Book Reviews

Guido Seiler, *Präpositionale Dativmarkierung im Oberdeutschen*. (*Zeitschrift für Dialektologie und Linguistik*, Beihefte, 124.) Wiesbaden: Franz Steiner Verlag, 2003, 283 pages, ISBN 3-515-08318-9, EUR 60.

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The differential marking of grammatical relations has attracted much typological attention over the last few decades. Rectifying the once common, somewhat simplistic assumption that, in all languages, each grammatical relation perforce comes with its unique marking, and conversely that being marked differently perforce implies relational distinctness, the relationship between relations and their overt marking has been recognised as being potentially more flexible, just as the relationships between the syntax of grammatical relations and their semantics and pragmatics are potentially flexible.

The grammatical relations that have been highlighted as being specially prone to differential marking are those of direct (or primary) object and of subject, both intransitive and transitive. Indirect (or secondary) objects have received less attention, perhaps because this relation is often not too dissimilar from that of oblique object, and different markers may therefore actually be marking different relations. Oblique objects and especially adverbials are not marked uniformly in the first place, but differentially depending on their relational semantics, irrespective of their syntactic uniformity.

The parameters that have been established as determining the choice among marking alternatives, at least for the syntactic core relations, include (i) the referential and information status of the nominals concerned (to do with definiteness, specificity, individuation, and focus), (ii) their lexical semantics ("animacy"), (iii) their morphosyntactic categorisation (noun, pronoun, free or bound), (iv) the relationships in these semantic and syntactic respects to other nominals occurring in the same clause, (v) the verb or verb class a nominal is governed by, and (vi) several of the factors contributing to the overall transitivity of a clause.

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The chief motivation of differential marking patterns as they recur across languages is economic; that is, instead of consistently IDENTIFYING each relation, overt markers are employed judiciously so as to only DISTINGUISH relations when overt distinction is needed to preclude ambiguity. A further functional motive for differential marking, antagonistic to economy, is clarity: when salient relational-semantic contrasts are in danger of being slurred through insufficiently distinctive marking, they are liable to be reinforced through more dependable marking alternatives, again employed judiciously.

The distribution of FORMAL TYPES of markers over the several kinds of grammatical relations to be marked, differentially or otherwise, can likewise be seen as being shaped by the principles of economy and clarity. To only look at adpositions vs. cases, their utilisation is not random: when both are employed in one language, the preferred domain of adpositions will be adverbials and oblique objects, and the preferred domain of cases will be indirect and direct objects (or, in more general terms, secondary and primary objects) as well as subjects. There may be zones of overlap, or also somewhat different dividing lines in different languages: but doing it precisely the other way round is unheard of. (As to other types of relational marking, agreement/cross-reference and rigid ordering share their preferred utilisations with cases.) Given that case exponents are typically less substantial in phonological bulk than adpositions, and that the paradigms of cases are typically smaller than the sets of adpositions, more numerous contrasts can be expressed by drawing on adpositions than on cases. With subjects and with primary and secondary objects it is the verbs or other predicates themselves that spell out in detail the semantics of their argument relations, so that minimal support from extra overt markers is required to tell apart which argument is subject and which object. The demands on identifying semantic relations not encoded through predicates are higher, and richer inventories of markers are therefore at a premium here.

While both the scope and systematics of differential marking and the relational distribution of types of markers fall into patterns that recur in language after language, neither is diachronically immutable. As to the distribution of marker types, adpositional marking has often been observed to spread from syntactically marginal semantic relations to syntactic core relations, while case marking does not seem to spread in the opposite direction. For instance, when one case marks both the primary object and a local or temporal oblique object or adverbial, this dual coverage is unlikely to have come about through the case concerned having spread from the primary object to the oblique or adverbial: presumably, the language concerned deploys case marking in a wider relational zone than just the core relations; if things were to change, perhaps as a result of the case paradigm shrinking, one would expect adpositions to be roped in for obliques and adverbials and concomitantly case to be limited to primary objects.

