs only once in the written corpus in a text from Stirlingshire. Häcker notes: ‘this seems to be a coincidence, as I am assured that it is used in other parts of Scotland as well (personal communication A. V. Murray, 24. 6. 98)’ (p. 90). Although this is not explained in the section dealing with methodology, Häcker appears to have used such ad hoc consultations as a means of checking for ‘accidental’ absences or scarcities rather than carrying out systematic elicitation tests. In some cases, though, she states that constructions ‘are not found in Scots’ without specifying whether this means that they are not found in the corpora or whether there is other evidence that their absence is not accidental (see, for instance, p. 123). This is a perennial problem in corpus studies and perhaps inevitable given the limited scope of what is clearly a doctoral dissertation, but such lacunae point up the need for supplementary information such as can be gained from elicitation tests.

The greater part of Häcker’s work is devoted to a detailed and systematic account of the adverbial constructions found in the corpora, under the headings of major semantic categories: ‘clauses of place’, ‘clauses of time’, ‘clauses of condition’, etc. Within each of these categories, a description of the semantic relations expressed is followed by an account of each construction found in the corpus, illustrated by examples. For each construction, the total number of occurrences in each corpus is given. At the end of each section, there is a summary of the differences from Standard English. This methodical approach, set out clearly in the table of contents, makes the book very useful for reference. A scholar carrying out research on adverbial clauses in a different variety of English would find each category easily, whilst readers interested in the main points of comparison with Standard English could move directly to the paragraphs headed ‘Differences from Standard English’. For example, under ‘Clauses of place’, a brief description of ‘locative relationships’ is followed by sections on ‘definite place’ and ‘indefinite place’ in each of which an
account is given of the subordinators found in the corpora, with the total number of occurrences and examples in each case. We learn that subordinators introducing clauses of place are restricted to where under ‘definite place’ and where, anywhere and everywhere under ‘indefinite place’. The last two occur only in the spoken corpus, a restriction which, according to Häcker ‘may be explained by prescriptive reservations against them’ (p. 54). Examples with anywhere and everywhere in Scots are glossed with wherever in the Standard English ‘translations’ which appear beneath each example. Thus:

(47) This is an Australian photographer . . . An everywhere we went he was there. (GA/A)
   ‘This is an Australian photographer . . . And wherever we went he was there.’ (p. 54)

In the section on ‘differences from Standard English’, Häcker notes ‘Wherever is absent from the Scots system; where Standard English would use wherever, Scots uses where, everywhere or anywhere.’ However, no details are given of the ‘prescriptive reservations’ against anywhere and everywhere or of any evidence beyond its absence from the corpora for the exclusion of wherever from the Scots system. As an educated (albeit northern) speaker of Standard English, I would find anywhere and everywhere perfectly acceptable in the sentences used as examples, and can find no reference to proscription of these usages in, for instance, Fowler (ed. Burchfield, 1996). This tendency to state without further justification that usages found in the corpus would be unacceptable in Standard English is in evidence throughout the book. In her discussion of when introducing conditional clauses, Häcker states: ‘when has a much wider semantic range in Scots than in Standard English and the corpus contains numerous examples where the use of when would not be acceptable in Standard English’ (p. 100). Once again, no justification is given for this statement and in all the examples provided, when is acceptable to me. In some cases, Häcker refers to major corpora of Standard English such as the London–Lund Corpus of Spoken English (LLC) in order to make a direct comparison of Scots and English usage. Under ‘clauses of restriction’, she points out that ‘a regional restriction of for all (that) . . . is confirmed by a search for for all (that) and as far as’ in the Lancaster–Oslo–Bergen, the Brown and the London–Lund corpora. Here she notes that ‘a restrictive clause introduced by for all is recorded from only one speaker in LLC. There are some indications that this speaker comes from Northern England’ (pp. 126–7). This is a much more satisfactory and objective way of contrasting Scots and Standard English usage, since it involves comparing like with like, i.e. corpora of the respective varieties. However, it raises the intriguing question of how ‘standard’ the usage in LLC really is, if one speaker is revealed as having a ‘northern’ feature found in Scots, but not in (southern) Standard English.

