

cues in the signal that may indicate categorical information. For example, Cohn and Kishel (2003) found that both duration and intensity of contrastive underlying forms showed significant differences in child language output. In addition, Richtsmeier (2010), and references therein, discuss how these variations would not be perceivable solely to the ear, which is precisely why acoustic analyses are so important when investigating categorical information.

The subtitle of the book marks this study as a cross-generational comparison. Though comparisons were made, I was surprised that they were so interspersed and that a greater focus was not placed on them. It would have been useful to have the comparisons all in one spot, say in a chapter devoted to the subject. The author did make good use of them in the fifth chapter to highlight where and why his theoretical assumptions had changed. His reasons for shifting his assumptions were well argued and clearly noted.

In conclusion, there are strengths and limitations to this work as previously noted. Whether or not the data in this book will prove as useful as Smith's first title is not as easy to judge. The absence of acoustic analysis is a serious drawback. That being said, the rich discussion of theories and their implications for the field of phonological acquisition makes this book a valuable addition to the linguistic literature especially for students and instructors of language acquisition.

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Igor A. Mel'čuk. 2012. *Semantics: From meaning to text*. In the series *Studies in language companion series*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins. Pp. xxi + 436. US \$158.00 (hardcover).

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This book is the first volume of Igor Mel'čuk's long-awaited monograph building on his Meaning–Text Theory (MTT) (developed with Alexander Žolkovskij) more than four decades after its launch. MTT was conceived in the context of incipient machine translation research back in the Soviet Union of the 1960s. This theory gave the world the revolutionary idea of lexical functions and allowed for a new description of language in terms of lexemes and their combinatorial qualities. Aimed at developing *interlingua* for the purposes of machine translation, this research sought to present the meaning of utterances in a non-linear way in order to break free from the syntactic rules of specific natural languages. Further, MTT pursued working out a mechanism to solve the problem of the distinctive divisions of reality that exist between

human languages. The description of lexemes and their lexical functions not only gave rise to Explanatory–Combinatory Dictionaries (ECDs) of Russian (Mel’čuk and Zholkovsky 1984) and French (Mel’čuk et al. 1984), among others, but also paved the way for the identification of multiple lexical functions across languages, which nowadays form part of machine translation technology (Apresian et al. 2003). This volume is intended as the first of three volumes that form part of an ambitious project where the author plans to integrate not only his own work but also that of his collaborators, including Alain Polguère and David Beck.

The book starts with Beck’s Foreword, which is followed by “Abbreviations and notations”, “Organization of *SMT [Semantics: From meaning to text]*”, and “General introduction”, which outlines the boundaries of MTT and provides a brief description of its history.

Chapter 1, “Meaning–Text Approach and Meaning–Text Models”, provides definitions for a series of basic linguistic notions like speaker, meaning, utterance, paraphrase, and other concepts more specific to MTT.

Chapter 2 is concerned with the notion of linguistic paraphrasing. It addresses three types of meaning: propositional, communicative, and rhetorical, of which only propositional meaning is responsible for two phrases to be considered paraphrases. To extract this meaning a set of (quasi-synonymous) paraphrases is used (Mel’čuk 1999 [1974], Milićević 2007). The author presents a typology of paraphrases classified according to four parameters. First, paraphrases can be obtained either vertically from deeper structures or horizontally by a special component of the MTT model called the “Paraphrasing System” (referred to as *generator* in Mel’čuk 1999:193 and to be described in detail in the second volume). Second, a distinction should be made between linguistic and cognitive paraphrases. MTT does not allow for the generation of the latter. Third, paraphrases can be exact or approximate. To deal with the latter, the author introduces the concept of semantic neutralization. Fourth, depending on the level of linguistic representation at which paraphrases are produced, another distinction should be made between semantic, deep-syntactic, and surface-syntactic paraphrases.

Chapter 3 is of paramount significance within the book as it presents the MTT with its main postulates as well as the restrictions assumed by the author. The first postulate, *Language as a meaning-text correspondence*, describes a natural language as a finite set of rules mediating between meanings (SemR) and texts (SPhonR). The second postulate, *Linguistic description as a functional model*, claims that text generation should rest on a system of linguistic declarative static rules and the related system of procedural dynamic rules. The third postulate, *Multiple levels of linguistic representation*, introduces two intermediate levels: SyntR and MorphR, each of which further split into deep (D) and surface (S) sublevels. The relation between SemR and DSyntR is regarded as the main object of this book. While SemR is studied in depth in this volume, a thorough discussion of DSyntR is left for the next volume.

