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Review Of "Structure De La Phrase Et Théorie Du Liage" By H.-G. Obenauer And A. Zribi-Hertz

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Review
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as a serious shortcoming of the grammar: virtually all the example sentences are apparently obtained by elicitation, and one suspects that they may not be completely representative of naturally occurring, authentic Lango. But this was perhaps inevitable given the circumstances—N collected his data from speakers residing in the U.S. However, the somewhat artificial examples also have a clear advantage: they are much easier to follow than natural utterances, which typically contain a lot of irrelevant material. In this way, they contribute to the high degree of accessibility of the book to nonspecialists. Particularly for typologists, N’s grammar is one of the best sources now available for Nilo-Saharan languages. [Martin Haspelmath, Freie Universität Berlin.]


This is a collection of eleven papers in Government and Binding (GB), ten of which were presented at the first Colloque International of the GDR 120 on comparative syntax in March, 1990, in Paris. Six other papers presented at the conference were not received in time for publication. The editors open the book with a joint article about how variation within a language (not just across languages) may be the effect of a complex of interacting principles with differing parameters (‘Grammaire et variation: A propos de la comparaison linguistique dans le cadre des “principes et paramètres”’. 7–27). They discuss variation in question formation in French, give a summary of Binding Theory, and point out that we need to have a relativized idea of Condition A with respect to the definition of ‘locality’ if we are to account for binding in languages that have multiple kinds of anaphors (like Dutch and Basque) and that have long-distance anaphors (like Icelandic). This article serves as an excellent introduction to the concerns of the entire volume, since all the articles deal with Binding Theory somehow and many touch on the issue of parameters.

Five articles look seriously at the finite/non-finite distinction and/or the role of Agr. Maria Manuela Ambar (‘Temps et structure de la phrase en portugais’, 29–49) examines data from Portuguese infinitival clauses that split main verbs from auxiliaries with respect to transparency to theta-assignment (as in English, but unlike in French), and proposes that we need two T nodes (morphological and semantic) as well as Agr, where the most ‘visible’ one will be structurally higher. Carmen Dobrovie-Sorin (‘À propos du se/si dit “impersonnel” en roumain, français et italien’, 51–68) argues that the middle/passive use of the reflexive morpheme exists in all Romance languages, but the personal use does not exist in some and occurs only in finite clauses in all others. Jacqueline Gueron & Teun Hoekstra (‘Chains temporelles et phrases réduites’, 69–91) examine reduced sentences in French and English (small clauses, causative complements, passive participles, absolutes), arguing that T is present only if the structure has a verbal base, but Agr is always present, thereby accounting for distribution facts. Stephen Harlow (‘Finiteness and Welsh sentence structure’. 93–119) shows that the claimed correlation between finiteness and VSO word order does not hold. Knut Tarald Taraldsen (Second thoughts on der’, 217–49) argues that the relativizer in Danish is an expletive subject, comparing with data in Norwegian, Icelandic, and even Irish; he delves into the question of whether agreement is clitization of a pronoun.

Two articles concern themselves primarily with reflexives. Celia Jakubowicz (‘Sig en danois: Syntaxe et acquisition’. 121–49) looks at the structure and acquisition of sentences containing sig in Danish, showing that it need not be long-distance bound or logophoric. Georges Rebuchi (‘Théorie du liage et localité relativisée’, 195–216) examines the interaction of a reflexive possessive and the reciprocal with secondary predicates in eastern Basque. Two articles discuss movement: Rita Manzini (‘A unification of locality theory for movement and binding’. 151–68) extends her earlier unification theory to account for data from English and Icelandic, and Hans-Georg Obenauer (‘L’interprétation des structures wh et l’accord du participe passé’. 169–93) gives new evidence from French for the analysis of agreeing past participles as involving movement. In the final article, Anne Zribi-Hertz (‘Les pronoms réfléchis: Universaux et typologie’, 251–70) argues that pronouns and anaphors are not disjoint categories in Universal Grammar, but instead represent differing degrees on an incline from more referential to more anaphoric.

Three of the articles are in English: the rest

With the appearance of this final volume, the Linguistic atlas of the Gulf States (LAGS) is now complete. Previous volumes—those appearing in book form—have been reviewed in Language by Bruce Southard (Vol. 3 in Lg. 67/3) and myself (Vols. 4–6, respectively, in 68/2, 69/1, 69/2).

Volume 7 serves as an interpretive companion to Vol. 6. Where Vol. 6 presented massive amounts of raw data (almost 7,000 LAGS items plotted by race, gender, age, and education level on tables and graphic plotter grid maps), Vol. 7 charts 150 items on conventional dialect maps. However, added to these dialect maps are graphic overlays which indicate not only the regional pattern but also the dominant social variable(s) affecting each item’s frequency. Thirty-one of these maps chart Black usage, 25 maps chart White usage, and 12 maps chart White usage in combination with gender, age, or educational factors. The remaining maps show these variables in other combinations.

The purpose of this interpretive volume, as the introduction explains, is to explore the role social variables play in determining each linguistic feature’s regional pattern. A good example is Map 3, which charts the absence of /r/ in horse. The feature /r/-lessness appears only in the southern lowlands and the Mississippi delta. But Map 3 also charts Black consultants’ usage, which for this feature corresponds closely to the regional pattern. Thus, an apparent regional pattern is explained by social factors, in this case by the concentration of Black populations in limited areas. This lends credence to the arguments of scholars like Crawford Feagan who suggest that many of the unique features (especially pronunciation features like /r/-lessness) of southern dialects are in fact due to the influence of Black speech.

Because these maps only summarize data, each is also accompanied by a table that shows the usage breakdown for each of the four social variables (race, gender, age, education) within each of the 39 separate LAGS physiographic regions. Readers are thus enabled to draw conclusions independently. For example, Map 57 shows preterite dove with a largely coastal regional pattern. But dove appears to be widespread elsewhere if we examine only the younger (under 65 years) White population. The table accompanying the map tells us that this usage was given by none of the Blacks but by 9 of 33 Whites in the Upper Mississippi Basin; this distribution is not apparent from Map 57.

Education was also a significant factor: 7 of the 26 better-educated consultants (11th grade +) in the Upper Mississippi Basin used dove, but only 2 of the 23 with less than an 11th-grade education had the same usage. Hence, although the Upper Mississippi Basin does not appear as part of the regional pattern for dove, it is clear from the table that infrequent usage among Blacks, older consultants, and consultants with lower levels of education account for that exclusion.

One puzzling editorial decision is the inclusion of a dendrogram summary of the data for each map as well. These diagrams consume two pages each, are hard to read, and repeat data which could be assembled from the maps and tables. The space for the dendrograms could have allowed twice the number of maps to be included in this volume.

 Appropriately for the final LAGS volume, the last 45 pages are given over to an alphabetical index of all LAGS features which appear in Vols. 4–7. Entries include all volumes, so it is possible to locate an item, say, in the regional pattern volume as well as in this one. Readers who keep all four volumes at hand for comparisons will find this index invaluable. [Timothy C. Frazer, Western Illinois University.]


Conceived as an introductory text, this handy volume provides the student and teacher with a straightforward, reliable presentation based on readings of numerous Old High German texts—and one text, a ‘Wessobrunner Sermon’ from around 1100, which shows the transition from