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German Linguistic Islands

The volume *Studies on German-Language Islands*, edited by Michael T. Putnam, focuses on German-speaking *Sprachinseln* around the world, and is divided into six sections: (1) âPhonetics and Phonology,â (2) âMorphology and Lexical Studies,â (3) âSyntax I–Verb Clusters,â (4) âSyntax II–The Syntax of Cimbrian German,â (5) âSyntax III–The Syntax of Pennsylvania German,â and (6) âPragmatics and Conversation Analysis.â

This work is valuable in its collection and presentation of German *Sprachinseln* from around the world–that is, this volume does not focus strictly on one approach (for example, âsocio- and ethnolinguistic aspects of dialect communities,â p. 1) and/or one geographic region in its treatment of German-language islands. The following review, then, examines all of the sections described above, but focuses on select key contributions to highlight the breadth of topics covered in this volume, which range from phonetics to Conversation Analysis.

Section 1 begins the volume with âPhonetics and Phonology,â and includes articles on Wisconsin Standard German (Renee Remy, âOn Final Laryngeal Distinctions in Wisconsin Standard Germanâ) and on past participle formation in the Upper German dialect of MÃ³cheno in Trentino, Italy (âPast Participles in MÃ³cheno: Allomorphy, Alignment and the Distribution of Obstruentsâ by Birgit Alber).

Remy begins with a discussion of terms used to describe âfinal laryngeal distinctionsâ (pp. 13â15). [1] The author examines the perception of final obstruents in Manitowoc (by a speaker with ancestry from Kiel), such as German underlying final /s/(*alles*), underlying final /z/ (*logs*), underlying final /g/ (*logs*), underlying final /d/ (*Hund,* etc.), underlying final /b/ (*gab*, etc.), and an underlying final /bt/ cluster (*erlaubt*). Remy also examines the perception of final obstruents in Ozaukee (by a speaker with Pomeranian ancestry), examining German underlying final /s/, /z/, /g/, /d/, /b/ (*Klub*, *glaub*), as well as looking at glottal pulsing in his acoustic analysis (pp. 17â22).

With the examples given by speakers from both regions, Remy shows that Eastern Wisconsin (EWE) English production of final /d/ is almost always devoiced, regardless if preceded by nasal, liquid, or vowel in German (though preceding and following sounds seem to affect American English pronunciation); EWE seems to âhave taken its cue from the German speakers in the areaâ (p. 30) whereby there is also a convergence of English speakers on the German norm and vice-versa (p. 31).

Section 2 (âMorphology and Lexical Studiesâ) presents articles on gender distribution in Henderson (Nebraska) Plautdietsch (Anna Toeboesch), the morphosyntactic role of anaphors in Amana German (Michael T. Putnam), the lexicon in Texas German (Hans C. Boas and Marc Pierce), and gender assignment in Pennsylvania German (B. Richard Page).

Boasâ and Pierceâs âLexical Developments in Texas Germanâ examines the typology of lexical borrowings in

Texas German (TxG), a variety that the authors feel will âdie out in 30 yearsâ (p. 129). Similar to earlier work on Wisconsin German varieties, Boas and Pierce assert that TxG speakers show differing levels of competency, generally limited to very specific âdomesticâ (or âsemanticâ, p. 147) domains.[2] Furthermore, the language, specifically the lexicon, hasnât undergone âdramaticâ changes in the last forty years–yet dialectal origins of lexical items can be traced to Gilbertâs work on the dialect in the 1960s. TxG is thus âstage 2â in Thomason and Kaufmanâs 5-stage borrowing scale (âlexical borrowing and slight structural borrowing in combination with conjunctions and adverbial participles,â pp. 134, 147). The authors discuss the nature of these borrowings, both from English into German and vice versa, but conclude, based on lack of salient changes in their data and Gilbertâs 1960s TxG data, that the lexical changes occurring in TxG are âunsystematicâ and not indicative of âlexical erosionâ (p. 147). While supported by sound theory for lexical change and borrowing between English and colonial German in the United States, these conclusions may, indeed, make the assumption that languages change and die out in an unordered fashion.

Section 3 is devoted to the syntax of verb clusters, featuring contributions on Pennsylvania Dutch (Mark Louden, âSynchrony and Diachrony of Verb Clusters in Pennsylvania Dutchâ) and Mennonite Low German (GÃ¶z Kaufmann, âLooking for Order in Chaos: Standard Convergence and Divergence in Mennonite Low Germanâ). Louden establishes that, in Pennsylvania Dutch (PD), 3-4 verb clusters in subordinate clauses show only one lexical verb within a clause, where additional lexical verbs are to the right of the clause periphery; thus, non-lexical verbs in verb clusters (such as finite auxiliary *hawwe* [to have] and a non-finite modal: [*hawwe* + modal]) form a single syntactic unit (p. 165). Based on examples of possible constructions, he establishes a âPreliminary Verb Cluster Rule: verbal complements containing an infinitive in PD must be located right of the clause peripheryâ (p. 170).

