Phonetics and Phonology of Tense and Lax Obstruents in German (review)

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terms of traditional linguistics and the distinction be-
tween metaphor as meaning and metaphor as use.
Chs. 4, 5, and 6 address metaphor as language use,
focusing respectively on 'Metaphor and lies'
(100–23), 'Metaphor and irony' (124–64), and 'Met-
aphor and indirect speech acts' (165–208). Ch. 7
(209–36) concludes with an evaluation of both her
analysis of metaphor as reconception and other theo-
ries of metaphor in terms of their explanatory power
with respect to a list of criteria she has drawn up
throughout the book.

The gift of N's analysis is its accessibility. Her
terminology is familiar, her organization exemplary,
and her explanation plainspoken and thorough with
many examples. She makes use of concepts that have
been dealt with by other linguists and cognitive sci-
entists in a more technical fashion, and she brings
them into the realm of everyday use. While her argu-
ments consist, in large part, of ideas already intro-
duced by other scholars, her method of presentation
combines them in a reductive way that simplifies
their expression and makes them more practically
available to scholars outside or marginal to the field
of linguistics. Concepts such as Gilles Fauconnier's
space blending (*Mental spaces*, Cambridge: MIT
Press 1985) and George Lakoff's account of categori-
zation (*Women, fire, and dangerous things: What
categories reveal about the mind*, Chicago: Univer-
sity of Chicago Press, 1987) underlie her explanation
of the way reconceptualization operates within lan-
guage systems, but she approaches them in a way
that highlights their basic and intuitive connection
with language behavior. Her explanation of metaphor
is thus very comfortable and in agreement with intui-
tions about metaphoric language use.

N's methodical style of expression is, at times, an
impediment to clarity. Her tendency to amply explain
points sometimes extends to stating the obvious, and
her preference for constructions such as 'that is' and
'in other words' can make her seem redundant. Fur-
thermore, in an exception to her usually thorough
explanation, the distinction between meaning and se-
mantics as it applies to her differentiation of meta-
phoricity and metaphorical content is not always
clear. Ultimately, however, N resolves these prob-
lems, clarifying her distinctions through the discus-
sion as the book progresses. By the time she reaches
her conclusion, she has brought the reader to those
conclusions, too, led by her accessible, organized,
and thorough explanatory style. While her analysis
tends to reformulate other ideas, and in that sense is
not particularly groundbreaking, she confirms intui-
tions about metaphoric language, and the practical
approach that her work takes to the ideas she presents
will facilitate their broader understanding in the
field—and outside of it. [HEATHER K. CONRAD,
Northwestern State University.]

**Phonetics and phonology of tense and
lax obstruents in German.** By MI-
CHAEL JESSEN. (Studies in functional
and structural linguistics 44.) Amster-
dam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins,
1998. Pp. xx, 394.

A revised version of the author's 1996 Cornell
University PhD dissertation, this book argues for
[tense] as the feature responsible for the contrast be-
tween tense and lax obstruents in German and in
other Germanic languages (Dutch excepted). This bi-
nary feature has such diverse phonetic correlates as
aspiration duration (basic correlate), stop closure, fri-
cative, and preceding vowel duration (substitute cor-
relates) which, however, can be assigned to a
common denominator: the duration of the consonant
as a whole.

Ch. 1 presents the theoretical grounding of the
book. A functional perspective based on work by
Roman Jakobson and his collaborators is explicitly
adopted. Ch. 2 provides a review of the phonetic
literature on the tense/lax opposition in German, and
Chs. 3–4 present experiments which investigate the
role of the acoustic correlates of the tense/lax opposi-
tion across contexts in that language.

In Ch. 5 different feature proposals for the distinc-
tion between tense and lax stops are discussed, like
[voice] and [spread (glottis)]. Jessen rejects [voice]
for German stops based on the preceding experiments
which show that in several contexts both tense and
lax stops are realized without voicing. As for
[spread], though aspiration is found in the majority of
contexts, J contends that it is not a reliable correlate
throughout. The main advantage of [tense] is its con-
textual stability, that is, the same general phonetic
denominator responds for the tense/lax opposition
across all contexts.

While [voice] is considered part of the crosslin-
guistic feature inventory, though not implemented in
the German stop system, J argues that [spread] is
no longer necessary once one accepts [tense]. Since
duration is the common denominator for the corre-
lates of [tense], it is argued that gemination is also
accounted for by [tense]. Crosslinguistic evidence is
presented supporting the prediction that aspiration
and gemination, being correlates of the same feature,
cannot implement different oppositions within the
same language.

