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### Review Of "X-Bar Grammar: Attribution And Predication In Dutch" By F. C. Van Gestel

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Review

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## BOOK NOTICES

**Grammaire et théorie du langage au 18<sup>e</sup> siècle: 'Mot', 'temps' et 'mode' dans l'*Encyclopédie méthodique*.** By PIERRE SWIGGERS. Lille: Presses Universitaires, 1986. Pp. 112. F 90.00.

This book's cover is so handsome that one scarcely notices what is missing: the name of Nicolas Beauzée (1717–89), author of the three articles reproduced here with introductions by S. They are entries which B wrote originally for Diderot & d'Alembert's monumental *Encyclopédie* (Paris, 1751–80), then revised for his own *Encyclopédie méthodique: Grammaire et littérature* (Paris, 1782–86). The present book complements S. Auroux's edition of two other articles by B (*L'Encyclopédie: 'Grammaire' et 'langue' au XVIII<sup>e</sup> siècle*, Paris, 1973).

B's current renaissance (see also my BN on M. Wilmet, *La détermination nominale*, *Lg.* 63.434–5, 1987) is credited to his 'modernity'; this means, in effect, that a number of wheels re-invented in the 20th century were already rolling in his work. He gives form priority over meaning, pursues a fairly rigorous binarism in his analyses, cites ungrammatical sentences as linguistic evidence, and posits universals based on data from all the languages known to him. Yet he clearly lacks an adequate concept of historical relationships among languages. This was to be developed by the next generation of linguists, as they lost sight of B and the long tradition that preceded him.

The article 'Mot' should interest anyone working with basic grammatical categories and relations. B classified declinable words as determinate (nouns, pronouns) or indeterminate (adjectives, verbs), and indeclinables as suppletive (prepositions, adverbs) or discursive (conjunctions). The surprising combination of adjectives (including determiners and quantifiers) with verbs is based on the view that both must receive determinate inflection from a noun or pronoun; this is not far from the current treatment of inflection as an affixed nominal element.

'Temps' is the most complex and controversial article, proposing a wholesale revision of the traditional tense system. For B, the PRESENT tenses were those which express simultaneous

existence with a given epoch—i.e., all and only the simple tenses (the traditionally-termed present, imperfect, simple past & future, present conditional, present & imperfect subjunctive, present infinitive & participle). B's PRETERIT and FUTURE tenses express existence prior or subsequent to a given epoch; the former comprise the compound and supercompound tenses, the latter the periphrastic futures with *devoir* and *aller*.

Well aware of how radical the proposal was, B devoted many pages to defending it. He supported putting *je parle*, *je parlai*, *je parlerai* in a unified category of 'present' by citing contexts where they are interchangeable. But then he cloaked the partial interchangeability of *je parlai*, *j'ai parlé* or *je parlerai*, *je vais parler* in different terms, to sustain their separate classification; whether a tense expresses simultaneity with the past or future, or existence prior or subsequent to the present, he claimed, the result is virtually identical. It seems, ultimately, that B's edifice of semantic/metaphysical explanations is posterior, and that strictly formal criteria dictated the system. This does not, however, efface its originality, or its suitability for continued investigation by Romance morphologists.

In the introduction to 'Mode', S shows how B departed from the usual 18th c. treatment of mood as a semantic feature with affinities to derivational morphology—returning to the position of medieval modistic grammar, which restricted mood to verbal inflection. S, who has earned an outstanding reputation in linguistic historiography, is at his best when positioning B in the perspective of his predecessors. If, when summarizing the content of B's articles, S's comments are sometimes redundant, it is just that we do not need a contemporary voice to interpret B for us. His clarity of thought and expression pierces through two centuries of oblivion, and his proposals have far more than merely historical interest. S deserves great credit for restoring this work to print. [JOHN EARL JOSEPH, *University of Maryland*.]

**X-bar Grammar: Attribution and predication in Dutch.** By FRANK C. VAN GESTEL. Dordrecht: Foris, 1986. Pp. v, 191. f38.00.

