



of one particular collocation. Arguably, significantly more breadth would have been needed to make more than a speculative suggestion about collocations in general.

Without a doubt, however, there are treasures and genuinely fresh insights to be enjoyed by readers of this book. Principally, these are perhaps the continuities shown between conventional expressions and those that are less conventional but still rely on the same frame integration mechanisms and that (some) collocations may not be as arbitrary as they might at first appear. Consequently, this book makes a welcome contribution to the discussion around the theorisation of collocations.

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**Lotte Sommerer and Evelien Keizer (eds.)**, *English noun phrases from a functional-cognitive perspective* (Studies in Language Companion Series 221). Amsterdam and Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2022. Pp. vii + 433. ISBN 9789027210173.

Reviewed by Lieselotte Brems, University of Liège

This volume brings together a selection of chapters presented at the workshop ‘The English noun phrase: Synchronic and diachronic perspectives’, which was organised at

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the English department of the University of Vienna in July 2019. The aim is to give a comprehensive overview of current research investigating the English noun phrase, from both a synchronic and a diachronic point of view and covering a range of functional-cognitive approaches, but the volume also includes two more formal chapters. In addition, some chapters take a comparative perspective, for instance between English and Japanese, or include acquisitional data. Methodologically, most studies are corpus-based and include both qualitative and quantitative analysis, but some add experimental methods.

The volume is divided into three parts: ‘Determination, modification & complementation’, ‘Shell nouns & the X-is construction’ and ‘Binominal constructions’. These three topics are discussed briefly in the editors’ introduction (pp. 1–23).

The volume starts with a contribution by Kristin Davidse, ‘Refining and re-defining secondary determiners in relation to primary determiners’ (pp. 27–78), which argues for a refinement and redefinition of the functional category of secondary determiners, proposing a new and more restricted typology which is based on a typology of primary determiners, following Langacker’s indefinite grounding, relative quantification, possessive grounding and definite grounding. This gives rise to four types of secondary determiners, i.e. those that retrieve the type specification of an instance newly introduced by an indefinite NP (*a particular person*); those that identify the correct antecedent of a definite NP (*the famous incident when he threw up in the Korean president’s lap*); those that relate a referent to another instance of the same type (*the same president*); and those that refer to a generalised referent (*these sorts of questions*). Focus markers (*the very walls of the city*), nominal aspectual modifiers (*a several Conclave*), modal and temporal modifiers (*carefree past summers at the beach*) and metadesignatives (*the following former user*) are clearly distinguished from secondary determiners based on semantics and formal behaviour.

Fuyo Osawa’s chapter, ‘The rivalry between definiteness and specificity: The grammaticalisation of definiteness in DP emergence’ (pp. 79–106), presents a formal approach to the emergence of DP (Determiner Phrase) and the grammaticalisation of definiteness, as opposed to specificity, as a D head in English. This is surprising given cross-linguistic acquisitional data and historic facts, which point to specificity as being more suitable for a D head. Article use by L2 learners from L1 article-less languages such as Russian, Korean and Japanese, as well as from L1 definiteness-based article languages such as Dutch and Arabic, show specificity-based errors, which seems to make specificity more basic than definiteness. Definiteness grammaticalised, nonetheless, for two reasons. Firstly, because person properties are encoded into D and definiteness is hence to be assimilated to the category of person. Secondly, the author tentatively suggests that intersubjectification might have happened in the sense that [+specific] is a speaker-property only, whereas [+definite] is speaker-hearer oriented.

Rahel Oppliger’s study on ‘Post-head compression in noun phrase referring expressions: Structural change in interactive communication’ (pp. 107–33) deals with referring expressions with NPs (NP REs) and how they change in the course of interaction, with speakers tending to shorten NP REs, as also argued in previous research. Using data from an experimental study, this chapter looks into the structural

changes accompanying this process. The study confirms that interlocutors indeed shorten NP REs in elicited dyadic dialogues. From producing more clausal elements, speakers later on decrease their use, while at the same time an increase in phrasal modification can be observed. The latter is indicative of structural compression.

The last chapter in this first part of the volume is by Charlotte Maekelberghe, titled 'From noun to verb: Modeling variation in the English gerund system' (pp. 135–67). The paradigmatic relations, variation and potential overlap between nominal and verbal gerunds in present-day English are reassessed from a Construction Grammar perspective. Three possible configurations between nominal and verbal gerunds are argued for. Their likelihood is assessed based on a two-step analysis. Firstly, the degree of overlap between both gerunds is evaluated by means of a hierarchical configurational frequency analysis, which revealed that they show overlap while being two separate constructions. In a second step the variation at token-level is examined using distinctive collexeme analysis, which showed that the two types of gerunds display a low number of shared lexemes.

Marta Carretero's 'Shell nouns as epistemic stance devices in English: A study of four epistemic modal nouns and four evidential nouns' (pp. 171–203) leads the second part of this volume. Working within the framework of modal and evidential frames, the chapter focuses on the difference between epistemic and non-epistemic uses, using data from the *British National Corpus* (BNC) on possibility, probability, likelihood, certainty and evidence, indication, proof and sign. The study identifies four factors of (non-)epistemicity with a different relative weight depending on the nouns. Firstly, the nouns must have an epistemic lexical meaning, while not occurring in non-epistemic collocations. Secondly, the frame element 'believe' has to be retrievable. Thirdly, the 'modaliser' in epistemic modal nouns and the 'belief' in evidential nouns have to be facts or non-facts of the world. Fourthly, epistemic stance must be expressed by the speaker/writer and be valid at time speech. The study also shows that the non-epistemic uses were the most frequent for all the nouns.

