

Chris Cummins & Napoleon Katsos (eds.). 2019. *The Oxford Handbook of Experimental Semantics and Pragmatics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. xxi + 661pp.

Reviewed by Huan Xu*

The last two decades have seen an upsurge in experimental semantics and experimental pragmatics, which rely on experimental evidence to substantiate linguists' statements rather than on introspection and intuition (Noveck & Sperber, 2004, Matlock & Winter 2015: 774). Nevertheless, relevant research makes a mutually exclusive distinction between semantics and pragmatics, e.g. *Experimental Pragmatics* (Noveck & Sperber 2004), *Experimental Semantics* (Matlock & Winter 2015), and *Experimental Pragmatics: The Making of a Cognitive Science* (Noveck 2018), so that the investigations on debates on semantics and pragmatics are sporadic and not comprehensive. Against the backdrop, the volume embraces a broader connotation of experimental linguistics and juxtaposes the topics of semantics and pragmatics to direct their theoretical debates through neuroimaging techniques, i.e. Eye-tracking, Event-Related Potential, and Functional Magnetic Resonance Imaging.

The *Handbook* consists of thirty-two chapters. Except for the Introduction, the volume is organized thematically into six parts, and each chapter is well-structured with an introduction to the fundamental concepts, a discussion of important topics or theoretical controversies, experimental evidence, and concluding remarks. Chapter 1, "Introduction" (pp. 1-6), explains why contemporary experimental semantics and pragmatics is flourishing by sketching the inevitable combination of experimental methods and linguistics, and highlights the aim of handbook is "to capture a snapshot of the questions and methods used in the field, to synthesize the existing findings and to identify under-researched questions or under-utilized techniques" (p.1). Although scalar inference triggered the outgrowth of experimental research and stimulated discussion on semantic-pragmatic interface in previous studies, more theoretically motivated topics should be emphasized in semantics and pragmatics (e.g. word meaning, reference). As such, this long-awaited handbook focuses on experimental work on classic research topics of semantics and pragmatics and aims to showcase best practice in this field.

Part I, chapters 2-4 (pp. 7-61), centers upon fundamental issues in the processing of pragmatics and the semantics/pragmatics interface regarding implicature. It starts with Dimitrios Skordos and David Barner's "Language comprehension, inference, and alternatives", which examines research on communicative inference in language comprehension and then focuses on children's inferential development. The authors propose that children's inferential difficulties stem from their misidentification of the Question Under Discussion (QUD). In chapter 3, "Constraint-based pragmatic processing", Judith Degen and Michael K. Tanenhaus survey the constraint-based approach to pragmatic processing and contrast this approach with the Default and Literal-first hypothesis in scalar implicature, arguing that constraint-based accounts are the most promising and strongly supported by the data. Chapter 4, Richard Breheny's "Scalar implicatures", summarizes the major theoretical issues (Gricean account, Relevance Theory, and Grammatical Theory) and experimental findings on scalar implicature processing from the standpoint of the Gricean inferential system.

Part II, chapters 5-7 (pp. 62-123), includes three free-standing chapters on experimental semantics and pragmatics. In chapter 5, "Event (de)composition", Sherry Yong Chen and E. Matthew Husband demonstrate the real-time sentence processing of several components of event structure (e.g. result, manner, and temporal boundaries). Chapter 6, Florian Schwarz's "Presuppositions, projection, and accommodation", examines experimentally presuppositions with

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triggers in non-embedded and embedded situations, as well as presuppositions in discourse. The topic of chapter 7 is “Spatial terms”, in which Myrto Grigoroglou and Anna Papafragou examine the representation and acquisition of spatial terms in location, motion, and frames of reference, as well as the fact that, while cognitive and linguistic categories of the spatial world are dissociable, they are frequently highly correlated.

