Determinants of Grammatical Variation in English

This volume provides a comprehensive account of Early Modern English, organized by linguistic level. The volume not only presents detailed outlines of the traditional language levels, it also explores key questions and debates, such as do-periphrasis, the Great Vowel Shift, pronouns and relativization, literary language (including the language of Shakespeare), and sociolinguistics, including contact and standardization. In this important and pioneering book Frederick Newmeyer takes on the question of language variety. He considers why some language types are impossible and why some grammatical features are more common than others. The task of trying to explain typological variation among languages has been mainly undertaken by functionally-oriented linguists. Generative grammarians entering the field of typology in the 1980s put forward the idea that cross-linguistic differences could be explained by linguistic parameters within Universal Grammar, whose operation might vary from language to language. Unfortunately, this way of looking at variation turned out to be much less successful than had been hoped for. Professor Newmeyer’s alternative to parameters combines leading ideas from functionalist and formalist approaches which in the past have been considered incompatible. He throws fresh light on language typology and variation, and provides new insights into the principles of Universal Grammar. The book is written in a clear, readable style and will be readily understood by anyone with a couple of years’ study of linguistics. It will interest a wide range of scholars and students of language, including typologists, historical linguists, and theorists of every shade.

The series Handbooks of Linguistics and Communication Science is designed to illuminate a field which not only includes general linguistics and the study of linguistics as applied to specific languages, but also covers those more recent areas which have developed from the increasing body of research into the manifold forms of communicative action and interaction. In its 1500-year history, the English language has seen dramatic grammatical changes. This book offers a comprehensive and reader-friendly account of the major developments, including changes in word order, the noun phrase and verb phrase, changing relations between clausal constituents and the development of new subordinate constructions. The book puts forward possible explanations for change, drawing on the existing and most recent literature, and with reference to the major theoretical models. The authors use corpus evidence to investigate language internal and language external motivations for change, including the impact of language contact. The book is intended for students who have been introduced to the history
of English and want to deepen their understanding of major grammatical changes, and for linguists in
general with a historical interest. It will also be of value to literary scholars professionally engaged with older
texts. This book, the second volume in A Linguistic History of English, describes the development of Old
English from Proto-Germanic. Like Volume I, it is an internal history of the structure of English that
combines traditional historical linguistics, modern syntactic theory, the study of languages in contact, and
the variationist approach to language change. The first part of the book considers the development of
Northwest and West Germanic, and the northern dialects of the latter, with particular reference to
phonological and morphological phenomena. Later chapters present a detailed account of changes in the
Old English sound system, inflectional system, and syntax. The book aims to make the findings of
traditional historical linguistics accessible to scholars and students in other subdisciplines, and also to
adopt approaches from contemporary theoretical linguistics in such a way that they are accessible to a wide
range of historical linguists. This collection presents a number of studies in the lexico-grammar of English
which focus on the one hand on close reading of language in context and on the other hand on current
functional theoretical concerns. The various contributions represent distinct functionalist models of
language, including Functional Grammar and Functional Discourse Grammar, Systemic-Functional
Grammar, Role and Reference Grammar, Cognitive Grammar and Construction Grammar. Taken
together, however, they typify current work being conducted from the grammatical perspective within the
functionalist enterprise, emphasizing on the relation between structure and usage. A fundamental goal of
the enterprise is to identify linguistic structures which are constrained by specific features of use, or which
actually encode specific features of use, as many of the contributions here show. English historical
linguistics is a subfield of linguistics which has developed theories and methods for exploring the history of
the English language. This Handbook provides an account of state-of-the-art research on this history. It
offers an in-depth survey of materials, methods, and language-theoretical models used to study the long
diachrony of English. The frameworks covered include corpus linguistics, historical sociolinguistics,
historical pragmatics and manuscript studies, among others. The chapters, by leading experts, examine the
