A central objective of diachronic linguistics consists in identifying basic regularities of language change, in order to contribute to a deeper understanding of language and human cognition. One particularly systematic type of change that lends itself to this kind of investigation is linguistic cycles, that is, instances of recurrent directional, stepwise change and renewal of linguistic markers, found repeatedly within one language but also across languages.

The concept of linguistic cycles (or spirals), already explicit in von der Gabelentz 1901 and Meillet 1912, has proven very fruitful in recent years, with the renewed interest in the history of negation and JESPERSEN’S CYCLE (Willis et al. 2013, among others), and also in a number of other linguistic areas. Evidence of this is the volume Cyclical change continued, which contains a dozen papers based on the 2014 workshop Linguistic Cycles II at Arizona State University. Elly van Gelderen has refined our understanding of cycles, not least by relating it to her theory of feature economy (van Gelderen 2004). Cyclical change continued forms a perfect companion to van Gelderen 2009 and 2011. While the latter gives a systematic overview of known cycles in various areas of morphosyntax, expanding the analysis within the framework of minimalist generative syntax, the former collects a number of in-depth empirical studies, as does this volume. Some of the topics overlap with the 2009 volume, but the empirical coverage is extended to further languages and new cycles are discussed as compared to the previous collection (e.g. distributive, reflexive, and future cycles).

The first part, entitled ‘Characteristics of cycles’, is opened by ELLY VAN GELDEREN’s ‘Cyclical change continued: Introduction’, characterizing the scientific background of the concept of linguistic cycles. The special emphasis is on the distinction between microcycles (in subparts of grammar) and macrocycles, that is, cycles in language type from synthetic to analytic and back (Hodge 1970)—a problematic concept not least because of the fuzziness of the terms ‘analytic’ and ‘synthetic’. Putting the contributions into a wider context, van Gelderen identifies overarching questions about cycles, including typical steps, sources, and influencing factors.

In ‘What cycles when and why?’, MARIANNE MITHUN scrutinizes the Iroquoian languages of North America for instances of cyclical change, identifying reflexive, determiner/DP, distributive, pronominal, and negative cycles driven by weakening and subsequent renewal of pragmatic force, and a locative cycle primarily driven by language contact.

The second part of the volume, ‘Macro-cycles’, is devoted to the above-mentioned synthetic-analytic cycles. In ‘Is radical analyticity normal? Implications of Niger-Congo and Southeast Asia for typology and diachronic theory’, JOHN McWHORTER argues that the near-total lack of

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inflectional morphology in the respective languages represents a diachronic anomaly that, contra Hodge (1970), cannot be attributed to some grammar-internal synthetic-analytic cycle, but can only be explained as the result of interrupted language transmission, due to widespread L2 acquisition, which is evidenced by crucial parallels to pidginization/creolization and a layered areal distribution of analyticity.

Benedikt Szmarcedesanyi is less critical of the notion of a synthetic-analytic macrocycle. He describes ‘An analytic-synthetic spiral in the history of English’ on the basis of an aggregative measure of analyticity/syntheticity as the ratios of function/inflected words in texts. While analyticity increased until late Early Modern English, the language subsequently ‘spiral back’: twentieth-century texts are comparable to twelfth/thirteenth-century texts in this respect. One might wonder whether all parameters used are equally indicative of analyticity (e.g. ratio of complementizers) and—especially in the light of the previous chapter—what triggers this cycle.

‘The interaction between the French subject and object cycles’ is investigated in the ensuing paper by Mariana Bahtchevanova and Elly van Gelderen. The subject agreement cycle, well known for first/second-person singular in Colloquial French, is shown to hold also for third person and plural, displaying different stages within the cycle. In the case of the third person, the cycle is accelerated: the doubling stage between the original pronouns reanalyzed as verbal agreement markers and the new emphatic pronouns is skipped and the latter appear straightforward on their own. As clitic object pronouns inhibit the adjacency of the reanalyzed subject pronouns to the verb, they are omitted, placed postverbally, or are themselves reanalyzed as verbal agreement markers so that the subject cycle triggers an object cycle.