Part III, chapters 8-15 (pp. 124-262), discusses quantifiers and operators. In chapter 8, “Counterfactuals”, Heather Ferguson presents an overview of major models (e.g. mental models) and the processing of counterfactuals comprehension. She then demonstrates that readers can make appropriate inferences in a counterfactual context, showing rapid and possibly simultaneous access to counterfactual and factual interpretations of events. Chapter 9, Kristen Syrett’s “Distributivity”, discusses two experimental findings about lexically-encoded distributivity. First, 3-year-old children are unaware of the lexically-encoded distributivity of the universal quantifier *each*. Second, for adults processing sentences with distributive interpretations, the quantifier *each* has real-time consequences. In chapter 10, “Genericity”, Dimitra Lazaridou-Chatzigoga examines experimental studies on genericity from the perspectives of formal semantics and cognitive psychology. Chapter 11 addresses “Modified numerals”, in which Rick Nouwen, Stavroula Alexandropoulou, and Yaron McNabb give an analytical survey of empirical work on the comprehension of semantic-pragmatic sources of ignorance inferences and variation effects of numeral modifiers. Experimental results support the pragmatic view. In chapter 12, “Negation”, Ye Tian and Richard Breheny analyze three explanations of negation processing, i.e. rejection accounts, general contextual approach, and the dynamic pragmatic account, arguing that the dynamic account may account for the processing and pragmatic effects of negation. Chapter 13, “Plurality”, by Lyn Tieu and Jacopo Romoli, reviews experimental work on the semantics and pragmatics of plurality, demonstrating that plural meaning is context-dependent, sensitive to monotonicity, suspendable under certain conditions, and computed on a par with standard implicatures by preschool-aged children. Chapter 14, Adrian Braşoveanu and Jakub Dotlacil’s “Quantification”, reviews empirical evidence about the processing of quantifier scope and analyzes the various theories (e.g. underspecification theories and hierarchy-based accounts). In chapter 15, “Quantifier spreading”, Patricia J. Brooks and Olga Parshina discuss the literature on children’s quantifier spreading errors and their comprehension of universal quantification, arguing that children’s errors may indicate task demand.

Part IV, chapters 16-22 (pp. 263-386), zeroes in on resolving lexical ambiguities. Chapter 16, Stephanie Solt’s “Adjective meaning and scales”, discusses research on relative gradable adjectives and scalar expressions for reinforcing, going beyond, and detaching from intuition-based data. Chapter 17, “Ironic utterances”, by Nicola Spotorno and Ira Noveck, summarizes three psychological methods for irony processing (direct access, graded salience, and parallel constraint satisfaction account) and emphasizes the significance of attitude ascription in irony processing. In chapter 18, “Metaphor”, Nausicaa Pouscoulous and Giulio Dulcinati clarify the relationship between metaphor and literal meaning. Then, experimental studies on metaphor processing, comparisons to other tropes (e.g. irony and hyperbole), and the development of metaphoric abilities throughout childhood are discussed. Chapter 19, Petra B. Schumacher’s “Metonymy”, looks at experimental studies on metonymy comprehension, the underlying lexical representations, and real-time processing. Next comes chapter 20, “Vagueness”, in which Sam Alxatib and Uli Sauerland summarize three different explanations of vagueness (epistemicism, supervaluationism, and fuzzy logic) and discuss experimental work on scalar adjectives and number rounding. In chapter 21, “Verbal uncertainty”, Marie Juanchich, Miroslav Sirota and Jean-Francois Bonnefon elaborate on three experimental methods of verbal probabilities: mapping verbal probabilities onto a numerical probability space, and an outcome space, and selecting verbal probability expressions. They then discuss major findings regarding the production, interpretation, and application of probability expressions. In chapter 22, “Word senses”, Hugh Rabagliati and Mahesh Srinivasan suggest that

the senses of flexible words can be viewed from three perspectives: as reflections of conceptual biases and culture-specific conventions, as representations in the mental lexicon, and as mechanisms for learning and communication.

