
With The syllable in optimality theory, Caroline Féry and Ruben van de Vijver deliver a collection of papers which they suggest offers several opportunities for insight (3). The most general of these insights centers on the results available from the study of the syllable, a core concept in generative phonology by the sound pattern of English (Noam Chomsky and Morris Halle, New York: Harper & Row, 1968). In the context of optimality theory (OT), one can easily agree that some of the clearest illustrations of the factorial typology, for example, have emerged from the analysis of crosslinguistic variation in syllable structure.

The book contains one of the canonical papers on opacity in optimality theory, John J. McCarthy’s ‘Sympathy, cumulativity, and the Duke-of-York gambit’, in which the particular revision of sympathy theory known as cumulativity is presented. Beyond this now-familiar proposal, McCarthy’s paper finds some thematic unity with at least two others in the volume by invoking the notion of the semisyllable. For McCarthy, this is a morallelsyable, motivated by rhythmical requirements. Young-Mee Yu Cho and Tracy Holloway King (‘Semisyllables and universal syllabification’) advocate a structurally similar view of the semisyllable, now motivated as an aid in achieving exhaustive well-formed syllabification. Paul Kilarski (‘Syllables and moras in Arabic’) uses the semisyllable—albeit with a somewhat different definition—to illustrate subtle differences between Arabic dialects, as part of his ongoing program to develop a version of optimality theory that preserves central aspects of the architecture of lexical phonology and morphology.

Haruo Kubozono (‘The syllable as a unit of prosodic organization in Japanese’) demonstrates the importance of the syllable in Japanese, where the literature usually focuses on the role of the mora. Kubozono also makes an important contribution to the study of foot typology, giving several arguments for the footing of Japanese syllables into uneven troches. Such a foot necessarily consists of a heavy-light sequence, and since some of the literature in metrical phonology suggests that this foot type is universally unavailable, it is useful to study the varied evidence that Kubozono brings to bear on this issue.

Junko Itō and Armin Mester (‘On the sources of opacity in OT’) use some facts about the German coda to discuss several theoretical aspects of opacity. The theoretical tool receiving most attention here is constraint conjunction, especially involving faithfulness and markedness constraints in an independently established hierarchical relation. Itō and Mester note the need for more research on various aspects of constraint conjunction, and one might add to their list the question as to whether this operation fundamentally undermines OT. One of the core tenets of the theory, of course, is that all variation derives from reranking of a universal set of constraints. Maintaining this view and allowing conjoined constraints requires the conclusion that conjoined constraints are part of the universal set of constraints. When one takes into account the requirement that a conjoined constraint should dominate its components, then OT analyses should show much heavier use of conjoined constraints than we usually see. If, by contrast, conjunction is actually an operation, then it is a tool for formulating language-specific constraints. Language-specific constraints, of course, undermine the OT ambition of defining the universal space of variation for grammar. Itō and Mester provide a stimulating opportunity to reflect on these issues.

The book also includes papers by Stuart Davis (‘The controversy of geminates and syllable weight’), Dragà Zec (‘Prosodic weight’), Caroline Féry (‘Onsets and nonmoraic syllables in German’), Antony Dubach Green (‘Extrasyllabic consounds and onset well-formedness’), Caroline R. Wiltshire (‘Beyond codas: Word and phrase-final alignment’), Marc van Oostendorp (‘Ambisyllabicity and fricative voicing in West Germanic’), Ruben van de Vijver (‘The CiV-generalization in Dutch: What petunia, mafia, and Sovjet tell us about Dutch syllable structure’), Frida Morelli (‘The relative harmony of /s + stop onset: Obstruent clusters and the sonority sequencing principle’), and Juliette Blevins (‘The independent nature of phonotactic constraints:

This book by Anita Fetzer covers a large amount of research done on context, with special emphasis on grammatical and content-based issues. The book contains only three chapters (plus a concluding chapter), and the amount of information that they cover is sometimes so high and varied that the reader tends to lose track of the claims made. It is, nevertheless, a welcome addition to the current interest in context within pragmatics.

In the first chapter (‘Introduction’, 1–31), the author introduces several aspects concerning context and mentions several theoretic approaches that, to a greater or lesser extent, have addressed this notion, distinguishing those that view context as static and those that suggest a more dynamic picture of context. She cites so many of these approaches (including cotextual ones, speech acts, discourse analysis, corpus linguistics, sociolinguistics, ethnomethodology, relevance theory, and so on) that the reader has to make an effort not to get lost. The introduction also includes some discussion on the grammaticality/well-formedness and acceptability/appropriateness dichotomies. Not surprisingly, the general purpose of the book is to study ‘the connectedness between grammaticality and context and between context and appropriateness’ (30).

The next chapters develop what can be called a multidimensional account of context or, as F states, a network perspective that ‘permits the accommodation of different contexts and conceives of communication and language as firmly anchored to context, and as embedded in context’ (30). Specifically, the second chapter (‘Grammaticality and context’, 33–88) addresses the interface between context and grammaticality. The chapter also includes a discussion on the boundaries of these notions plus well-formedness, and also on other dichotomies in which context is related to syntax (§2.2), morphology (§2.3), phonology (§2.4), and the semantics/pragmatics interface (§2.5).

The third chapter (‘Context and appropriateness’, 89–229) addresses the relationship between context and a notion of appropriateness that is highly anchored to a dialogue grammar. Much of the chapter is devoted to how the theory of speech acts accounts for this notion of appropriateness. Another section (3.3) focuses on the mutual dependence of context and the utterance, but extends it to wider notions of context such as social and sociocultural ones. Section 3.4 moves onto a dialogue-based connectedness with context and ‘supplements the differentiation between cognitive, linguistic, social and sociocultural contexts with the categories of local and global contexts’ (31).

All in all, this book is worth reading, but occasionally the depth and number of approaches mentioned make it hard to follow, and obscure the track intended by the author. Besides, there is a tendency in the book to focus on cotextual and grammaticality-centered issues and less on intraindividual cognitive or large-scale sociolinguistic aspects of context.

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This monograph, whose title can be translated as The syntax of pronominal adverbiais in the dialects of German: An investigation of preposition stranding and related phenomena, is a slightly revised version of Fleischer’s dissertation of the same title submitted in late 2001. It consists of three parts. After the preface and a brief introduction to the structure and contents of this monograph, ‘Teil 1: Pronominaladverbien in der Standardsprache’ (13–33, two chapters) sketches the empirical basis of pronominal adverbials in standard German. The core part of the book, more than just in terms of length, is ‘Teil 2: Dialektgeographischer Teil’ (34–383, ten chapters), a very thorough discussion of dialectal variation and presentation of the relevant data of pronominal adverbials in different (geographical) regions of the German-speaking parts of Germany, Austria, and Switzerland (as well as varieties spoken in Poland plus some Danish and Dutch dialects). The final part, ‘Teil 3: Analyse’ (384–411, three chapters), attempts a generative analysis.

German possesses a number of so-called pronominal adverbs—biformic words consisting of a prefix (da(r) ‘there’, wo(r) ‘where’, hier ‘here’) and a preposition (virtually any of twenty-one different ones), such as daran ‘at it’, womit, whereby, wherewith, with what, or hierfür ‘therefor, for this purpose’. These elements manifest interesting variation in their use (not all forms are used equally in all German-speaking areas) and form (some dialects...