languages does not of course provide a typologically balanced picture, but the authors are aware of this. Much of the analysis presented depends on subtle judgments of available readings of various structures, and accounts such as these can only be based on in-depth analyses of languages for which these judgments can be elicited. The book provides a baseline and tools for the comparison of similar structures in typologically diverse languages and will be very useful to researchers studying these structures in all languages.

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English: The language of the Vikings. By JOSEPH EMBLEY EMONDS and JAN TERJE FAARLUND. (Olomouc modern language monographs 3.) Olomouc: Palacký University, 2014. Pp. 180. ISBN 9788024443829.

Reviewed by DAVID W. LIGHTFOOT, *Georgetown University*

English has horrendous orthography, an extremely complicated inventory of vowels, a few hundred irregular verbs, a huge vocabulary, and other features that make it ill-equipped to be a global language used by millions of people who must learn it in adulthood (Pullum 2015).

This results to some degree from the fact that English is a global language in a different sense, one that has been shaped in part by much population movement, both of different populations moving into England in ancient times and, more recently, of English speakers taking their language into many parts of the world in what is referred to euphemistically as 'language contact', often a brutal process serving to suppress and replace the indigenous languages of the colonized. At different stages of history England was dominated by invaders: British, migrants from all over the Roman Empire, Celts, Anglo-Saxons in the sixth century, Scandinavians in the ninth and tenth

centuries, and Norman French in the eleventh, all of whom left an imprint on the language of the residents. In modern times the language has absorbed words from the many languages encountered in the process of colonization. All of this, of course, has contributed to the multiplicity of vocabulary, different words from different roots with similar or even identical meanings.

Nonetheless, the standard textbook view is that English is some kind of 'gradual and imperceptibly changing object which smoothly floats through time and space' (Kiparsky 1968:175), changing from Old to Middle to Early Modern and then to present-day English, with various gradations in between but no major disruptions.

The early generativists dealing with change, by contrast, saw abstract grammars changing as children encountered new ambient language. Kiparsky went on: 'the transmission of language is discontinuous, and a language is recreated by each child on the basis of the speech data it hears' (see Lightfoot 2016). There may be new phenomena that trigger a single change at the abstract level, yielding a new structure that serves to generate many new phenomena that enter the language at the same time. This approach anticipated neo-Darwinian biologists' rejection of Darwin's gradualism and their appeal to punctuated equilibrium (Eldridge & Gould 1972), in turn based on Ernst Mayr's model of geographic speciation. This led to a focus on structural shifts across many historical disciplines, some known as Thomian 'catastrophes' or phase transitions at different stages of investigation.

Linguists also began identifying such saltations and understood them in terms of children acquiring new I-languages when exposed to new ambient language, such that the new E-language triggers new I-languages. Rich and deep explanations have been developed for some syntactic changes.

Anybody who has examined early English knows that there was substantial influence from Norse, many have noted major differences between Old and Middle English, and some scholars have claimed that Middle English's surprising properties result from a kind of creole status (Bailey & Maroldt 1977, Görlach 1986).

Joseph Emonds, a distinguished theoretical syntactician, and Jan Terje Faarlund, a leading Scandinavianist, now offer a radical challenge to the philologists' conception of English as progressing gradually and often imperceptibly from one stage to another. E&F postulate that so-called early Middle English, spoken and written in the East Midlands in the twelfth and thirteenth centuries, represents a new language, which they call Anglicized Norse, having a Scandinavian syntax alongside words descended from Old English antecedents. They build on work by philologists and syntacticians who argued for analyses that E&F now construe as aspects of a more comprehensive phase transition, and they muster considerable evidence for their analysis (for example, Denison's (1993:Ch. 9) work showing that Old English lacked subject raising).

E&F tease apart syntactic characteristics of West Germanic (Dutch, Frisian, High and Low German, and their later offshoots Yiddish and Afrikaans) and North Germanic (Scandinavian), all well-analyzed languages, and argue that Old English has the former characteristics and Middle English the latter. For example, North Germanic has underlying head-initial VPs, West Germanic 'at least partly' head-final; North Germanic has infinitives with a free morpheme *to*, while West Germanic uses inflection; North Germanic has subject raising, but West Germanic does not; restrictive relatives are introduced by invariant morphemes in North Germanic but by pronouns marked for case in West Germanic. E&F examine twenty such parameters and argue that early Middle English set them in the North Germanic fashion.

The core of their case lies in Ch. 3, which lists Norse properties of Middle English syntax that were absent from Old English; Ch. 4, which analyzes the possibility of 'split infinitives' in Middle and Modern English as in North Germanic, a feature that is quite different from Old English or West Germanic more generally; and Ch. 5, which lists morphosyntactic properties of Old English lacking in Old Scandinavian and Middle English. These central chapters constitute strong evidence for their claim.

For all twenty parameters, they offer a plausible demonstration that Old English set them in the West Germanic fashion and early Middle English in the North German fashion. There is much to be said about all of them. For example, E&F (84–93) offer excellent discussion of the very un-

usual property of preposition stranding, absent in most languages, including Old English and West Germanic (except Frisian and Dutch under very special circumstances), but found in the early and modern mainland Scandinavian languages. They also offer good, nuanced discussion of the change from head-final VPs to head-initial, recognizing work (e.g. Pintzuk 2002) showing the new V-DP order occurring sometimes in Old English.