Part V, chapters 23-29 (pp. 387-511), is concerned with disambiguation and licensing in discourse contexts. Chapter 23, “Antecedent-contained deletion”, by Kristen Syrett, discusses experimental investigations into the understanding of antecedent-contained-deletion sentences for both children and adults. The topic of chapter 24 is “Exhaustivity in *it*-clefts”, in which Edgar Onea summarizes the major theoretical perspectives (e.g. conversational implicature) and empirical studies on the exhaustivity of *it*-clefts. There appears to be a major disconnect between the theoretical and empirical literature. Specifically, theoretical literature views exhaustivity of *it*-clefts as a semantic feature, whereas experimental studies demonstrate that *it*-clefts inference is semantically weak. Chapter 25, Christina S. Kim’s “Focus”, discusses the memory representations, time-course, perception of focus, and cues to focus structure. Chapter 26, “Negative polarity items”, by Ming Xiang, provides a summary of the experimental research on the comprehension and acquisition of negative polarity items. In chapter 27, “Pronouns”, Hannah Rohde introduces the Bayesian approach, shifting the focus from pronouns specifically to a generative model of language more broadly. In chapter 28, “Reference and informativeness”, Catherine Davies and Jennifer E. Arnold use informativeness and discourse-based approaches to account for speakers’ referential preferences and examine constraints on referential choice (e.g. the extra-linguistic context). Chapter 29, “Prosody and meaning”, by Judith Tonhauser, mainly reviews experimental research on the production, perception, and interpretation of prosodically realized focus.

Part VI, chapters 30-32 (pp. 512-548), considers interactional factors in pragmatics. It begins with Thomas Holtgraves’s “Politeness”. The author summarizes the primary theoretical perspectives on politeness and early empirical studies on Penelope Brown and Stephen Levinson’s politeness theory. Then, he discusses research on the role of politeness in reasoning, the communication of uncertainty, and the cognitive and neural processes involved in the processing of politeness. Chapter 31, “Theory of mind”, by Paula Rubio-Fernandez, reviews experimental investigations on the development of the Theory of Mind throughout childhood. The experimental results are more consistent with Harris’s (1996, 1999) early explanations of the development of belief reasoning in conversation. The final chapter is J. P. De Ruiter’s “Turn-taking”, which addresses experimental and non-experimental methods as well as several longstanding controversies regarding turn-taking (e.g. the existence of or general adherence to the turn-taking rules and their processing), and calls for potential online experiments on turn-taking.

The *Handbook* features three advantages. First, contributions to the volume come from leading experts from areas such as the psychology of language, psycholinguistics, and experimental pragmatics. For example, Noveck, the author of *Experimental Pragmatics: The Making of a Cognitive Science* (2018) and a co-editor of *Experimental Pragmatics* (2004), is the author of chapter 17, “Ironic Utterance”; Juanchich, Sirota and Bonnefon, the authors of chapter 21, “Verbal uncertainty”, have worked on the topic of language uncertainty and reasoning and conducted extensive research in the relevant domains. Therefore, the volume is a vital resource for authoritative and cutting-edge knowledge of experimental semantics and pragmatics. Second, this volume covers a broader range of research topics and provides more detailed and up-to-date research overviews than comparable volumes (e.g. Matlock & Winter 2015, Noveck & Sperber 2004, Noveck 2018). Concerning experimental semantics, Matlock & Winter (2015) primarily explore experimental semantics research on four aspects of literal meaning (e.g. meaning based on usage and experience). This volume goes beyond cognitive linguistic theories to interpret semantic processing in interaction with pragmatic factors, e.g. adjective meaning and scales (chapter 16) and ironic utterances (chapter 17). Regarding studies on experimental pragmatics, while Noveck (2018) provides more extensive descriptions of some issues than Noveck & Sperber (2004) (e.g. irony and prosody), this volume builds on the topics by Noveck (2018) (i.e. metonymy,

negation, presupposition, and politeness) and presents experimental evidence for more theoretical issues in semantics and pragmatics. Third, it is instructive and practical for scholars whose research interests include experimental linguistics, not only by delving into hot-debated topical issues in experimental semantics and pragmatics with reference to neurological, developmental, and pathological data, but also by indicating yet-to-be-solved issues.