In light of the synchrony and diachrony of 3-verb clusters in PD subordinate clauses, Louden shows that verbs that occur in 3-1-2 clusters have decreased since the 1930s and 1940s. To that end, 3-1-2-4 are in fact 2-1 | 3 structures (see ex. 15); thus 3-1-2 clusters are actually 2-1 structures: â2-1 order is preserved in all surface orders, and if the number of lexical verbs within the clause exceeds one, then the most deeply embedded infinitive (â3â) is extraposedâ (p. 180).

Sections 4 and 5 are also both devoted to syntax–section 4 on Cimbrian includes articles on areal contact (âSpoken Syntax in Cimbrian of the Linguistic Islands in Northern Italy–and What They (Do Not) Betray about Language Universals and Change under Areal Contact with Italo-Romance,â by Werner Abraham), grammaticalization in the Cimbrian CP (âDiachronic Clues to Grammaticalization Phenomena in the Cimbrian CP,â by Andrea Padovan), verb second in Cimbrian (âHidden Verb Second: The case of Cimbrian,â GÃ¼nther Grendorf and Cecilia Poletto), and the Cimbrian pronominal system (âRevisting the *Wackernagelposition*: The Evolution of the Cimbrian Pronominal System,â by Ermenegildo Bidese). Section 5 examines syntactic issues in Pennsylvania German (âChanges in Frequency as a Measure of Language Change: Extraposition in Pennsylvania German,â by Gesche Westphal Fitch, and âFrom Preposition to Purposive to Infinitival Marker: The Pennsylvania German *ferâ¦zu* Construction,â by Kersti BÃ¶rjars and Kate Burridge).

In investigating the Cimbrian CP, Andrea Padovan looks at the complementizer *ke* and other particles (*az*, Italian loanword and according to the author the âoriginalâ Germanic complementizer) that have undergone âdiachronic analysisâ to show that the âexpansionâ of loan words does not occur randomly (p. 280). He shows how âspeech act elementsâ (for example, Italian *allora* [then]; pero [yet, but]; Molise Croatian *lor* [since]) can take on the function of a complementizer, especially in the grammar of younger speakers (p. 280).

Padovan shows that, diachronically, Old and Modern Cimbrian differ in that *âz* is the âonly expletive element and *da* is just a headâ (p. 297). *âz* is absent from interrogatives and topicalizations; *izta kalt* (where the presence of *da* is âblockedâ) does not exist, but weather verbs such as *reng* (to rain) have obligatory *âz* in interrogatives (p. 297). *Da* is incorporated into the verb into presentative/existential constructions (see ex. 30c-f), and the relative complementizer *bo* is also incorporated into *bo*da (emphasis in original). In light of such possibilities, Padovan proffers a conception of *da* as âa default pronominal clitic in the topic subfieldâ (p. 298).

Gesche Westphal Fitchâs âChanges in Frequency as a Measure of Language Changeâ examines extrapositional elements (such as âevent-related adverbs,â p. 377), showing that Pennsylvania German (PG) has the highest rate of extraposition (of the three varieties at hand), and that Palatinate dialects (PL) show a higher rate of extraposition than Standard German (SG). Extraposed adverbials

are also more represented in PG than in SG or PL (p. 371).

A breakdown of the extraposition of all bracket structures is shown as follows: PG 25.2 percent, PL 18.1 percent, SG 8.2 percent (p. 376). These numbers elucidate how ongoing language change âshares some traits with Palatinate variants,â which in turn show high rates of extraposition, but low rates of adverb placement in the Mittelfeld (p. 382). The high rate of extraposition in PG may be attributed to âeither a natural tendency of its base dialectsâ or to the âbilingual coexistence of English and Germanâ which could allow for a surface order similar to English; however, the author notes that this is difficult to know without a diachronic analysis (p. 382).

