



**Review: [Untitled]**

Reviewed Work(s):

*Oggetti e soggetti nella formazione della morfosintassi romanza* by Nunzio La Fauci  
John E. Joseph

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phonetic variation (59); rather, the disappearance of nominal declensions was probably connected with the fact that the first element of the compound was a root form. K notes that the most common first element of these compounds by far is *man-* 'hand', and she relates this fact to the importance of hand gestures in feudal rituals (49). K relates the fact that *caput* is the second most frequent N element to this noun's semantic underdeterminacy (where it could mean 'head', 'end', 'chapter', 'paragraph', or 'legal head of family'). Among V second elements we find recurrence of a few verbs and then several isolated examples (61). K gives charts showing the relative frequency of N first elements and V second elements across the four languages (64, 67).

This book does not itself present arguments pertinent to modern theories of morphology or phonology. However, the data are a useful resource to linguists interested in morphology and phonology, and K's observations are both informed and sensible. [DONNA JO NAPOLI, *Swarthmore College*.]

**Oggetti e soggetti nella formazione della morfosintassi romanza.** By NUNZIO LA FAUCI. (Nuova collana di linguistica, 7.) Pisa: Giardini Editori, 1988. Pp. 131.

Using the combined perspective of universal-typological studies and Relational Grammar (RG), La Fauci rethinks such classic problems of Romance linguistics as the loss of case inflection, the formation of the compound past tenses, and the diversity of past participle agreement systems. Objecthood is the main link among these strands of inquiry, so RG seems an appropriate framework, since it is what gave the impetus to generative studies of unaccusativity. Whereas GB work in this area has inevitably emphasized linear order over grammatical relations, RG (at least as practiced by LaF) assumes that either or neither may dominate the other within a given system.

In LaF's view, the Old Romance two-case system does not continue the nominative/accusative codifications of Latin (distinguishing all subjects from all objects), but rather distinguishes between actives (subjects of active verbs) and inactives (subjects of middle verbs plus objects). The fact that inactives control past participle agreement (PPA) in Old Romance

is interpreted here as partial compensation for the ongoing loss of cases. By treating the *cas régime* as inactive, hence unmarked (just as absolutive is unmarked relative to ergative), LaF is able to explain why it survived rather than the *cas sujet*. This is harder to explain when one instead equates *régime* with acc. and *sujet* with nom., since nom. is generally unmarked in a nom./acc. system.

But as the two-case system collapsed, the active/inactive codification gave way to a new nom./acc. distinction based on linear order: object = postverbal = acc.; subject = preverbal = nom. It is just when objects appear in nom. position that they, like middle subjects, control PPA. Once again PPA seems to fill a need for case marking. And it is precisely those languages which lack PPA, like Spanish, that have developed the exceptional case marking of direct objects with prepositions.

The division of the auxiliary function between *esse* and *habere* does not reflect an active/inactive codification, but rather continues the middle/active distinction of the Latin verb, a condition LaF calls 'split activity' (52). If the surface subject has been a direct object at any level of structure (the case of middles and unaccusatives), *esse* is chosen, otherwise *habere*. LaF's analysis of the Romance compound past is not separable from the RG framework, and needs to be read in detail; the crux is that Latin *habere* can initiate a new subject at the structural level in which it takes over predicatehood from the past participle (which then becomes a *Chômeur*), so that a portion of its original possessive meaning is kept. The Romance reflexes of *habere* lose the ability to initiate a new subject, and so are fully fledged auxiliaries.

The closing contrastive study of PPA in several Romance idioms suggests that the fewer restrictions a dialect puts on PPA, the more conservative it is. Thus the dialect of Altamura (Puglie) is extremely conservative, necessitating only that the controller of PPA be a direct object at some level of structure, just as in Early Romance. Italian places an additional restriction and French yet another, while Spanish, Portuguese, and Sicilian are the most innovative in allowing PPA only for passives (i.e. when controller is surface subject). LaF is fully aware of the challenge this presents to the traditional areal view of PPA as itself being an innovation that spread outward from Central Romance.

