

Editors' introduction

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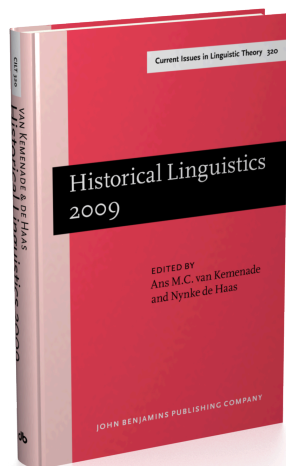
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Editors' introduction

1. Introduction

The International Conference on Historical Linguistics has always been a forum that reflects the general state of the art in the field, and the 2009 edition (ICHL 19) of the conference fully allows the conclusion that the field is a thriving one. Here, we will sketch the state of the art as illustrated by some core issues as they emerged at the conference. We will divide this discussion into three subsections: the first discusses a number of topics and domains of language and grammar that are at the heart of issues in language change; the second is about sociolinguistics, contact and the role of second language acquisition; the third is on methodologies that are currently being developed to facilitate historical linguistic research on a larger database than was possible until recently, and to circumvent the data-gap that is inevitable in our historical record, giving us some of the most exciting work that is currently being done. Such methods and more traditional ones illustrate the issue of making the best of bad data in historical linguistics. It seems worth emphasizing here that this is a primary area where progress is currently extremely fast. The final section discusses more specifically the articles in this volume.

Crosscutting the issues and methodologies in historical linguistics and language change, the coverage of languages and language families at the conference was very substantial. There was, as always, a strong focus on the Indo-European languages, with a workshop on the origin of non-canonical subject marking in Indo-European, another one on information structure in historical linguistics featuring work in Germanic languages, Russian, and ancient Greek, and much work on other Indo-European languages across other workshops and in thematic sessions in the general program. This included a substantial representation of Germanic languages including Afrikaans, on Latin and the Romance languages, and Balto-Slavic and Slavic languages. Other language families that were prominently represented were the Meso-American and South-American languages, and the Austronesian and Oceanic languages, with some focus on Papua New Guinea. The conference also featured a day-long workshop on grammaticalization in the languages of East Asia.

2. Change in domains of language and grammar

The traditional topics in the study of historical linguistics and language change were very amply represented at the conference. These included sound change, various types

of morphosyntactic change, and pragmatic change. We devote separate subsections to each of them.

2.1 Sound change

Sound change is, of course, a classic in any general conference on historical linguistics and was the topic of a day-long workshop which was in part inspired by an intensive and dynamic discussion on sound change on the HISTLING list in the fall of 2007. The study of sound change is in many ways the foundation upon which modern (post-18th century) historical linguistics has been built, yet much about it still remains unaccounted for. The framing issues for this day-long workshop were how sound change is to be defined, how it achieves regularity (if it ever does), how it is to be separated out from other changes with similar effects, whether innovation is to be distinguished from spread in studying and understanding sound change, and what is at stake in characterizing it in a precise way. The workshop presentations addressed some of these fundamental issues for the study of sound change: there was groundwork urging an approach towards sound change from the point of view of linguistic change in general, as a necessary prerequisite for an understanding of what it is. Several presentations on the fine phonetic and phonological detail of sound change placed these factors against the backdrop of the role of co-articulation and articulatory phonology more generally. Cognitive work argued that the regularity of sound change resides in the cognitive process of generalization from phonetic, phonological and lexical variation. Finally, there were several sociolinguistic presentations on the spread/diffusion of sound change in the speech community.

2.2 Morphosyntactic change

Morphosyntactic change is taken here overall to refer to a range of types of change that are related to the interaction of syntactic change (word order, argument selection and argument realization) with changes in inflectional morphology (the morphological expression of grammatical categories such as tense, mood, aspect, case, agreement, clause typing, clause linking) and derivational morphology (valency changing morphology). Classical issues in this broad area concern the syntactic effects of the loss of inflectional morphology, as seen in word order on the one hand, and in grammaticalization on the other hand. We will first briefly address these types of change.