A synopsis of extraposition, then, shows that the Nachfeld seems to have âopened upâ to adverbs in PG, yet adverb placement in the Mittelfeld is (statistically) low and is similar to PL and different from SG (p. 382). Conversely, the right periphery seems to have âloosenedâ in PG even though it still maintains V2/1 and OV word order. This syntactic flexibility is attributed to contact with English and shows maintenance of older established syntactic rules of European variants related to the âcolonialâ variety of PG in America, but may be becoming more flexible as a result of substrate language (German) contact with English (pp. 382â383). [3]

Section 6 (âPragmatics and Conversation Analysisâ) includes contributions by Emma Betz on SiebenbÃ¼rger SÃ¤chsisch (âWord Choice, Turn Construction, and Topic Management in German Conversation: Adverbs That Are Sensitive to Interactional Positionâ) and Hunter Weilbacher on discourse pragmatics in Texas German (âTexas German Discourse Pragmatics: A Preliminary Study of the English-origin Discourse Markers *Of Course*, *See*, and *Now*â). Betz assesses the relationship of word choice and turn construction in the Romanian German dialect of SiebenbÃ¼rger SÃ¤chsisch. She analyzes *ientz* (now) and *ientzer* (now) as a means of marking a âturn constructional unitâ (TCU) or a turn as complete or incomplete. As such, lexical resources are used by interlocutors as âindicators of status of the utterance, topic, and sequence underwayâ (p. 416). Betz looks at resources for accomplishing this in Colloquial Standard German (p. 416), and shows that the *ientz* and *ientzer* do not exist as such in SG (outside of the âbaseâ token *jetzt*), although Northern Bavarian *eytz* and *eytzat* function similarly (p. 444).

Betz shows that *ientz* and *ientzer* function semantically as temporal adverbs, yet they differ in placement within a turn–*ientzer* is TCU final, *ientz* TCU initial. Ad-

ditionally, both have the same semantic content, but fulfill different interactional functions and/or show a different structural distribution, that is, are in different syntactic environments (p. 420). She emphasizes that this interplay of semantics and syntax must be taken into account in understanding the interactional function accomplished by *ientz*/*ientzer*, *eytz*/*eytzat*. In this way, these tokens (which can be differentiated from the discourse particle *nau* [dann], [now]) can best be defined âwith the understanding that this classification cannot be based on semantics and syntax aloneâ (p. 448). In addition to her conclusions, it merits mention that Betz makes the data she presents accessible to readers less familiar with CA by including an appendix with an overview of the Jeffersonian transcription conventions used by the majority of North American CA researchers (p. 448).

Overall, this volume presents a great collection of current, relevant contributions to the study of German-language islands from a multitude of generative and structural approaches. As mentioned earlier, this volume is noteworthy for its depth on a number of levels–it presents new work on German dialects spoken in diaspora from around the world (that is, the data presented is not confined to any one region), and is broad in its selection of German-speaking communities and approaches used to interpret the data (from Optimality Theory, to syntax in CA, and obstruent phonology and acoustic phonetics, etc.). In this manner this volume is (according to the editor) the first of its kind to be set up with this sort of âall-encompassingâ generative/structuralist approach.

Michael T. Putnam not only constructed and subdivided the volume effectively, but he also contributed an article on the Amana (Iowa) *Sprachinsel* as well as constructive introductory remarks that set up the relevancy of every contribution. Indeed, contributions are generally well structured and they also give valuable and complete bibliographic information, often incorporating not only new research on the topics at hand, but also referring back to older, seminal literature. For a volume of this size (approximately five hundred pages), it also includes an encompassing topical index and a complete list of further compilations in the Studies in Language Companion series. As with any collection of this size and scope, minor infelicities exist (for example, typographic errors such as extra spaces and the inclusion of potentially debatable sociolinguistic concepts such as âprestigeâ) but these are few and far between. This volume is to be recommended, especially to linguists and Germanists (both professors and advanced graduate students) concerned with the most up-to-date research on varieties as diverse

as the speech communities represented in this volume.

Notes

[1]. See Gregory Iverson and Joseph Salmons, âFinal Devoicing and Final Laryngeal Neutralization,â in *The Blackwell Companion to Phonology*, 5 vols., ed. Marc van Oostendorp, Colin J. Ewen, Elizabeth Hume, and Keren Rice (Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011), vol. 3, 1622-1643.

[2]. Lester W. J. Seifert, âThe Problem of Speech Mixture in the German Spoken in Northwestern Dane County, Wisconsin,â *Transactions of the Wisconsin Academy of Sciences, Arts and Letters* 39 (1949): 127-139.

[3]. For a related discussion, see Joseph Salmons and Thomas Purnell, âLanguage Contact and the Development of American English,â in *The Handbook of Language Contact,* ed. Raymond Hickey (Oxford: Blackwell, 2010), 454-477.

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