

Preface^{*}

Within the Chomskyan paradigm, the main goal of linguistics is the discovery of the underlying principles of universal grammar (UG), i.e. the characterization of the abstract grammatical properties which are common to all human languages. UG is a complex system that emerges out of the interaction of a number of invariable, law-like Principles and a limited set of Parameters, i.e. of ‘open’ options which are allowed by UG and which are set by the speakers of a language on the basis of evidence provided by the linguistic environment of this language. Researchers working within this framework have always had as their primary goal to build a theory of linguistic competence, or in more recent terms of *internalised* language (I-Language), in effect a model which will account for the invariant properties of human languages and also for the attested linguistic variation. Perhaps due to the adherence

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to this explanatory goal and because of the rigid dichotomy between synchrony and diachrony inherited by the structuralists, the systematic study of language change long remained at the margins of interest and preoccupation for most generative linguists. This situation has changed considerably in recent years. The study of language change has once again become central to linguistic theorising, contributing useful hypotheses and insights to the general question of how the interaction of different parameter settings with invariant principles of UG yields different surface structures. Within the general framework of enquiry of what the nature of the triggering evidence for setting a parameter value is, a great deal of attention has been paid to questions like “is language change due to the resetting of (the value of) a parameter — of ‘parameter change’ (Lightfoot 1991)”? Or is it due to a ‘reanalysis’, i.e. a more general change consisting in a grammatical reorganization of active patterns? Or is it perhaps due to gradual morphological changes pervading the whole, or, anyway, large domains of a given language?

This volume testifies the increasing interest among generative linguists in how and why language changes. The papers collected here were all presented at the workshop

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The area of inquiry of the papers ranges from theoretical considerations about how language change actually takes place to the effort of explaining why and how a certain construction/area of a grammar has changed in the development of the language under investigation.

Loren Billings and **Abigail Konopasky** explore the change in clitic placement in Tagalog and compare it to the Romance and Slavic subgroups of Indo-European languages. They propose that the largely prosodic ordering of clitics in Tagalog is an innovation which has emerged from a stage in which the clitics were ordered by syntactic mechanisms. **Verner Egerland** provides support for the well-known hypothesis that language change cannot be investigated without a theory of language acquisition (Lighfoot 1991) by examining the change from weak pronouns to clitics in Italian. **Susann Fischer** investigates the change of clitic placement in Romance in order to support her theory on language change and markedness.

Thorbjörg Hróarsdóttir proposes that language change is a three step process, using Icelandic data to justify her hypothesis. **Eric Mathieu** and **Ioanna Sitardou** address the question why split wh-constructions were widespread in Classical Greek but are not anymore in Modern Greek. **Hedde H. Zeijlstra** offers a correlation between the stage of the Jespersen Cycle a language or variety is in and the extent to which negative elements may rule each other out. His study is based on Dutch, but he provides enough crosslinguistic data in support of his claim.