Despite these strengths, the volume has some shortcomings. First, the scope of the volume excludes several classic topics in pragmatics. For example, while the chapter on reference and informativeness concentrates on the speakers' choice of referential forms, reference resolution and anaphora are not covered. Another classic pragmatic topic, speech acts, is also absent, maybe due to the unavailability of expert authors in the time available. Second, it would be more reader-friendly if the chapters introducing experimental techniques were presented in a logical manner or if an experimental techniques section were included at the beginning of the volume. For instance, Event-Related Potential (ERP) is not effectively introduced until chapter 19 (p. 325), whereas brain potential (N400) is already described in chapter 4 (p. 58). The incoherence of chapters may be explained in part by the fact that 48 authors contributed to this volume and it is incredibly difficult to coordinate these details. Third, in the chapter on politeness, it is imprecise, if not incorrect, to label Brown and Levinson's face theory as a "maxim-based" theory (p. 513). Brown and Levinson explicitly stood against the maxim-based theories, claiming in their seminal research on politeness that "the distribution of politeness (who has to be polite to whom) is socially controlled: it is not as if there were some basic modicum of politeness owed by each to all" (Brown & Levinson 1987: 4-5). In Fraser's (1990) taxonomy, Lakoff's (1973) and Leech's (1983) politeness principles were referred to as the Conversational-maxim view, while Brown & Levinson's (1978, 1987) theory was categorized as the Face-saving view. Furthermore, this chapter would be more comprehensive if it contained recent empirical studies on politeness and prosody (e.g. Brown, Winter, Idemaru, & Grawunder, 2014). Finally, there are several editorial errors; for instance, in chapter 5, the introduction of sections 5.4 and 5.5 (p. 64) contradicts their title and contents. Also, "evluates" (p. 238) should read "evaluates", and "adifferent" (p. 500) should read "a different".

Notwithstanding these quibbles, the value of the volume cannot be underestimated. With its extensive coverage and up-to-date overview, this *Handbook* is undoubtedly insightful and useful for both novices and professionals in pragmatics, semantics, and linguistics in general, providing new perspectives for theoretical linguistic debates and concerns.

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Paula Rautionaho, Hanna Parviainen, Mark Kaunisto & Arja Nurmi (eds.). 2023. *Social and Regional Variation in World Englishes. Local and Global Perspectives*. New York and London: Routledge. xiii + 219 pp.

Reviewed by Ruxandra Drăgan*

Included in the book series *Routledge Studies in Sociolinguistics*, the volume under review is a collection of corpus-based synchronic and diachronic studies of grammatical variation in a considerable number of World Englishes from the British Isles, North America, Europe, Africa, and Asia. The volume consists of a "Foreword" (pp. ix-xii), "Acknowledgments" (pp. xiii), ten chapters, and an "Index" (pp. 215-219).

Chapter 1, "English around the globe: Local and global perspectives on social and regional variation" (pp. 1-7), by Paula Rautionaho, Hanna Parviainen, Mark Kaunisto and Arja Nurmi, provides an overview of the background and content of the present volume. The editors introduce the concept of *language variation* as applied to the field of World Englishes and discuss existing and potential avenues of study of this multifaceted phenomenon: identifying the different varieties of English, both from a local perspective (i.e. studying one variety at a time) and globally (comparing native varieties with non-native and learner varieties by focusing on their converging and diverging features); studying social vs. regional variation, i.e. researching the effects of social parameters such as age, gender, and social status on language use, in the former case, vs. investigating the geographical and socio-political causes of language variation, in the latter case; relating the study of World Englishes to sociolinguistic theory by using the former to verify the applicability and theoretical soundness of acknowledged sociolinguistic principles through the application of the latest statistical techniques to the multitude of digital corpora of World Englishes, etc. The editors point out that all the chapters in this volume adopt some such perspective(s) (synchronic / diachronic, local / global, divergent / convergent) in the study of the variation of a number of grammatical features of diverse World Englishes (the modal auxiliaries *have to* and *have got to*, the omission of prepositions, *was/were* alternations, the complementation patterns of the matrix verb *regret*, etc.).

