

Bantu languages and their behavior in contexts involving vowel harmony. He asserts that masking arises when researchers rely on data that are impressionistically transcribed or otherwise incorrect for a variety of reasons. He offers methodologies to improve the accuracy of vowel transcription, and he closes with a case study on Swahili vowels and whether and to what extent available materials and the well-established Swahili orthography are guilty of masking.

With the anomaly of the final chapter's place in the volume aside, there are two back-to-back chapters that seem unbalanced in their polish and contribution compared to the others. TIMOTHY M. STIRZ's chapter on Caning provides many (often redundant) pages of data that reveal similar alternations in slightly different morphological contexts which reveal the same outcomes and arrive at the same point. He entertains three analyses but settles on none of them as a worthwhile option to frame his data. Endnotes are also off throughout the entire paper, and data formatting is inconsistent, which puts a burden on the reader. KATHERINE HOUT's short chapter briefly discusses three resolutions to vowel hiatus in Mushunguli; at issue are fairly predictable instances of blocked fusion that she transparently analyzes by appealing to a lexical stem-initial glide.

Without a doubt, the coeditors and authors of this volume should be commended for their contributions and for the strides that they continue to make in forging connections between documentary and descriptive linguistic research in the African context.

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**The historiography of generative linguistics.** By ANDRÁS KERTÉSZ. Tübingen: Narr Francke Attempto, 2017. Pp. 208. ISBN 9783823381563. \$68.99 (Hb).

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The great diversity of contemporary linguistic theories is well known and has been illustrated by a number of publications showcasing the various approaches. A few of the most recent volumes of this kind are Kiss & Alexiadou 2015, Bond et al. 2016, Müller 2016, and Stewart 2016. However, the similarly wide-ranging assessments and evaluations of the individual theories have not so far been given a comprehensive overview in the literature. The present volume does just this for the family of approaches known as Noam Chomsky's GENERATIVE GRAMMAR. Gleaning from the literature of the last forty years, András Kertész presents a broad spectrum of the diverging evaluations of this theory and suggests a novel interpretation of the historical process that has given rise to its different versions.

Bookended by an introduction and a concluding chapter, the volume consists of two main parts. The introduction defines the central problem of the book: 'What historiographical *framework*, *central hypothesis* and *basic terms* can account for the history of generative linguistics?'

(14; italics original). Part 1, titled ‘Metahistoriographical overview’, describes twenty-two alternative positions on this question, with each discussed in a separate subsection of the chapters. This well-balanced survey of the literature spanning the entire lifetime of the theory to date includes both positive and negative evaluations by linguists such as Cedric Boeckx, Randy Allan Harris, Konrad Koerner, Stephan Kornmesser, Robin Lakoff, James McCawley, Stephen Murray, Frederick Newmeyer, and Pieter Seuren, and concludes with Chomsky’s self-assessment (86–88). Part 2, ‘Toward a new historiography’, outlines an alternative historiographical approach proposed by K, demonstrates its applicability, and lists questions left open for further work. The concluding chapter returns to the central question raised in the introduction, highlights the author’s answer to it, and assesses its significance for linguistics historiography and linguistic theory. The presentation has a clear structure with well-defined goals and a relentlessly logical flow with intermediate summaries and previews. Notes appear as footnotes; there are indices of names and subjects at the end.

In Part 1, K surveys a set of reviews that focus on five milestone works by Chomsky published between 1957 and 1995: *Syntactic structures* (1957), *Aspects of the theory of syntax* (1965), *The sound pattern of English* (Chomsky & Halle 1968), *Lectures on government and binding* (1981), and *The minimalist program* (1995). A separate chapter is devoted to each. Each chapter is an independent unit while also forming a coherent narrative with the others. Due to the monumental influence of Thomas Kuhn’s 1962 book *The structure of scientific revolutions*, one third of the assessments that K analyzes are based on Kuhn’s philosophy of science (summarized on pp. 15–19); the remaining assessments assume other frameworks. There are three major issues that the various accounts address. One is continuity: is generative grammar a continuation of Bloomfieldian and neo-Bloomfieldian linguistics, or does it constitute a break? Second, if it is a break, can generative grammar be considered revolutionary, and if so, which of Chomsky’s five works created a revolution? Third, has generative grammar been a positive step forward, or is it to be viewed as a decline in linguistic theorizing?

