

**Adjectives:** Formal analyses in syntax and semantics. Ed. by PATRICIA CABREDO HOFHERR and ORA MATUSHANSKY. (Linguistics today 153.) Amsterdam: John Benjamins, 2010. Pp. vii, 335. ISBN 9789027255365. \$158 (Hb).

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It seems fair to say that compared to other lexical categories, notably verbs and nouns, adjectives have received relatively little attention in the formal linguistic study of human language. A volume on the syntax and semantics of adjectives is therefore very welcome. This volume consists of two parts: Part 1, 'Syntax', contains four contributions, and Part 2, 'Semantics', contains five. The range of topics covered by these nine contributions is quite broad, but there is also some overlap in the issues addressed by the various articles. A volume covering such a wide variety of adjectival issues may run the risk of lacking coherence. This, however, is not the case, among other reasons because of the informative introductory chapter by Patricia Cabredo Hofherr, 'Adjectives: An introduction'. This introduction nicely summarizes several major issues that have been dealt with so far in studies on the syntax and semantics of adjectives, and makes clear how the articles in the volume contribute to those issues. I believe that the coherence of the volume might have been even greater if at those places where possible and appropriate the authors would have referred to each other's contributions. For example, two articles (Aljović, Babby) deal with long- and short-form adjectives in Slavic languages. It would have been interesting and helpful to the reader if points of divergence or convergence in their analyses were pointed out more explicitly. A similar remark could be made about the two articles that deal with the semantic properties of superlative adjectives (Gutiérrez-Rexach, Sleeman). That said, these considerations should not deflect from the fact that this volume is a very interesting collection of articles that provides the reader with a rich source of information about the syntax and semantics of adjectives. This richness also includes the variety of languages covered by the various articles in the volume. Data are presented from English, French, Spanish, Bosnian/Croatian/Serbian, Russian, Hebrew, and Mandarin Chinese.

Part 1 of the book, 'Syntax', opens with NADIRA ALJOVIĆ's 'Syntactic positions of attributive adjectives' (29–52). She discusses the noun-phrase internal placement of two different forms of adjectives in Serbo-Croatian: short adjectives (SA) like *star-a* (old-GEN.SG.M/N.nominal) 'old' and long adjectives (LA) like *sta:r-og(a)* (old.GEN.SG.M/N.nominal-GEN.SG.M/N.pronominal). The former can be used predicatively; the latter cannot. As for their attributive use, Aljović argues that the two forms occupy different syntactic positions within the containing nominal expression. More specifically, SAs occupy a position adjoined to NP, whereas LAs occupy the specifier position of a functional category (FP) dominating NumP. Evidence for this structural distinction comes from differences in grammatical behavior regarding NP-ellipsis, the interpretive properties of coordinated adjectives, and ordering restrictions on a sequence of multiple adjectives. The different configurational analyses of the two adjectival forms also account for their different behavior with respect to agreement morphology.

The syntax of long and short adjectives is also the topic of LEONARD H. BABBY's contribution, 'The syntactic differences between long and short forms of Russian adjectives' (53–84). The two morphological forms (e.g. long form (LF) *vkusn-oe* (good-LF.NOM.N) 'good/delicious', short form (SF) *vkusn-o* (good-SF.NOM.N) 'good/delicious') are in complementary distribution. The SF typically appears in primary predication configurations involving a copular verb (*Vino bylo vkusn-o* (wine.NOM.N was.N good.SF.NOM.N) 'the wine was good'); and the LF is found in secondary predication configurations, comparable to English *Andrej returned home hungry* and *he ate the meat raw*. Babby claims that LF-adjectives and SF-adjectives have different phrasal projections. More specifically, an SF-adjective carries an external role, which is assigned small-clause internally to the subject that occupies the specifier position of an inflectional phrase aFP (the small clause), which is headed by the adjectival inflection that takes AP as its complement. The LF-adjective heads an adjunct-afP and has an unlinked theta role that needs to be bound by a theta-role associated with a DP of the matrix clause. An interesting analytical challenge comes from LF-adjectives that appear in copular environments, as in *Vino bylo vkusn-oe*. Babby argues that, even though at the surface this looks like an LF-adjective acting as a predicate that combines with the copula, the

correct structural analysis of the LF-adjective is that of an attributive adjective. More specifically, the LF-adjective is an adjunct within a predicative noun phrase, headed by a null noun. In other words, N-ellipsis is involved, that is, *vkusnoe* means ‘a good/delicious one’).