2.2.1 *Loss of inflection and word order*

There is a rich recent flow of work on this issue from a variety of theoretical perspectives, including formal syntactic theories, primarily generative syntax (Chomsky 1981; 1995 and after), and Lexical Functional Grammar (e.g. Bresnan 2000). The generally recognized key mechanism in this approach is reanalysis, which may be broadly defined as the language learner's/speaker's attribution of a novel structure to an existing surface form.

An example of this is the English suffix *-hood* as in *motherhood*, an abstract noun marker which at one point was an innovative formation deriving from the earlier independent word *hād* meaning “state, condition”. Reanalysis thus involves the creation of a new association of form and content. Ever since Lightfoot (1979), the generative approach to syntactic change has considered that the key mechanism of change is reanalysis. Typical examples of syntactic reanalyses recurring in the literature are for instance word order changes such as the transition from OV to VO word order; and the loss of strategies of finite verb fronting. At the heart of the approach is the attempt to make sense of such reanalyses as shifts in the balance between inflectional morphology and syntax, from the point of view of a theoretical framework that makes tight claims about how this relationship can be modelled in structural terms. A much discussed change typical of the approach is the loss of Verb-*not* order in English, with a lexical finite verb preceding the negator *not*, as in *þe fadyr of Heuen spared not his owne sonne* “the Father of heaven did not spare his own son”. This word order is taken to reflect a verb fronting strategy, which was keyed to the presence of verb morphology for tense and agreement. With the loss of much agreement inflection over the late Middle English period, the verb fronting strategy was lost for lexical verbs, and the pre-*not* position became exclusively reserved for finite auxiliaries. The relation between agreement and verb fronting strategies is thus modeled theoretically, either derivationally as in generative work, or by means of mapping between various levels of expression as in Lexical Functional Grammar (LFG). The development of historical work in this vein has therefore closely followed various incarnations of minimalist and lexical functionalist theorizing, spearheaded in particular by theoreticians, and counterbalanced by extensive theoretically informed corpus-based work (see, e.g. Allen 1995; 2008; Battye & Roberts 1995; van Kemenade & Vincent 1997; Pintzuk, Tsoulas & Warner 2000; Butt & Holloway King 2001; Lightfoot 2002; Battlori, Hernanz, Picallo & Roca 2005; Crisma & Longobardi 2009). It is worth emphasizing that the key element in these approaches is the insight that syntactic variation between languages (and historical stages of languages) is essentially morphological in nature, i.e. it is in the way in which grammatical categories are expressed, by syntactic means such as word order, by morphological means such as case on nouns, tense, mood and aspect on verbs, or, alternately, by means of periphrastic expressions for these same grammatical categories (adpositions, auxiliaries, adverbs).

This broad line of work was amply represented at the conference, with work offering a variety of descriptive issues and topics in many different languages across the general program and a number of workshops.

2.2.2 Grammaticalization

One of the most intensively studied types of morphosyntactic change, again from a variety of perspectives, is grammaticalization, the reanalysis from a category with a measure of lexical properties to one with a purely grammatical function. The rich literature on grammaticalization, starting with Meillet (1912) and repioneered over the

past three decades by Elizabeth Traugott and others (Lehmann 1982, 1985; Traugott & Heine 1991; Hopper & Traugott (1993/2003)) emphasizes the interrelation between the semantic/pragmatic, phonological, morphological and syntactic entrenchment of grammaticalizing forms. While in the 1990s and 2000s, there was emphasis on casting grammaticalization as a (usage-based) theoretical framework, with heated debate over the cognitive mechanisms that drive grammaticalization, and over its purported unidirectionality, grammaticalization was also increasingly approached from various theoretical angles as the morphosyntactic change it also is, involving the reanalysis of lexical elements to grammatical elements, and spinning off from loss of inflectional morphology. As such it has also come to be approached from the perspective of formal theories (e.g. van Kemenade 1999; Roberts & Roussou 2003; van Gelderen 2007). The effect of decades of intense study is that grammaticalization, as a pervasive type of change, has become a firm topic in any conference on historical linguistics, and thus ICHL 19 featured a full-day workshop on grammaticalization phenomena in the languages of East Asia, and a further set of presentations across the program focusing specifically on case studies of grammaticalization in a variety of languages.