The chapters of Part 1 have a uniform structure. In each, K first synthesizes the work by Chomsky that is at issue. This is then followed by the central theses of the evaluators (marked by T1, T2, etc., where T stands for ‘Thesis’), with the emerging solutions to the central problem of the book distilled into compact statements (marked as SP1, SP2, etc., where SP stands for ‘Solution (to the central) Problem (of the book)’). Thus, the seminal points of Part 1 can be conveniently extracted by locating the twenty-two Ts and SPs in the text. The descriptions of the accounts are supported by copious verbatim quotes. The twenty-two approaches are summarized, compared, charted (88–103), and evaluated by K in terms of six general criteria for historiographic studies. His conclusion is that the various assessments surveyed meet these criteria only partially and to different extents. This outcome motivates new approaches to the historiography of generative grammar, such as the one put forth by the author in the second part of the book.

Part 2 presents the author’s novel proposal for the historiography of generative grammar. It provides the following answer to the central question of the book: ‘The history of generative linguistics is a process of plausible argumentation based on the cyclic, prismatic, and retrospective re-evaluation of the linguist’s knowledge of grammars’ (124). The metascientific framework that it is based on is the P-MODEL presented in Kertész & Rákosi 2012; see also Kertész & Rákosi 2014. The p-model (‘p’ for ‘plausibility’) is designed to reflect the argumentation process of the analyst as she encounters and evaluates data and proposes solutions. It is based on seven principles: the recognition of the uncertainty of linguistic data, the employment of plausible statements instead of assertions deemed unconditionally true, plausible rather than deductive inference, plausible argumentation instead of logical structure, argumentation as a dynamic process rather than a static one, inconsistency tolerance rather than insistence on consistency, and the recognition of the plurality of solutions to problems rather than absolutism (126–27).

The key terms describing the process of plausible argumentation are CYCLICITY, PRISMATICITY, and RETROSPECTIVE REEVALUATION. The three notions are not distinct; all seem to be equally present in the process to throw light on it from somewhat different angles. They are presented on a par, but, as I see it, the seminal notion is prismaticity: the same data may be viewed from different perspectives in the light of new sources that alter the plausibility of the conclusions. Due to

the changes of perspective, the analyst may cycle back to an earlier stage of the argumentation and revise his hypotheses.

Plausible argumentation is a ubiquitous feature of human thinking, including grammatical analysis, scientific discourse in all domains, and everyday arguments. An example from linguistic theory pertains to the assertion that knowledge of language is modularly organized (131). This is a plausible statement supported by two similarly plausible premises: that language is part of human cognition, and that if the whole has property P, then the part also has property P. The degree of plausibility of the original point depends on the degrees of plausibility of the two premises. New information may supply additional premises, in the light of which the analyst may have to begin a new cycle of evaluating the original statement.

In Part 2, K invokes the general framework of the p-model to the specific task of assessing the history of generative grammar. It is revealing to see that this approach is akin to Chomsky's own view. In *Syntactic structures* (SS), Chomsky states that grammars are not fixed for all time; the discovery of new facts may prompt researchers to begin a new cycle of argumentation. The p-model, put forward independently, reflects Chomsky's insights, which are of course shared by many other researchers as well. In this sense, the p-model is not new; rather, it synthesizes, highlights, and explicates the general argumentation process of theory construction.

