REVIEW OF BREITBARTH, LUCAS & WILLIS (2020), *THE HISTORY OF NEGATION IN THE LANGUAGES OF EUROPE AND THE MEDITERRANEAN*, VOLUME II: *PATTERNS AND PROCESSES*

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1 INTRODUCTION

As Anne Breitbarth, Christopher Lucas and David Willis comment in the preface of their new book, negation has remained of constant interest in linguistic research during the last couple of decades. This interest in one of the few true linguistic universals has led to a body of work that is large and diverse in regard to the languages and time periods studied, and to the focus and theoretical assumptions that are made by individual researchers. This diversity, and the tendency for diachronic studies to focus on individual languages, is exemplified by the first volume of this two-volume publication, part of the *Oxford Studies in Diachronic and Historical Linguistics* series, *Case Studies* (Breitbarth, Lucas & Willis 2013), a collection of chapters written by experts on the history of negation of individual European and Mediterranean languages. The present volume, then, *Patterns and Processes*, co-authored by the editors of the first, offers an opportunity to take stock of the work carried out in recent decades on the diachrony of negation within individual languages, and draw out the empirical generalizations that can be made over the changes that have occurred in the expression of sentential negation and indefinites in the scope of negation. Of course, the authors also offer an account of these changes, and, though a generative framework is adopted,

pragmatics and, in particular, language contact, also feature in their multiple causation approach to the cyclical developments that are observed in the diachrony of sentential negation and indefinites.

This review is organized as follows: Section 2 provides a brief overview of the structure, scope and contents of the book; Section 3 highlights a handful of comments and criticisms on the content, followed by concluding remarks in Section 4.

2 OVERVIEW

As this type of volume necessitates, the introductory chapter outlines the usage of terminology, the study's scope, and the framework. The scope of the investigation is limited by considering mainly languages with 'symmetric' (Miestamo 2005; 2003; 2007) sentential negation constructions, as well as languages whose developments in the expression of sentential negation are typical of the 'Scandinavian-style cycle' (van Gelderen 2011), whereby a negative argument or adverb develops into a sentential negator.[1] The authors adopt a generative framework, and make frequent recourse to certain third-factor principles, above all van Gelderen's (2008, 2009, 2011) Feature Economy, and Cardinaletti & Starke's (1999) Minimize Structure, as well as the Accord Maximization Principle (Schütze 1997: 112–123). For their account of contact-induced change, the authors develop a model based upon the assumption that individual bilingual speakers initiate change (cf. Van Coetsem, 1988, 2000), through either the 'imposition' of linguistic material from their psycho-linguistically dominant language upon the recipient language, or the 'borrowing' of material from the source language into the speaker's dominant recipient language.

The remainder of the book is divided into two main sections: *Part I: Jespersen's Cycle* (chapters 2–4) addresses the diachronic changes that occur in the expression of sentential negation whereby the standard clausal negator is replaced by a new item in a pattern of cyclical renewal, while *Part II: Quantifier Cycles and Indefinites* (chapters 5–7) examines developments in indefinites in the scope of negation and the interaction of these developments with changes to the expression of sentential negation. The internal structure of Parts I and II is the same. The first of the three chapters records empirical generalizations in relation to Jespersen's Cycle (Part I), and in relation to indefinites in the scope of negation, where two cyclical developments are identified: the quantifier cycle and the free-choice cycle (Part II); the second aims to account for the internal motivations of the empirical observations using formal approaches;

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1 Rather than 'Givon's Cycle' (Givón 1978; van Gelderen 2011) or 'Croft's Cycle' (Croft 1991).

the third develops an account for external motivations of change, examining to what extent language contact has played a role. The third chapters of each section also contain a case study focusing on specific language contact situations: contact between Coptic, Egyptian Arabic, and Berber varieties in North Africa in Part I, and Welsh and English in Part II.

3 Comments and criticism

The book's introduction focuses on presenting the terminology surrounding negation and indefinites in the scope of negation. Space is given first to distinguishing between standard negation and sentential negation on the basis of form (cf. Payne 1985) and semantic scope, which is followed by an introduction to Jespersen's cycle (Dahl 1979; Jespersen 1917). Of note is that the authors distinguish between negative concord items and negative quantifiers based on how they interact with sentential negation, which they claim diverges from other uses in the literature which tend to subsume the two into a single group, citing Hansen (2014), Penka (2011), and de Swart (2006). However, both Hansen and de Swart identify negative concord items, which they both term n-words, as a separate category of items that display behavioural properties of both negative quantifiers and NPIs.[2] The important thing is that the terminology is used consistently throughout the book. The clarification of the terminology, though a requirement for any volume on a subject with such a large literature and the inevitable variation in usage that typically follows, is also a strength of the book for readers who are not familiar with the field of negation and its diachronic study, by making it accessible to them. The introduction to the authors' framework on the other hand takes for granted that the reader will be familiar with the vocabulary and fundamentals of generative syntax (e.g., 'merge' on p. 25). This isn't necessarily a criticism, as at no point does the volume claim to be for novices in syntax, but it is somewhat at odds with the careful exposition of terms relating to negation.