The major findings from the corpus study are summarized again in the final section, which also considers evidence for regional variation within Scots, the diachronic perspective, and a comparative study of adverbial subordinators in English, Scots, Danish, Icelandic, Dutch, German, French, Latin, and Gaelic. The important point to emerge from the study of regional variation is that ‘regional
differences within Scotland are comparatively rare and restricted to peripheral areas’ (p. 236), suggesting a division of dialects not corresponding to that given in the *Scottish National Dictionary*, but closer to that based on historical phonology and described by Johnston (1997: 57, 60) as the ‘Anglian Core’ of ‘Southern and East Mid Older Scots’ with the ‘Burgh-borne dialects’ occurring ‘North of the Tay – Moray Firth’. Thus, as Häcker points out, ‘the linguistic notion of centre and periphery not only works for large areas … but also for comparatively small ones such as Scotland’ (p. 237). The diachronic and comparative studies reveal some interesting tendencies which challenge received views on the development of adverbial subordinators. Häcker convincingly argues that ‘there is not a linear development from fewer to more and more complex subordinators, but possibly a cyclic development, in which periods of extension are followed by periods of reduction and simplification of structural complexity, and periods of restructuring alternate with comparatively stable periods’ (p. 243). Häcker’s findings also challenge the claim that unidirectionality of language change is exceptionless: whilst the development of *and* from co-ordinator to subordinator in both Middle English and Scots is in the expected direction of ‘more to less paratactic’, that of *but* from preposition and subordinator to co-ordinator is in the reverse direction, whilst the development of sentence-final *but* fits into neither category.

Häcker’s work thus covers a great deal of ground in terms of its theoretical scope, raising important questions about typology, dialect geography and linguistic change. As a study in dialect syntax, though, its most valuable contribution is the demonstration that, where Scots differs from Standard English, these differences are not due to ‘errors’, but are systematic and often have cognates in other European languages. Thus *whenever* meaning ‘as soon as’ is used in the corpora in clauses that do not refer to repeated action. This, as Häcker points out, ‘seems odd in Standard English’ (p. 241), but the Dutch *wanneer* is used in the same way. This study also demonstrates that the adverbial system of spoken Scots is every bit as complex as that of Standard English, challenging the received view that complex subordinate structures are likely to be less evident in the nonstandard usage of ‘uneducated’ speakers. As such it is a very valuable contribution to the growing field of dialect syntax and points to the need for further corpus-based studies of nonstandard varieties of British English.

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Sociolinguistics has always had an active sociopolitical dimension, and many would see a concern for social justice in language issues as its main rationale. We think of Labov’s early invective against what he saw as repressive determinism in early versions of Bernstein’s codes hypothesis, and his involvement in the Ann Arbor ‘Black English’ trial. Rickford’s more recent involvement in the Oakland ‘Ebonics’ controversy continues this tradition. Hymes has been vociferous in support of Native American language rights for many decades, and Fishman’s theoretical work has centred on principles of linguistic self-determination and minority language rights. At the same time, there has been a curious neutrality inherent in sociolinguistics’ dominant paradigm – variationist research into linguistic change. Its practitioners, and Labov in particular, have individually been sharp and committed critics of linguistic authoritarianism. But their work has given priority to patterns and mechanisms of language change whose social dimension consists largely of identifying more conservative and more innovative groups. Variation theory and analysis is often undertaken at one remove from the day-to-day politics of sociolinguistic usage, with little sense of social struggle and social disadvantage.

In this context, Rosina Lippi-Green’s book is a very welcome and direct engagement with the politics of language variation, and of variation in the ‘classical’ Labovian sense – mainly phonetic/phonological variation linked to social group membership. Hence ‘accent’ in the book’s main title. The title voices the nontechnical view that English speakers either have or do not ‘have an accent’. Lippi-Green then proceeds to debunk ‘the myth of non-accent’ (pp. 41ff.) and ‘the standard language myth’ (pp. 53ff.) in the book’s first part. Generally, the book is an assertion of the sociolinguistic principle that ‘nonstandard’ language varieties have no
inherent inadequacies, and a detailed exploration of the social and ideological forces and practices lined up against this view. Lippi-Green’s view that ‘standardness’ is essentially a political matter of domination and subordination, and her own political stance against domination, are never in question. The book ends with a call to arms:

A realistic goal must be ... to make people aware of the process of language subordination. To draw their attention to the misinformation, to expose false reasoning and empty promises to hard questions. (p. 242)

A comment on the previous page even flirts with ‘large-scale civic disobedience’, of the sort Lippi-Green says some of her students favour.