In light of the p-model's view of the evolution of generative grammar, the issues raised by the various evaluators surveyed in the first part of the book simply do not arise. Rather than taking a stand on whether generative grammar has been developing in continuity with Bloomfieldian and neo-Bloomfieldian views, whether it has or has not created a revolution, and whether it has been a positive or a regressive step, the framework opens up an inside view into the argumentation process that has led from structuralism to generative grammar and from earlier stages of the theory to subsequent stages. The concept is documented by case studies having to do with three topics dealt with in SS: the definition of language, the question of the type of grammar needed, and the introduction of the evaluation procedure. In each case, the conclusion is that the relevant statements in SS partly originate from Leonard Bloomfield and Zellig S. Harris, but, 'in the course of the plausible argumentation process, he [Chomsky] developed their cyclically, prismatically, and retrospectively re-evaluated variants' (165). The notion of continuity is not accepted in the sense of unchanged preservation, and the term *revolution* is not applicable (165, 182).

While the twenty-two views presented are subjected to stringent critique in the light of a set of well-defined criteria that historiographic accounts must meet (104–17), K's new proposal is not offered in competition with the earlier ones. On the one hand, it is shown to hold up to the general criteria articulated on pp. 105–6 by not being influenced by personal relationships between the historiographers and relative to Chomsky, not being driven by bias for or against particular works in generative linguistics or for generative linguistics as a whole, and being informed by recent developments in the philosophy of linguistics. On the other hand, the approach is not claimed to be better than other accounts and it is actually said to be narrower, since it does not consider social and rhetorical factors (122) or ideological or personal animosities that were shown in Part 1 to taint some of the assessments. The main difference between the previous assessments and the author's is that the former are judgmental while the latter is analytic. The author does not arbitrate over specific solutions or approaches; he construes his own as a possible alternative without denying the validity of the others. Rather than being based on evaluative concepts such as the revolutionary character of Chomsky's work and whether it is progressive or regressive, it probes into the actual process driving the evolution of theories, and as such it offers a measure of understanding how and why the path of generative grammar has taken the turns that it has.

That the author's proposal is not meant to be the final word is also shown by the list of six questions said to be left open (167–81). They include the historiographic perspective on grammatical proposals that are rejected at one stage but newly emerge later; identifying constant elements in the history of generative grammar; and the relationship between generative linguistics and its alternatives, such as generalized phrase structure grammar (GPSG) or lexical-functional grammar (LFG).

What is the significance of this book? The author states that his is the first systematic analysis of the historiography of generative linguistics (11). As far as I know, this is correct. One of its val-

ues is its informational content: it offers succinct summaries of each of Chomsky's five works and of the various evaluations. In addition, it puts forth an insightful view of the evolution of generative linguistics. The importance of the new approach lies in its contributions both to linguistic historiography and to linguistic theory (182–85). From the perspective of historiography, the new approach meets the six general criteria formulated on pp. 105–6. While K's argument does not pass judgment on any particular version of generative grammar or on the basic approach, it also offers food for thought for practicing linguists in that it reveals the fundamentally uncertain and provisional character of the solutions proposed for problems.

The most significant insights of the p-model appear to apply far beyond the pale of linguistic historiography. It bans the notion of exclusivity: of unique and unchanging answers to questions; instead, it argues for pluralism and dynamicity. In this view, the plurality of theories is not a fault but a benefit, and change is not fatal inconsistency but a natural step in the process of theory construction. The fundamentally nonabsolutistic, pluralistic approach of the p-model goes a long way toward softening and resolving conflicts between approaches and their proponents. The two basic concepts of this approach—diversity and change—are important ideas to be embraced in all aspects of human thought and action.

I can highly recommend this well-researched, transparently structured, articulate, and insightful book for linguists and philosophers of science, as well as for cognitive psychologists. Given that it requires only some basic knowledge of linguistics, it does not call for a background in the philosophy of science, and it is couched in a highly reader-friendly style, it is appropriate reading for graduate and undergraduate students as well.

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**The semantics of evaluativity.** By JESSICA RETT. New York: Oxford University Press, 2015. Pp. 202. ISBN 9780199602483. \$50.

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JESSICA RETT's book investigates the phenomenon called 'evaluativity' (also referred to as 'norm-relatedness' by Bierwisch 1989) in degree and other constructions. A construction is evaluative if it requires that a degree exceed some contextual standard. The author argues in favor of