I have highlighted what I consider the most important of the original ideas and analyses

found in this monograph, yet a wealth of others remain. Not every analysis is convincing, not all the pieces fall neatly into place. But La Fauci's presentation of the theoretical issues is unfailingly thorough and insightful. I doubt that anyone interested in Romance historical syntax could fail to find stimulation here. [JOHN E. JOSEPH, *University of Maryland.*]

**Yhteissaamelainen sanasto [Common Lapp dictionary].** By JUHANI LEHTIRANTA. (*Mémoires de la Société Finno-ougrienne*, 200.) Helsinki: Suomalais-Ugrilainen Seura, 1989. Pp. 180.

This monograph is a welcome contribution to Lapp and Balto-Finnic scholarship. It is very user-friendly; its organization and presentation make it easy to find and understand the material. Lehtiranta presents reconstructions of 1,479 Proto-Lapp words (numbered in text), with cognates from nine Lapp dialects/languages. For the most part, forms chosen for inclusion have a wide distribution among Lapp dialects and have cognates in Lapp's sister languages (examples from the closest relatives are also presented). Loans into Proto-Lapp from Finnish (153 cases), Proto-Finnic, and Scandinavian languages (107 cases) are identified and the sources are given. There are 582 words inherited from Early Proto-Balto-Finnic times.

The final section of the monograph is a concordance with the forms listed by semantic domain: nature (animals, people, plants, environment), consciousness and society, economy and technology, sounds, travel and movement, other verbs, quality, quantity, time and space, reflexive pronouns, and adverbs.

The dialects represented are Southern Lapp, Uumaja (Umeå), Arjeplog (Pititimen), Luulaja (Lulea), Northern Lapp, Inari, Kolta Peninsula (in the Soviet Union), Kildini, and Turja.

This should prove to be a very valuable and useful basic reference. [LYLE CAMPBELL, *Louisiana State University.*]

**Categories and processes in language acquisition.** By YONATA LEVY, IZCHAK M. SCHLESINGER, and MARTIN D. S. BRAINE. Hillsdale,

NJ: Lawrence Erlbaum, 1988. Pp. ix, 284. \$36.00.

This edited collection reflects the 1982-1983 interaction of a research group in language acquisition at the Institute of Advanced Studies within the Hebrew University of Jerusalem. The chapters contained in the volume are essentially papers that were originally discussed in that setting and revised since. Not surprisingly, Hebrew and English figure prominently as data sources, encouraging a crosslinguistic perspective with detailed information about two very different language structures and their respective acquisition patterns.

Most of the chapters focus on questions of elementary syntax, the fundamental questions about how word classes and relational categories come to be established. The thrust is thus to outline a theory of how simple sentences without embedded clauses are acquired, namely, those simple declarative and imperative sentence formats that are the focus of grammatical development in the early years of acquisition.

A methodological theme which characterizes much of the work reported in the volume arises from a perspective which the editors choose to call *METHODOLOGICAL EMPIRICISM*. Compatible with nativism, but contrasting with extreme forms of pure nativism, innate concepts and mechanisms which underlie language learning are not to be denied; but neither are they to be taken as the final mystical explanation by the methodological empiricist. Granted that innate concepts and abilities do exist, the components and mechanisms of language learning should be, to the extent possible, analyzed and explained. Otherwise, innateness claims are here viewed as promissory notes, which will have to be redeemed at some time by other researchers in developmental psycholinguistics or its allied disciplines. The emphasis is thus on primitives which take the form of learning mechanisms, and one notes considerably less eagerness to postulate more innate concepts. Still, some likely candidates for conceptual primitives are nominated, as for example the notions of predicate and corresponding arguments, and possibly even thematic or case categories. And indeed, the edited volume primarily revolves around this conceptual focus, examining in considerable detail the possible bases of linguistic categories and how they are learned by young children.