In this dissertation, G argues that the subject/predicate relation which is expressed explicitly

in copular sentences is also implicit in the relation of noun to attributive adjective. He gives a brief but thorough history of the debate over whether attributive adjectives should be generated in copular clauses and transformationally derived, or whether they should be base-generated in their surface position with no movement or deletion. G argues against a transformational analysis, and in favor of base-generation of an  $A^3$  node in prenominal position—where  $A^3$  is, essentially, a small clause with PRO in subject position and  $A^2$  in predicate position. In the process, G has to modify both the Projection Principle and the definition of government. Of course, theoreticians have become accustomed to considering modifications of both these concepts since at least 1981. However, this in no way diminishes the ambition of G's work: he firmly holds to his data, and requires that the theory be empirically adequate. Unfortunately, many of G's copious data lists lack much explication of their import. This is particularly true in Ch. 3; here I would have appreciated remarks as to exactly how the data were problematic or supportive for the analysis being considered—and, especially, an explanation of the *met* 'with' absolutive. (I am puzzled, e.g., by the failure of item 6g on p. 55.)

Nevertheless, G's discussion and criticism of many issues, particularly of  $\pm N$  and  $\pm V$  as features, is strong. One interesting and important point is that restrictive and non-restrictive relative clauses have the same structure in Dutch (Ch. 4). To be sure, some relevant facts for English differ from those for Dutch; but the important point is that Dutch offers evidence that semantic differences do not have to be paralleled by syntactic differences. Elaborate versions of X-bar theory, based on the strict notion that all semantic distinctions must be reflected in the syntax, could well be simplified without losing empirical adequacy. Another much appreciated feature of this book is its organization: every now and then (as at the start of Ch. 5), G gives a recapitulation of where we've arrived thus far.

This volume is an interesting and serious contribution to our understanding of the syntactic and semantic aspects of attribution. The proposal of an  $A^3$  node might have not appeared in G's dissertation if Chomsky's *Knowledge of language* (New York: Praeger, 1986) had been published before G's dissertation was written—since Chomsky allows for a subject/predicate relation that does not require any clause or small

clause analysis. However, much of G's work is valid even if we are to consider a base-generation of attributive adjectives which posits them as  $A^2$  in prenominal position (with no small clause structure—and thus no PRO). I recommend his book to scholars of predication, of X-bar theory, and of Dutch. [DONNA JO NAPOLI, *Swarthmore College*.]

**Frisian reference grammar.** By PIETER MEIJES TIERSMA. Dordrecht, Holland, & Cinnaminson, NJ: Foris, 1985. Pp. x, 157.

T's book is a relatively non-technical description of modern West Frisian, a dialect spoken by approximately 350,000 inhabitants of the province of Friesland in northeast Holland. T focuses on the literary standard, a more conservative form of WFr. shaped by scholars and activists over the past two centuries and based primarily on the Klaaifrysk subdialects. *FRG* is the first major Frisian grammar targeted to an English-speaking audience; it is intended to serve both the trained linguist and the educated layperson.

Ch. 1, 'Introduction', briefly summarizes the history and development of WFr., followed by the geographical disposition of its modern dialects and the rise of the literary standard. It concludes with an informative discussion of the present sociolinguistic status of WFr.

Ch. 2, 'Phonology', details the rich WFr. inventory, including 9 short and 9 long vowels, with numerous diphthongs (and according to some, triphthongs). The major phonological processes affecting both vowel and consonant segments are presented; for the vowels, these are nasalization, truncation—and, most characteristic, shortening of long stem vowels and 'breaking' (alternation of rising and falling diphthongs). For the consonants, the processes include assimilation, syllabification, final devoicing, *r*-deletion, and *d*-insertion (cf. St. Dutch). The chapter concludes with a succinct and very useful exposition of the major (primary) word-stress patterns.

Chap. 3, 'Spelling', is devoted to WFr. orthography. Many of the principal spelling rules are similar to those of Standard Dutch.

Chap. 4, 'Morphology', presents the major WFr. form classes, starting with the major constituents of the noun phrase and their inflectional patterns; these include determiners,