*English with an accent* contrasts nicely with another, more recent Routledge volume – Bex and Watts’s (1999) edited collection under the title *Standard English: the widening debate*. I have reviewed that book in detail elsewhere (Coupland, 2000). The Bex and Watts volume is itself an impressive but somewhat inconsistent admixture of descriptivist and ideological orientations to ‘standard English’. The descriptivism resides in contributors adopting an audible silence about sociopolitical matters and getting on with describing the less commonly noticed corners of the variety they take to represent ‘standard English’. Other chapters argue that ‘standard English’ is nothing but an idealized fiction. They are mainly concerned to expose and critique the self-serving pronouncements of self-appointed guardians of correctness. My personal response was to suggest, in my review, that sociolinguistics needs to come down from the fence and stop prevaricating about the politics of ‘standardness’. It needs to place its analyses in a more consistent ideological framework and eschew the tendency to describe ‘standard English’ neutrally, as if it were ‘just another language variety’.

Lippi-Green’s orientation is full-bloodedly ideological. The fact that she deals specifically with the USA context, we might say in variationism’s own back yard (or at least its first back yard), adds some edge. She carries her arguments into diverse domains of linguistic subordination. After part 1’s introduction to sociolinguistic principles and to the theory of language ideology, part 2 turns to the institutions. Chapter 5 considers accent stereotyping in popular culture, including cartoon characterizations. Why, Lippi-Green asks, do *all* African-American Vernacular English speakers in Disney cartoons appear in animal rather than humanoid form, when ‘standard’ General American speakers voice both types evenly (p. 93)? Chapter 6 overviews the status of English varieties in the USA education system. What are the implications of school students doing worse in an English test when, as one study shows, they believed that their teacher was Asian (p. 127)? Chapter 7 examines linguistic prejudice in the print and TV media industries. In what ideological climate can newspapers carry advertisements for ‘accent-reduction programmes’ for Black English speakers (p. 141)? Chapter 8 opens up legal aspects of workplace discrimination based on race and vocal styles linked to ethnicity and region. Lippi-Green shows (p. 154) that legislation against discrimination linked to speech style is weak and often ineffective. Indeed, some legal agents in court have
themselves recycled sociolinguistic prejudices, such as arguing that ‘nonstandard’
speakers have ‘a difficult manner of pronunciation’ (p. 160).

The book’s final part contains three chapters, looking in more detail at the politics
of Black English, southern USA speech and the status of ‘foreign’ accents in the
USA, respectively. The first of these chapters is essentially a short cultural history of
Black English issues and debates, followed by a collage of extracts of prejudicial
views and representations. The ‘Hillbillies, rednecks, and southern belles’ chapter
draws on Preston’s perceptual dialectology research, but is again mainly based
around extracts from newspaper articles, novels, and commentaries by self-styled
purists. The final chapter contrasts the USA’s demographic melting-pot history with
its current centripetal language ideology. Lippi-Green gives evidence of how
language subordination works against Asians, Filipinos, Mexicans, and other
minorities, for example ‘to devalue and suppress everything Spanish’ (p. 253).

*English with an accent* is a remarkably rich assemblage of social documents
relating to language variation in the USA. Many sociolinguists will have their own
bulging folders of newspaper cuttings, quotations and other extracted material with
which to illustrate the social environment in which sociolinguistics operates. Not
only is Lippi-Green’s folder fuller and more richly diverse than others’, but it is also
better constructed. The range, as I have sketched it above, of domains of linguistic
prejudice that she documents, and the weight and intensity of prejudice, are truly
striking. Students and researchers who are prone to doubting the relevance of
‘traditional’ sociolinguistic research on accent and dialect variation will emerge from
reading this book more aware and politically more galvanized. Sociolinguistics’
heritage from dialectology has sometimes risked romanticizing language variation.
So-called ‘nonstandard’ usage may be assumed to be a manifestation of authentic
community and of cultural continuity, which in many senses it is. Lippi-Green’s
book reminds us, on the other hand, that language variation as a quality of social
life, and language varieties other than the authorized ‘standard’, are often open to
vilification as being naïve, uncultured, and inauthentic, according to the norms of
elites.

