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 dynamism. 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 couchèd in a highly reader-friendly style, it is appropriate reading for graduate and undergraduate students as well.

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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
an approach that treats evaluativity as an implicature. The self-defined goal of the book is to apply the Gricean theory of conversational implicature (CI) to R’s earlier work (Rett 2007, 2008) in terms of markedness and semantic competition. Knowledge of R’s earlier work is advantageous but not obligatory when approaching the present book. Besides offering a new analysis of evaluativity as implicature, this book is an excellent overview of evaluativity in degree constructions, with extensions to other domains. It presupposes knowledge in generative grammar, more specifically familiarity with degree semantics (see e.g. Cresswell 1976, von Stechow 1984, Beck 2011 for an overview) and CI (Grice 1975). The theoretical orientation of this work is formal compositional semantics in the spirit of Heim & Kratzer 1998.

The book is structured as follows: Chs. 2–4 provide the background by introducing the null morpheme POS in Ch. 2, the null morpheme EVAL (cf. Rett 2007, 2008) in Ch. 3, and a brief review of a theory of implicature in Ch. 4 along with a discussion of markedness. Ch. 5 is central in that it introduces the new account of evaluativity as an implicature and applies it to some core phenomena. Possible extensions to other phenomena are presented in Ch. 6, and Ch. 7 contains overall conclusions.

In the introductory chapter, the author addresses two problems of previous approaches to evaluativity in positive constructions such as 1a: the extra argument and the evaluativity problem. She points out that it is wrong to conflate these two issues. The covert operator originally dubbed POS, used to explain positive constructions in a framework working with degrees, is very powerful in that it solves both the extra argument problem (by existential closure) and the question of evaluativity. R discusses examples like 1a–c, in which POS cannot account for the presence of evaluativity, and 2a–b, in which it cannot account for its absence.

(1) a. Adam is tall.
   b. How short is Adam?
   c. Adam is as short as Doug.

(2) a. Adam is shorter than Doug.
   b. Adam is as tall as Doug.

R also discusses the wide distribution of the phenomenon to other constructions besides comparatives rejecting POS.

In Ch. 2, R introduces the basics of degree semantics, according to which degrees are semantic primitives. She addresses the semantics of gradable adjectives and elaborates on the nature of scales. She provides concise overviews on numerals, measure phrases (MPs), and degree quantifiers. The last part of Ch. 2 is dedicated to a more profound discussion of evaluativity in positive constructions and to POS. R discusses the different formulations of POS by authors over the course of time and finally possible extensions of POS to the verbal domain where evaluativity occurs optionally. This is the strongest argument in favor of divorcing the evaluativity component of the original POS from its type-shifting component (separation of evaluativity and existential quantification).

In Ch. 3, R explains why the covert EVAL-operator (Rett 2007, 2008), a modifier version of POS, is not sufficient and why it needs to be supplemented with the account of its distribution outside of positive constructions and comparatives. She critically assesses her own EVAL theory, outlines its strengths and weaknesses, and anticipates the possible objection that we do not see an overt manifestation of this operator in the grammar crosslinguistically. Among the strengths of her old account, she highlights that it correctly predicts that evaluativity can exist outside of positive constructions, since it treats evaluativity as a property independent of whether the adjective’s degree argument is overtly manipulated. As to the weaknesses, the internal argument asymmetry in equatives needs a stipulation, MPs are also a problem, and the explanation of evaluativity in the equative is not satisfying. These drawbacks are the main motivation for introducing a new approach to evaluativity. Using absolute, periphrastic comparatives and comparison of deviation (COD), R shows convincingly that the evaluativity component needs to be divorced from positive constructions. Next, the author situates evaluativity in the context of a larger empirical phenomenon by explaining it as a CI. Further on, the principle of markedness-based competition is introduced. The chapter ends with a discussion of three other semantic accounts of
evaluativity, namely evaluativity as quantifier domain restriction (Schwarzschild 2012), evaluativity and dynamic update (Barker 2002), and modifications of R’s old EVAL account by Sassoon (2011) and Breakstone (2012).

