

JOSEPH, BRIAN D. and RICHARD D. JANDA, Editors. *The Handbook of Historical Linguistics*. Oxford: Blackwell, 2003. Pp. xviii, 881.

The Blackwell Handbook in Linguistics series has already yielded outstanding state-of-the-art summaries of many subfields of general linguistics: child language, second language acquisition, phonological theory, syntax, semantics, sociolinguistics, etc. This large, epoch-making work is particularly outstanding in that it comprehensively covers the contemporary state of affairs of such important historical linguistic topics as sound change, analogy, and grammaticalization. However, it is not a history of historical linguistics, although there are numerous pages containing developmental overviews which are, of necessity, historical in orientation.

The book consists of 25 well-researched, polished essays in the ever-growing field of comparative-historical linguistics. Due primarily to space limitations but also in accordance with my background and interests, I have chosen to focus on half of them which, I believe, have significant general interest. This decision, however, in no way implies that those not discussed are less satisfactory. These latter works are listed with their authors at the conclusion of the remarks.

The editors' preface (pp. xi-xviii) states that this publication is dedicated to the spirit of cooperative and collaborative research, which they hope always leads to the progress of an academic discipline (and I believe it does). Their following introduction, "On Language, Change, and Language Change – Or, Of History, Linguistics, and Historical Linguistics" (pp. 3-180) is a joint effort of unusual proportions reflecting "on what the present and future trajectory of work in our field may – and can – be" (p. 3). Like the editors, I hold that "the greatest achievements of historical linguistics are yet to come" (p. 130), but in order for such to take place, tomorrow's linguists must certainly know their ABCs that are so well covered in this tome.

Robert L. Rankin's "The Comparative Method" (pp. 183-212) illustrates the notion of cognate using Siouan languages (p. 190): Mandan and Dakotan *pti:* and *pte* 'bison' are very close, whereas Crow *bišé:* is more divergent. The comparative method works because of what is known as the regularity postulate, i.e., sounds change in a regular fashion, and linguists try to account for

any exceptions. I agree with the author, who proclaims that “the comparative method is arguably the most stable and successful of all linguistic methodologies” (p. 208).

S. P. Harrison’s “On the Limits of the Comparative Method” (pp. 213-43) demonstrates that the comparative method cannot help evaluate the following type of situation with the verb ‘eat’ in the Romance languages (pp. 236-7): Spanish and Portuguese *comer*, Catalan *menjar*, French *manger*, Italian *mangiare*, and Rumanian *mînca*. As it turns out, the aforementioned are all innovations because the Latin *edere* ‘to eat’ (cognate with English *eat* and German *essen*, etc.) was replaced.

The author clearly shows that “one must subgroup in order to reconstruct” (p. 239); however, subgrouping is problematic since cases of linguistic diffusion tend to obscure history. In Semitic linguistics, e.g., there have been several subgroupings on the position of Ugaritic (discovered in 1928) within the family (see Alan S. Kaye, "Does Ugaritic Go with Arabic in Semitic Genealogical Sub-Classification?", *Folia Orientalia* 28 [1991], pp. 115-28). Subgrouping depends on a hierarchy of significant features, and therein lie the differences of opinion.

Don Ringe’s “Internal Reconstruction” (pp. 249-61) looks at the synchronic structure of a language to offer generalizations concerning its evolution from prior stages. The author is right when he asserts that this method is “generally less reliable” than the comparative method (p. 244). By looking at German pairs such as */gra:t/*, pl. */gra:dəl/* ‘degree, rank’ and */gra:t/*, pl. */gra:təl/* ‘edge, ridge’, one can internally reconstruct **/gra:d/* for the former and */gra:t/* for the latter (pp. 245-6).

One of the most intriguing chapters deals with a hotly debated topic – relating one established language family with another. Lyle Campbell’s “How to Show Languages are Related: Methods for Distant Genetic Relationship” (pp. 262-82) examines glottochronology and multilateral or mass comparison (to which the late Joseph H. Greenberg was committed). Campbell is right that most linguists have rejected glottochronology (p. 264) and multilateral comparison, in which a few words are compared across many languages (p. 266).