2.2.3 *Argument selection and argument marking*

A further domain in which the effects of the interaction between syntactic change and morphological change can be seen to be at work is in the area of argument selection and argument marking. ICHL 19 featured two workshops that are of special interest to this area. The first was a workshop on the origin of non-canonical subject marking in Indo-European, bringing together work on changes in case marking and argument alignment in the Indo-European languages, and bringing it to bear on the reconstruction of the origin of oblique subjects constructions such as those found in present-day Icelandic. The second was on complementation in diachrony, focusing on the diachronic paths manifested in the argument structure of verbs, as seen in syntactic, semantic/pragmatic as well as morphological changes related to specific verb classes or to the overall verbal domain of a language. A further focus of the workshop was on the system of clausal complementation, in particular on issues regarding finite vs. non-finite complements and how such patterns evolve diachronically.

2.2.4 *Clause typing and clause linkage*

The workshop mentioned on complementation featuring in the previous subsection also touches on the morphosyntactic means by which sub-clauses are embedded in the main clause. The fact that there is much morphological and syntactic variation here, even within present-day Standard English, may be evident from the clausal complementation of the present-day English verb *believe*, whose complement may be variously expressed as finite *I believe that he is innocent*, *I believe he is innocent*, and

non-finite *I believe him to be innocent*, or verbless *I believe him innocent*. These different grammatical expressions of what is semantically the same clausal complement represent varying degrees of integration with the main clause. This specific topic was at the heart of another workshop on the diachrony of clause linkage, which featured work on the historical development of how sub-clauses of various semantic types are integrated with the main clause in a variety of languages.

2.2.5 *Information structure/pragmatics*

One recent topic that touches on the intersection between morphosyntactic change and pragmatic change is the diachronic study of information structure, the expression of given and new information at the clause level. While this topic has been extensively studied from the perspective of discourse marking (e.g. Brinton 1996), there is a recent industry on changes in the interaction between syntax and information structure, studying from a formal perspective the shifts that occur in how the changing morphosyntactic make-up of a language, e.g. the presence of topic markers, focus markers, or modal particles in the history of English, interacts with the ordering of information (given/new) at the clause level. At the ICHL 19 conference, this work was brought together in a workshop on information structure in historical linguistics, with extensive corpus-based work on older Germanic languages, older Romance languages, and ancient Greek.

A further area that is more explicitly and specifically concerned with pragmatic change was represented in a workshop on procedural meanings in diachrony, where procedural meanings refer to linguistic items/constructions that provide instructions to hearers on how to integrate the elements that contribute semantically to the message within an evolving mental model of the discourse. For example, introducing a clause by the adversative conjunction *but* signals to the hearer to look for an adversative contrast to the previous context. The papers presented in the workshop explored whether the development of markers that carry procedural meaning in language follow characteristic pathways of grammaticalization across languages, and how the meanings associated with such constructions arise from language use.

3. The social setting of language change

Since the development of the field of sociolinguistics spearheaded by Labov, the study of change in progress in the speech community has been an important source of inspiration for historical linguists trying to identify the driving forces of language change in their often impoverished dataset. Precise sociolinguistic mechanisms in historical records can be studied in detail only when there are enough sources which

are accurately dated, and the relevant data (age, gender, social status) of the authors are available (see, e.g. Poplack 2000; Nevalainen & Raumolin-Brunberg 2003). Shana Poplack gave a plenary lecture at ICHL 19 doing just that: tracking change in progress and where possible its social conditioning across a number of centuries with the help of extensive corpora of written records and early spoken records. Gillian Sankoff focused on age grading in change in progress, while William Labov established some conditions for dialect divergence. It is important to note that, even when historical sociolinguistic work requires a lot of care with respect to the data and the historical study of the social setting, and full insight is not often warranted by the available historical record, we can learn a great deal about possible or plausible changes by projecting these insights into possible scenarios for language change.

Beside a substantial number of papers in the general program and across various workshops, a specific set of papers in the ICHL 19 conference that was concerned with language change in a social setting was the workshop on language and migration, which represented work in which the dynamics of (historical) language change through dialect contact was explicitly connected with migration patterns and demographic developments.