The third part of the volume, ‘The negative micro-cycles’, deals with Jespersen’s cycle, ‘the most widely cited example of a linguistic cycle’ (219), and also lesser-known negative cycles. Ljuba N. Veselinova’s paper, ‘The negative existential cycle viewed through the lens of comparative data’, investigates languages from six families (Slavic, Uralic, Polynesian, Turkic, Dravidian, Berber). In the development of markers of existential negation into standard neg-markers and the subsequent renewal of existential negation, stages with variation are common and diachronically persistent, while a full cycle is rarely completed in a reconstructable time span. Veselinova proposes an extended concept of a negative lexical cycle to cover extension of other lexicalizations including negation.

The distinction between this negative lexical cycle and Jespersen’s cycle could have been sharpened by relating it to the following papers, notably Johan van der Auwera and Frens Vossem’s ‘Jespersen cycles in the Mayan, Quechuan and Maipurean languages’, which starts with a summary of research on Jespersen’s cycle. It then expands the empirical coverage of Jespersen’s cycle to 530 languages of Central and South America and discusses its relation to constructional asymmetry (irrealis marking under negation), other sources of renewal (e.g. nominal privatives), word order (new negators also left of the verb), and areal distribution.

An even more detailed picture of Mayan negation is drawn by Clifton Pye in his chapter ‘Mayan negative cycles’. While some Mayan languages display an incipient Jespersen’s cycle, the extension of neg-markers by paradigm leveling, development of new neg-markers for specific contexts, and renewal on the basis of aspectual/modal clitics that modify the original neg-marker rather than the predicate (an instance of the complementizer cycle linked to the particular syntactic structure) are more common.

‘Pronominal, quantifier, and modal cycles’ form the fourth and most comprehensive part of the volume, starting with Tom Givón’s ‘The diachrony of pronominal agreement—in Ute and maybe elsewhere’. He gives a detailed description of the discourse-pragmatic functions of various reference-coding devices (demonstratives, independent and clitic pronouns, zero anaphora, NPs) based on their distribution in narrative Ute texts, with a brief section on ‘Diachronic interpretation of the data’ at the end hypothesizing that obligatory pronominal agreement can develop only in languages with flexible word order and second-position pronominal clitics. The paper by Bahtchevanova and van Gelderen, the only other paper dealing solely with pronominal cycles, would have fitted more naturally in this part of the volume, too.

The following two papers are concerned with the development of different degree expressions. Johanna L. Wood investigates ‘The degree cycle’. In the change of English that, this, and thus
into degree adverbs, cyclical change is identified only with *thus*, which changes from a low (VP) to a high (CP) adverb and is currently declining and being replaced by *thussly* or *therefore*. Since this development seems rather to be part of a complementizer cycle and *this/that* (which develop into degree adverbs by shifting from the extended DP-projection into that of AP) do not cycle, it is not entirely clear what constitutes the degree cycle. One line to take might be to investigate *this/that* as renewals of earlier degree adverbs (*so/as*) or to look at partial parallels in the development from manner to degree readings with the comparative cycle (the repeated development of markers for manner/non-degree-equatives > degree equatives > comparatives; Jäger 2010).

**Remus Gergel’s** contribution, ‘Modality and gradation: Comparing the sequel of developments in “rather” and “eher”’, extends his paper in van Gelderen 2009 by further considerations of triggers and the range of possible meanings. English *rather* (and similarly German *eher*) shows a development from temporal-based comparison to modal meanings (ordering preferences, for *eher* also likelihood) and finally modificational uses. The change is triggered by the restricted distribution of *rather* in its original meaning and involves deletion of part of the original logical form (LF), including loss of movement.

