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This book contains a selection of the papers given at the Ninth International Conference on English Historical Linguistics, held at the University of Poznań, Poland, in August 1996. It reflects the growing interest in syntactic studies within historical linguistics: there are as many as twelve syntactic contributions as against four in the area of phonology and five in morphology. The history of English linguistics is also strongly represented, and seems to be an Italian-Dutch speciality (much like baseball!) with studies provided by Maurizio Gotti on John Bullockar, Roberta Facchinetti on Anthony Huish, Robin D. Smith on Dyche, Priestly and Buchanan, and Ingrid Tieken on the contribution of 18th-century printers to the standardization of English spelling. Finally, there is a mixed bag of studies ranging from general, methodological to socio-linguistically oriented ones. Let me deal with the more general (plenary) papers first. Richard Hogg challenges long-established ideas about the boundaries of OE dialects, showing how these were not really geographically established but grew out of a conjunction of, on the one hand, the scientific pursuit of the Neogrammarians (*i.e.* their emphasis on *splits* in the *Stambaum*-method), and, on the other, out of an unconscious ideological idea about nationhood (*i.e.* the belief in the traditional heptarchy) current at the time of Sweet, who is here considered the central figure of what grew to be the traditional way of thinking about OE dialects. Hogg shows how Campbell in his *Grammar* recognised this 'unreality' of the established dialects, and how he therefore treated them as part of an abstract, structural system, thus cleverly freeing his findings from the ideological bind. Hogg's study is a plea to recognise Campbell's achievement, but also to see it for what it is: a structural system that hangs logically together but needs to be founded on the social, cultural and political contexts of the time. Another general study of a very different nature is Mieko Ogura and William Wang's 'Evolution theory and lexical diffusion', in which they investigate how the study of evolutionary biology may illuminate the pathways of linguistic change. They look at two cases where such parallelism may be detected. In the first, the closeness or stability of the family relation between eight Germanic languages is studied by sorting out the effects of borrowing and inheritance, where words are treated as similar to genes in biological evolution. I believe it is interesting and useful in principle to revert to other scientific areas to illumi-

nate what happens in language, but in this case the outcome of the statistical tests seems rather predictable and the investigation does not really show how genetic and linguistic change are similar. The same is true of the second case, where the authors focus on the formal resemblances between biological evolution and the mechanisms of lexical diffusion. That both phonetic change and epidemic infectious diseases show an S-curve does not really illuminate the subsequent discussion of the two dimensions of this S-curve. The data presented is too global and the method of statistics too opaque for the average reader.

In phonology, we find studies by Raymond Hickey on the current 'Dublin Vowel Shift', which involves a retraction of diphthongs with an initial lower or back element, and the raising of low, back vowels. The shift is of wider interest in that it offers evidence for the mechanism of actuation and spread in soundshifts. Two studies deal with phonological issues in Old English. Marcin Krygier shows that the case of i-umlaut is not a neatly settled one, and that the old debate between the theory of epenthesis and *Mouillierung* deserves to be looked at again. Jerzy Welna, in his investigation of the functional relationship between the OE fricative voicing rule and the late OE lengthening of vowels before homorganic clusters, shows that there is plenty of uncertainty too in another area. Donka Minkova and Robert Stockwell's 'The origin of long-short allomorphy in English', provides a bridge between the phonology and morphology papers in that it investigates whether the allomorphy in items like *describe-descriptive* is produced by historical soundchanges or by other factors. They come to the conclusion that there is very little evidence for the historical continuance of vowel-shortening rules in terms of conspiracies or for synchronic constraints in terms of rime-templates, but that instead Marchand was right when he suggested that these alternations are the result of an historical accident, of separate lexical borrowings. More morphology, centred on word formation, can be found in a contribution by Christiane Dalton-Puffer, who is interested in finding out why it was that the French suffix *-able* ousted all other deverbal adjectival suffixes; in Kristin Killie's account of how adverbial *-ly* spread to present participles (*cunningly* etc.); and in Don Chapman's investigation of the pragmatic motivations behind the production and analysis of Wulfstan's compounds. In a more syntactic vein, Stephen Nagle and Sara Sander question the general assumption that the early association of preterite-present morphology with modality led to the grammaticalization of the pre-modals and to the loss of all other premodals that did not make it, or indeed whether this loss was an accidental, independent factor. Finally, Angelika Lutz is interested in the typologically unusual Modern English pronoun system, with only one form for the second person singular and plural, wishing to throw light on the interaction between the internal and external forces that led to this.

In syntax there is a large variety of topics, some of which are of rather minor interest both because of the topic and because of the merely descriptive nature in which the evidence has been presented, such as the studies on *but*, on the degrammaticalization of 'addressee-satisfaction conditionals', such as *if you please*, and on the development of counterfactual conditionals. Other studies, such as Gunnar Bergh's investigation of double prepositions, are of much more

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general interest, because they pose broader theoretical questions, such as, in this case, the nature of and interrelation between constructions involving pied-piping and preposition-stranding. As far as Old English syntax is concerned, Willem Koopman offers food for thought about the relation between topicalization, subject-verb inversion and clitic-hood; Bettelou Los shows that there was no direct competition between bare and *to*-infinitives, as is generally assumed, but that it was the *that*-clause that was in competition with the *to*-infinitive; Toril Swan investigates the ways in which subjects could be modified, by adverbials as well as adjectival elements, as part of a larger project involving also Old Norse, while Masayuki Ohkado investigates three structural peculiarities of passive constructions, which, as is claimed, can all be (generatively) accounted for by the idea that nominative case could be assigned in object position. Finally, I must briefly mention Aimo Seppänen's further explorations into the nature of the relative clause, in which he shows, as before, that all is not so simple as it seems and that traditional assumptions must be modified, and, last but not least, the contributions by the Helsinki corpus-research team, spreading out into different theoretical fields: socio-linguistic factors involved in pronominal change in 17th-century English (by Helena Raumolin-Brunberg) and in the decline of multiple negation (Terttu Nevalainen), and Matti Rissanen's more general methodological musings on the integration of corpus studies and theoretical linguistics illustrated by a case-study of the development of causal connectives.