interplay of language theory and empirical data throughout, critically assessing the work in the field. Of
particular importance are the diverse data sources which have become increasingly available in electronic
form, allowing the discipline to develop in new directions. The Handbook offers access to the rich and
many-faceted spectrum of work in English historical linguistics, past and present, and will be useful for
researchers and students interested in hands-on research on the history of English. What makes the noun
phrase ‘the man I saw’ more complex than ‘the man’? This book explores that question. The basic idea
behind this volume is to probe the nature of grammaticization. Its contributions focus on the following
questions: (i) In how far can grammaticization be considered a universal diachronic process or
mechanism of change and in how far is it conditioned by synchronic factors? (ii) What is the role of the
speaker in grammaticization? (iii) Does grammaticization itself provide a cause for change or is it an
epiphenomenon, i.e. a conglomeration of causal factors/mechanisms which elsewhere occur
independently? (iv) If it is epiphenomenal, how do we explain that similar pathways so often occur in
known cases of grammaticization? (v) Is grammaticization unidirectional? (vi) What is the nature of the
parameters guiding grammaticization? The overall aim of the book is to enrich our understanding of
what grammaticization does or does not entail via detailed case studies in combination with theoretical
and methodological discussions. This book has been shortlisted for an ESSE book award 2012 in English
Language and Linguistics, Junior Scholars. This volume approaches the analysis of variation in English
from diachronic, diatopic, and contrastive/comparative perspectives. The individual case studies, all
closely interrelated, are organized into three parts or sections. Part I (Diachronic Studies) applies a
variationist methodology to the analysis of developments in the use of the courtesy marker please, adverbs
in -ly, the genitive and a number of phrasal combinations with the verb get. It also examines Early
Modern English regional dialect vocabulary. Part II (Diatopic Studies) is concerned with the analysis of
several morphological and phonological features in different varieties of English, namely Standard English,
Modern Scottish English, Galwegian English, and Black South-African English. Part III (Contrastive
Studies) contains four chapters dealing with the contrastive analysis of a number of morphosyntactic
features, such as the use of modifiers of adjectives by advanced learners of English, the acquisition and use
of aspect by advanced EFL learners with different mother-tongue backgrounds, a comparison of the tempo-aspectual categories of English and Italian, and some of the problems encountered by researchers when compiling and analysing learner corpora of spoken language. The book deals with the development of descriptive models of English grammar writing during the Early Modern English period. For the first time, morphology and syntax as presented in Early Modern English grammars are systematically investigated as a whole. The statements of the contemporary grammarians are compared to hypotheses made in modern descriptions of Early Modern English and, where necessary, checked against the Early Modern English part of the Helsinki Corpus. Thus, a comprehensive overview of the characteristic features of Early Modern English is complemented by conclusions about the descriptive adequacy of Early Modern English grammars. It becomes evident that comments by contemporary authors occasionally reflect the corpus data more adequately than the statements found in modern secondary literature. This book is useful for (advanced) university students, as well as for scholars of English and grammarians in general. This book aims at providing a cross-section of current developments in English linguistics, by tracing recent approaches to corpus linguistics and statistical methodology, by introducing new inter- and multidisciplinary refinements to empirical methodology, and by documenting the on-going emphasis shift within the discipline of English linguistics from the study of dominant language varieties to that of post-colonial, minority, non-standardised, learner and L2 varieties. Among the key focus areas that define research in the field of English linguistics today, this selection concentrates on four: corpus linguistics, English as a global language, cognitive linguistics, and second language acquisition. Most of the articles in this volume concentrate on at least two of these areas and at the same time bring in their own suggestions towards building bridges within and across sub-disciplines of linguistics and beyond. Methodological know-how has become one of the key qualifications in contemporary linguistics, which has a strong empirical focus. Containing 23 chapters, each devoted to a different research method, this volume brings together the expertise and insight of a range of established practitioners. The chapters are arranged in three parts, devoted to three different stages of empirical research: data collection, analysis and evaluation. In addition to detailed step-by-step introductions and illustrative case studies focusing on variation and change in English, each chapter addresses the strengths and weaknesses of the methodology and concludes with suggestions for further reading. This