

Indeed, quantitatively robust investigations of the evolution of sentential word order in Latin do not find evidence for V-to-C movement in declaratives in any period of documented Latinity (Danckaert 2017).

This book requires some prior knowledge of modern generative theory. The main target group is clearly formal linguists. For this latter audience, Wolfe's new contribution to the history of French is undeniable and will surely be of interest not only to Romanists, but also to any generative linguist interested in language change, word order and syntax in general. My overall impression is therefore that Wolfe achieves his ambition, stated in the introduction, of providing "a synthesis of the vast array of existing work on some of the most significant syntactic changes to have taken place from Latin to Modern French, whilst also developing a formal analysis of French's syntactic evolution in light of recent developments in parametric theory" (p.2).

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Labeau, Emmanuelle, *The Decline of the French Passé Simple*. (Empirical Approaches to Linguistic Theory, 19). Leiden – Boston: Brill, 2022, xxiv + 474 pp. 2210 6243  
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*The Decline of the French Passé Simple* is a detailed study of the French *passé simple* which brings together theoretical and empirical perspectives. It builds on a long tradition of research on the French TAM system in general and the *passé simple* in particular, including Emmanuelle Labeau's own previous studies. The aim of the volume is to provide "a wider and more detailed view of the actual position of the PS in Contemporary French" compared to what has come before (p.7). At a total of nearly 500 pages, this is certainly a weighty volume on a weighty topic, which will be of use to students and scholars alike who are interested to know more about the workings of the *passé simple* in contemporary French.

The book's structure reflects the two interests of the Empirical Approaches to Linguistic Theory series in which it appears: the first half of the book (Chapters 1-5) lays the theoretical groundwork, and the second half (Chapters 6-9) presents the results of a corpus analysis. *The Decline of the French Passé Simple* starts with a short Introduction, which establishes the interest, complexity, and, at times, paradoxes of the *passé simple*. It also lays out the four main research questions, which can be summarized as: How has the *passé simple* evolved over time? What is its status in contemporary French? What factors govern its use? How is the French verbal system affected by changes to the *passé simple*? (p.7).

After the introduction, two chapters lay the groundwork for what follows. Chapter 1 concerns Language Evolution in general and it is where Labeau articulates her approach to understanding the history, current status, and potential future of the *passé simple*. She explains that she uses a "dia-model" which "considers variation according to the language user and to the language usage, inspired by Labovian variationist sociolinguistics" (p.34). Accordingly, Chapter 2 examines diachrony, tracing the history of verb tenses from Classical Latin to Modern French.

Labeau then turns to the main focus of the book in Chapter 3, namely the *passé simple* in Contemporary French. This chapter reviews what is known about the factors, which govern its use, including speaker variables, medium, genre, and linguistic factors. As Labeau herself acknowledges, it is only for journalistic texts that extensive quantitative studies have been carried out (p.137). Chapter 4 explores theoretical perspectives on the *passé simple*. Labeau offers a detailed account of the main approaches of previous scholars before outlining her own take which is based on systematicity (the *passé simple* is part of a wider system of tenses) and monosemism (the *passé simple* has just one value in *langue* even if it can have a wider range of uses in *discours* pp.185-186). Chapter 5 examines the tenses, which can be used in Contemporary French in contexts where a *passé simple* could be found. Labeau proposes the recognition of a wider range of alternative tenses than are usually cited, a proposal which is supported by the results of the empirical study presented in the second half of the book.

The methodology and corpus for the investigation are described in Chapter 6. It is a quantitative and qualitative study of a set of subcorpora which represent a range of media and genres, together constituting around 1.5 million words. Most of the data are from the twenty-first century, although some subcorpora are from the twentieth century to allow diachronic contextualization. The results are then presented in Chapters 7 and 8. Chapter 7 reports on the use of the *passé simple* and alternative tenses across a range of spoken and written genres. Chapter 8 adopts a micro-diachronic perspective to examine the use of the *passé simple* and its alternatives in newspaper reports of football world cup finals from 1950 to 2010. The quantitative and qualitative data analysis presented in these two chapters allows Labeau to draw a number of interesting conclusions which are highlighted in the short Chapter 9 which concludes the volume. At the highest level, Labeau argues that although there has over the long term been a restriction of use of the *passé simple*, it is not possible to speak of its complete demise. The results presented in Chapter 7 showed that of the different genres

and media, it is written language intended for silent reading which remains the stronghold of the *passé simple* today. Labeau also suggests that the results indicate that the meaning of the *passé simple* has shifted from the temporal-aspectual domain to socio-stylistics.

*The Decline of the French Passé Simple* is certainly a valuable contribution to research on the *passé simple*. The first half of the book will be a useful resource for people looking for a wide-ranging but comprehensible overview of previous work on this tense. Anglophone readers will find it especially helpful to have summaries of the approaches of scholars such as Jacques Damourette and Édouard Pichon or Gustave Guillaume who are less well-known outside the Francophone tradition. The results of the empirical study will also be of value. There is no doubt that the largest study to date of the *passé simple* has advanced knowledge in this field, especially highlighting the range of other tenses that can fulfil the traditional function of the *passé simple*, and in underscoring the importance of genre-based variation. Some limitations to the study mean that more work in this area remains to be done. In particular, although inspired by variationist sociolinguistics, the methodology and scope of the study did not allow any firm conclusions about the influence of diastatic and diatopic factors, as Labeau herself admits (p.435). In addition, journalistic texts remain a significant focus of this volume so future research will need to focus on other genres in order to address the asymmetry in the field that Labeau herself identified (p.137).

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Swamy, Vinay et Mackenzie, Louisa (dirs.), *Devenir non-binaire en français contemporain*. Genre(s) et création. Paris : Editions Le Manuscrit, 2022, xxvi + 254 pp., ISBN : 978 2 304 05242 8.  
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Cet ouvrage collectif offre un éventail impressionnant de réflexions sur les défis que représente le vécu non-binaire dans un espace francophone, tant au niveau linguistique et culturel que pédagogique. Une de ses originalités est l'espace interculturel dans lequel il se situe. Les auteurs sont d'origine nord-américaine ou française, et quatre des huit chapitres sont traduits de l'anglais. L'espace francophone non-binaire qui est exploré est riche et varié. L'intérêt commun des auteurs est d'étudier, de mieux comprendre, le vécu du sujet non-binaire francophone où qu'il se trouve, en milieu ambiant dominant anglophone ou francophone. A travers les divers chapitres émane une volonté de préférer les