Chapter 2, "Status or style? Social and register variation in processes of linguistic change in the past" (pp. 8-31), by Terttu Nevalainen, is a diachronic case study of the change undergone by the first- and second-person possessive adjectives *mine* and *thine*, which, beginning in Early Middle English throughout Middle and Early Modern English, lost their final *-n* inflectional markers and became shortened to *my* and *thy*. The case study is built on a corpus of personal correspondence covering two centuries (early 15th century to late 17th century). Bringing together

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historical sociolinguistics and corpus linguistics, this empirical study attempts to answer a more theoretical challenge regarding the impact of social factors vs. style and register in real-time linguistic change over centuries. It combines sociolinguistic variation in terms of social status (social rank, gender) and dialect region with register variation in terms of stylistic choices (based on author-addressee relation) and genres (text types). It also divides the data into generational 20- to 40- year periods, reflecting the duration of the change in progress, and it relates them to the phases through which the change progresses (from incipient to new and vigorous to completion). The study shows that in a first stage, which is new and vigorous to mid-range, social variation, connected to the regional diffusion of the change in progress, dominates over register variation by addressee and register variation by genre. Meanwhile, in the final phase, when the change has neared completion, register variation by genre takes over, as the change makes its way into a wider range of genres and registers.

Chapter 3, “*Have to vs. have got to in British and Irish English(es)*” (pp. 32-42), by Markku Filppula, is a diachronic and synchronic comparative study of linguistic variation focusing on the deontic values of the two modal expressions in British English and Irish English. For a more comprehensive geographical and sociolinguistic understanding of the issue, two more contact varieties are added to the study - Indian English and Hebridean English, the former because it shares grammatical features with Irish English, and the latter, because of its generally similar language contact background. Built on a substantial number of corpora, the analysis shows that there are significant differences in the distribution of *have to* and *have got to* between British English and Irish English. *Have got to* is more frequent in spoken standard British English than in standard Irish English, which favours *have to* in over 90% of the identified contexts. The contrast is even sharper in the case of Indian English, where *have got to* occurs only 3% of the times. Vernacular spoken British and Irish varieties yield similar results, with *have got to* being as marginal in the latter varieties as in Indian English and Hebridean English. This indicates that *have got* never took root in Irish English despite the geographical proximity and enduring social, and cultural ties between the two countries.

Chapter 4, “*Was/were variation with subject pronouns we, you, and they in recent British English*” (pp. 43-65), by Paula Rautionaho and Mark Kaunisto, examines the *was/were* variation in spoken nonstandard contexts using data selected from the spoken sections of the original 1994 and the new 2014 versions of the *British National Corpus* (Love et al. 2017). Frequency of nonstandard *was* in *were* contexts in recent British English is investigated based on three intra-linguistic variables (inversion, polarity and pronoun) and four sociolinguistic variables (the speakers’ age, gender, social class, and dialect area), using a generalized mixed methods tree analysis (GLMM) (Fokkema et al. 2018, Fokkema, Edbrooke-Childs & Wolpert 2020). The study follows three lines of investigation: (1) possible diachronic trends in the *was/were* variation with three pronoun subjects; (2) degree of influence of the four sociolinguistic variables on the speaker’s choice of *was* vs. *were*; (3) influence of the three intra-linguistic factors on the *was/were* variation. Overall, the application of the GLMM tree method indicates a general decline in the use of nonstandard *was* paralleled by a move towards standard use. While all the intra- and extralinguistic variables play some role in the nonstandard use of *was* in the 1990s, the picture becomes much simpler in the 2010s, when only age, social status, and the type of inversion pattern continue to govern this choice.

