

Pilar Guerrero Medina, Roberto Torre Alonso, and Raquel Veá Escarza, editors. *Verbs, Clauses and Constructions: Functional and Typological Approaches*. Cambridge Scholars Publishing, 2018. 439 pages.

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This volume includes a selection of twenty papers originally presented in the 2014 and 2016 editions of the *International Symposium on Verbs, Clauses and Constructions*, held at the University of La Rioja. The book opens with an introduction by the editors and is divided into three main parts, devoted to verbs, clauses, and constructions, respectively. The wide variety of studies presented here, from both a theoretical and an applied perspective, clearly attest to the interplay between semantics, morphology, syntax, and pragmatics. Moreover, the miscellany of linguistic approaches and the typological diversity of the languages discussed are a great asset to this monograph. This most comprehensive and enlightening volume succeeds in bringing together numerous articles from both a diachronic and a synchronic dimension, thereby providing further insights into functional-oriented disciplines such as corpus and cognitive linguistics.

Part I (*Verbs*) opens with a corpus-based study by Kereković on the types of verbs used in mechanical engineering textbooks and papers, taking as a reference the categories established by Biber et al. (1999) and Beck et al. (2002). In her corpus, activity verbs are the most common, while aspectual verbs show the lowest degree of use. This finding concurs with Biber et al.'s (1999) data from the Longman corpus. Nonetheless, the remaining verbal categories pattern differently. Beck et al.'s (2002) typology distinguished between general English, general scientific, and technical verbs. Kereković's results indicate that general English verbs are far more frequent than any other types in both textbooks and papers. Technical verbs, in turn, are rare in papers but predominate in textbooks, since students need to fully grasp the concepts and acquire this vocabulary.

The next three chapters focus on different aspects of the morphology of Old English (OE). The first one, by Metola Rodríguez,

addresses the process of lemmatisation of OE strong verbs with the lemmatiser *Norna*, a software which was developed at the University of La Rioja by the *Nerthus* research group and which is based on the *Dictionary of Old English Web Corpus* (DOEC). The lemmatiser comprises an index, a concordance, a reference list of preverbal and inflectional endings, and a number of queries and filters, all of which are designed to minimise the process of manual revision. For this reason, the queries and filters take into consideration potential effects of spelling variants, *i*-mutation, and consonant assimilation, among others. The automatic searches in the lemmatiser *Norna* have an accuracy of about 80%, which is quite remarkable considering that the inflectional forms corresponding to lemmas starting with letters H-Y have not been published in the *Dictionary of Old English* (DOE) yet. The second paper, by Ojanguren López, is also concerned with OE strong verbs, but concentrates instead on participles, which could be inflected (e.g. *gebundenne*) or uninflected (e.g. *gebunden*). More specifically, it explores the variation within and across tense (past and present participle) and case (nominative, accusative, genitive, and dative). Participial variation was rather widespread at the OE period, since both the inflected and uninflected variants could be attested for the same verb, text, and function. Taking the DOEC as a basis, this corpus-based study supports the general literature on the loss of inflectional marking in OE adjectives and proves that it is the past participle that leads this change, whereas the present participle lags slightly behind. The corpus data additionally reveal that the lack of inflectional marking takes place earlier in certain cases, such as the accusative singular and the dative plural. Along the lines of Metola Rodríguez's chapter, the chapter by García Fernández discusses the process of lemmatisation of OE derived preterite-present verbs, a category which comprised many of the present-day auxiliaries, including *can* (< OE *cunnan*) and *shall* (< OE *sceal*). The data are also issued from the DOEC and the different inflectional forms for the participles are assigned to a given lemma taking as a reference the list of preterite-present verbs from the lexical database *Nerthus*. The high degree of spelling variation at that period accounts for the lower rates of precision of the lemmatiser in this case, since approximately one third of the lemmas resulting from the automatic lemmatisation are valid. Therefore, García Fernández points to the need to revise and provide the lemmatiser with richer input, especially for the verbs

starting with the letters I-Y and for the different spelling variants of the prefixes involved in complex verbs.

The remaining papers in part I tackle different verbal issues in languages other than English. Thus, chapter five analyses verb derivation in three different dialects of the Australian Western Desert group, namely Pitjantjatjara, Yankunytjatjara, and Ngaanyatjarra (PYN). For his analysis, Pyle takes Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) (*cf.* van Valin 1992) as a framework and draws on materials from the PYN corpus, based primarily on oral recordings. This research work shows that in PYN different types of nominals without an auxiliary such as English *to be* can predicate as statives. Moreover, these nominals may take different verb endings, yielding both intransitive and causative verbs.

