Motion and the English verb: A diachronic study. By Judith Huber. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. 472. ISBN 9780190657802. $99 (Hb).

Reviewed by Claudio Iacobini, *University of Salerno*

The title *Motion and the English verb: A diachronic study* does not fully represent the contents of this well-written and interesting book by Judith Huber, whose main topic is the encoding of motion events in Old and Middle English. The diachronic perspective of the volume concerns the period of investigation (Medieval English) and the comparison of the available resources and preferred strategies employed for motion encoding in two language periods, Old and Middle English. However, the main contribution of the volume is the result of a synchronic approach that deals with English's intertypological language contact with the French language, namely, the reconstruction and the explanation of how French path verbs (*entrer*, *issir*, *descendre*, etc.) were incorporated into Middle English. The detailed examination of the early use of the borrowed path verbs in Middle English, whose semantics were unusual for the receiving language, is of particular interest not only for the history of the English language, but also, in a broader typological perspective, for the reconstruction of the process of accommodation of linguistic elements pertaining to different typological frames. In this case, the topic at issue is the expression of the path in verb roots in a language that, typically, encodes path in satellites.

The book is a reworked version of a doctoral dissertation, based on extensive data collection. The author successfully manages to cope with the difficulty of selecting an adequately representative corpus. In this respect, a thorough discussion of the textual characteristics depending on the different typologies and textual genres is provided. Issues of a philological nature concerning the identification of both form and meaning of the words investigated are also tackled and effectively sorted out. The reference corpus can be consulted in two very useful appendices, which are available as downloads from the companion website (http://www.oup.com/us/motionandtheenglishverb/). The two appendices contain, respectively, the corpus of Old English (50 pages) and Middle English (172 pages), with the verbs categorized as MANNER, PATH, NEUTRAL MOTION, or NONMOTION. The verbs are categorized on the basis of decontextualized meaning, the context in which the verb appears, the indication of the contextualized meaning, the etymology, and the prefixes with which each verb combines.

The ten chapters into which the book is divided can be grouped into four sections. The first one consists of an introduction (Ch. 1) and the presentation of the theoretical framework and relevant previous work (Ch. 2). The second section (Chs. 3–6) is devoted to the description of motion expression in Medieval English. The third (Chs. 7–9) starts with a chapter summarizing the studies on motion expression in Latin and French; the characteristics of these donor languages are important in order to better understand the context from which path verbs are extracted, and the dynamics of contact with Medieval English. Ch. 8 introduces the hypotheses, methodology, and material on which the analysis of the borrowed path verbs in Ch. 9 is based. The final section (Ch. 10) is dedicated to the presentation of the general conclusions.

The author adopts a construction grammar approach, which appears to properly accommodate an analysis of motion typology applied to single-motion expressions rather than to entire languages, and which proves to be particularly suitable for handling the diachronic data. In this regard, H's approach differs from that adopted by Talmy (e.g. Talmy 2000), as the latter considers each language to be characterized by a single dominant strategy of motion expression. Another important theoretical choice, which differentiates H's position from Talmy's and which has important repercussions for data analysis, concerns the treatment of prepositional phrases. Differently from Talmy's approach, in which prepositional phrases are kept distinct from satellites, H highlights the points in common between prepositions and satellites, and he adopts a wider definition of satellite, treating prepositional phrases as path satellites as well. This choice is based not only on the lack of clear category boundaries between directional adpositions and adverbs employed in Medieval English as path expressions, but also on well-explained theoretical principles.

The constructionist approach to verb semantics is also the basis of the analysis of the integration of French path verbs into English. It allows H to avoid positing an additional verb sense for

each new syntactic configuration in which a verb appears. H shows that path verbs initially appear to have been borrowed predominantly in specific contexts still compatible with the manner-conflating character of Middle English. Pure path verbs (*enter*, *descend*, etc.) were a novelty in the Middle English verbal system. Yet they came into use by occupying an appropriate semantic niche. They were borrowed primarily not as verbs expressing general literal directed motion (like a human figure moving with respect to a concrete ground), that is, not in their core meanings in the donor languages. Rather, they were borrowed in specific, often technical and figurative, senses (such as 'descend into details', 'enter into a treaty', 'enter into membership') typically employed in discourse domains that had long been dealt with in French and Latin during the triglossic Middle English period (e.g. administration, business, religion, warfare, etc.). An example is the English verb *entren* (from French *entrer*), which, at the beginning, was often used in the legal sense of 'enter into possession'. The detailed examination of the early use of the borrowed path verbs in Middle English allows the reconstruction of the senses in which each of these verbs was initially used; compare the use of ME *descenden* (cf. Fr. *descendre* and Lat. *descendere*) in the sense of lineage and heritage, or of *ascenden* in astronomy and theology. H also thoroughly illustrates these verbs' integration into the English lexicon as a consequence of the functional extension of Middle English to the specific domains previously occupied by French and Latin. Other examples concern metaphorical motion, where the source domain of motion is mapped onto more abstract target domains, such as change.