Providing a diachronic connection of the two themes of marker types and differential marking, the encroaching of adpositions on case territory is in fact a common scenario for the rise of diffential marking: of the two markers alternatively available for the same relation, especially that of direct/primary object, one often is a case and the other an adposition; and the adposition's scope has diachronically been expanding from more marginal relations, namely those of indirect/secondary or oblique object. (The differential markers of direct/primary objects can be different cases too, rather than a case and and adposition, and those of subjects usually are, with adpositions rarely extending to the top of the relational hierarchy.) This sort of expansion commonly appears to be triggered by the weakening or loss of case marking: in order to reinforce an endangered contrast among case forms, adpositions are drawn on, which are diachronically more stable, or at any rate have a longer life expectancy, owing to their greater formal substance. This is done especially for those direct/primary objects which, being definite and/or animate, could otherwise be mistaken for subjects; and those adpositions are the most suitable reinforcements whose previous use was with referentially and semantically similar nominals (such as indirect objects, which are typically definite, animate, etc., like subjects).

The permissible and preferred patterns of differential marking have become clearly discernible with recent research ranging wide across language families and areas. What continues to be less clear is how these patterns can come about diachronically, and how the impermissible ones have managed never to be innovated (or always to be gotten rid of). There are some valuable historical accounts for PARTICULAR relevant languages and families (such as Romance or Indo-Iranian), but questions such as the following need more GENERAL answers, informed by more comprehensive comparative histories: What are the possible scenarios for the emergence of differential marking, providing just the right marker types for just the right relations? What are the causes and conditions of such developments? Are there relevant mechanisms of change other than extensions of markers of the same type or of different types?

Lest such diachronic scenarios are expected to be more or less uniform, all essentially variations on one and the same general theme, an episode, or a set of very similar episodes, in Upper High German dialects where the circumstances were rather special deserves to be drawn attention to. This is now described in great detail in Guido Seiler's *Präpositionale Dativmarkierung im Oberdeutschen* (revised from a Zürich doctoral thesis), and it ought to interest typologists as much as dialectologists. The Upper High German dialect lesson is that, though usually driven and guided by such general principles as economy and clarity, differential marking can also originate by sheer accident, as it were by mistake, through the misanalysis of an ambiguous form, with a definite article thus spawning a preposition. The differential relational markers at issue in Upper High German are the dative case and that preposition.

To be able to appreciate what is specific about Seiler's dialectal account, it has to be noted (Seiler himself does not, or only tangentially) that the dative faces stiff competition from prepositional marking in High German IN ALL ITS VARIETIES, though apparently subject to much individual variation.

A substantial number of ditransitive verbs taking an accusative-marked direct object and a dative-marked indirect object alternatively permit a preposition for the latter – for example:

(1) a. *Ich schickte d-en Brief d-em Direktor*
b. *Ich schickte d-en Brief an d-en Direktor*
'I sent the-ACC.SG.MASC letter the-DAT.SG.MASC /
to the-ACC.SG.MASC director'

(2) a. *Ich schrieb d-en Brief d-em Direktor*
b. *Ich schrieb d-en Brief an/für d-en Direktor*
'I wrote the-ACC.SG.MASC letter the-DAT.SG.MASC /
to/for the-ACC.SG.MASC director'

Datives governed by certain monotransitive verbs – depending on one's relational analysis, this case would be marking an indirect object (as with ditransitive verbs of transfer and the like) or a direct object (differentially marked, with accusative or genitive as the other case options with monotransitive verbs) – likewise alternate with prepositions:

(3) a. *Ich vertraute d-em Direktor*
b. *Ich vertraute auf d-en Direktor*
'I trusted the-DAT.SG.MASC / on the-ACC.SG.MASC director'

Certain "free" datives, marking oblique objects or adverbials not verb-governed, engage in similar alternations:

(4) a. *Ich entwischte d-em Direktor*
b. *Ich entwischte vor d-em Direktor*
'I escaped the-DAT.SG.MASC / from the-DAT.SG.MASC director'

(5) a. *Mir war alles klar*
b. *Für mich war alles klar*
'Everything was clear me.DAT.SG / for me.ACC.SG'

Looking at such alternations diachronically, they exemplify what is probably the standard scenario for the emergence of differential marking on non-primary objects: the dative was originally the only marker for such relations (indirect, oblique, adverbial object), and prepositions have subsequently been catching on as alternatives to the dative. The advance of the alternation in German appears to have been piecemeal, diffusing through the lexicon verb by

verb or close-knit semantic verb class by verb class; there is considerable variation across speakers especially for those verbs or verb classes which were the most recent to succumb to prepositional marking. There remain ditransitive and monotransitive verbs, including ones with a high frequency of occurrence, whose datives are strictly opposed to permitting prepositional alternatives, now and very likely also in the near future:

