

Joseph C. Salmons & Shannon Dubenion-Smith, Eds. *Historical Linguistics 2005*. (Current Issues in Linguistic Theory 284). Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins Publishing Company, 2007. vii, 413.

The 22 papers produced here were selected from the 17th International Conference on Historical Linguistics at Madison, Wisconsin, July 31 – August 5, 2005, thus the title of a work published in 2007, offers a survey of scholarship across language types, including IE languages, Aramaic, Zoque varieties in Chiapas, Pilbara languages, Uto-Astecan languages, Japanese, and Korean, from several research perspectives. This work represents scholarship in Grammaticalization, Syntax and Semantics, Morphology, Phonetics and Phonology, and Variation. This review will attempt to inform readers of the contents and make the occasional salient observation.

Laurel J. Brinton and Elizabeth Closs Traugott, who have been very involved in scholarship developing the topic grammaticalization, in “Lexicalization and Grammaticalization all over again” (3 – 19) point out their assumption that “changes are tendencies, not absolute phenomena” and caution that “synchronic potentials of word formation need to be distinguished from processes of change,” lest productive word formation be misconstrued (5), and review the distinct processes of lexicalization and grammaticalization (7). Fascinating data involving *all* expressions in OE and ME exemplify morphological processes, lexicalization, and grammaticalization.

Jan Terje Faarlund, in *Grammaticalization as Reduction* (21 – 30), employs interesting data from the Zoque group in Chiapas, Mexico, in an argument that attributes change as a unidirectional omission of elements to reanalysis during from L1 acquisition (30), and concludes that grammaticalization theory is “not a theory of language change, but a generalization over a set of observations about language change” (29), lacks explanatory value, and therefore “vanishes into thin air (30). To get to this side of the bridge requires vanquishing a straw man;

Since Meillet's well-known use of the term to apply to "*le passage d'un mot au rôle d'élément grammatical*," much has been written concerning observations about such *passages*, but these remain "observations about language change."

In "Metaphor and Teleology do not Drive Grammaticalization" (33 – 48), Matthew L. Juge, offers a convincing critique of metaphor-driven theories, using cross-linguistic examples of 'come' and 'go'.

In Miriam Bouzouita's "Processing Factors in Syntactic Variation and Change: Clitics in Medieval and Renaissance Spanish" (51 – 71), the process of proclisis in later Spanish that resulted in the preverbal clitics of Renaissance Spanish being able to "appear anywhere," attributed to "routinization," sounds very much like a detailed accounting of analogy.

In "An Economy Approach to the Triggering of the Russian Instrumental Predicate Case" (103 – 117), Nerea Madariaga applies the Minimalist Program to the topic in Old Russian. In this case the reanalysis is assumed to be the result of L1 acquisition error, "[s]yntactic change stems from the divergence between a child's grammar and his or her parents' grammar" (104).

A fascinating topic in Japanese, the variable distribution of particles *ga* and *no*, the nominative and genitive, respectively, which mark syntactic role, is studied by Satoshi Nambu and Kenjiro Matsuda in "Change and Variation in *ga/no* Conversion in Tokyo Japanese" (119 – 131). Their data, from an electronic database of speeches in the Diet, demonstrate decreasing occurrence of genitive *no* to the benefit of nominative *ga*. (122 – 123) Historical records show a distribution of the two forms in like environments before the Muromachi Era (124). As it is pointed out that in Tokyo Japanese, only *ga* can occur between nominals in main clauses (125), while the frequency of *no* in certain subordinate clauses reduces, and bearing in mind that the records used for this study reflect formal (government) speech in the dialect of the capital, one is reminded of the vast influence on the language of Chinese, where an attributive (i.e., genitive)

marker appears in such clauses. It is noted that the data here, reflecting intragenerational change, challenge the First Language Acquisition model of language change.

Marie-Eve Ritz, in “Perfect Change: Synchrony meets Diachrony” (133 – 147), provides an excellent analysis of the “non-standard” present perfect that has emerged in Australian English, marking pragmatically interpreted present speaking points in narrative discourse, a case for pragmatic selection of language resources in specific contexts contributing to change. One notes that this characterization, coming, as it does, from a writer on the continent, contradicts the notion of local English with its own standards, recognizing, as is implied, an overarching standard for English.

In “Variabale Use of Negation in Middle Low German” (149 – 160) John Sundquist expands on Jespersen’s four stages of the development of negative marking in German, from *ni / ne* to *nicht*. In a very neat analysis, data from over six centuries show different rates of increase of *nicht* and decrease of *ni*, i.e., contradicting the Constant Rate Hypothesis.

In “Some Semantic and Pragmatic Aspects of Case-loss in Old French” (191 – 205), by Richard Ashdowne and John Charles Smith, the point is made that the functional load of case-marking in a nominal case system should “show a correlation with its inherent semantic identity,” including its thematic roles and thus the functions in which it appears (193). In a study of a poetry text from the 12th century, it is shown that discourse-pragmatic factors play a role in case-marking being emphasized when items appear in a form that does not correspond grammatically, (203), where otherwise they have less prominence and are disappearing. This study also makes a contribution in its discussion of the selection of old texts and justifications for it (194 – 196, n. 4, 5).