In terms of ideological *analysis*, rather than providing *testimony* to ideological
repression, I think the book is less complete. Lippi-Green’s approach is more
taxonomic than critical, in that sense of ‘critical’ which implies theorizing and
decomposing ideology. She tends to allow her extracts and instances to speak for
themselves, then add her own voice in opposition. The first part’s overview of
language ideology (mainly contained in pp. 63–73) is clear and convincing. But it
does not take in a detailed review of the many other contemporary treatments of
language ideology (Blommaert, Fairclough, Kress, Milroy, van Dijk, Verschueren,
Wodak, Woolard, to mention a few). Nor does it try to sharpen the analysis of
language ideology in the USA by contrastive reference to other communities’
linguistic antagonisms and developments. Obviously in its subtitle, and entirely
legitimately, the book sets out to document language discrimination in the USA
alone. But linguicism is a global problem, and sociolinguistic conflicts in the USA
are systematically linked to those elsewhere. The USA’s leading role in economic and cultural globalization, for example, means that its language ideologies can easily be inherited by others. Also, it is likely that much of the USA’s obsession with ‘standard English’ is itself a refocusing of English English ideology, as this is described in some important contributions to the Bex & Watts volume.

Sociolinguistically too, there is a surprisingly small amount of actual analytic detail on ‘accent’, after the useful but elementary initial accounts of inherent variation, language change, social stratification, grammaticality, and speech and writing in chapter 1, titled ‘The linguistic facts of life’. It would have helped nonspecialist readers to appreciate the sociolinguistic substance of minority and minoritized varieties by offering rather more descriptive detail in later chapters. As mentioned above, Preston’s research gets some coverage, but there is no engagement with the social psychology of language. Yet it is this subfield of sociolinguistics that has made the most direct inroads – and they have been systematic and cumulative, even if far from comprehensive – into researching language attitudes and the social evaluation of accent in particular. Most of the early and influential attitudes studies, it is true, were based outside of the USA – and especially in Wales and Canada. But as a body of research, language attitudes studies still present the most rounded and the most empirically extensive account of sociolinguistic stereotyping.

These two ‘omissions’ are only omissions by the norms of mid- and upper-level academic sociolinguistics, and *English with an accent* seems not to be designed primarily for students of (socio)linguistics, except at the very lowest levels. In the text, ‘linguists’ tend to be cast, in fact, as an outgroup (in formulations like ‘linguists are concerned with . . .’), and Lippi-Green’s principal target audience is a general one. In that vein, the book has the potential to carry sociolinguistic concepts and, more importantly, sociolinguistic values and priorities well beyond the classroom. This has increasingly become a goal sociolinguists hold for their own work, although few have achieved it.

Lippi-Green certainly makes us reflect on what will actually change the attitudes of newspaper editors, employers, parents, and educationists, although she does not debate strategy explicitly. She ultimately puts her faith, as in the quotation above, in *awareness* as a stepping stone to resistance and change. On the other hand, ideologies, in the name of ‘common sense’ or ‘self-evident logic’, have in-built mechanisms for resisting resistance. As Lippi-Green occasionally notes, some of the most repressive views about ‘incorrect’ or ‘inadequate’ speech are voiced by its own speakers. In those terms, I wonder if the repeated *demonstration* of centripetal beliefs, which is her main strategy in this book, is likely to succeed. There is certainly no panacea, but I would have welcomed a greater reflexivity about sociolinguistic interventionism and about how Lippi-Green’s own politics are likely to be received by pro-‘standard’ ideologues. What sympathetic readers should do about linguistic subordination, if they come to share her libertarianism, isn’t easy to determine.