In ‘All you need is another “need”: On the verbal NPI cycle in the history of German’, Łukasz Jędrejowski traces the repeated replacement of the German modal negative polarity item (NPI) ‘need to’ from *dürfen* to *bedürfen* and finally *brauchen*. These start as lexical verbs with DP arguments, and turn into deontic and later epistemic modals through lexical split and syntactic upward reanalysis, during which process they acquire and later lose NPI status.

The final paper, by Robert Santana LaBarge, also deals with verbal grammaticalization, viz. ‘The grammaticalization of *yao* and the future cycle from Archaic Chinese to Modern Mandarin’. Similarly to English *will*, Chinese *yāo/yào* has changed from a full verb taking DP arguments and a core meaning of volition and compulsion to a deontic modal and eventually to a future auxiliary. This is also analyzed as diachronic upward movement and supported by interaction with aspect markers and the observation of recent renewal of the original full verb as well as the deontic use.

As a whole, the volume contributes to the refinement of the concept of linguistic cycles, with different authors stressing different aspects on the basis of their data. While some stress the directional and systematic aspects of cycles, other authors underline the crucial repetitive nature of cycles. Cycles are generally taken to reside in morphosyntax. However, van Gelderen’s restriction to ‘the disappearance of a particular word’ (3) seems too narrow; cycles may be observed that involve just affixes (e.g. repeated reanalysis of plural nouns as singular forms and renewal of plural forms), and Gergel’s contribution shows that cycles also hold in semantics. If widened to repeated directional change and renewal of linguistic forms/markers, the concept of cycles might even apply to phonology.

Concerning the trajectory of cycles, Santana LaBarge holds that ‘an intermediary stage must always exist in which newer forms are emerging while older forms remain’ (416), whereas Veselinova and Bahtchevanova & van Gelderen describe cycles where this stage is skipped. As is evident from several papers, where doubling stages exist, they do not necessarily involve cooccurrence of the original and new markers in one clause, as in Jespersen’s cycle, but often simply coexistence of two alternative markers within the language, with functional competition between the two leading to loss of the original marker.

In addition to reduction due to the cognitive phenomenon of routinization on the one hand and the expressive need for renewal on the other, further factors are brought into view as triggers of cycles. These include distributional restrictions, frequency of certain morphological forms relative to others, constant entailments, syntactic properties (positions, word order), and language contact. Another aspect original to this volume is the discussion of cycles and the resulting areal patterns, with forms that have progressed the furthest at the center and a layered spread of change around them; see the chapters by McWhorter and by van der Auwera & Vossen. The latter take these areal patterns to be so intimately linked to this type of change that the lack of them ‘makes one suspicious’ (204) about whether the respective languages are aptly described as having undergone cyclical change.
In some places, the use of terminology could have been more consistent across papers; for example, the same cycle is referred to by Pye as the ‘existential cycle’, by Veselinova as the ‘negative existential cycle’, and by van der Auwerda & Vossen as the ‘Croft cycle’; the term ‘microcycles’ is used by van Gelderen to refer to cycles in subparts of grammar but by Gergel and Jędrzejowski to refer to subparts of cycles/development of one item.

Many of the papers are nicely related. At times, the discussion would have profited from referring explicitly to other papers investigating similar phenomena (McWhorter and Szmcensanyi on analyticity/syntheticity, chapters in Part III on negation, McWhorter and van der Auwerda & Vossen on areal patterns, Pye and Bahtchevanova & van Gelderen on reanalysis of clitics inhibited by other clitics, Jędrzejowski and Santana LaBarge on syntactic positions of modals above VP).

In sum, the volume constitutes a valuable contribution to historical linguistics and the theory of language change. It increases the empirical coverage of cycles by presenting new data from a vast range of languages that is couched in different theoretic frameworks, sharpens our understanding of this inspiring and fascinating concept, as well as its typical characteristics and triggers, and highlights the principled and universal nature of language change.

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