In Ch. 4, R provides a general overview of Grice 1975 in which she discusses the controversial nature of the properties of CIs and shows two counterexamples to the claim that cancelability is not a sufficient property for CIs, but a necessary condition. R’s plan is to show clear parallels between evaluativity and established CIs. The author uses Horn’s (1984) division of pragmatic labor where he contrasts the Gricean maxim of quantity with that of manner. She also introduces his Q (quantity) and R (relevance) principles, elaborating on the empirical predictions that follow from these principles for equatives.

The aim of Ch. 5 is to show that evaluativity arises as a CI that sometimes takes the shape of a quantity implicature and sometimes of a manner implicature. In §5.1, R implements Katzir’s (2007) formalization of the Q principle. She introduces the marked meaning principle (based on Horn’s principle of least effort). R encodes the EVAL account in the (neo-)Gricean framework by looking at different phenomena: MPs, equatives, positive constructions, and evaluativity across different adjective classes. According to the new account, MPs such as 6 feet tall will not enter into competition with the negative antonym 6 feet short because such a form is unavailable. In equatives, evaluativity is modeled as a manner implicature. The new account, like the old one, predicts that equatives demonstrate a polarity asymmetry concerning evaluativity (compare the equative in 1c, which is evaluative due to the negative form of the adjective, to the equative in 2b, which is not evaluative by virtue of using only the positive form of the adjective). But the explanation is of course a different one: the antonymous constructions are actually synonymous except for evaluativity, and are therefore subject to markedness competition. Evaluativity in positive constructions like 1a results from an uninformativity-based quantity implicature (a subspecies of quantity implicature) in that they are not cancelable following Grice’s treatment of tautologies like Women are women. Since positive constructions are semantically trivial, they take on a nonconventional, evaluative meaning. In §5.4, R discusses how her new approach could be extended from relative adjectives to different evaluativity patterns across adjective classes, within adjective classes, and across languages. Absolute, total, and partial adjectives behave differently with respect to evaluativity. R elaborates on differences between these classes and comes to the conclusion that the new implicature-based approach can handle the evaluativity patterns of all the adjective classes. However, R is ready to admit that only a strict subset of relative adjective antonym pairs behave identically to tall and short. The chapter is concluded by a discussion of the strengths of the implicature-based account as opposed to other accounts.

Ch. 6, discussing extensions of evaluativity as implicature to other domains, is definitely the most exploratory. It opens with analytic comparatives such as Simon is more beautiful than Brian in different languages. R describes them as marked and therefore evaluative when compared to their synthetic counterparts. She discusses cases from Russian, Bulgarian, Navajo, and Macedonian and argues that the new account can very naturally, by using the markedness competition, make the right predictions about evaluativity in comparison constructions—while the EVAL account cannot. In §6.2.2, R discusses subcomparatives, or, using her terminology, two-parameter comparatives. She distinguishes two types: indirect comparatives (ICs) and CODs. She compares the latter to positive constructions that are evaluative because they are degree tautologies, and therefore are meaningless unless they carry an evaluativity implicature (161). The parallel to CODs is that since they combine adjectives which are associated with different dimensions, they would be meaningless unless they are evaluative. In this case, evaluativity comes about, again, as an uninformativity-based quantity implicature that behaves like a repair strategy. R concludes Ch. 6 with a discussion of ‘evaluative DPs’, which are taken to illustrate that the phenomenon of evaluativity strengthening can be extended to further domains. She shows that evaluativity exists outside of constructions with gradable predicates.

The author concludes with an excellent chapter-by-chapter summary of the whole book in Ch. 7, with extremely enlightening succinct discussions of the strengths and weaknesses of the new approach as compared to the old one.
This book is the best overview of the phenomenon of evaluativity that I know of and the best attempt at a unifying account of evaluativity in different grammatical phenomena. It makes a clear and convincing argument in favor of a more general mechanism, namely that of implicature, to deal with evaluativity across different constructions and therefore does not need to postulate the covert semantic operator relied upon in R’s earlier work. The background sections of the book provide instructive overviews of various relevant topics, such as relative vs. absolute adjectives, degree constructions in general, and many more. In comparison to Rett 2007, 2008, where evaluativity is treated as a covert operator, this book represents an impressive development. The switch to an account at the semantics-pragmatics interface has significant repercussions for the theory of evaluativity: one of the improvements of the new approach is that it makes the right predictions for a larger number of constructions than the old one does, for instance, for the obligatoriness of evaluativity in negative-antonym equatives and evaluativity in degree questions and degree demonstratives. In summary, the major benefit of the new approach is that it provides a unified, independently motivated treatment of evaluativity, where it arises as an implicature when it is needed to supplement semantic meaning or to explain the use of marked forms.