(6) *Ich sagte dem Direktor (*an den Direktor) die Wahrheit*
'I told the-DAT.SG.MASC director (*to the-ACC.SG.MASC director) the-ACC.SG.FEM truth'

(7) *Ich half dem Direktor (*an den Direktor)*
'I helped the-DAT.SG.MASC director (*to the-ACC.SG.MASC director)'

Where alternations are possible, as in (1)–(5), there are usually semantic differences which are to do with animacy or (clausal) transitivity (telicity, perfectivity, affectedness, involvement, etc.): however delicate the contrasts, the dative comes with more animate objects and with more transitive clauses than do prepositions. It is almost as if dative-marked nominals are being shifted down the relational hierarchy when preposition-marked, being oblique rather than indirect, adverbial rather than oblique, and the verbs being correspondingly conceived of as less (di-)transitive. Though transitions are subtle and not perforce categorical, we may not really be dealing with the differential marking of one and the same relation, but the relation itself may be altered with different kinds of marking.

To note a further difference, where more than one preposition is available, this sometimes helps to disambiguate semantic relations neutralised by the dative; thus, compare (2a) with (2b), where addressee (recipient) and benefactive are distinguished by prepositions. The desirability of making such overt distinctions has sometimes been claimed as a causal factor in the advance of prepositions.

Its more comprehensive cause has been seen in the attrition of the case system. However, although the case marking of NOUNS has undeniably worn off, with maximally two cases distinguished inflectionally, that of DETERMINERS and of PRONOUNS pertinaciously maintains a three- or even four-way contrast – which somewhat detracts from the causal coherence of this particular developmental scenario. The continuing liveliness of the inflectional contrast between dative and accusative is in fact seen in examples such as (1)–(3) and (5), where the prepositions alternating with the pure dative themselves govern a different case, namely the accusative – a directional rather than locational case, to the extent that there is a spatial basis to the semantics of accusative and dative.

The Upper High German dialects of Alemannic and Bavarian – as spoken in southern Germany, Austria, Switzerland, Alsace (in France), and in a few

isolated communities in northen Italy and in Romania – do not fundamentally differ from Standard High German in case inventory and case uses, including the differential dative vs. adpositional marking. It is true, the genitive is even more marginal in dialects; also, in Alemannic nominative forms of determiners have been extended to direct object function; and in Bavarian forms originally dative sometimes (namely for 3rd person personal pronouns) appear on direct objects where Standard High German has the accusative. However, since such nominative and dative exuberance is always limited in terms of word classes, genders, and/or inflection classes, and never extends to ALL case-marked forms, the three-way paradigmatic case contrast as such is not endangered. (Seiler seems to me to somewhat exaggerate that danger in his portrayal of Upper High German as headed for a two-case system, with a prepositional-phrase case, the dative, in opposition with a noun-phrase case, a syncretic nominative-accusative.)

Now, sifting a huge amount of dialectological literature and dialect writing, and filling in gaps through a questionnaire and informal surveys of his own and from information in the Zürich-based *Syntaktischer Atlas der deutschen Schweiz* (directed by Elvira Glaser, with Seiler a collaborator), Seiler documents the precise spread of an innovation over most varieties of Bavarian and Alemannic that also involves the dative and what would seem to be prepositions, yet is different from the differential marking through dative vs. preposition as above. The innovation at issue consists in a further marking, reminiscent of the prepositions *an* 'at, to' or *in* 'in, into' (with final nasal consonants somewhat evanescent, and the vowel somewhat indistinct), being added on to noun phrases which are in the dative. These are primarily indirect objects of ditransitive verbs (8) and sole objects of monotransitive verbs (9) as well as of adjectives (10), indirect or direct depending on one's analysis; but adnominal possessor noun phrases in the dative (11) and beneficiary and other noun phrases in the dative which are not valency-bound (12) are not exempt from such extra marking.

