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This is a contribution from *Constructions and Frames* 10:1
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Stefan Müller (2016). *Grammatical theory. From transformational grammar to constraint-based approaches. Volume I: Background and specific theories*. Berlin: Language Science Press. xx+427 pp.

Reviewed by Frank Van Eynde (KU Leuven)

This book is an extended and revised version of the German *Grammatiktheorie* by the same author, published in 2013. It consists of two volumes.¹ The first volume introduces the basic concepts and tools of current theorizing in syntax, ranging from constituency over parts of speech and heads to phrase structure grammar and X-bar theory (chapters 1 and 2). A separate chapter is devoted to feature structures and descriptions (chapter 6). Together these chapters provide an introduction which is both thorough and easy to follow. Moreover, since they are larded with exercises, they can be recommended for teaching, especially to students who are familiar with German, as most of the examples are taken from that language.

The rest of the first volume consists of presentations of no less than nine frameworks, including the transformational theories of Government & Binding and Minimalism (chapters 3 and 4), Generalized Phrase Structure Grammar (chapter 5), Lexical Functional Grammar (chapter 7), Categorical Grammar (chapter 8), Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar (chapter 9), Construction Grammar (chapter 10), Dependency Grammar (chapter 11) and Tree Adjoining Grammar (chapter 12).

Each of these chapters has the same structure. After a brief sketch of the representational format, one gets detailed treatments of a number of phenomena which the author considers of central relevance for the treatment of natural language in general (the passive and long-distance dependencies) or German in particular (local reordering, also known as scrambling, and the alternation between verb-final and verb-initial constructions). This is topped off by a summary, often preceded by a section on new developments and theoretical variants. The chapter on Construction Grammar, for instance, contains separate subsections on Berkeley Construction Grammar, Sign-Based Construction Grammar, Embodied Construction Grammar and Fluid Construction Grammar. This reader's digest is based on an impressive amount of literature and contains plenty

1. A review of the second volume, by Liesbeth Augustinus, follows the current one in this journal issue.

of useful suggestions for further reading. Moreover, the various approaches are not only presented, but also evaluated and occasionally compared. The main criteria for evaluation are implementability and relevance for German. Computational implementations receive a lot of attention and much of the argumentation in favor of or – more often – against some given claim is based on technical issues: interactions with other parts of the grammar, blocking of overgeneration, avoidance of redundancy, and the like. Unsurprisingly, the winner of this comparative evaluation is the theory that the author adopts as a framework in most of his own work, i.e. Head-driven Phrase Structure Grammar.

Being a supporter of that framework myself, I endorse most of the author's conclusions, but at the same time I should add that much of the argumentation is not likely to convince the sceptic. This is partly due to the high level of technicality, making the text a tough read for the non-initiated, but also – and more importantly – to the elliptical nature of the argumentation. For crucial parts of the reasoning the author simply refers to his other work. An example is the following quote about the treatment of verb-initial clauses in HPSG: "... there are a number of different approaches to describe the verb position, however in my opinion, the HPSG variant of the GB analysis is the only adequate one (Müller 2005a, b, subm.)" (p. 280). Another example concerns scrambling: "Both the completely flat analysis and the compromise have to be on the wrong track (see Müller 2005a, 2014 and Müller 2007: section 9.5.1) and therefore, I will only discuss the analysis with binary branching structures" (p. 286). Such quotes are scattered throughout the text, usually with reference to one or more of the 56 publications by Stefan Müller in the bibliography.

While the chapters about specific frameworks contain exercises, just like the introductory ones, they are less appropriate for teaching. The presentations are too dense to provide the level of understanding that is required to work with the respective frameworks, and the comparisons and evaluations seem to be written mainly for colleagues, rather than for newcomers to the field.

Given its size, volume I contains surprisingly few errors. Here is a list of those I found:

- p. 20, line 2: infinitive forms → non-finite forms
- p. 44, par. 1.8.2, line 9: verb-final → verb-second
- p. 135, Figure 4.14: C[Decl(arative)] → C[Interrogative]
- p. 247, line just after Figure 8.10: gerund → present participle
- p. 269, line just after (20): sentence → clause
- p. 296, (65): In HPSG, the ARG-ST feature is not declared for objects of type *category* but for objects of type *lexical-sign*.

p. 407: The numbering in the figures does not correspond to the numbering procedure that is presented in the accompanying text.

p. 417, Figure 12.16: ger(und) → present participle

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