In Ch. 6 it is argued that, with respect to the frica-
tives, [voice] and [tense] form a syncretism, i.e., the
two features act in combination. This is supported
with evidence from German phonotactics, child lan-
guage, and aphasia, showing that fricatives are
marked relative to stops.

Ch. 7 presents an experiment using the technique
of transillumination, whereby movements of the glot-
tis are registered by a phototransistor, and it is argued

that glottal opening must be coordinated to supralaryngeal activity to effect aspiration. Ch. 8 draws a conclusion, discusses controversial aspects of the proposal, and makes suggestions for future research. Although J professes a functionalist perspective, formalist interpretations are seriously considered. Consequences of the reintroduction of [tense] for feature geometric models, for the nonlinear representation of gemination, and for the rule vs. representation issue are addressed.

An appendix contains statistical results of the experiments. A comprehensive bibliography and a subject and a name index follow.

J accomplishes his task successfully, combining an exhaustive phonetic analysis with in-depth phonological theorizing. [Gisela Collischonn, *Federal University of Rio Grande do Sul, Brazil*.]

A reference grammar of the Northern Embera languages. By Charles A. Mortensen. (Publications in linguistics 134.) Dallas: SIL & the University of Texas at Arlington, 1999. Pp. xvi, 194. $29.00.

This is the seventh volume to appear in the series 'Studies in the languages of Colombia' published by the SIL. It focuses primarily on what Mortensen refers to as Northern Embera Proper but also discusses throughout the distinctions between this language and Embera-Katío, which together form the Northern Embera (NE) branch of the Chocó family of languages spoken on the Pacific coast of Colombia and in Panama.

This grammar has the same general format as other grammars in this series. The introduction (1–13) gives information about the languages and their place in the family, a little about the culture, a phonological sketch, and a quick typological overview. Following this there are chapters on word classes (15–27), derivational morphology (29–32), the noun phrase (33–46), case (47–57), the verb (59–87), the clause (constituent order and interrogative, imperative, and negative constructions) (89–102), the sentence (vocatives and various adverb-like sentence-level elements linking sentences) (103–11), subordination (113–33), and some discourse and pragmatic issues (135–54). The appendices (155–92) contain two texts, one from each language, and are followed by references.

M has (explicitly) modeled this grammar on Phillip Harms's (1994) *Epena Pedee syntax*, which appeared in the same series, and often makes overt comparisons between the NE languages he is discussing and this Southern Embera language. While some of these comparisons are of interest, at other times

they seem unnecessarily derivative for a grammatical description, where M explains the system of Epena Pedee only to point out that this system is entirely different in the NE languages.

This grammar is comprehensive in the sense that, as far as it is possible to tell, it mentions all the morphological and syntactic phenomena of the NE languages. However, like all the grammars in this series, it is relatively short (154 pages, excluding the texts), and a more accurate title would be *A sketch grammar . . .* rather than *A reference grammar. . . .* To take an example at random, in the discussion of aspect there is a section on progressive aspect (82), where M notes that 'the equivalent of progressive aspect manifests itself in two different ways', gives the morphemes and one example sentence for each but no further discussion, no indication of when either of the progressives is used, whether they are only found with present tense, which verbs they can be used with, and so on.

Overall, this volume is a useful contribution to our knowledge of South American languages, for many of which we have no general description at all. It is clearly written, with examples of each phenomenon discussed. It will be of use to those interested in South American languages, particularly the languages of the Chocó family, giving a general view of what the NE languages are like. It will also be of some interest to typologists, with enough information to allow general typological comparison, although if one is interested in the details of use of any particular construction, one quickly finds oneself wishing for more. [Timothy Jowan Curnow, *La Trobe University*.]

Cubeo grammar. By Nancy L. Morse and Michael B. Maxwell. (Publications in linguistics 130.) Dallas: SIL & the University of Texas at Arlington, 1999. Pp. xii, 197. $29.00.

The fifth in the 'Studies in the languages of Colombia' series, this is a grammar of the Tucanoan language Cubeo, which has similarities to both Eastern and Western Tucanoan languages. The introduction (1–13) has a short geographic and cultural sketch of the speakers, who live in the border regions of Colombia and Brazil, and a description of the complex phonological system, including some discussion of the morphophonemics. Following this are chapters on the verb, including verb classes, verbal morphology and the use of auxiliaries (15–72); the noun classes, noun phrases and nominal affixes, and clitics (73–122); the other word classes—adjectives, quantifiers, adverbs, postpositions, conjunctions, and interjections (123–39); clause structure, essentially constituent order and quotes, a very short chapter