(8) a. *E d-amm Mànn, e d-are*
PREP this-DAT.SG.MASC man, PREP this-DAT.SG.FEM
Fràj kâsch nichs glàiwe
woman can.you nothing believe
'This man, this woman you can't believe anything' (Alemannic: Alsatian)

b. *Er git d-r Öpfel a mir,*
he gives the-ACC/NOM.SG.MASC apple PREP me.DAT,
statt a dir
instead PREP you.DAT
'He gives the apple to me instead of to you' (Alemannic: Glarus, Switzerland)

(9) *i hån in* D-*m waib … gulfm plind*ɒ*rn*
I have PREP a-DAT.SG.FEM woman … helped move'
'I have helped a woman to move house' (Bavarian: Außfern, Austria)

(10) *sei sie ächt i d-e Tanne … nydig gsi?*
have they really PREP (OF) the-DAT.PL firs … envious been?'
'Have they really been envious of the firs?' (Alemannic: Luzerner Hinterland, Switzerland)

(11) *däs is än w-en sei Haus?*
this is PREP who-DAT.SG his house?
'This is whose house?' (Bavarian: Westkärnten, Austria)

(12) *da Walta soe a d-a Mamma p-Post hoen*
the Walter should PREP (for) the-DAT.SG.FEM mother the-mail fetch
'Walter should fetch the mail for mother' (Bavarian: Rehdorf, Upper Bavaria)

Dative noun phrases which are the complements of a preposition are the only ones which do not take such an additional *a(n)/i(n)*; but this limitation also holds for the alternations between dative and preposition in High German generally.

In the relevant varieties of Alemannic and Bavarian, however, the datives in all other relations (indirect, perhaps also direct, oblique, adverbial) know no "exceptions" in terms of individual verbs or verb classes: for all of them the marking through *a(n)/i(n)* is an option. A further significant difference is that when noun phrases are accompanied by *a(n)/i(n)* they invariably remain in the dative, although the corresponding prepositions can take the accusative (directional) as well as the dative (locational). Yet another difference is that adding *a(n)/i(n)* to datives in Alemannic and Bavarian as in (8)–(12) is without semantic consequences; in particular, it does not diminish animacy or transitivity. What specially encourages the addition of *a(n)/i(n)*, on the other hand, is that a dative noun phrase is specially focused.

This marking of dative noun phrases through *a(n)/i(n)* falls under the rubric of differential marking insofar as noun phrases in the grammatical relations concerned may have or may lack *a(n)/i(n)*; and there is no question here of the corresponding noun phrases with and without *a(n)/i(n)* being in DIFFERENT grammatical relations. This differential pattern is not exactly one that would be crosslinguistically familiar. One special factor, as just mentioned, is focus, which is a necessary condition for the use of *a(n)/i(n)* and increases the probability that it actually will be used. Clitic pronouns, which are never focused, do

not permit marking through *a(n)/i(n)* at all. Another factor is the internal constituency of noun phrases. Although there are varieties (such as South Bavarian) where just about any kind of noun phrase can take *a(n)/i(n)*, the actual incidence of *a(n)/i(n)* tends to differ depending on whether noun phrases consist of pronouns of various kinds or what kind of determiner nouns are accompanied by: the incidence is everywhere highest in the presence of a definite article. This is another difference to the type of dative vs. preposition alternation in Modern High German discussed earlier, where the dative on the contrary tends to go with definiteness and the prepositional alternative with indefiniteness.

The distribution of the two varieties of the prepositional marker, *a(n)* and *i(n)*, is areal, with both forms attested in both Alemannic and Bavarian; but sometimes there is reason to doubt that *a(n)* and *i(n)* can really be distinguished from one another in the first place. Such marking is a feature of oral speech; and translating dialect speech into spelling is hazardous. In fact, synchronically identifying *a(n)/i(n)* in examples like (8)–(12) with the prepositions *an* 'at, to' and *in* 'in, into' is not unproblematic, especially on semantic grounds, relatively colourless ("abstract") though *an* and *in* themselves are. Seiler does make a convincing case, however, that the forms in (8)–(12) are prepositions (of the "structural" kind): they are not prefixes (which will disappoint hunters after rara of thre calibre of case prefixes). Whether prepositions or prefixes, Seiler's assumption is that they are grammatical elements which associate with what follows them. This is certainly valid as far as SYNTACTIC association goes: they are PREpositions, not POSTpositions. The implicit assumption is that this also holds for PHONOLOGICAL association; but I see no direct evidence in the book that *a(n)/i(n)* are dedicated PROclitics, never found ENcliticised.