The empirical chapters are a particular highlight of the book. The examination of cross-linguistic data from a wide range of languages has enabled the authors to identify important trends in the developments that are observed: for example, the importance of certain bridging contexts in the instantiation of incipient Jespersen's Cycle (pp. 45–62), as well as the source constructions for (negative) indefinites undergoing the quantifier cycle (pp. 164–174). One criticism is that, in the section on lexical sources for Jespersen's Cycle, the

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2 However, in the HSPG model adopted by de Swart, no lexical difference is assumed between negative quantifiers and negative concord items, and therefore de Swart uses the term *neg expression* to generalize over both for much of the paper.

authors include clause-final repeated negators of the type found in Brazilian Portuguese, Afrikaans, several southern Dutch dialects and some Gallo-Romance varieties spoken in northern Italy, yet they are omitted from the analysis in later chapters. While it is reasonable to assume that the developments associated with this type of negator differ from the others treated in this book, given that there is no renewal of the morphological form of the negator in this case, its inclusion or exclusion ought to be justified either way. Nonetheless, to have these empirical generalizations in one place is a useful tool which will allow researchers of diachronic cyclical developments in sentential negation and indefinites to compare and add their own observations to those made in this volume.

In their analysis of the internal motivations for the empirical observations, the authors argue that there is an interplay of semantic-pragmatic factors and internal syntactic changes. With regard to the former, it is the conventionalization of a scalar implicature of the source constructions for Jespersen's Cycle and the quantifier cycle, and the reanalysis of a universal scalar implicature as existential in the free-choice cycle, with clausal comparatives as the bridging context, that is shown to be crucial (pp. 78–9; p.206). In the development of the syntactic analysis, the authors combine the recent efforts of several generative syntacticians, though they notably adopt a NegP-free approach, in contrast to much recent work on negation in generative syntax (cf., among others, van Gelderen 2011; Roberts & Roussou 2003; Zanuttini 1997; Zeijlstra 2004). For their analysis of indefinites involved in the cyclical developments described, the authors adapt Leu's (2005) proposal that the internal structure of indefinites contains two functional heads: Q and Restr, with Q hosting the determiner-like element (e.g. *any*, *some*) and Restr the nominal like element (e.g. *thing*, *body*). In their analysis of Jespersen's Cycle, it is van Gelderen's (2008, 2009, 2011) Feature Economy and Cardinaletti & Starke's (1999) Minimize Structure that drive the developments. Table 3.1 (p.107) summarizes the authors' classification of negative markers that occur in the cycle and the principle that brings about the changes to their properties.

Marker	distribution	formal feature	complexity	reason
Strong	free, constituent neg	[FOC], [iNEG]	phrase	MS
Weak	adjoined to vP	[iNEG]	phrase	MS
Clitic	clitic (e.g. on T)	[iNEG] > [uNEG]	head	FE
Affix	affix on verb	[uNEG] > ∅	head	FE

MS = Minimize Structure; FE = Feature Economy

Table 3.1 The four classes of negative marker and their properties

The integration of semantics and pragmatics into a generative account of Jespersen's Cycle and indefinite cycles is justified, particularly in the discussion of how the cyclical developments are instantiated, if we are to accept, as the authors do, that the "push" of items with a scalar semantics is what at least partially drives the cycles. One of the issues faced by a volume of this kind, which deals with such a large subject matter, is the loss of detail with respect to the nuances in the developments of individual languages. This is true not only in the case of the empirical chapters, but also in the analysis. For example, the authors focus on the classic case of the quantifier cycle, in which indefinites become increasingly negative over time, becoming restricted from weaker to stronger NPI contexts along Haspelmath's (1997) implicational map of indefinite functions. Though the authors acknowledge that counter-cyclic developments occur (i.e., from more negative to more positive), their analysis accounts for the more typical cycle, with counter-cyclic developments characterized as instances of analogy, in which items that are morphologically or semantically negative from their inception join a paradigm, adopting the other members' properties (p. 163). However, studies that closely examine the changes to indefinites of individual languages have shown the need to depart from Haspelmath, such as Gianollo's recent (2018) work on Latin indefinites, and Hansen (2012, 2014) on temporal indefinites in French, who argues against the analogy hypothesis according to the fact that members of a paradigm do not necessarily behave alike synchronically.

The chapters on the role of language contact as a motivator for change promise to be among the most novel contributions that the volume offers to the diachronic study of linguistic cycles. The model that the authors develop based on Van Coetsem's (1988, 2000) work is clearly stated and applied to situations of language contact, and particularly interesting is the work on transfer in indefinites, which demonstrates that imposition is more frequent than borrowing (pp. 222–31). Overall, the authors do a good job of distinguishing change caused by contact from internal motivations, as seen particularly in the case study of Welsh and English in Part II. The problem lies in the scant evidence that is available for historical periods, and, as the authors repeatedly point out themselves in section 4.2, where the authors argue that there have been at least five independent instantiations of Jespersen's Cycle in Europe, there is no way of ruling out the possibility of multiple individual instantiations of the cycle. Indeed, syntacticians and dialectologists will probably prefer to exclude other internal factors, such as typological differences, first. For example, ongoing research by Ledgeway & Schifano (In prep.) relates the stage of Jespersen's Cycle that a language has reached to verb movement. Nevertheless, as the case studies of this book

demonstrate, more targeted research by language experts on language contact in diachronic linguistics is, for now, more successful, and the inclusion of these chapters in this book may well lead to an increase in research of this kind, and the possibility of more definitive answers on the role of language contact in the diffusion of Jespersen's Cycle across Europe.

4   CONCLUDING REMARKS

Despite the few criticisms that are mentioned above, this volume can certainly be recommended. The objectives of the study were by no means small in scale, and while some sections are more successful in achieving them than others, a generative account that does not omit the role of pragmatics and semantics in language change, that appeals to language contact as a motivator of change, and that, above all, is rooted in empirical observations, is an undoubtedly welcome addition to the field.

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