Nominal expressions involving an attributive adjectival modifier and an empty pronominal head (*pro*) are also central in HAGIT BORER and ISABELLE ROY’s contribution, ‘The name of the adjective’ (85–114). The authors address the following question: Are phrases such as *an American* and *the rich* nominal expressions involving a noun *American/rich*, which happens to be homophonous with the adjective *American/rich*, or are they nominal expressions involving an attributively used adjective *American/rich*, which modifies a phonetically empty noun? For an expression like *an American*, they argue that *American* is a noun—thus [*an* [<sub>N</sub> *American*]]. For an expression like *the rich*, they argue that it is a true attributive adjective that appears in a nominal expression displaying N-ellipsis ([*the* [[<sub>AP</sub> *rich*] *pro*]], where *pro* is a null definite *pro* that must be licensed through an overt and sufficiently specific D). Evidence for this distinction is given on the basis of data from English, French, Hebrew, and Spanish. The authors further show that the two types of nominal expressions can be distinguished from each other on the basis of their distributional properties within the clause.

In ‘Adjectives in Mandarin Chinese: The rehabilitation of a much ostracized category’ (115–52), WALTRAUD PAUL addresses the question of whether adjectives constitute a separate part of speech in Mandarin Chinese. She answers this question with a firm ‘yes’, and thereby rejects the analysis according to which they are to be conflated with intransitive stative verbs (see e.g. McCawley 1992). Paul presents two major arguments for this. First, nonpredicative adjectives (e.g. *fang* ‘square’), which cannot function as predicates on their own (i.e. require the presence of the copula *shi* ‘be’), occur on their own as modifiers of nouns. Second, adjectives display a reduplication pattern that is different, both formally and interpretatively, from that of (stative) verbs. Paul further argues for the existence of two types of syntactic structure for attributive modification in Mandarin Chinese: (i) a juxtaposition structure, [A N], and (ii) a modification structure featuring the subordinator *de*, [A *de* N]. It is shown that the juxtaposition structure is really phrasal and should not be interpreted as a compound. Furthermore, Paul shows that the two adjectival structures display specific semantic interpretations of the adjectives.

Part 2, ‘Semantics’, begins with PETER ALRENGA’s ‘Comparisons of similarity and difference’ (155–86). In this article, he examines the semantic properties of English constructions involving *different*, *same*, and *like*: for example, *I am different now than I used to be*. The first question that Alrenga raises is to what extent these ‘comparisons of similarity and difference’ (CS&D) are similar to ‘ordinary scalar comparisons’ like *I am taller now than I was before*, where we find a scalar adjective. It is shown that the CS&D adjectives and ordinary scalar adjectives display a strong parallelism with respect to their grammatical behavior, for example, the syntactic environments in which they occur and the types of complements they select. Given this largely parallel behavior, Alrenga concludes that CS&D comparisons are a subclass of comparative constructions. As for the question of what CS&Ds are comparisons between, Alrenga proposes that they should be analyzed as comparisons between sets of properties. Under this view, the sentence *I am different now than I used to be* asserts that there is some difference between the properties that I used to possess and those that I now possess; that is, these two sets of properties are nonidentical.