3.1 Contact linguistics

The field of contact linguistics is in a separate subsection, though not as a matter of principle, since here too the social setting of language change is of paramount importance: as Salikoko Mufwene reminds us, the ecology of the contact setting to an important extent determines what course language change through contact may take. The thin line between sociolinguistics and contact linguistics is usually taken to lie in the typological distance between the languages involved – we speak of language contact when two clearly different languages are involved and mutual intelligibility between speakers of both languages is less likely. For the same reason, it is in the field of contact linguistics that the issue of imperfect second language learning is central in the discussion: while children learn their first language with depth and perfection, adults learning a second language do not preserve structural conditions with the same fidelity (as adult second language learning is to varying degrees imperfect). The result, depending on a number of factors such as the typological distance between the languages involved, the age of the speakers, and other aspects of the ecology of the contact setting, is loss of structure (loss of inflection) and code-switching between the languages involved. A particularly interesting contribution at the conference was a plenary lecture by Antonella Sorace, in which it was argued that attrition of the native language in language contact, both in the individual speakers' lifetime and across generations, provides one of the keys to understanding language change.

4. Methodological issues

One of the major challenges in the study of historical linguistics and language change is to achieve an understanding of the linguistic and psycholinguistic processes that underlie the changes observed in the historical data. The dataset is by definition limited, since the study of historical change inevitably has to rely on written records. Written language is, however, a derivative of the language spoken at any given point in time, and is situated at some remove from the natural language that is the object of the linguistic investigation, a position that has long been recognized. Historical linguistics thus also involves the art of making the best use of bad data. While over the past three decades, this has been attempted by means of modeling change in terms of theoretical approaches to the study of language (language typology, sociolinguistics, functional models of language use and modeling in terms of formal approaches as briefly discussed in Section 2), increasingly on the basis of corpus work, a variety of new methodologies is now developing to come to grips with the necessarily impoverished historical record.

This new line of work crucially draws on the rapidly expanding availability of large corpora, and the fast developing area of computational modeling of processes relating to language. These innovative methodologies were prominently welcomed at the ICHL 2009 conference. Charles Yang gave a plenary lecture on how the course of language change can be predicted, arguing that work on child language acquisition has identified learning mechanisms that select grammatical hypotheses in a way closely akin to the Darwinian process of natural selection. Using methods from population genetics allows the formulation of a fitness metric, which in turn facilitates the prediction of how a particular language change will proceed. Michael Dunn and Russell Gray both gave plenary lectures on how methods from evolutionary biology can be employed in the reconstruction of the history of language families, and to distinguish between stable language transmission from one generation to the next, and disruption of that transmission by language contact. Such methodologies can also be extended to an interdisciplinary framework, allowing triangulation with archaeological and genetic data, and providing methods of testing dates and migration paths. Pieter Muysken presented a plenary lecture on the languages of South-America, giving a digest of the descriptive and typological work done so far, and working towards modeling the historical relations between the languages of South America by means of techniques from phylogenetics, as developed by Dunn et al. (2005 and in subsequent work). Phylogenetic methods were also central in the plenary lecture by Giuseppe Longobardi, but his concern was rather with a phylogenetic model of grammars in the Chomskyan sense (where a grammar with a cluster of parameter settings is taken to represent the mental representation of the speaker's knowledge of language). Finally, the conference

featured a workshop on the spatial dynamics of language change, whose focus was to explore methodologies to come to grips with how the geographical distance between languages and dialects can be correlated with their structural properties.

5. Notes/comments on the present selection

This volume is organized in four parts. Part I is devoted to general issues of language change, as well as language-specific or language-family-specific ones that have a potentially wider relevance. Here, Theresa Biberauer writes on a specific class of exceptions to Jespersen's cycle, citing evidence from contact languages. She proposes a syntactic constraint on the progression of Jespersen's cycle, arguing that languages which draw on structurally high negative reinforcers and subsequently grammaticalize these as concord elements will not be able to replace the original sentential negator with this element.

Vit Bubenik studies the reconstruction of experiential constructions in (late) Proto-Indo-European, focusing on the rise of oblique subject typology from the perspective of morphology, semantics and pragmatics, and arguing that a cognitive approach along these lines offers essential insights that purely formal syntactic approaches cannot.