Among the few dialectologists who have taken systematic note of it, the history of Alemannic and Bavarian *a(n)/i(n)* has been discussed controversially. The innovation, sometimes assumed to be as recent as the early nineteenth century, is convincingly dated by Seiler to the fifteenth century for Alemannic, or indeed the thirteenth century for Central Swiss Alemannic, and to the twelfth or thirteenth centuries for South Bavarian (where *a(n)/i(n)* marking is synchronically most prominent, attaining near-categoriality). Since then, spreads as well as withdrawals and demises have occurred, the latter under the influence of the standard language. It is difficult to decide between mono- or polygenesis of *a(n)/i(n)* marking; following Seiler, there probably was not a single Upper High German centre of the innovation. On the other hand, Seiler also points to an analogous amplification of the dative case through the preposition *a* (< Latin *ad* 'at, to') in Rhaeto-Romance (as well as in Sardinian and Mozarabic), and he does not find it a coincidence that something that occurs within Germanic only at its southern periphery should essentially replicate an archaism surviving at the northern periphery of Romance.

It is a moot question whether differential marking of the kind of a prepositional amplification of datives as illustrated in (8)-(12) can only be due to borrowing or stimulus diffusion. Within Upper High German there is robust evidence that such a development, even if modelled on another language, is not automatic, but needs structural licensing, or triggering, of a very particular kind, not familiar from other instances of differential marking: at the origin of the prepositional amplification is the MISANALYSIS of the definite article in dative noun phrases as a preposition fused with a definite article.

In High German, as elsewhere in Germanic, the definite article is morphologically complex, consisting of the definite stem *d-* (< demonstrative) plus agreement suffixes for gender-number-case. In Upper High German – significantly not everywhere, that is, but in precisely those dialectal varieties where differential marking through *a(n)/i(n)* was to emerge – the segmental substance of the definite article was weakened: its first consonant was lost, unless there would have been no consonant left (with final <r> only an orthographic consonant); final schwa was lost too. This is how the definite paradigm was altered; the forms given are Bavarian, but Alemannic does not differ in essence for the relevant points; segments lost are underlined:[1]

	MASC	NEUT	FEM	PL	>	MASC	NEUT	FEM	PL	>	FEM	PL
NOM	*d-er*	*d-as*	*d-ie*	*d-ie*		dɐ	(ɐ)s	də	də		d	d
ACC	*d-en*	*d-as*	*d-ie*	*d-ie*		(ɐ)n	(ɐ)s	də	də		d	d
DAT	*d-em*	*d-em*	*d-er*	*d-en(en)*		(ɐ)m/ (ɐ)n	(ɐ)m/ (ɐ)n	dɐ	(ɐ)n/de			
GEN	*d-es*	*d-es*	*d-er*	*d-er*		(ɐ)s	(ɐ)s	dɐ	dɐ			

In the dialectological literature the source of the segmental weakening of the definite article is specifically localised in the close clitic combinations it forms with several prepositions (including *an* and *in*: *in=den/dem/das* 'in=the', etc.). Arguably, however, the deletion pattern just shown follows from the definite article IN GENERAL being enclitic, and proclitic only if there if there is nothing to its left it can lean on (and indeed prefixal if lacking a vowel, cf. *p-Post*, from /t-pɔst/, in (12)): this is only one instance of the general pattern in Upper High German, and probably in all of German(ic), where phonological phrasing (being trochaic) runs counter to syntactic phrasing (being effectively iambic, with weak function words before strong content words).[2]

Whether the loss of its onset consonant only happened locally or just about everywhere, as a result the definite article on its own – in the dative singular masculine/neuter – became indistinguishable from these fusions of *an* and *in*

1. I am grateful to Aditi Lahiri for phonological enlightenment.
2. This is shown in more detail in forthcoming joint work with Astrid Kraehenmann.

with an enclitic definite article in dative singular masculine/neuter form; the weak and evanescent vowel would be none too distinct, and sequences of nasal consonants in the coda would be further simplified (/nm/ > /m/):

(13) X [*(ɐ/i)m* Y N-DAT.SG.MASC]$_{NP}$ Z
a. the.DAT.SG.MASC
b. PREP=the.DAT.SG.MASC

In this formulaic representation *X* and *Z* are variables for just about anything in the syntactic context of a dative noun phrase, dative-governors included: naturally, it is only when *X* is itself a preposition that no further adjacent preposition as per (13b) would be countenanced in the same phrase. *Y* stands for anything else that the noun phrase itself may contain in between definite article and noun.

