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Terje Lohndal (ed.), *In Search of Universal Grammar: From Old Norse to Zoque* (Linguistik Aktuell/Linguistics Today 121). Amsterdam & Philadelphia, PA: John Benjamins, 2013. Pp. 361.

doi:10.1017/S0332586513000322

Reviewed by Ida Larsson

Department of Swedish and Multilingualism, Stockholm University, SE-106 91 Stockholm, Sweden. ida.larsson@su.se

Over the last almost 40 years, Jan Terje Faarlund has contributed to the growing knowledge of human linguistic competence, on a variety of topics and from different perspectives. He has done substantial work on language change, focusing in particular on Old Norse. His books *Syntactic Change: Towards a Theory of Historical Syntax*

and *The Syntax of Old Norse* (Faarlund 1990, 2004, respectively) are often cited. He has also contributed greatly to the theoretically-based description of the modern Nordic languages, not least as one of the co-authors of the Norwegian reference grammar (Faarlund, Lie & Vannebo 1997), but also e.g. with a description of his home dialect, *Totenmålet* (Faarlund 2000). In 2012, he published the first description of an endangered language spoken in southern Mexico, *A Grammar of Chiapas Zoque* (Faarlund 2012). He has been actively involved in recent reforms of the Nynorsk variety of written Norwegian, and was the chair of the Nynorsk expert committee 1996–2000. Moreover, Faarlund is known as an appreciated and inspiring teacher and colleague. Thus, it is clearly well-justified that this volume in honor of Professor Jan Terje Faarlund covers several central areas of linguistics. It includes discussion of issues that have concerned Professor Faarlund in his research and that have a direct bearing on our theoretical understanding of the language faculty, as well as descriptions of individual languages and their history.

The volume is a collection of 14 papers, organized in sections that represent Faarlund's diverse interests, with an introduction by the editor, Terje Lohndal. It includes a section on modern Scandinavian (with papers by Tor A. Åfarli and Christer Platzack), a section on French (Hans Petter Helland and Christine Meklenborg Salvesen) and one on lesser-studied languages (Jerrold M. Sadock and Alice C. Harris). Another sequence discusses language acquisition (David Lightfoot and Marit Westergaard), one is concerned with grammar change (Werner Abraham and Elly van Gelderen), and one with sociolinguistics (Unn Røyneland and Peter Trudgill). Finally, two papers (by Erika Hagelberg and Salikoko S. Mufwene) are connected to the contributions that Faarlund has recently made in the field of language evolution.

Åfarli's paper, 'On the syntax of the accusative/dative alternation in spatial PPs in Norwegian dative dialects', discusses a systematic alternation between accusative and dative case found in Norwegian dialects. For spatial prepositions, the case alternation correlates with locative and directional interpretations; the general pattern is the same as in other (Germanic) languages, despite the fact that case distinctions in Norwegian are only maintained in a more restricted set of contexts. With previous work, Åfarli argues that the locative/dative version is the default. He develops an account where accusative case is licensed when the preposition heads a small clause in the complement of a verbal head that denotes a result state (Ramchand's (2008) category *res*).

The paper by Platzack, 'Spurious topic drop in Swedish', is concerned with finite clauses in Swedish that lack an overt subject. The author focuses in particular on cases which, unlike ordinary Topic drop, have an overt element preceding the finite verb, and also discusses relative clauses. Building on recent minimalist work which assumes parallel movement (Chomsky 2008), Platzack argues that the seemingly different cases of finite subjectless sentences all involve deletion of an element from spec-CP, like ordinary Topic drop. In this way, the strict subject requirement in Swedish can be maintained.

The paper ‘Topics and the left periphery: A comparison of Old French and Modern Germanic’, by Salvesen, is also concerned with the left periphery of the clause, comparing data from Old French and modern Germanic. Salvesen argues that Old French was a V2-language, like the modern Germanic languages (except English). She assumes a fine-grained C-domain in both Germanic and Romance, and suggests that V2 involves obligatory verb movement to Fin°. The more widespread occurrences of V3 in Old French depend, she suggests, on pragmatic differences between the languages, and specifically, on the information value of the first element in the V2 configuration.

In the paper ‘Non-finite adjuncts in French’, Helland discusses the French gerundive *en* + *V-ant* and the present participle *V-ant*, and their partly similar, partly different properties. Among other things, he shows that the two constructions behave differently with respect to control – only the gerundive allows non-obligatory control. Helland argues that the element *en* is a prepositional complementizer, and that both the gerundive and the participle project clausal structure, with a defective TP.

Several of the papers are concerned with aspects of language change, or with historical languages. In the paper ‘Origins of metathesis in Batsbi’, Harris discusses a case of metathesis in Batsbi (an endangered language spoken in eastern Georgia), which she suggests originates in something other than sound change. Building on joint work with Jan Terje Faarlund, Harris proposes that the origin is instead grammaticalization, where a present tense marker is trapped between the main verb and an auxiliary that has grammaticalized into a transitive marker. Harris claims that the phenomenon is genuine metathesis in the synchronic grammar of Batsbi, and that the typology of the historical sources of metathesis should be extended to include grammaticalization also.

The topic of Sadock’s paper, ‘Indefinitely definite expressions’, is the interpretation of noun phrases without determiners in Old Norse and English. Sadock argues that a strict correlation between the presence of a definite determiner and a definite interpretation cannot be maintained. In Old Norse, bare noun phrases can be neutral as to definiteness, and even in modern English, Sadock suggests, there are cases of determiner-free definite noun phrases.