Jadranka Gvozdanović formulates criteria for differentiating inherent and contact-induced changes in language reconstruction. Her analysis of two historical Slavic accent shifts, one fairly generally shared by the Slavic languages, and another restricted to Slovene, shows that the difference in application between both shifts can be explained in terms of different rankings of tone and quantity, the more innovative of which were arguably influenced by the presence of different rankings in neighboring languages.

In perhaps the most controversial contribution to this volume, John Whitman reexamines the importance of reanalysis, and more specifically misparsing, in syntactic change. This is widely held to be a key factor, but in his overview of recent research on the most well-known examples of misparsing, Whitman argues that in these cases, misparsing is either not the best or not the only viable analysis.

Margaret Winters & Geoffrey Nathan investigate the nature of prototype change. They analyze instances of such change in phonology, syntax, and the lexicon and show that similar processes of change play a role across these components. They conclude that while the outcome of changes to prototypes may be different from other changes in set configuration, the underlying processes are the same.

The final chapter in Part I is Yuko Yanagida's study of the syntactic reconstruction of alignment and word order in Old Japanese. Yanagida argues that the Old Japanese split alignment pattern, with nominative-accusative alignment in main conclusive

clauses and active alignment in adnominal clauses, fits into a pattern found more widely across languages. The two alignment patterns can be seen as descendants of distinct nominalization strategies and thus show a development that has also been argued for in proto-Carib syntax.

Part II contains a selection of papers on various aspects of linguistic variation and change in Germanic languages. Jac Conradie makes a case that some peculiarities of the Afrikaans development of the Dutch-Afrikaans verbal prefix *ge-* represent a case of degrammaticalization. Although degrammaticalization is thought to be rare, innovative uses of *-ge* in Afrikaans indicate that it is an instance of this process, for instance its use as a past tense marker (providing it with more semantic content than before), and the possibility of its occurrence in ellipsis (providing an argument that it has word status rather than affix status).

Jack Hoeksema & Annelien Schippers offer an overview and analysis of changes in long-distance dependencies in the history of Dutch. Their analysis of the history of dependencies in various constructions (*wh*-questions, relative clauses, topicalization and comparatives) shows that resumptive prolepsis is very common in some clause types but not others, and that violations of the *wh*-island constraint have dropped in use since early modern Dutch. Hoeksema & Schippers' diachronic corpus-based study underlines the importance of studying long-distance movement from a broad perspective: relating movement to alternatives such as copying and partial movement is the best way to clarify developments in the selection of these different alternatives.

Eric Hoekstra, Bouke Slofstra & Arjen Versloot present a corpus-based study of changes in the use of the Frisian quantifiers *ea/oait* 'ever' between 1250 and 1800. Native Frisian *ea* was replaced by *oait*, based on a Standard Dutch model. This development not only yields insight into a situation of language contact, it clarifies the position of these quantifiers in a system that also comprises negated quantifiers of the 'never' type and universal quantifiers of the 'always' type, which also underwent change in the same period.

Ida Larsson's study on the development of the perfect participle in Swedish brings together contemporary and historical linguistic data in a theoretical framework. Larsson argues that fine-grained distinctions in the classification of participles are necessary to clarify the different stages in development from the resultative to the perfect tense. Using evidence for such distinctions from present-day Swedish, she shows that the relevant distinctions can help account for historical developments in Old Norse and Old Saxon.

Eric Magnusson Petzell adds an interesting argument to the debate on triggers of verb placement in his corpus-based analysis of the interaction of OV word order and finite verb movement in the history of Swedish. He shows that the changes in frequency of various OV orders in early modern Swedish increased the cues that V-to-I

movement did not take place, so that these developments directly contributed to the loss of this type of movement.

Gerard Stell argues that ethnicity is an independent factor of morphosyntactic variation across space, focusing on spoken Afrikaans. Stell's sociolinguistic apparent-time study of several White and Colored varieties of Afrikaans shows that, while some convergence is apparent in the morphosyntax of these varieties, there is still a clear gap between them. Multivariate analysis reveals that this gap is determined by ethnicity more than by socio-economic status, although both concepts are still interwoven in today's South-African society.