Chapter 6 approaches verbal inflections and the role of analogy in the Spanish and Judeo-Spanish verb systems. Herce thus challenges the use of well-established notions such as (*ir*)*regularity* and *predictiveness* in morphological theories, especially in Information Theory, hence casting doubt on their usefulness and applicability in contrastive and cross-linguistic research. In his own words, “the new approach to morphological analysis would and should profit from insights from other research paradigms and specially from the evidence provided by analogical changes and diachrony in general” (124).

Basque is the focus of chapter 7, which deals with a rather productive periphrastic construction involving the light verb *egin* and a non-referential noun: ([N + *egin*]_v (e.g. *lan egin* ‘to work’, literally ‘to make work’). In these cases, the noun serves as a semantic base, while *egin* is a dummy verb. By resorting to a variety of sources, including corpora and dictionary data, Martínez Etxarri applies a number of semantic and syntactic tests to analyse the degree of union of the constituents of these locutions (e.g. topicalisation, focalisation, or insertion of linking words, among others). The results of these tests serve to classify these constructions into three main types, from a higher degree of freedom at the far left hand-side of the continuum to the locutions which form a tight indivisible unit, at the right end of that continuum. As a result, [N + *egin*]_v constructions, which are accounted for in terms of reanalysis, constitute a rather heterogeneous category.

Part I closes with Al Zahrani's paper on epistemic modals modifying verbal clauses in Hijazi Arabic (HA), which looks into the interplay between the epistemic modal constituents and the functional categories (TP, AspP, Tax-AspP and VP). In line with previous morphosyntactic and semantic studies, Al Zahrani proves that epistemic modals are generated in the node which he labels as *Epistemic Modal Phrase* (EModP) and are the highest functional category in a hierarchical structure (higher than TP, AspP, and VP). They are located higher than TP because they cannot be preceded by the temporal auxiliary *kaan*. In turn, non-epistemic modals (deontics and dynamics) scope lower than TP, which is also in keeping with previous research on this type of verbs.

Part II (*Clauses*) provides insights into different clausal aspects from a cross-linguistic perspective, with studies on a wide variety of languages, including Arabic, French, and Upper Sorbian, a language of the Slavonian branch spoken by around 15,000 people in eastern Germany. The first chapter, by Premper, analyses a type of clauses characteristic of Arabic, namely circumstantial clauses (CirCl), with sentences extracted from a novel and several grammar books. There are two types of CirCl: syndetic and asyndetic. In the former, the second clause (CirCl) is syndetically added by the coordinating conjunction *wa* 'and' and has S-P word order. In turn, the asyndetic type has P-S order and in this case the second clause (CirCl) is asyndetically added to the first. It is precisely the asyndetic type that Premper focuses on, discussing the different uses and related constructions. The author thus shows that these are not isolated constructions, as they can modify sub-events such as manner or motion and express purposive relations, thereby sharing a prototypical function: the codification of *motion-cum-purpose*.

Botalla's contribution (chapter ten) examines the use of the so-called *non-sentential utterances* (NSUs) in French, which refer to those utterances that are not headed by a verb (e.g. *how about a cup of coffee?*). Drawing on corpus data from both written and spoken French, Botalla is particularly concerned with fragments, one type of NSUs which depend on the previous utterance, since it is precisely that utterance that contains the syntactic governor. In order to study fragments and their syntactic relationship with the preceding utterance, she

subdivides fragments into additions and piles. In addition, the previous utterance with the governor has a different syntactic function, so this addition opens a new syntactic function. By contrast, in the case of piles the utterance which contains the governor already has an element with the same syntactic function.

Chapter eleven presents an experimental investigation on subordinate clauses and their identification by Lebanese university students majoring in English language. In this study, Sabra designed a diagnostic pre-test, which the students had to complete before the course, and a post-test, delivered at the end of the module. The results of the initial test revealed that Lebanese students had difficulties in identifying dependent clauses introduced by the same subordinator (e.g. *where*). Nonetheless, following a form-focused type of instruction which highlights the major differences between these dependent clauses, as well as the similarities with their mother tongue (positive transfer), students were eventually able to overcome these initial problems and performed significantly better in the post-test. In addition to the linguistic benefits, therefore, the focus on form served to enhance the students' (meta)cognitive skills.

In contrast to the previous chapters in Part II, Salaberri's paper has a diachronic focus, as he approaches word order in Old Saxon clauses. With evidence from the *Heliand*, the first recorded Old Saxon document (c. 830 CE), he looks into factors such as the argument structure of the predicate (intransitive, transitive or ditransitive), the clause type (main or subordinate), and word order (SV vs. VS, SVO vs. OVS, etc.), in addition to the discourse type (e.g. narration or (in)direct speech). In the light of the data consulted, he concludes that syntax only cannot account for word order preferences in Old Saxon, since there are other considerations, such as discourse, pragmatic, and narrative factors, which also play an important role.