Such a grand enterprise cannot be undertaken without some shortcomings: the analysis remains rather tentative or not fully spelled out on several occasions, namely in the case of relative adjectives other than tall and short in §5.4.2, subcomparatives in §6.2.2 (where it is not clear why some subcomparatives are strengthened to C0Ds and some are not), and evaluative DPs in §6.3. However, the author herself acknowledges this shortcoming. Some parts of the analysis rely on auxiliary assumptions, for example, that implicatures can be calculated locally, which still need more research and strengthening. There is also no mention of the syntax of the investigated constructions, making it harder for the reader to see how the account would work in compositional semantics. The reader might also expect discussion of approaches to topics of vagueness, but R sets these issues aside and delimits the focus of the book to evaluativity. At the same time, there are some highly interesting excursions to pertinent and prevailing topics in linguistics, such as the role of the QUD (question under discussion) or the question of borders between entailed and projective content. The overall structure of the book is clear and consistent, guiding the reader by interim summaries at the right places. The book will appeal to researchers and (post)graduate students in the area of theoretical linguistics.

REFERENCES


Deaf people’s capacity to negotiate communication across different native sign languages has long been appreciated in the deaf world as a visual-language advantage. In recent decades a particular variety of ‘transnational’ signing has been promulgated by deaf leaders in international deaf domains of advocacy, sport, and academia; although the capitalized name suggests that International Sign (IS) is a fully conventional code, it is better described as a dynamic type of contact language that takes shape when deaf people from various countries interact in a sustained manner for specific purposes. Motivated by her experience with IS as a sign language interpreter working at international events, Lori Whynot set out to investigate an overarching question: How ‘universally’ comprehensible is expository IS as used in such contexts? Her doctoral research tackled this question by making a corpus of authentic IS texts by deaf conference presenters, analyzing linguistic features of the corpus, and then experimentally testing comprehension of texts by demographically diverse deaf audiences. This book reports on the findings of this research, and as such comprises the most theoretically and empirically ambitious description, to date, of the semiotic features, use, and comprehension of IS texts.

Ch. 1 introduces the emergence and definitions of IS (‘a range of semiotic strategies of interlocutors in multilingual sign language situations’; p. 1). Historical context and applied issues around the use of IS at international deaf events are described; for instance, W comments that the (increasing) provision of ‘interpretation via an unstable contact language [rather than via native sign languages] has not been without controversy’ (21). Concerns include the precision of information that IS can (or cannot) convey, and that the lexicon typically used in IS is more accessible to some language groups than others. Justifying this research, W also notes that training and standards for IS interpreting (or even direct use) are not yet firmly grounded in empirical documentation of a ‘moving target’.

Ch. 2 reviews the small literature showing that IS employs grammatical structures commonly found across native sign languages, and that a limited ‘conventional’ lexicon is supplemented by gestural, depicting, spatial, and other semiotic strategies (such as shared context). Previous studies indicate that American Sign Language (ASL; used in the US) and British Sign Language (BSL; UK) are key sources of IS vocabulary, and that lexical sources vary by user and context (Woll 1990, Rosenstock 2004), prompting W’s question about its comprehensibility outside the sphere of North America and Europe. Some previous studies have described features of IS (e.g. Allsop et al. 1995, Supalla & Webb 1995) or examined its use by interpreters (McKee & Napier 2002, Moody 2002); however, gaps remain in the description of IS and in the measurement of how well diverse deaf audiences make sense of IS texts. W’s study brings corpus-based and experimental evidence to critical consideration of questions not yet fully addressed in the existing literature.

A cognitivist framework has lately been applied to the analysis of lexico-grammar in signed languages (e.g. Taub 2001, Liddell 2003, Wilcox 2004), and W adopts this theoretical lens in Ch.