Alan Dench, in “Demonstrative paradigm Splitting in the Pilbara Languages of Western Australia” (223 – 237), traces the development of mid-distal demonstratives and 3PS pronouns

across the languages in this group, which are known to be richly ergative. It is noted that in languages such as Nyatal, whose pronouns are nominative-accusative, “emphatic ergatives” in 1PS and 2PS place stress on their referents as agents (232), suggesting that discourse-pragmatic functions played a role in the development of the paradigms.

Steven E. Fassberg begins his article, “Infinitival Forms in Aramaic” (239 – 256), with a sketch of the history of the language, from its appearance in inscriptions from a millennium B.C.E., its emergence as a lingua franca in the Near East, its adoption by Persians as a language of administration after the conquest of the Babylonians to the dispersion of its speakers to Syria, Kurdistan, and Israel (239). It is argued that a nominal pattern functioning as an infinitive absolute, even in varieties that had no contact with Hebrew or Canaanites, should be seen as a general feature of Semitic (242). Quite surprising, though, is the “remarkable tenacity of forms” (241), evident from the observation of diverse infinitivals in present day varieties of Aramaic which are “known from the most ancient inscriptions” (240, 251), in contrast to the general expectations, in a language most of whose dialects have proven “impervious to outside influences” (250).

In “The Role of Productivity in Word-formation Change,” (257 – 271), Carmen Scherer employs *-er* nominalization in German to investigate, using the Munz Newspaper Corpus (subcorpora dating from 1609 to the 20th century), changes in productive patterns of word formation, focusing on formal and semantic restrictions. This very productive derivational morpheme has changed its semantic output range from over 95% person type nouns to close to 80%, the remainder being objects and abstractions (262, Table 2). From another perspective, the increase in new words in the person and abstraction type run parallel, but the object type increase in frequency much faster, explosively so after 1850 (*ibid.*, Table 3). Likewise the collocational range, all patterns show “clear and statistically significant growth in type frequency” (266). The

two types of productivity exemplified here reflect the effects of changing semantic and formal restraints on processes in the word formation system as a whole.

The invention of the elegant and phonetically highly faithful Han'gul alphabet promulgated under the rule of King Sejong in the 15th century makes possible very definite phonetic and phonemic analysis of Korean from the Middle Period. In “Structural Imbalances in the Emergence of the Korean Vowel System” (275 – 293), Sang-Cheol Ahn and Gregory K. Iverson present and employ the rudiments of the orthography as they explicate the development of the balanced system of vowels and “seemingly skewed set of phonemic diphthongs in Modern Korean” (292). Also noteworthy is the table of Chinese character transcriptions of the vowel sounds named by the Han'gul letters (283). Thus we can see evidence of phonological change in Korean (based on the phonemic reality preserved in the Han'gul graph), and in passing, graphic examples of evidence used in reconstructing Chinese from the Middle Period.

The problem of apparent stem final features in reconstruction of proto-Uto-Zatecan has been a thorny question. In “Final Features in Proto-Uto-Aztecan” (295 – 310), Karen Dakin attributes putative “syllable final nasals” and glottal stops to reflexes of **-ri* and **-ra*, suffixes in the protolanguage which lost their vowels and nasalized in later stages of the languages.

In “Facts, Theory and Dogmas in Historical Linguistics” (311 – 335), Michele Loporcaro makes the seemingly common sense point that “no serious diachronic account” can be absent philological evidence, comparative reconstruction, and internal reconstruction (324) as it investigates vowel quantity in the development from Latin to Romance, where in some cases vowel length contrast and in others Open Syllable Lengthening was lost. It is pointed out that conclusions regarding the rise of Raddoppiamento Fonosintattico from a generative perspective focusing solely on internal reconstruction prove to be wrong, not standing up to the philological record (325).

Irregularity in vowel length in open syllables in German are accounted for by B. Richard Page, in “On the Irregularity of Open Syllable Lengthening in German” (337 – 350). An Evolutionary Phonology perspective which distinguishes between “sound change” and “prosodic change” (338) is used to resolve the problem of irregularity in like environments, contra Neogrammarian theory. OSL was variety-specific in application, but prosodic factors apprehended by hearers influence perceptions of of vowel length, obviating UG and markedness constraints.

In “The Resilience of Prosodic Templates in the History of West Germanic” (351 – 365), Laura Catharine Smith investigates prosodic patterning and its influence on syncope and inflection. In German plural formation is complex. The system is made orderly by an appeal to the prosodic requirement of bringing about or maintaining a trochee (361), which also could appeal to analogy in interacting with phonotactic preferences of a variety.

Pieter van Reenen, in “The Hollandish Roots of Pella Dutch in Iowa” (385 – 401) relates features found in the Dutch spoken in Pella, Iowa, with those mapped in Holland, which demonstrate the principle that the study of an immigrant language must “take into account the dialectal elements from which it developed” (387). In this case, since the origins of the immigrants are well documented, a direct relation of geographical features may be determined.

The studies reported in this volume, collectively, reflect contemporary work in historical linguistics, as the individual articles illuminate topics of interest to a broad range of students of language and linguistics.

Robert D. Angus
California State University, Fullerton