This formal ambiguity was to prove momentous because it occasioned a reanalysis: constructions of type (13a), with a definite article as of old, were in fact misanalysed as in (13b), with a combination of preposition plus definite article. It is not in noun phrases exactly fitting the morphosyntactic specifications of (13) where this reanalysis becomes manifest: overt differences revealing the reanalysis only appear when the definite article is not singular masculine/neuter, but singular feminine (cf. (9) and (12) above) or plural (10); or when it does not contain the definite article, but the indefinite article (9)[3] or any other determiner (such as the demonstratives in (8a)); or when it consists of a non-clitic pronoun (such as the personal pronouns in (8b) and the interrogative pronoun in (11)).

It is the pathways of this diachronic extension of the original reanalysis which define the synchronic patterns of the differential marking of noun phrases through either the dative alone or through a preposition *a(n)/i(n)* plus the dative, as observed across the Alemannic and Bavarian dialect varieties (and comprehensively documented by Seiler). Alongside these morphosyntactic parameters, it is the pragmatic distinction of being unfocused or focused which determines whether a plain dative or a dative plus *a(n)/i(n)* is used to differentially encode the relevant grammatical relations. At least in this last respect there would be a principle seen to be at work, then, which is also guiding other dif-

3. The indefinite article in Alemannic and Bavarian has short and long dative singular forms: cf., for Bavarian, *ɐn* and *ɐrɐn/ɐnɐn* MASC/NEUT, *ɐrɐ* and *ɐrɐnɐ* FEM. The long forms are difficult to account for historically, and Seiler (with others) appears to favour the assumption that they have been lengthened on analogy with the tight combinations of preposition *an/in* and definite article. (All those forms of the definite article where initial /d/ is lost coincide with corresponding forms of the indefinite article in Bavarian.) Another possibility would be that the long forms of indefinite articles, assuming they are old, were likewise ambiguous and were subsequently reanalysed as per (13).

ferential marking – iconicity: the more discourse-salient a noun phrase, the more distinctive and dependable its overt relational marking.[4]

There remains the question why, given a formal ambiguity as in (13), arising through the vicissitudes of morphological and phonological change, the "wrong" analysis of a dative definite article as a preposition plus a dative definite article, which was at the origin of this particular manifestation of differential marking, was to prevail – persisting for centuries and only succumbing to the pressures of Standard High German. For one thing, Upper High German syntactic history may have taken this unusual turn because history elsewhere, in a language only Upper High German was in contact with, had taken this same turn too: Rhaeto-Romance showed a very similar pattern of differential marking of dative relations, and indeed a very similar form, the preposition *a* (from Latin *ad*), added to datives. But further encouragement, if not the original incentive to seize on a welcome chance opportunity, may have been internal: as shown above, as a backdrop to the peculiarly Alemannic and Bavarian dative amplification, there was an inclination in High German generally to reinforce datives (though not all of them indiscriminately) through prepositions (though ones also governing cases other than the dative itself). The role of the dative or similar markers that is highlighted in standard histories of differential marking is to be extended from indirect/secondary objects to (transitive subject-like) direct/primary objects. To get a fuller picture of the dynamics of differential marking, grammatical relations marked with a dative (or also further cases not earmarked for subjects and primary/direct objects, such as genitive) ought to be recognised as being special in their own right: syntactic processing would seem to prioritise them for distinctive marking, whose maintenance and formal reinforcement therefore should be a diachronic priority too.[5]

"German" does not lack differential object marking, then, but shows several manifestations of it, one, attested only in dialects, of a rather unusual kind and history. This will not be the only language where dialects are in stark contrast to a standard, and where a bias in favour of standards would deprive typology of much of its subject matter – DIVERSITY, increasing with successful innovations, unchecked by artificial norms though possibly reined in by universal constraints on doing things differently. Dialectology in turn stands to

4. In the Alemannic variety of the Swiss Kanton Freiburg, close to Germanic's western border to Romance, a prefixal dative marker *i-* of personal pronouns, formally reminiscent of the preposition *i(n)* but argued by Seiler (pp. 82–86) to have originated through a reanalysis of variant forms of 3rd person pronouns and its analogical extension to other pronouns, has spread also to the accusative, creating the familiar differential marking pattern with only highly "animate" direct objects (i.e., pronouns) receiving a special marker, one shared with indirect objects.
5. Distinctiveness requirements have variously been shown (first but not least in work of my own and of my colleagues Josef Bayer and Markus Bader) to be stricter for genitives and datives than for nominatives and accusatives or ergatives and absolutives.

benefit from an awareness of the kind and extent of typological diversity to be reckoned with. Books like Guido Seiler's *Präpositionale Dativmarkierung im Oberdeutschen*, however rare, bode well, on both sides.