Chapter 5, “*Regional syntactic variability in the complementation system of global varieties of English*” (pp. 66-90), by Raquel P. Romasanta, examines regional syntactic variation from a global perspective by focusing on variation in the selection of finite *that*-clauses vs. non-finite gerundial clauses as complements of the matrix verb *regret* in five African varieties from three regional areas (East Africa (Kenyan and Tanzanian Englishes), West Africa (Nigerian and Ghanaian Englishes), and Southern Africa (South African English)). The analysis investigates the

convergence/divergence of the patterns of variation, the underlying causing factors, and the role of geographical proximity. The study includes four extralinguistic factors of syntactic variability: geographical proximity, evolutionary development, substrate language effects, and maximization of transparency, i.e. the tendency to use simpler, more transparent patterns due to ease of production and comprehension (Slobin 1973, 1977, Williams 1987,). The data selected from the Corpus of Global Web-Based English (Davies 2013, Davies & Fuchs 2015) are analysed using two statistical methods: random forest analysis and multidimensional aggregational analysis. The findings indicate that distributional differences between the two syntactic patterns are subject to the principle of maximization of transparency in that postcolonial varieties exhibit more frequent use of finite patterns due to specific intra-linguistic factors (overt marking for tense, agreement and modality, presence of explicit subjects and complementizers). Geographical proximity can only partially account for the similarities across varieties. The most relevant extralinguistic factor is the level of development of a variety assessed in terms of five phases according to Schneider's Dynamic Model (Schneider 2003, 2007). In particular, the more advanced varieties (American English and South African English) are closer to British English, hence similar in terms of complementation choice. Likewise, the Tanzanian, Kenyan, Ghanaian, and Nigerian varieties, which are all at phase 3 (nativization), prefer the same type of (finite) complementation.

In chapter 6, "The process of preposition omission across English variety types" (pp. 91-122), Heli Paulasto and Lea Meriläinen conduct a corpus analysis of the variation of this nonstandard phenomenon using a number of corpora that include native varieties of English (ENL – British, American), second language varieties (ESL – Singapore English, Nigerian English and Welsh English), and learner varieties (EFL varieties spoken by native speakers of Chinese, Japanese, Swedish and Finnish). The study aims to identify the contexts of preposition omission, the similarities and differences across varieties, and the variables influencing this process. The analysed variables are the presence/absence of a head word subcategorizing for a PP (*wait for*, *anxious about*), the status of the preposition as head of an adverbial (*on Monday* (Time)), the complexity of P (simple vs. complex), and its optional status. The results indicate that (1) preposition omission tends to occur in head word constructions in EFL; (2) in ESL and ENL corpora, preposition omission occurs more often in the context of space and time adverbials, and with place names and institutional settings; (3) omission of simple prepositions is more frequent than omission of complex prepositions across the board; (4) high frequencies of preposition omission in optional contexts feature in British English and the EFL varieties of Swedish and Finnish native speakers; in contrast, Nigerian and Singapore English, as well as the EFL varieties of Chinese and Japanese speakers exhibit high frequencies of preposition omission in contexts where P is obligatory in standard English. The authors also discuss the concept of "linguistic creativity" in connection to L2 learner. If the deviant non-standard forms produced by L2 learners are generally considered "errors", here they are viewed as innovations due to their regular patterns of occurrence. From this point of view, ESL varieties resemble ENL varieties and distance themselves from learner Englishes whose speakers do produce errors whose frequencies mainly depend on their levels of proficiency in English and their degree of exposure to and use of English.