systematic, state-of-the-art survey is ideal for both novice researchers and professionals interested in extending their methodological repertoires. The book also has a companion website which provides readers with further information, links, resources, demonstrations, exercises and case studies related to each chapter. The future of English linguistics as envisaged by the editors of Topics in English Linguistics lies in empirical studies which integrate work in English linguistics into general and theoretical linguistics on the one hand, and comparative linguistics on the other. The TiEL series features volumes that present interesting new data and analyses, and above all fresh approaches that contribute to the overall aim of the series, which is to further outstanding research in English linguistics. Investigating the history of a language depends on fragmentary sources, but electronic corpora offer the possibility of alleviating the problem of ‘bad data’. But they cannot overcome it totally, and questions arise of the optimal architecture for a corpus and its representativeness of actual language use, and how a historical corpus can best be annotated to maximize its usefulness. Immense strides have been made in recent years in addressing these questions, with exciting new methods and technological advances. The papers in this volume, which were presented at a conference on New Methods in Historical Corpora (Manchester 2011), exemplify the wide range of these recent developments. This book uncovers how women and men from around the world really speak English based on empirical evidence. With most studies on grammatical variation concentrating on the synchronic level, a systematic investigation of long-term grammatical variation within the context of language change, i.e. from a predominantly diachronic perspective, has largely remained a desideratum. The present volume fills this research gap by bringing together nine empirically rich bottom-up case studies on morphological and morphosyntactic variation phenomena in standard and dialect varieties of Indo-European languages (Germanic, Romance, Greek). While variation has often been regarded as merely a transitory epiphenomenal symptom of change, the findings of this volume show that variation is a resilient feature of human language and answer the question what makes variation time-stable. Bridging the gap between corpus-based research on language variation
and more theory-driven typological and functional approaches, the volume is of special interest for all researchers concerned with interface phenomena seeking to gain a broader understanding of the mechanisms of linguistic variation and change. Grammatical Complexity in Academic English uses corpus-based analyses to challenge a number of dominant stereotypes and assumptions within linguistics. Biber and Gray tackle the nature of grammatical complexity, demonstrating that embedded phrasal structures are as important as embedded dependent clauses. The authors also overturn ingrained assumptions about linguistic change, showing that grammatical change occurs in writing as well as speech. This work establishes that academic writing is structurally compressed (rather than elaborated); that it is often not explicit in the expression of meaning; and that scientific academic writing has been the focus of some of the most important grammatical changes in English over the past 200 years (rather than being conservative and resistant to change). Supported throughout with textual evidence, this work is essential reading for discourse analysts, sociolinguists, applied linguists, as well as descriptive linguists and historical linguists. The book contains a collection of papers dealing with the question of how rhythm shapes language. Until now, there was no comprehensive theory that addressed these findings adequately. By bringing together researchers from many different fields, this book will make a first attempt to fill this gap. The book presents an analysis of selected domains of morphosyntactic variation in a 250,000 word collection of the Middle English Paston Letters (1421-1503) from a historical sociolinguistic point of view. In the three case studies, two nominal and one verbal variable are described and discussed in detail: the replacement of Old English “i>h-th-wh-take, make, give, have, do plus deverbal noun). While the study aims at a balanced integration of theories and methods from a number of different approaches in sociolinguistics, cognitive linguistics, typology, and language change, its main focus is social network theory and the role of the linguistic individual in the formation and change of language structures. Questions of individual language use and of deliberate versus unmonitored changes in the (individual) system take center stage and are discussed in the light of social network analysis. Traditional empirical social network analysis is carefully revised. Despite its many merits in present-day sociolinguistics, it often needs to be supplemented by hermeneutic-biographical analyses of the individual speakers' lives when applied to historical data. With this background, common theories and models of language change, such as grammaticalization, paradigmatic pressure, typological alignment, and generational shifts, are illustrated and evaluated from the point of view of single speakers and social groups, and their particular embedding in the speech community