

The Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory, ed. by MARK BALTIM & CHRIS COLLINS. Oxford: Blackwell Publishers, 2001. Pp. xii + 860 (ISBN 0-631-20507-1).

Reviewed by Andrew Carnie

Baltin & Collin's *Handbook of Contemporary Syntactic Theory* (henceforth B&C) is one of the latest in a series of books brought out by Blackwell which survey particular linguistic subdisciplines. The purpose of the series is to provide a snapshot-view of current research in each area, by providing survey articles on particular empirical issues and particular theoretical lines of thought.

Part I of the book examines the question of whether syntactic resources are concentrated in derivational or representational form. This includes articles by Bresnan ("Explaining Morphosyntactic Competition"), Collins ("Economy Conditions in Syntax"), Lasnik ("Derivation and Transformation in Modern Transformational Syntax") and Rizzi ("Relativized Minimality Effects"). Bresnan's article presents an optimality theoretic view, where constraints on the form of syntactic structures is evaluated on fully formed representations. The other authors all argue for some form of the idea that constraints are applied "online" as the derivation creates the syntactic structure.

Part II of the book contains papers describing different kinds of movement/displacement effects including papers by Roberts ("Head Movement"), Thráinsson ("Object Shift and Scrambling"), Watanabe ("Wh-in-situ Languages") and Baltin ("A-Movements"). These papers all consider the questions crosslinguistic import: what motivates certain movements in some languages, but not in others? They also consider the types of constraints that universally hold of such relationships.

Part III of the volume focuses on thematic (semantic) relations and phrase structure. Gruber ("Thematic Relations in Syntax") considers how thematic relations correspond to grammatical positions in the tree. Bowers' article ("Predication") argues that the relationship between a predicate and its arguments is mediated through a functional head. Ura's article on Case provides a nice survey of Chomskyan approaches to case theory and an innovative account of ergative/absolutive case. Fukui's paper ("Phrase-structure") traces the history of generative approaches to phrase structure

from syntactic structures, through X-bar theory, to the new settheoretic "Bare Phrase Structure". Baker ("Non-Configurationality") distinguishes among three distinct types of non-configurationality (or free word order languages). This part of the book closes with Johnson's comprehensive chapter on verb phrase (VP)-ellipsis, describing how the phenomenon is licensed and; how the meaning of the VP is recovered.

Much of the work in recent Chomskyan syntactic theory is done by functional projections, these are the focus of part IV. Belletti ("Agreement") and Zanuttini ("Negation") look at the range of functional elements in the verbal domain. This is followed by two papers on the internal structure of nominals: Bernstein ("The DP Hypothesis") and Longobardi ("The Structure of DPs"). Part V of the handbook focuses on the interface between syntax and semantics. Szabolcsi's paper ("The Syntax of Scope") surveys several accounts of quantifierscope interactions. Reuland and Everaert ("Deconstructing Binding") survey both the traditional GB approach to binding theory, as well as the more recent view in which reflexivization is determined by extra-syntactic considerations. Finally, Barss' "Syntactic Reconstruction Effects" addresses the question of why NPs may be interpreted in their base or intermediate positions.

The final section of the book essentially takes on the question of parameter setting. Kroch's article ("Syntactic Change") approaches the question from a diachronic perspective. He examines various features (Verb second, verb raising) across the history of the Germanic languages, and considers what kinds of data would need to be available (or more accurately not available) to speakers, such that they reset a parameter setting cross-generationally. He also considers the sociolinguistic situations that cause the slow diffusion of syntactic change through time. Fodor's paper, "Setting Syntactic Parameters", considers the question from a psychocomputational point of view. She asks what kinds of data a child has to be sensitive to in order to correctly set their parameters.

The authors in this volume took a variety of approaches to the task of writing a handbook article, meeting various levels of success. Many of the articles (such as Lasnik, Bresnan, Gruber, Bowers, Fodor) were essentially reports on the author's own research rather than true surveys. Some of these (such as Gruber and Lasnik) were technical to the point that even an experienced syntactician such as myself found them difficult. By contrast the rest of the articles took seriously the task of surveying their assigned

area. In particular, Roberts, Thráinsson, Baltin, Watanabe, Baker, Johnson, and Szabolcsi all had articles that should be accessible to anyone who has taken a course or read an introductory textbook in modern syntactic theory. I was able to use several of these articles in my graduate level survey of syntactic theory as starting points for exploring a wider range of primary literature.

There are a couple of areas in this book that I felt weren't treated as fully as one might hope. For example, while there were two articles on DP structure, there were no articles on Tense, Aspect or Mood functional projections, nor were there any articles on topic/focus constructions, or on the morphology/syntax and phonology/syntax interfaces. The book contains two excellent articles on the "external evaluation of syntax" (Kroch on diachronic syntax as a means of looking at parameters, and Fodor's psycho-computational view of the same question). One wonders, however, why these two areas were chosen, while there are no articles about the equally interesting and equally well-studied interface areas such as sentence processing, syntactic acquisition or second language syntax.

In their introduction, B & C admit that this book is slanted towards current Chomskyan views of syntax and, with two exceptions (the Bresnan article and Baltin's contribution), this is true. There is little recognition in the book that other formal approaches to syntax, let alone functionalist ones, might exist. This made the title of the book misleading. The book really should be titled *The Handbook of Contemporary Chomskyan Syntactic Theory*. The publishers might well consider offering another volume that assembles other approaches to syntactic theory.

Overall, while I found the articles to be of mixed quality, I found the book to be a very valuable reference tool and resource. I think it deserves a place on the shelf of every serious linguist, even if they don't specialize in syntactic theory.

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