I wonder, also, if the adversarial stance that Lippi-Green adopts is likely to be the
most productive one. The language attitudes line has always been that ‘nonstandard’ varieties, which it shows tend to attract stereotypes of incompetence and low education and sophistication, also attract more positive judgments in terms of social attractiveness and likeability. It is true that this can appear a glib generalization, when opportunities for economic and social advancement so often depend on the perception of ‘competence’. On the other hand, we see little of the positive side of ‘nonstandardness’ in Lippi-Green’s treatment, little of the social solidarity that such varieties can symbolize and that ‘standard’ varieties can not. Taking a broader view, it is possible to argue that the solidarity-linked associations of ‘nonstandard’ varieties gives them important, specific, positive social values in the late-modern world – of connoting intimacy and distinctiveness in a homogenizing, globalizing world. There already seems something anachronistic, or at least tired, about pro-‘standard English’ ideologies, perhaps about ‘standard English’ accents themselves, and the sociolinguistic world is certainly becoming less univocal and more decentred as modernity changes its shape. Lippi-Green’s suggested programme – to make people more aware of sociolinguistic domination, and so to counter it – might be less effective than playing up the arenas where ‘nonstandardness’ already has strong cultural capital.

This is of course too general an analysis, but we can point (as Lippi-Green herself does) to how a variety like African-American Vernacular English – not only its phonology and lexis but its performance styles and genres such as rap and soul – provides an international rallying point for youth culture. More locally, there are many instances of regional and class accents of English achieving new vitality in symbolizing group-styles (e.g. London English as a performance requirement in 1970s punk music, or, remarkably, Welsh English surfacing from its associations of parochialism and low sophistication into the ‘cool’ of contemporary UK rock music). These and similar indications of new, polyvocal accent possibilities may be slight and peripheral to the cultural mainstream. But they also seem to be part of a steady drip-feed process by which sociolinguistic ideologies of ‘standardness’ are gradually being undermined, and replaced by multiple, new focal points of sociolinguistic prestige. English with an accent does an impressive job of cataloguing repressive, centralizing ideologies of language in the USA and will open the eyes of many readers, North American and others. But it may be documenting a regime whose foundations are, we can hope, already cracking.

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This work is a well-conceived and well-constructed argument that undermines the notion that sentence accent conforms to a set of linguistic rules. Talk, like life itself, is far too complex to be captured in this way. Talk is spoken discourse that uses linguistic resources to create sentences/clauses that have to be adapted to the ever changing context in which they are used. Talk is not neat form; nevertheless it has to conform to conventions so that talkers can articulate messages and interpret them with a high degree of confidence that they get the intended meaning.

I recommend the book as required reading for generative phonologists; others will be pleased to see their stance vindicated.

Chapter 1 is an interesting and valuable presentation of the distinction between sentence and utterance and how this distinction relates to intonation in general, and accent in particular. (Stress is confined to word phonology; accent relates to sentences/utterances.) Sentences are linguistic forms that represent semantic properties, whereas utterances are events in which sentences are interpreted according to context. Sentence grammar – in a generative semantics view – cannot cope with context; Chapman’s account of the earlier work of Postal and McCawley reminds me of the way that Crystal (1975) firmly discounted similar generative attempts to ‘tame’ accent. You can’t do it in purely linguistic terms.

An interesting angle was to compare acoustic foregrounding with its visual counterpart, and a valuable commentary on right-hemisphere processing of intonation – as opposed to left-hemisphere processing of all language functions – was new to me. Linguistic competence is activated in the left hemisphere, e.g. getting sentence syntax right, but intonation and the tailoring of the speech product to the context is activated in the right. Hence, syntax and semantics are linguistic, while pragmatics belongs to a different order, and includes accent. Thus accent is not determined by linguistic rule, but by the meaning that the speaker intends when ‘performing’ sentences in real talk.
Nevertheless there are regularities in the placing of accent in the sentences generated by talk. Halliday would refer to this in terms of ‘neutral tonicity’; Ladd would talk of ‘default’ locations. And both would account for deviation from the expected in terms of markedness and contrastivity.

This is the topic discussed in detail in chapter 2. Chapman reviews the criticism of the Chomsky & Halle ‘nuclear stress rule’ and the gropings for additional rules to account for all the exceptions. As she herself acknowledges, these gropings relate to the significance of the context of cited examples and hence to the acknowledgement of a need to refer to given and new information. She carefully works her way through Bolinger’s ‘mind-reading’, Gussenhoven’s syntactic rules and Allerton & Cruttenden’s ‘event’ sentences.