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Nicole Kruspe, *A Grammar of Semelai*. (Cambridge Grammatical Descriptions, 3.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2004, 520 pages, ISBN 0-521-81497-9, EUR 106.70.

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The linguistic typologist, as archetypal end-user of descriptive grammars, has two reasons to rejoice with the publication of Kruspe's grammar of Semelai, an Aslian (Mon-Khmer, Austroasiatic) language of peninsular Malaysia. First, the book adds to the library's A-list of grammars in quality and comprehensiveness. Second, it makes a significant addition to the language sample, being the first full reference grammar of an Aslian language (followed now by Burenhult 2005), and one of surprisingly few comprehensive grammars of an Austroasiatic language. It is certainly more representative of Austroasiatic languages than its more famous and better described cousins (Khmer and Vietnamese), having been spared the ravages of national language status.

As primarily a reference work, a grammar must be designed for the generic linguist, anyone from any area of the discipline, who comes looking for answers to unforeseen questions, motivated by very different sets of presuppositions (cf. Ameka et al. 2006). The best grammars, therefore, are readily accessible by linguists regardless of intellectual orientation or specialization. In addition, a grammar must be as comprehensive as possible within the confines of publishability. Kruspe's grammar of Semelai exemplifies this multiple ideal. It is comprehensive, well organized, and well conceived.

This is the third in the Cambridge Grammatical Descriptions series.[1] The publisher's blurb tells that the series contains "comprehensive grammars of previously undescribed languages that are of outstanding theoretical interest",

1. It is remarkable that a major press agreed to publish this book at all, and the other books in its series, given the frequent pariah treatment of new grammatical descriptions. (And it is therefore not surprising – though regrettable – that CUP is not commissioning further titles for the series.) Major presses do regularly publish grammars, but mostly only those of major, national languages. Ironically, these grammars of well-known languages seldom if ever approach the quality and comprehensiveness of a grammar like Kruspe's.

where each presents "a full explanatory account, providing a permanent record and a research resource that will continue to be studied long after the language itself has passed into extinction". In accordance with this *raison d'être*, Kruspe's book describes the facts of a minority language in meticulous detail, and with excellent coverage of the range of topics a generic end-user may expect in a reference grammar. The chapters are: 1. Semelai; 2. Phonology and phonotactics; 3. Morphology; 4. Word classes; 5. The verb; 6. Pronouns: personal, ignorative, and demonstrative; 7. The noun phrase; 8. Prepositions and the prepositional phrase; 9. Grammatical relations, constituent order and coding strategies; 10. Basic clauses; 11. Complex clauses; 12. Expressives; 13. The quotative marker, interjections and discourse clitics; 14. Texts. There is a good balance to the range of topics. While many grammarians for one reason or another give greater attention to some topics at the cost of others (though no jury should convict them), Kruspe is beyond reproach, displaying exemplary well-roundedness. Equally careful attention is given to the range of topics which make a reference grammar genuinely comprehensive.

Those interested in phonology and morphophonemics will find Chapters 2 and 3 thorough and richly detailed. Even those readers looking to skip forward to the morphosyntax are given good reason to pay attention to prosody and syllable structure – as Kruspe explains (p. 64), they are necessary for a proper understanding of the language's intriguing morphological processes. These processes are covered in Chapter 3, with an elaborate inventory of affixation types: prefixation, suffixation, circumfixation, and infixation of various kinds, involving both the affixing of pre-specified morphological material and the rule-governed derivation of new forms via complex rules by which phonological material is copied from a root and affixed in various ways. These processes show an amazing array of semantic functions. Derivational morphology is further treated in discussion of the verb in Chapter 5, where we enter into the morphosyntactic manipulation of valency, transitivity (in the general sense, i.e., involving distinctions in aspect and degree of agentivity), and other features of argument structure. Of typological note is an unusual variety of split-S marking which, unexpectedly, employs the MORE A-like form when a lone actor is being compelled by someone else rather than instigating the action themselves (pp. 6, 160). Aspects of the noun phrase are covered in detail in Chapters 6 to 8, followed by an insightful and absorbingly detailed description of the general phenomena of clausal and sentential syntax: systems of encoding grammatical relations, word order, and coding strategies (Chapter 9); basic clauses (Chapter 10); and complex clauses (Chapter 11). The balance of breadth and depth to this grammar reveals the mastery which Kruspe has brought to the job of writing it.