In chapter 7, "Colonial lag or feature retention in postcolonial varieties of English. The negative scalar conjunction *and that too* in South Asian Englishes and beyond" (pp. 123-148), Robert Fuchs uses a number of different corpora to argue that the complex conjunction *and that too* (\approx 'what is worse, even worse'), which joins two negative elements, is a clear case of colonial lag/feature retention. The data show that it is a construction used more frequently in informal (private conversations) than in formal registers (monologues and written languages), which was part of 19th century British English, though nowadays it has fallen into disuse and prevails only in the post-colonial Englishes of South Asia (the Indian, Pakistani, Bangladeshi and Sri Lankan varieties). However, the frequency of the construction in these varieties fluctuates due to

differences in the use of English in these countries after the end of British colonial rule. Specifically, the data indicate that it has a higher frequency in India and Pakistan, which are multilingual countries, where English was maintained as a buffer language between the multitude of competing local varieties, and a lower frequency in Bangladesh and Sri Lanka, countries with single highly predominant local varieties, in which English is only an optional medium of instruction.

In chapter 8, “*My bad* – The rise of an innovative structure through the media” (pp. 149-165), Patricia Ronan examines, both diachronically and synchronically, the roots and evolution of the American colloquial *my bad* expressive marker, using a selection of traditional audio-visual media and international digital media corpora: the *Corpus of Contemporary American English – COCA* (Davies 2008) and the *Corpus of Historical American English – COHA* (Davies 2010). The study shows that the *my bad* structure, first attested in a 1965 American movie, gained popularity in telecinematic genres, initially film and television, in the 1990s, later spread into both informal fiction and magazine writing, as well as unscripted spoken language (throughout the 2000s), and recently has entered the less formal news genres (news reporting, sports, and lifestyle reports). In addition, it has spread to other varieties of English spoken around the world, although British and Irish English exhibit a lower number of attestations, probably due to attitudinal factors, i.e. their resistance to Americanisms. On the other hand, the corpus data reveal a drop in the number of attestations in the second decade of the 21st century, pointing out the decrease in iconicity of this catch-phrase (Adams 2014, Bednarek 2018).

In chapter 9, “Big and rich social networks in computational sociolinguistics” (pp. 166-190), Mikko Laitinen and Masoud Fatemi propose a new algorithmic method of analysis of social media data that is intended to tackle the shortage of social background information pertaining to the informants, an aspect at present considered a major limitation of the social media data used in computational sociolinguistics. Their method, couched in the theoretical framework of the social network analysis (Granovetter 1973, Milroy 1987, Milroy & Milroy 1985), is verified in a case study which relies on the freely available social interaction data provided by Twitter, but, as pointed out by the authors, it could be modified to cover other social media platforms as well. The proposed method, which uses participant-centred information, namely, the size and structure of social networks, as a proxy for social information, facilitates the study of the diffusion of language change by increasing the validity of the social media data it helps to extract.

Chapter 10, “Rhythm in World Englishes: Evidence from a quantitative analysis of co-occurrence patterns in a corpus of L1 and L2 varieties of English” (pp. 191-213), by Sebastian Hoffman, Sabine Arndt-Lappe and Peter Uhrig, is an exploratory study intended to bridge the gap between two trends in rhythm-based research – the study of the effects of the Principle of Rhythmic Alternation and the study of isochrony in world languages. Using data extracted from all 20 varieties of the Global Web-Based English Corpus (GloWbE) (Davies & Fuchs 2015), the analysis focuses on the effects of the rhythmic properties of different L1 languages on the production of English bigrams by ESL speakers. The results lend support to the idea that the properties of L1 influence the way L2 is spoken, by providing further evidence that speakers of syllable-timed varieties do not conform to the same type of rhythmic constraints in English as speakers whose L1 is stress-timed. In particular, the data reveal that syllable-timed ESL varieties like Bangladeshi, Indian, and Kenyan English produce more bigram combinations that violate the Principle of Rhythmic Alternation than stress-timed native Englishes.

Overall, the present volume is a highly informative collection of studies covering an extensive range of topics, from microanalyses of specific grammatical features to macroanalyses of general phenomena in contact linguistics. It is a volume that uses a vast array of corpora and databases of various sizes, as well as the latest methodological approaches in corpus linguistics. For all these reasons, the book will be of great relevance not only to scholars, but also to PhD students doing research in the fields of sociolinguistics, corpus linguistics, and World Englishes.

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