In line with Botalla's paper (chapter 10), Sasahara's contribution tackles post-sentence-final elements in German and Upper Sorbian. Resorting to oral data from a number of interviews with young speakers (aged 17-18), Sasahara examines non-modal and modal uses of post-sentence-final elements in both languages (among others,

relative clauses, prepositional phrases, tag questions, or interjections), which may not only signal the speaker's attitude, but may also signpost the end of the sentence.

Part III, the last one in the monograph, is devoted to constructions. The first paper, by Cominetti, explores marked and unmarked syntactic nominalisations in Modern Standard Chinese, with examples retrieved from corpora and other sources. Cominetti proves that most of the syntactic criteria used to establish Part-of-Speech (PoS) distinctions are not met by this language, given that in Chinese a large part of the lexicon can perform different syntactic functions. In that regard, semantic criteria are more adequate. The author thus shows that marked nominalisations (with the particle *de*) apply only to first-order entities (people, animals, or objects); second- and third-order entities take unmarked nominalisations. Moreover, the author questions the appropriateness of distinguishing between verbs and adjectives in Chinese, as both categories seem to be very closely related in this language.

In chapter fifteen, Kalnača and Lokmane present a corpus-based study on Latvian constructions involving the indeclinable participle in *-am(ies)/-ām(ies)*, traditionally considered as raising constructions. These participial forms have their origin in passive declinable present participles, to which the suffixes *-am(ies)/-ām(ies)* are added. The authors then look more closely at the different constructions in which the indeclinable participle may occur in this language (raising and control constructions), and suggest that it is more frequent in control constructions (e.g. with transitive matrix verbs of perception or cognition).

As in the paper presented in Part II, here Salaberri's study also approaches word order, yet on this occasion he focuses on extraposition as a trigger for word order changes, providing ample diachronic evidence from typologically different languages (Indo-European, Niger-Congo, and Sino-Tibetan languages). Salaberri thus shows that in some languages of the Niger-Congo family, for instance, extraposition has led to word order changes, since the extraposed elements were reanalysed as the unmarked order. This reanalysis, however, requires a change in focus from preverbal to postverbal

position. That is why no such development has taken place in languages such as Basque or Georgian, whose focus has remained stable over time.

The next chapter, by Yasuhara, investigates i. the uses of the causative alternation and the induced action alternation, which can both occur transitively and intransitively, but differ regarding the types of verbs licensed, ii. the selectional restriction on the subject NP (allowing, e.g., a natural force subject), and iii. the obligatory occurrence of a directional phrase. Yasuhara argues that the transitive variant of the induced action alternation in particular, called the secondary agent construction (*the nurse walked the patient to the room*), “should be uniformly treated with manipulated object constructions” (334) (*John hit the stone against the wall*), given that the object of secondary agent constructions is also construed as a manipulated object.

Staudinger’s contribution discusses a type of constructions in French with psych-predicates ([*ça* PRON PRED *de* INF PROPOSITION], in which the dependent clause is introduced by cognitive or speech act verbs. By drawing on synchronic and diachronic corpus data, she considers the different uses and functions of these constructions, not only to express the speaker’s attitude towards a given topic, but also for politeness purposes. The rise of these constructions is argued to constitute a case of actualisation and is connected with the development of narrative techniques.

Chapter nineteen approaches idioms from a constructional perspective and takes issue with those studies that interpret them in terms of metaphors (cf. Croft and Cruse 2004). Fulgêncio and Ciríaco argue that idioms are non-compositional, since their meaning cannot be derived from their individual parts and they are instead memorised in the speaker’s minds as a given chunk. Metaphors, on the other hand, cannot be retrieved directly and require the transfer from a source to a target domain to be interpreted. In synchronic terms, therefore, they cannot be described as metaphors, although from a diachronic perspective some of these expressions were initially conceived metaphorically. According to the authors, then, idioms are best treated as a type of construction (cf. Goldberg 1995).

The monograph closes with the chapter by Pile. As in his previous contribution, he is also concerned with Pitjantjatjara and Yankunytjatjara (P/Y) and takes Role and Reference Grammar (RRG) as his theoretical framework. In this case, he focuses on the mechanisms of compounding and derivation in P/Y. His findings reveal that the most frequent type of compounding is that of noun to verb, yet there exist different types (e.g. verb-active adjective or verb-spatial adverb). Unlike in some other languages, compounding in P/Y does not constitute a case of noun incorporation. Derivation is also rather productive in P/Y, with a number of bound morphemes that can be attached to verbs in order to create nominalisations and to nouns to create verbs.

To conclude, the twenty high-quality papers in this volume make it a very challenging and stimulating reading and undoubtedly open new pathways for future research. This selection of papers provides access to a wealth of languages and variety of methodologies and perspectives supporting a functional approach to the study of language. This is, barring a few minor formatting errors that are hardly worth mentioning, a very welcome and invaluable contribution to the field of linguistics in general.

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