Space limitations preclude discussion of the many rich analyses discussed by E&F. However, it is important to note that, whatever their descriptive success with the twenty or so properties discussed, by postulating that the I-languages of Norse speakers took over the syntax of the English speech community in the emergence of early Middle English, they attain a remarkable level of explanatory adequacy. For example, E&F discuss the verb-second properties of Old English, which show the complicating property of verb-third when the subject is pronominal and to the left of the finite verb (van Kemenade 1987): *ælc yfel he mæg don* 'each evil he can do'. Whatever this special property of Old English is, it is absent from Norse, and therefore, given their central hypothesis, it is predictably absent from Anglicized Norse and early Middle English. By claiming that it was Norse syntactic systems that emerged, E&F PREDICT that all twenty relevant properties should have emerged in the first Middle English texts and that they should not have emerged in piecemeal fashion—all of the new phenomena involve 'changes' in the direction of North Germanic parameter settings: 'The Old/Middle English break very much CONCERNS THE STRUCTURE OF THE LANGUAGE ITSELF; it is very little connected with how English was used or how it was perceived' (28); 'When English began to be written after the [Norman] Conquest, the new characteristics were clearly in the ascendant, most strongly in the former Danelaw … , while many aspects of Old English (as well as most of its vocabulary) had disappeared or been reduced to remnant percentages, especially in the South and Southwest' (29).

New I-languages emerge when the ambient external language, experienced by children, changes, and E&F offer, particularly in Ch. 1, an intriguing sociopolitical history of the I-languages used in medieval England, addressing several matters that have been raised by historians of English (a good companion to this book is Ingham's 2012 analysis of Anglo-Norman, reviewed in Lightfoot 2014). They discuss how much of England was subjugated by Scandinavians for 200 years and then mercilessly by the Normans. In the post-Conquest years, the English and the Scandinavians had a common oppressor. By 1100 all property of any note was in the hands of the Normans (Baugh 1957:192–94); under the Normans 'two previously separate peoples became united in servitude' (41); 'The miserable circumstances gave rise to a complete FUSION of two previously separate populations, speakers of old English and speakers of Scandinavian' (43). This is when we begin to observe significant Scandinavian influence on the language, not when the Scandinavians first arrived and constituted the ruling class. When the two dispossessed Germanic populations had a common enemy, the Scandinavians predominated in trade, agriculture, and in leading the opposition to the French. The Scandinavians settled permanently in the East Midlands and North and seem to have enjoyed notably higher economic status than the native English. Giving a plausible sociopolitical history of language in England enables us to understand better how the dominant features of external language, both spoken and written, eventually came to be Norse, explaining why children came to acquire Norse syntax. And if they acquired Norse syntax, we understand why there was a wholesale introduction of new constructions, as Old English became more and more restricted to impoverished peasants and eventually died out.

E&F have advanced a bold and very interesting hypothesis, which will be hard to accept for philologists committed to a view that languages only change gradually and imperceptibly. They show that radical phase transitions may indeed take place and may explain discontinuities like the long-noted divergence of Middle English from Old English. Their hypothesis is intrinsically interesting and is certainly an empirical claim. Consequently, it will stimulate productive research as scholars seek to build on what E&F have done or to refute the basic claim.

People seeking to further E&F's claims will try to seek insights about how Kroch-style competing grammars may coexist for a while and in what way, and will seek to draw implications for the ways in which we classify languages and the cladograms that define their historical interrelationships. People seeking to refute E&F will try to show how Norse properties were anticipated in Old English, and how the phenomena that E&F unify in fact show different histories.

E&F focus on the syntax of Anglicized Norse but they conclude with some ideas about its phonology.

Historians of English are indebted to E&F for raising big, new questions that will stimulate new work invigorating the field and leading to new conclusions that will have consequences for other areas of research, for the histories of other languages, for generalizations about language contact, and about the way that syntax may change across generations. Rewriting the history of English will not go unresisted, but traditionalists now have much to contend with. E&F have made a substantial contribution to our understanding of the history of English; it will be interesting to see how the coming debates pan out.

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African American slang: A linguistic description. By MACIEJ WIDAWSKI. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2015. Pp. 296. ISBN 9781107074170. $105 (Hb).

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Maciej Widawski's *African American slang* uniquely pairs a dictionary with a linguistic description of lexical patterns in African American slang. Together, both parts display the dialect's vast lexicon and also affirm that African American slang is a rule-governed system. Throughout the main text and the glossary, W cites over 5,000 examples from a wide range of modern and diverse resources, including movies, articles, and TV series. His study provides an easy-to-follow guide for an audience of linguists and nonlinguists alike.

This book contributes to the study of African American English by providing a detailed linguistic description of morphological, semantic, and pragmatic patterns in African American slang. While researchers have produced linguistic descriptions of the dialect's phonology and