Chapter 4 addresses the purely semantic structure of the utterance or, more accurately, the propositional structure of the set of all utterances that express the same propositional content. This structure is represented as a semantic network (not to

be confused with a lexicon presented in ECDs which is covered in the second volume) with labels attached to the nodes on that network. These labels are referred to as *semantemes*, one of which, namely “Cause”, is analyzed in detail in Chapter 5. Going beyond the purely propositional structure, Chapter 6 deals with the semantic-communicative structure of an utterance through eight semantic-communicative oppositions described in Mel’čuk (2001).

In what follows, rather than conducting a fine-grained analysis of the scholarly contribution of an author with a life-long dedication to this topic, I would like to highlight several issues that are paramount to the realm of applied linguistics. Many of these concerns are also raised by the author throughout the book. The first is the author’s claim that MTT “is by no means a generative device” (p. 121; see also Waner 2012 for discussion). It is still reasonable to expect that MTT should be seen as a text production tool, especially by those working in machine translation. The author recognizes that a complete MTT should include both a system of declarative static rules and the system of procedural dynamic rules to make text generation possible (p. 95). However, while in Mel’čuk (1999:191–193) we can find reference to two elements of the model: a *generator* of alternative variants, and a *selector*, understood as a number of filters at various levels, this book dedicates only three pages to the hypothetical Functional Model of a natural language.

Another issue worth noting is the “watertight border” the author draws between linguistic and extralinguistic knowledge. While only the former is referred to as the object of study in this book (p. 89), later the author formulates his intention to keep the “naked” propositional meaning of an utterance separate from all its communicative, rhetorical, and referential features (p. 168) and, finally, includes his own detailed study of the communicative dimension of an utterance in Chapter 6.

The third point to raise is the author’s claim that MTT as presented in this book is “completely separate” from research into actual human linguistic behavior. We could ask the author how it can be perceived as separate when the texts themselves are the results of actual human behavior and their meanings are determined by adult native speakers. In this sense, Meaning–Text approach is akin to the one adopted in corpus linguistics.

Finally, regardless of the author’s claim that MTT is restricted to the behavior of adult native speakers (p. 5), this volume would also be of great interest to anyone working in the area of second/foreign language acquisition. Often viewed as an alternative to generative grammar, rather than predicting which combinations of words would make grammatically correct sentences, Mel’čuk’s approach aims at describing the rules that govern a specific language. Knowing which rules are common to a pair of languages, and which are not, and thus have to be consulted in the corresponding ECDs, would allow language learners to reproduce adult native speakers’ performance as closely as possible.

As the first book to introduce Meaning–Text semantics to the English-speaking world,¹ this volume will be appreciated by newcomers to the theory, who will find

¹There are two other books in English that have “Meaning–Text” in their title while not focusing on the theory itself: Mel’čuk and Pertsov (1987) and Mel’čuk (1995).

this volume especially useful thanks to a series of introductory elements at the beginning of the book. The supporters of this theory will finally have at their disposal a complete first-hand account of the MTT in this and the two upcoming volumes.

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Antonio Fábregas and Sergio Scalise. 2012. *Morphology: From data to theories*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press. Pp. xii + 209. £19.90 (softcover).

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Morphology: From data to theories is a new morphology textbook aimed at advanced undergraduate or early graduate students in linguistics. This book has three broad pedagogical goals. Its first goal is to introduce the readers to the newest frameworks in morphological research, such as *Distributed Morphology* (DM; Harbour 2007, Harley 2012) and *Construction Grammar* (CG; Booij 2010). Its second goal is to introduce a wide range of cross-linguistic data and use these data to evaluate the empirical import of each theory. Its third overarching goal is to discuss the role of morphology within the architecture of grammar: its status and its relation with syntax, phonology, and semantics. Thus, the book presents a state-of-the-art introduction to modern morphology and current morphological theories.