Moving on to another part of the Dutch linguistic area, Rik Vosters, Gijsbert Rutten & Wim Vandenbussche present a corpus-based study on orthographic variation in 19th-century Dutch in Flanders. They position orthographic variation in the sociolinguistic landscape of the Low Countries during the brief reunion of Belgium and the Netherlands, focusing also on normative publications, debates about language and language planning initiatives. It is shown that Flemish orthography was singled out as a salient point of Flemish linguistic divergence, and thus became a spearhead for linguistic reform, apparently with some success, as 19th-century Flemish court data show clear signs of convergence with the Northern norm.

Part III contains two contributions on linguistic variation and change in Greek. Adam Cooper & Effi Georgala study dative loss and its replacement in the history of Greek. They argue that two independent syntactic developments led to replacement of the dative by another case on noun phrases in the specifier of the Applicative Phrase. The rise of genitive case in this position arose from the raising of genitive clitic to this position, and was reinforced by phonetic developments. The rise of accusative case, on the other hand, seems to have followed from developments in the properties of *v*, which lost its dative feature and only retained accusative case.

Allison Kirk's contribution is on word order variation in two types of *wh*-questions in New Testament Greek. Kirk accounts for the distributional asymmetry between argument and adjunct *wh*-questions (the former being much more restricted in word order options than the latter) by arguing that they have fundamentally different derivations. In this account, argument *wh*-questions like direct object questions involve *wh*-movement of the argument to the specifier of a Focus projection in the left periphery of the clause with subsequent movement of the finite verb to the Focus head. Adjunct questions like cause/reason questions do not involve *wh*-movement at all. Rather, the *wh*-phrase is base-generated in a topical Interrogative Phrase in the left periphery of the clause, which does not give rise to verb movement and leaves different word order options for the rest of the clause open.

The concluding part of this volume, Part IV, comprises four studies on linguistic change in Romance. In the first of these, Louise Esher considers the morphological

evolution of Occitan infinitive, future and conditional forms in the light of the notion of 'morphomes', systematic morphological correspondences which exist independently of sound changes and functional correlates. Esher shows that this concept helps to account for the parallel developments of Occitan future and conditional forms, but also qualifies its importance in two ways: these forms do share some functional features, and are sometimes subject to independent changes.

Heather Burnett & Mireille Tremblay review the evolution of the encoding of direction by means of prefixes and particles in the history of French. They test a hypothesis from the theoretical literature which holds that the lexicalization of directional and aspectual prefixes into verbal roots caused the loss of directional particles in French. Burnett and Tremblay's corpus-based quantitative study shows that this hypothesis does not, in fact, hold in their data. In addition, they show how argument structure change is different from parameter change in that it is sensitive to many more factors, including lexical semantics.

Edward Cormany investigates the rise and fall of a short-lived syntactic pattern in Latin, *velle*-type prohibitions, analyzing it as the result of a morphosyntactic conspiracy. Diachronically, insertion of *velle* 'to wish' was a way to resolve the conflict between the requirement to follow the Sequence of Tenses and the requirement to represent punctual prohibited actions with a perfect form. Synchronically, the rise of *velle* in prohibitions, as well as its restricted use, can be linked to the ordinary use of its negative counterpart *nolle* 'to not wish' in prohibitions.

Finally, Mari Johanne Hertenberg studies the use and development of infinitives following *habere* in Latin. She presents a syntactic analysis of each use of *habere* + infinitive in terms of Lexical-Functional Grammar, and proposes a pathway for the development of the different uses. Relating the various senses of these constructions and their occurrence in different periods, Hertenberg ultimately derives modal *habere* + infinitive constructions from the earlier *praedicativum* and shows how different senses (ability/capacity, deontic modality, permission, and future) may have developed from each other through generalization.

6. Concluding remarks

The brief overview of the studies presented in Section 5 illustrates that, while they are less than fully representative of the range of issues and case studies welcomed at the ICHL 19 conference at Nijmegen as discussed in Sections 1–4, they are an expression of ongoing theoretical developments as well as new analytical approaches to the study of historical linguistics and language change. Taken together, they reflect some of the current challenges in the field, as well as the opportunities offered by judicious use of

theoretical models and careful corpus-based work. We hope that they will encourage discussion, and will further our understanding of the historical development of these phenomena.

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