Johanna Nichols’ “Diversity and Stability in Language” (pp. 283-310) deals with relative stability of selected linguistic elements, using data from Caucasian languages. She shows that the

probability of loss is low for the Swadesh 100-word and 200-word lists and personal pronouns; however, the latter are also subject to analogical change.

Paul Kiparsky's "The Phonological Basis of Sound Change" (pp. 313-42), reprinted from John Goldsmith, Ed., Handbook of Phonological Theory (Oxford: Blackwell, 1995), defends the views of the 19th century Neogrammarians that *Die Lautgesetze kennen keine Ausnahmen* (Sound laws admit of no exceptions).

Raimo Anttila's "Analogy: The Ways and Woof of Cognition" (pp. 425-40) makes a solid case that the transformational-generative ban on analogy was ill-conceived, and that: "Analogy must be used in explanation and understanding, problem-solving, decision-making, persuasion, communication, that is, in all kinds of learning or human activity" (p. 438).

Following up on the previous article, Hans Henrich Hock's "Analogical Change" (pp. 441-60) discusses four-part analogy (*dog: dogs; cow: cows* – the latter replaced *kine*, now archaic), leveling, morphophonemic extension, blending, contamination, recomposition, and folk etymology. The major conclusion offered is that "the Neogrammarian distinction between sound change and analogical (and semantic) change still has much to recommend it" (p. 457).

Bernd Heine's "Grammaticalization" (pp. 575-601) quotes Elizabeth Traugott's definition of grammaticalization "as the development of constructions ... via discourse practices into more grammatical material" (p. 581). Some of the diachronic findings of grammaticalization include (p. 594): (1) present tense and imperfective markers often come from progressive markers; (2) future tense markers often derive from motion verbs, such as *go*, or volitional ones, such as *want*; and (3) definite articles are almost always derived from demonstratives, and indefinite articles from numerals for 'one'. On the basis of grammaticalization theory, it is possible to offer some predictions about the future development of a language.

John J. Ohala's "Phonetics and Historical Phonology" (pp. 669-86) discusses the foundations of experimental historical phonology. The author convincingly argues that the inherent perceptual ambiguity in the speech signal itself constitutes what he calls "mini-" sound changes (p. 684). As he so eloquently sums up his essay: "It is rather a question of which of all the

mini-sound changes that crop up constantly are for some reason ‘selected’ via psychological and social factors to be copied by other speakers.” I recommend Jean Aitchison’s essay “Psycholinguistic Perspectives on Language Change “ (pp. 736-43) which sums up what we presently know on the topic of psychological factors.

The remaining authors and their essays are: Mark Hale, “Neogrammarian Sound Change;” Gregory R. Guy, “Variationist Approaches to Phonological Change;” Richard D. Janda, “‘Phonologization’ as the Start of Dephonetization – Or, On Sound Change and its Aftermath: Of Extension, Generalization, Lexicalization, and Morphologization;” Wolfgang Dressler, “Naturalness and Morphological Change;” Brian D. Joseph, “Morphologization from Syntax;” David Lightfoot, “Grammatical Approaches to Syntactic Change;” Susan Pintzuk, “Variationist Approaches to Syntactic Change;” Alice C. Harris, “Cross-linguistic Perspectives on Syntactic Change;” Marianne Mithun, “Functional Perspectives on Syntactic Change;” Joan Bybee, “Mechanisms of Change in Grammaticalization: The Role of Frequency;” Elizabeth Closs Traugott, “Constructions in Grammaticalization;” Benjamin W. Fortson IV, “An Approach to Semantic Change;” Sarah Grey Thomason, “Contact as a Source of Language Change;” Walt Wolfram and Natalie Schilling-Estes, “Dialectology and Linguistic Diffusion.”

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