The inclusion of texts and a basic vocabulary list, standard features of this CUP series, follows a strengthening observance of the Boasian ideal of

grammar-lexicon-text, and accords with the standard being upheld here. Most of the illustrative examples are from naturally occurring spoken data (narratives). Kruspe's lengthy field-based participant observation has given her sensitive intuitions about the language, resulting in an authoritative description. My only complaint is one that may be made of just about every grammatical description: none of the texts are from natural/spontaneous conversation, yet conversation is the overwhelmingly dominant context for deployment of grammatical structure in any living language.

This is the first high-standard comprehensive reference grammar of an Aslian language, and it should serve well to bring the Aslian family of languages to wider attention among typologists. The introductory chapter has a useful overview of Aslian peoples and languages, their history and classification (see also Burenhult 2005). The book is an important addition to the descriptive literature on Mon-Khmer languages, whose best known members have received most of the attention in grammatical description, despite being typologically atypical. The genius of your average Mon-Khmer language of mainland Southeast Asia is its rich derivational morphology (cf., e.g., Kmhmu; Svantesson 1983, Premsrirat 1989). Morphologists will find much to enjoy in both the Semelai facts and Kruspe's masterful description of them (Chapter 3).

Another important feature of the language for linguistic typology is the often neglected phenomenon of expressives (Diffloth 1972, 1976, otherwise known as ideophones; Voeltz & Kilian-Hatz 2001), a form class which is remarkably elaborated in Aslian languages, as well as Mon-Khmer languages more generally and other languages of mainland Southeast Asia. The category is widespread in languages of the area, but descriptively almost entirely neglected (Enfield 2005: 189).[2] This word class poses significant descriptive challenges and raises a host of important theoretical issues. Kruspe devotes an entire chapter to the problem (Chapter 12), with a generous supply of data and useful references to the literature.

Most satisfying of all is Kruspe's sustained, sensitive attention to semantics and to the semantic motivations for distinctions which Semelai grammar furnishes. Due to standard constraints, a grammarian typically has little space or time for semantics. If coherent discussion of functional motivations for formal distinctions are provided at all in a grammar, this represents a high standard of work. Kruspe achieves this. Chapter 10, for example, shows an exemplary balance between descriptive attention to meaning and form. The grammar is loaded with insightful discussion of guiding motivations and possible rationales for the formal behavior of Semelai grammar. Different analyses are con-

2. An exception is Thompson's superb description of Vietnamese, with over 20 pages devoted to ideophones and similar phenomena under the headings "emphatics" and "dramatics" (Thompson 1987: 154–176). See also Burenhult (2005: Chapter 6).

sidered, and choices of solution are well justified. For the student, then, this book is not only a comprehensive treatment of a captivating language. It is a fine guide to the art of grammar-writing.[3]

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3. Since publication of Kruspe's grammar, an erratum was posted on the book's CUP web site:

   To follow the final paragraph of Section 1.3.2, p. 21

   Hoe Ban Seng's 1964 undergraduate field report, published in 2001, devoted a chapter to a preliminary presentation of the Semelai language (Hoe 2001: 95–124) recording an extensive vocabulary of approximately 900 items, and samples of the language with Malay and English glosses. The Malay-based orthography had limitations, failing for example to distinguish the full inventory of vowels, and voiceless aspirated stops, although managing to capture the distinction between the final voiceless velar and glottal stops. Gianno's dissertation, published as Gianno (1990) advanced upon Hoe in accuracy by presenting linguistic data in a phonemic orthography based on work by Gérard Diffloth. It includes narrative transcriptions and appendices devoted to lists of Semelai plant names and related terminology, all based on that phonemicisation.

   The Gianno/Diffloth phonemicisation, to which I only gained access after completing my own initial phonological analysis, is broadly similar to the one advanced here, in recognising ten oral vowels, each with a phonemically nasal counterpart, and three series of stops: voiced, voiceless and voiceless aspirated. It also differs from it in a number of significant points, including an absence of a series of pre-glottalised sonorants and voiceless nasals, the inclusion of a voiced velar fricative, and the treatment of nasality on vowels.