through various network structures. The book is of interest to advanced students and researchers in English and general linguistics, Middle English, historical linguistics and language change, corpus linguistics, as well as sociolinguistics. The first comprehensive description of English word formation covers inflection and derivation, compounding, conversion, and minor processes such as subtractive morphology. It combines theory-neutral presentation of data with theoretically informed analysis. Winner of the 2015 Bloomfield Book Award and written by three outstanding scholars, this is a vital reference for all linguists. Review text: "Without a doubt, the volume in its entirety is inspiring. [The articles are all written in an accessible style, so that the publication is suitable not only for experts, but also for students of linguistics. It is recommendable to all who want to broaden their horizons and embark on linguistic studies at the borders of traditional sub-disciplines." Sixta Quassdorf in: Linguist List 22.3028. The analysis of constructions denoting possession (particularly, but not exclusively, in English) has long presented a challenge to morpho-syntactic theory and has been a topic of debate for some time. The papers presented here afford thought-provoking insights into the morphosyntactic nature of possessive markers under a variety of theoretical frameworks. The distribution of phrases expressing possession is explored in a range of languages (including English, Swedish, Urdu and West Flemish), with rigorous exploitation of corpus data and careful statistical analysis. Descriptions and analyses represent the state of the art in research into possessive constructions. Particular attention is paid to the English possessive’s, both synchronically and diachronically. This volume is essential for scholars interested in theoretical and corpus-based linguistics, morphosyntactic constructions, and the expression of possession. The book brings together ten studies into the social and conceptual aspects of language-internal variation. All contributions rely on a firm empirical basis in the form of advanced corpus-based techniques, experimental methods and survey-based research, or a combination of these. In the book, methods are
sought to unravel the complex and multivariate dimensions intervening in the interplay between conceptual meaning and variationist factors. In terms of its descriptive scope, the volume covers three main areas: lexical and lexical-semantic variation, constructional variation, and research on lectal attitudes and acquisition. It thus illustrates how Cognitive Sociolinguistics studies both the variation of meaning, and the meaning of variation. This collection of articles brings together new research from both established and emerging international experts in the study of English grammar, all of whom have engaged with the notion of 'construction' in their work. The research here is concerned with both synchrony and diachrony, with the relationship between Construction Grammar and other linguistic theories, and with a number of issues in the study of grammar, such as raising and control phenomena, transitivity, relative clause structure, the syntax of gerunds, attributive and predicative uses of adjectives, modality, and grammaticalization. Some of the articles are written within a constructional framework, while others highlight potential problems with constructional approaches to English grammar; some of the articles are based on data collected from corpora, some on introspection; some of the articles suggest potential developments for diachronic construction grammar, while others seek to compare Construction Grammar with other cognitive linguistic theories, most particularly Word Grammar. The research reported in this volume presents a series of ways of looking at the relationship between constructions and patterns in English grammar, either now or in the past. The book addresses scholars and advanced students who are interested in English grammar, constructional approaches to language, and the relationship between functional and formal issues in linguistic description and theory. Variability is characteristic of any living language. This volume approaches the 'life cycle' of linguistic variability in English using data sources that range from electronic corpora to the internet. In the spirit of the 1968 Weinreich, Labov and Herzog classic, the fifteen contributions divide into three sections, each highlighting different stages in the dynamics of English across time and space. They show, first, how increase in variability can be initiated by processes that give rise to new patterns of discourse, which can ultimately crystallize into new grammatical elements. The next phase is the spread of linguistic features and patterns of discourse, both new and well established, through the social and regional varieties of English. The final phase in this ebb and flow of linguistic variability consists of processes promoting some variable features over others across registers and regional and social varieties, thus resulting in reduced variation and increased linguistic homogenity. World Englishes is a vibrant research field that has attracted scholars from many different linguistic subdisciplines. Emphasizing the common ground of all research on World Englishes, the 22 articles in this collected volume, selected from more than a hundred papers