However, the extraordinary thing about Chapman’s claim for, and defence of, the notion of givenness and newness is that there is no reference at all to Halliday (1967), where those terms were first used as an explanation of the very phenomenon that she is describing. The sequence of theme (starting point of a clause) and rheme could also be usefully explored in seeking to explain the overwhelming preference of ‘right-most’ accent. And even Trubetzkoy’s notion of demarcatory significance of phonological features — to indicate the end of new information in an utterance.

Chapter 3 is a very complicated account of the accenting of given items of the type John insulted Mary and then SHE insulted HIM. I got the distinct feeling here of being an astonished onlooker trying to follow other people’s arguments. Even Chapman herself had to admit that her account is ‘both limited in the type of data for which it can account, and not as simple as would be desirable in its formulation’ (p. 102). It seems to me that what Chapman does here is abandon her laudable stance on utterances and revert to sentence grammar. The context is everything; the matter of speaker perception of the information is crucial. It is not just a matter of de-accenting insulted because it is given, but of accenting the two pronouns (which are also given) contrastively in the new roles of actor and goal in the process of insulting. The explanation is simple, from the ‘utterance’ perspective.

In chapter 4, Chapman returns quite clearly to her main thesis that accent is not governed by sentence rules but by context – whether that context is linguistic text, or situation, or, as in this chapter, presupposition. This is a good clear account, which I appreciated, particularly the reminder of how a speaker can manipulate the system tactically, for example by representing new information as if presupposed. Speakers have ‘freedom’ (p. 118). And here we have the explanation of another instance of insulting: Tony called Harriet a Socialist and then SHE insulted HIM; calling someone a socialist presupposes, in this context, that that is an insult. (Who can this Tony have been? And who the Harriet?)

Chapter 5 is largely devoted to distinguishing sentence meaning and utterance meaning and takes the reader through Grice, Sadock, Gazdar, Sperber & Wilson, Kempson, and Levinson – an easy read for semanticists, less so for phoneticians like me! The relevance of the survey is to reinforce the distinction between linguistic and pragmatic meaning and to remind the reader where accent’s role is to be played out:
‘it contributes to the proposition expressed by an utterance without having any
effect on the meaning contributed by the sentence’ (p. 137).

And finally, an article previously published as Chapman (1996) is reprinted with
revisions as chapter 6 to support the claim that meaning at the level of utterance is
different from meaning at the level of sentence. Metalinguistic negativity – of the
kind I haven’t stopped smoking; I’ve never smoked in my life! – applies to linguistic
properties such as lexical items like stopped, or pronunciation (not \textit{t@mA:t@Uz but
t@meIdoUz}) – the original phonetic transcription is poorly printed – but it does not
apply to accentuation. Accentuation belongs to utterances (pragmatics), not to
sentences (semantics). You cannot use metalinguistic negativity to object to a
previous utterance on the grounds of its accentuation (p. 151).

So the book presents a good, powerful, reasoned argument about the difference
between semantic and pragmatic meaning and in particular about the role of accent
as part of pragmatic/utterance meaning rather than sentence meaning. Accent – like
the study of the whole of language – must take discourse into account. Talking is
not just linguistic competence, but is ultimately performance, and communicative.
Due honour is given de Saussure (p. 121), but could also have been given Firth,
Halliday, Pike, and many a non-Chomskian who recognizes the significance of
context.

Chapman’s thesis will be welcomed by Hallidayan systemic-functionalists and
others who have often watched in bewilderment at the way generativists and auto-
segmentalists get tangled up in their rules after rules and in their convoluted
explanations of counterexamples, when all they had to do was acknowledge what
Firth called the ‘context of situation’, and what Halliday called ‘information
structure’, and what Ladd called ‘broad/narrow focus’. They – and many of us with
them – have always known about context; it’s nothing new, it’s given!

Hence my recommendation as required reading, above. But still one thing is
lacking: the prosodic analysis of real, extended (audio-recorded) discourse to see
how the whole thing is worked out in actual talk.

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