Marianne Hundt discusses 'Constructional variation in *N-is* focaliser constructions' both qualitatively and quantitatively (pp. 205–33). A constructional pattern can be reconstructed, starting with the noun *truth* in the sixteenth century, extending to *trouble*, *thing* and *word* in the seventeenth and nineteenth centuries, and *problem* in the twentieth century. Constructionalisation is argued to be at work, proceeding from bare complementisers to bare shell nouns. Quantitative study of Late Modern English American data shows constructional change and entrenchment of the constructional pattern in terms of the increase in overall discourse frequency and a more even distribution in terms of registers. Within a Construction Grammar approach, it is argued that the constructional pattern functions as a discourse marker, which is a subtype of parenthetical constructions.

In 'Premodification in *X-is* constructions: *fact* and *point*' (pp. 235–75), Evelien Keizer fills a gap in the literature by studying the type and range of premodifiers that can be found in this construction within a Functional Discourse Grammar approach. In addition, she seeks to reconstruct how this construction developed from a specificational copular

sentence into a semi-fixed focus marker, and how premodification patterns changed in this evolution. Token and type frequencies of premodifiers as well as their class and function appear to differ in both cases. Constructionalisation is argued to have taken place with the premodifier slot becoming less open and there is a preference for subjective modifiers in the non-specificational constructions.

The third part of the volume centres on binominal constructions and begins with a contribution by Elnora ten Wolde: 'From an *icy hell of a night* to a *hell of a fine story*: The development of the English binominal noun phrase and beyond' (pp. 279–309). She distinguishes between three constructions: evaluative binominal noun phrases (EBNPs), like *an icy hell of a night*, evaluative modifiers (EMs), such as *one hell of a party*, and binominal intensifiers (BIs), such as *a hell of a good dog*. The latter two are grammaticalised and are distinguished from the first one on the basis of the status of *of*, the first and second determiner slot, headedness, the relation between the first and second noun, the scope of the first determiner, premodification, constituency, restrictions on the first noun and the second, and number agreement.

Melanie J. Bell and Carmen Portero Muñoz deal with 'Time-measurement constructions in English: A corpus-based exploration' (pp. 311–62), such as *10 years' time* and *five-year plan*, in which a cardinal number is followed by either a bare time-noun (N1), or one in the S-form with or without an apostrophe, and a second noun (N2). Logistic regression corpus analysis confirms that the different N1-variants represent different constructions, i.e. the TIME-MEASUREMENT COMPOUND construction and the TIME-MEASUREMENT construction, based, among other things, on N1 being a nominal or part of a noun phrase, and on the fillers of the determiner slot.

Lotte Sommerer's contribution is titled '*Day to day and night after night*: Temporal NPN constructions in Present Day English' (pp. 363–94) and brings in a quantitative study of binominals in which a singular noun is connected to the same singular noun by means of a preposition, embedded in a Usage-based Cognitive Construction Grammar framework. *After*, *to* and *by* are most productive/frequent in these patterns and so are the temporal nouns *day*, *year*, *night*, *week* and *hour*. The frozen character of these patterns is shown by their restricted attestation with modification (*hour by precious hour*) or complements (*day after day of suffering*). In addition, the constructional network of this family of constructions is reconstructed. This includes fully specified constructions as well as semi-specific templates and potentially even higher levels of abstraction.

The volume concludes with a chapter by Kazuya Nishimaki, 'Coordinated phrases as dvandvas: A competition-theoretic perspective' (pp. 395–427), which takes a cross-linguistic perspective and compares English and Japanese. The theoretical framework predicts that dvandvas (i.e. coordinated compounds), such as *dan-zyo* 'male-female', have phrasal counterparts in present-day English, i.e. *male and female*. The framework indicates that English is a syntax-preferring language in which dvandvas in the strict sense are unattested; however, the author argues that dvandva status can be attributed to some coordinated phrases when these represent one concept as a single unit together and represent 'two entities but one concept'. *And* is then argued to be a formal element only, which is semantically empty and phonetically reduced.

Overall, this volume indeed presents a variety of chapters with a functional-cognitive perspective on the English noun phrase, except perhaps for two which have a more formal approach. The contributions are coherently structured around three main topics, which together represent the main axes of current research on the English noun phrase. The volume encompasses several theoretical frameworks, all grounded in corpus research, and includes both monolingual studies on English, synchronic and diachronic, and cross-linguistic studies, including both qualitative and quantitative analysis and experimental methodology.

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**Noelia Castro-Chao**, *Argument structure in flux: The development of impersonal constructions in Middle and Early Modern English, with special reference to verbs of desire* (Linguistic Insights 274). Bern: Peter Lang, 2021. Pp. 300. ISBN 9783034341899.

Reviewed by Florent Perek , University of Birmingham

Across the literature on historical linguistics, the English language can be noted for the dramatic changes that it has undergone over the past 1,300 years or so. The loss of case marking, shifts in basic word order and numerous phonetic changes are but a few examples. Changes in argument structure, i.e. how the participants expressed with verbs and other predicate words are morphosyntactically realised, are also abundantly attested. A case in point is the loss of impersonal constructions, as exemplified with the Middle English verb *longen* ‘long’ in (1) below. This is the chief focus of Castro-Chao’s investigation.

- (1) To þe me longeð swuðe.  
 to you me longs greatly  
 ‘I feel a great desire for you’  
 (Middle English, a1250, source: *OED*; cited on p. 11)

In Old English and Middle English, one of the arguments of many verbs (typically some kind of Experiencer) could be realised as a case-marked NP or objective