presented at the 2007 conference of the International Association for World Englishes in Regensburg, cover a broad range of topics which together reflect the state of the art of research in this field. The volume focuses on regions as diverse as Africa, the Caribbean, the Antipodes and Asia, but also promotes a globally comparative perspective by analyzing selected characteristics of the English language across a wide range of varieties. Methodologically, a number of different approaches are applied, including corpus linguistic studies, socio-phonetics as well as historical discourse analysis. Due to its wide scope, the book is of interest not only to World Englishes scholars but also to sociolinguists as well as applied, contact or corpus linguists. Explores categories, constructions, and change in the syntax of English, both past and present. The fourteen studies selected for this volume – all of them peer-reviewed versions of papers presented at the 15th International Conference on English Historical Linguistics 2008 (23–30 August) at the University of Munich – investigate syntactic variation and change in the history of English from two perspectives that are crucial to explaining language change, namely the analysis of usage patterns and the social motivations of language change. Documenting the way syntactic elements have changed their combinatory preferences in fine-grained corpus studies renders the opportunity to catch language change in actu. A majority of studies in this book investigate syntactic change in the history of English from this viewpoint using a corpus-based approach, focusing on verbal constructions, modality and developments in the English noun phrase. The book is of primary interest to linguists interested in current research in the history of English syntax. Its empirical richness is an excellent source for teaching English Historical Syntax. Volume II to be announced soon.
changing in the recent past, and discusses the linguistic and social factors that are contributing to this process. This book, the second volume in A Linguistic History of English, describes the development of Old English from Proto-Germanic. Like Volume I, it is an internal history of the structure of English that combines traditional historical linguistics, modern syntactic theory, the study of languages in contact, and the variationist approach to language change. The first part of the book considers the development of Northwest and West Germanic, and the northern dialects of the latter, with particular reference to phonological and morphological phenomena. Later chapters present a detailed account of changes in the Old English sound system, inflectional system, and syntax. The book aims to make the findings of traditional historical linguistics accessible to scholars and students in other subdisciplines, and also to adopt approaches from contemporary theoretical linguistics in such a way that they are accessible to a wide range of historical linguists. What factors influence the choice between alternative grammatical structures such as the following: a lit / a lighted cigarette, more full / fuller of convincing arguments, the main thesis of the book / the book's main thesis, take hostage a group of 15 holiday makers / take a group of 15 holidaymakers hostage, conceding that the argument is convincing / conceding the argument to be convincing? This is the central issue explored in this volume, which contains a unique selection of innovative in-depth empirical studies written in a broadly functional framework. The factors investigated include the following: phonological influences (such as the principle of rhythmic alternation and optimal syllable structure), frequency, pervasive semantic and pragmatic aspects (including iconicity, markedness, grammaticalization and typological tendencies), information structure, processing complexity and horror aequi (the avoidance of identity effects). Accompanying DVD-ROM contains "all sound files as well as appropriate software for listening to the recordings. In addition there is much information about Irish English, an introduction to the phonology of this variety, as well as various items of background information which might be of interest to users of the atlas." -- Page [v]. Includes Java version of the sound atlas. The order and behaviour of the premodifier (an adjective, or other modifying word that appears before a noun) has long been a puzzle to syntacticians and semanticists. Why can we say 'the actual red ball', but not 'the red actual ball'? And why, conversely, do some other premodifiers have free variation in sentences, for example we can say both 'German and English speakers' and 'English and German speakers'? Why do some premodifiers change the meaning of a phrase in some contexts, for example 'young man', can mean 'boyfriend', rather than 'man who is young'? Drawing on a corpus of over 4,000 examples of English premodifiers from a range of genres such as advertising, fiction and scientific texts, and across several varieties of English, this book synthesises research into premodifiers and provides a new explanation of their behaviour, order and use. This book examines the evidence for the development of adnominal genitives (the knight's sword, the nun's priest's tale, etc.) in English. During the Middle English period the genitive inflection -es developed into the more clitic-like 's, but how, when, why, and over how