A separate section of Ch. 9 is devoted to each verb (*entren*, *ishen/issuen*, *descenden*, *avalen*, *ascenden*, *monten*, and *amounten*). The different stories of path-verb integration show that text type, registers, and genres influence the meaning in which the verbs are used. In autonomous, genuinely Middle English texts, path verbs displayed a somewhat restricted use. They predominantly occurred in specific, often metaphorical and abstract, meanings. Middle English translations, by contrast, had a tendency to feature the verbs as they were used in French or Latin, that is, rather freely and for all kinds of literal motion events. The scope of contexts in which borrowed path verbs can be used later widened in the history of the English language for some of the verbs (*enter*), while others have never really been used to express literal motion events (*amount*), and others have fallen out of use (ME *avalen*, *ishen*). H's research is therefore based on an accurate reconstruction of the contextual and co-textual meaning of each verb. The author shows how a distinction between the two complementary perspectives of inventory and usage is to be made, both from a descriptive point of view and from a more general theoretical perspective. An inventory of motion verbs alone is not enough in order to study how motion is expressed. In addition to the inventory, which shows what is possible, it is also very important to find out which verbs and structures are typical or frequent in usage.

The merit of this excellent book lies not only in the detailed analysis of which verbs and which structures are typically used to express motion in Medieval English, but also, and especially, in the identification of the processes underlying the integration of uncommon strategies with the prevailing ones of a language. H's book is fully integrated into the tradition of variationist approaches to motion-event typology that gives center stage to the usage (and not just to the inventory) of the resources a language makes available for motion encoding (Goschler & Stefanowitsch 2013, Luraghi, Nikitina, & Zanchi 2017). The accurate identification of the usage contexts of the verbs under examination in the book (examined with close attention to philological details) can represent an important reference point for subsequent studies on the phenomena of contact and variation in the research field of motion-event typology.

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Quantitative historical linguistics: A corpus framework. By Gard B. Jenset and Barbara McGillivray. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2017. Pp. xiii, 229. ISBN 9780198718178. $88 (Hb).

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The early twenty-first century has witnessed a major shift toward quantitative approaches in the methodology of linguistics. Specifically, whereas quantitative methods have long been a staple of sociolinguistic and psycholinguistic research, the past two decades have seen their expansion toward descriptive and theoretical grammar. In usage-based approaches to language in particular, like cognitive and probabilistic linguistics, a 'quantitative turn' has occurred that applies the statistical testing of hypotheses to data derived from text corpora. The central inspiration for Gard B. Jenset and Barbara McGillivray's book is the observation that this turn toward quantitative corpus studies has not yet penetrated historical linguistics to the same extent as some other subfields of linguistics. It accordingly sets out to introduce 'the framework for quantitative historical linguistics'. The seven chapters fall roughly into two parts. In Chs. 1 to 3, a general argumentation in support of quantitative historical linguistics is developed, whereas Chs. 4 to 7 deal with the implementation of the ensuing program. The discussion of 'why' thus leads naturally to a discussion of 'how'.

Two threads run through the first part of the text: a specification of the kind of quantitative historical linguistics that the authors intend to propagate, and an argumentation in favor of the model in question. Important features of this argumentation are a description of the actual situation in historical linguistics and a conceptual defense of the approach against potential objections. Organizationally, Ch. 1 introduces both threads, Ch. 2 develops the first thread, and Ch. 3 the second.

With regard to the first thread, the first chapter introduces the authors' notion of quantitative research in historical linguistics by means of a double contrast. On the one hand, quantitative research differs from the conventional use of evidence in historical linguistics that rests on example-based categorical judgments about the existence of specific linguistic phenomena but does not look into probabilistic, distributional data about trends of variation and change of the phenomenon in question. On the other hand, quantitative historical research needs to go beyond raw frequencies, in the sense that the multidimensional nature of language requires a multivariate statistical approach. In the second chapter, this conception is further developed in terms of the distinction between CORPUS-BASED and CORPUS-DRIVEN approaches. Whereas the former turn to corpora primarily for illustration and confirmation, the latter use corpus data at two stages of the empirical process: corresponding to the distinction between exploratory and confirmatory statistics, quantitative distributional evidence is initially used to generate hypotheses, and subsequently for testing them.

With regard to the second thread, the text provides quantitative data (appropriately, one could say) to the effect that such a method is less entrenched in historical linguistics than other fields of linguistics. This argumentation rests on a comparison of the 2012 volume of *Language* with six journals with a (not necessarily unique) focus on language change, such as *Diachronica*, *Folia Linguistica Historica*, and *Language Variation and Change*. As an explanation for the observation that historical linguistics seems to be lagging behind, the book invokes early negative experiences with glottochronology, plus the influence of structuralist and generative theories (though this is of course a factor that is not specific to historical linguistics). At the same time, it is demonstrated how the rise of quantitative linguistics goes hand in hand with the growing availability of electronic corpus materials—a trend that obviously creates an opportunity for historical linguistics just as for the other branches of linguistics.