JAVIER GUTIÉRREZ-REXACH’s contribution, ‘Characterizing superlative quantifiers’ (187–232), gives a semantic analysis of superlative descriptions like *the highest mountain*. His main claim is that superlative descriptions are a subclass of definite DPs. Their meaning is determined compositionally by two elements: the definite determiner (*the*) and the superlative operator (*-est*). The former is the linguistic element responsible for contextual restriction, while the latter is restricted by what he calls the comparison frame of the superlative (e.g. the PP *in area B* in *the most expensive ticket in area B*). The article further discusses the role of focus in the so-called comparative reading of superlatives (see Szabolcsi 1986) and provides an analysis of the much debated ‘upstairs de dicto’ reading.

In her article ‘Superlative adjectives and the licensing of non-modal infinitival subject relatives’ (233–64), PETRA SLEEMAN investigates constructions like *Bill was the youngest child to have had that operation at that time*. This construction features a superlative adjective modifying

a head noun that is interpreted as the subject of the nonmodal infinitival relative clause. The central question of the article concerns the licensing of the infinitival relative clause by the superlative adjective. It is proposed that the relative clause is licensed by a contrastive identificational focus that explicitly excludes a complement set consisting of members that represent a still higher or lower value, which is expressed by a negative assertion. The adjectives licensing the nonmodal relative typically represent the end of the scale (expressing uniqueness), so that the complement set ('those who are less young than Bill') can naturally be excluded. Evidence in support of the claim that it is this negative meaning that is responsible for the licensing of the nonmodal relative clause comes from the use of subjunctive relative clauses in Romance and the distribution of negative polarity items like *ever* (*You're the first person to have ever asked that question*).

In 'Sentential complementation of adjectives in French' (265–306), CATHERINE LÉGER shows that in French three types of adjectives can be distinguished on the basis of the sentential complements they introduce: (i) propositional adjectives (e.g. *certain* 'sure'), which semantically express truth values and syntactically take finite indicative as well as infinitival complements; (ii) emotive adjectives (e.g. *content* 'glad'), which express evaluative judgments and take finite subjunctive as well as infinitival complements, and (iii) effective adjectives (e.g. *capable* 'able'), which describe the relationship of a subject with respect to the performance of an action and syntactically must combine with an infinitival complement. Léger proposes to derive the syntactic realization of the complement from the semantic properties of the selecting adjective: depending on their meaning, adjectives select a specific ontological category (proposition, event, action) as their argument, which corresponds in syntax to a particular projection (a Comp-projection, an INFL-projection, or a projection of the category V).

In 'Spanish adjectives within bounds' (307–32), RAFAEL MARÍN argues that contrary to what is traditionally assumed, the compatibility with *ser* or *estar* 'to be' is not a defining diagnostic for distinguishing individual-level (IL) and stage-level (SL) predicates. He shows that for an empirically adequate classification of adjectives, additional criteria of boundedness have to be taken into consideration, more specifically the compatibility with: (i) certain pseudo-copular verbs (e.g. *ir* 'go'), (ii) adjunct predicates (i.e. secondary predication), and (iii) absolute constructions. On the basis of this enriched set of criteria, Marín shows that adjectives like *enfermo* 'ill' can properly be considered stage-level adjectives. Among so-called ambivalent adjectives, that is, those that are underspecified for the SL/IL distinction, at least two groups can be distinguished: those like *nervioso* 'nervous', which are compatible with *ser* and are allowed in any of the other SL contexts, and those like *viejo*, which allow *ser* and *estar* but do not pass any of the other tests for boundedness.

As is clear from the above summary of the various contributions, the volume covers a wide variety of interesting topics in the study of adjectives. The informative introductory chapter, the range of adjectival topics, and the richness of the data drawn from various languages also provide the right basis for using the book in a research seminar on the syntax and semantics of adjectives. Both the empirical data and the linguistic analyses in each of the contributions trigger new questions. For example, one of the topics a student might want to work on for a research paper is N(P)-ellipsis with adjectival remnants. In all four syntactic contributions (Part 1), interesting information can be found on this topic. The long form inflection in Slavic, gender and number agreement in Romance, and the 'linker' *de* in Mandarin Chinese are all somehow involved in the licensing of noun ellipsis. The question, obviously, arises as to whether a unified analysis of these ellipsis patterns is possible.

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