long a time are unclear, and have been subject to considerable research and discussion. Cynthia L. Allen draws together her own and others' findings in areas such as case marking, the nature of syntactic and morphological change, and the role of processing and pragmatics in the construction of grammars and grammatical change. Using evidence derived from a systematic examination of a wide range of texts, Dr Allen reviews the evidence for the nature of the possessive inflection in earlier stages of English and the relationship of the -es possessive to the 'his genitive. In doing so she shows that Middle English texts are more reliable witnesses to the grammar of Middle English than has sometimes been assumed. The texts may have been conservative, but their language, the author argues, is reasonable reflection of the spoken language, and where the written evidence runs counter to typological generalization about syntactic change it may be the latter, not the former, which is in need of qualification. While the book focuses on Middle English it also contains discussions of linguistic change before and since, and draws on comparative evidence from other languages, particularly Germanic languages such as Swedish and Dutch. This ground-breaking book will be of great interest to scholars and students of Middle English in particular and the history of English in general. This volume, which emerged from a workshop at the New Reflections on Grammaticalization 4 conference held at KU Leuven in July 2008, contains a collection of papers which investigate the relationship between synchronic gradience and the apparent gradualness of linguistic change, largely from the perspective of grammaticalization. In addition to versions of the papers presented...
at the workshop, the volume contains specially commissioned contributions, some of which offer commentaries on a subset of the other articles. The articles address a number of themes central to grammaticalization studies, such as the role of reanalysis and analogy in grammaticalization, the formal modelling of grammaticalization, and the relationship between formal and functional change, using data from a range of languages, and (in some cases) from particular electronic corpora. The volume will be of specific interest to historical linguists working on grammaticalization, and general linguists working on the interface between synchrony and diachrony. This collection of nine original articles deals with the expression of possession at various levels of grammar, morphological, phrasal, and syntactic, and from a typologically diverse range of languages (including Germanic, Oceanic, Meso-American, and Australian Aboriginal). There are two main aims. The first is to reveal something of the range of constructions employed cross-linguistically in the expression of possession, and second, to present an understanding of the possessive relation itself as a cognitive and linguistic phenomenon. A guiding principle in the selection of contributors has been to invite linguists whose research, while not necessarily directly dealing with possession, touches on it, and indicates that they are likely to provide fresh perspectives on this well-trodden field. Key features: William McGregor is a well known expert in this field of research Possession is a paradigm for studies on typology, ethnology etc., because a multitude of linguistic and cultural varieties are reflected in this field new series textbook Using increasingly sophisticated databases, this volume explores grammatical usage from the Late Modern period in a broad context. The papers in this volume focus on the dynamics of one specific cell in morphological paradigms— the genitive. The high amount of diachronic and synchronic variation in all Germanic languages makes the genitive a particularly interesting phenomenon since it allows us, for example, to examine comparable but slightly different diachronic pathways, the relation of synchronic and diachronic variation, and the interplay of linguistic levels (phonology, morphology, syntax, and semantics). The findings in this book enhance our understanding of the genitive not only by describing its properties, but also by discussing its demarcation from functional competitors and related grammatical items. Under-researched aspects of well-described languages as well as from lesser-known languages (Faroese, Frisian, Luxembourgish, Yiddish) are examined. The papers included are methodologically diverse and the topics covered range from morphology, syntax, and semantics to the influence of (normative) grammars and the perception and prestige of grammatical items. Using the Web as Corpus is one of the recent challenges for corpus linguistics. This volume presents a current state-of-the-arts discussion of the topic. The articles address practical problems such as suitable linguistic search tools for accessing the www, the question of register variation, or they probe into methods for culling data from the web. The book also offers a wide range of case studies, covering morphology, syntax, lexis, as well as synchronous and diachronic variation in English. These case studies make use of the two approaches to the www in corpus linguistics— web-as-corpus and web-for-corpus-building. The case studies demonstrate that web data can provide useful additional evidence for a broad range of research questions. Copyright code: 112cf1958f6c6ca756e87911f93bba3f