In the paper ‘Doing diachrony’, Lightfoot discusses explanation in language change, and how the link between external linguistic data and internal grammars should be understood, drawing mainly on his own previous work (Lightfoot 1999, 2006). He argues for a cue-based model of acquisition, with a couple of examples from the history of English (the emergence of modals and *do*-support). Lightfoot stresses that the study of linguistic change, which must be combined with careful synchronic analysis, can give us important clues to how the input in acquisition can trigger particular grammatical properties.

Westergaard’s paper, ‘The acquisition of linguistic variation: Parameters vs. micro-cues’, too argues for a cue-based theory of language acquisition. Using

examples of word order variation in older English and modern Norwegian dialects, the author suggests that children are sensitive to fine-grained grammatical distinctions and that therefore acquisition cannot be a question of setting major parameters. Instead, she suggests that children build their grammars incrementally, making generalizations within subcategories, rather than directly (over-)generalizing to major categories. Westergaard refers to both generative and constructivist work, and she sets out on the commendable goal to integrate results from different theoretical camps into a theory of language acquisition.

Both Lightfoot and Westergaard explicitly argue that changes in the linguistic system require change in the input of the language learner. Although framed in different terms, Trudgill's paper, 'Gender maintenance and loss in Totenmålet, English, and other major Germanic varieties', gives examples of what can be understood at least partly as system change due to changes in the input. Trudgill's primary interest is in the sociolinguistic causes of change, and he argues that the partial or complete loss of gender in Germanic varieties is due to language contact. However, Trudgill also points out that the concept 'contact' requires further analysis, and he proposes that while simplification in language contact is due to adult second-language learning, also diffusion and dialect mixture can play a role. In addition to treating specific Scandinavian dialects, the discussion covers several other Germanic varieties (English, Afrikaans, Dutch/Flemish, High German, Frisian and Low German).

Abraham's paper, 'The developmental logic of the analytic past in German and Polish: An issue of universalism or areal contact?', is also to some extent concerned with the role of contact in language change. The focus of the paper is the ongoing development of a new periphrastic past tense in Polish, employing the verb *mieć* 'have' as an auxiliary. Abraham compares the development in Polish to the grammaticalization of the periphrastic past (or the perfect) in German and shows that there are clear parallels in the developments. He argues that this should be explained by the partly shared properties of the involved elements, in combination with general processes of grammaticalization, rather than being viewed as a result of language contact.

The paper 'The diachrony of pronouns and demonstratives', by van Gelderen, focuses on changes in the properties of pronouns and demonstratives in the history of English, with some comparison with Scandinavian. It is argued that Old English personal pronouns are not used deictically, while demonstrative pronouns are (see Kiparsky 2002:30). According to van Gelderen, the system changes in later Old English and Middle English, due to both internal factors (whereby interpretable features are lost) and external factors (the introduction of new lexical items through contact with Scandinavian).

Røyneland's paper, "'The voice from below": Norwegian language reforms in the 21st century', is concerned with a different kind of linguistic change, pertaining to language planning and recent reforms of the Nynorsk variety of written Norwegian. Røyneland describes the work leading to a reform proposal that was accepted in

2011, and which led to the first major revision of the Nynorsk variety since 1959. The paper discusses some of the specific problems and conflicts that the committees faced in developing the proposal, and the importance of including lay people and non-linguist language users in the process.

The last section of the volume is devoted to language evolution, viewed from two different angles. The paper ‘Language as technology: Some questions that evolutionary linguistics should address’, by Mufwene, argues that human languages (in the plural) have evolved gradually as a response to communicative needs, using cognitive means already present in earlier hominine species. Language is understood as technology, i.e. a means to fulfill a purpose. The paper deals with processes that are otherwise often taken to involve historical developments (e.g. grammaticalization or expansion in vocabulary) as opposed to evolution of the human species, but it also touches on the question of the emergence of argument structure and lexical categories like nouns and verbs.

One difficulty in the discussion of language evolution (as in historical studies) is that different aspects of language might have different sources, and often have several interacting sources. It is, for instance, far from evident that the development of phonological patterns should be treated in the same way as the emergence of predicational structure. This is pointed out in the paper ‘The evolution of language’, by Hagelberg, who is a biologist. Hagelberg provides an overview of the discussion of language evolution from Darwin onwards, and gives examples of paleontological, archeological, biological and cognitive evidence that has been important in the debate. For instance, she discusses the role of natural selection in language evolution, brain size, the hypothesis that language developed from gestures, and some of the possibilities and difficulties in using and interpreting genetic evidence to find the biological base for human language.

Together, the papers in this volume well represent the varying topics in Jan Terje Faarlund’s research interests. This has some obvious consequences for the coherence of the book, and the title is perhaps somewhat misleading – not all of the authors are here searching for universal grammar (and the paper by Mufwene argues against the concept of UG). On the other hand, as pointed out by the editor in the introduction, the different perspectives are important for the understanding of the language faculty and its boundaries, and a few of the papers explicitly deal with how the different aspects or components are interrelated, particularly in acquisition and change. In any case, the book includes topics and discussion that will be interesting for different groups of readers, be they in search of universal grammar or not.

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