Alejandro Alcaraz-Sintes and Salvador Valera-Hernández, eds. 2014. *Diachrony and Synchrony in English Corpus Linguistics* (Linguistic Insights 181). Bern: Peter Lang. 393 pp. ISBN: 978-3-0343-1326-1.

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This volume includes a selection of papers and plenary lectures from the *Fourth International Conference on Corpus Linguistics* held at the University of Jaén (Spain), from 22 to 24 March, 2012. It is divided into two sections: "Corpora and Historical Linguistics" (consisting of one introductory chapter by Alcaraz-Sintes, plus five further chapters) and "Corpora and Descriptive Linguistics" (with an introductory chapter by Valera-Hernández, plus seven more chapters). All chapters are of high quality, and serve to illustrate the various ways in which Corpus Linguistics has become an essential field in the advancement of linguistic study, particularly lexicological and grammatical studies, and also language acquisition and translation, in that these are the main sub-disciplines represented in the volume.

The paper by Nuria Calvo-Cortés, "A Corpus-Based Study of Gradual Meaning Change in Late Modern English," is a detailed lexical study which traces the evolution of four originally maritime words, *aboard*, *ahead*, *aloof* and *astern*, all of which developed new meanings and uses in the Late Modern English period. The author shows how this period is essential in the evolution of these four items and provides two socio-cultural reasons: (i) the decline of the prescriptive rule to avoid *a-* prefixed words, and (ii) the advance of technology with the arrival of the steam engine, which brought with it the demise of sail power. This led to the decay of the primitive meanings of the terms under investigation, which first underwent lexicalization and, later, grammaticalization, as they developed new metaphorical meanings. The author not only manages to intertwine these two processes of language change, but also provides examples of new meanings and earlier usages than those attested in the *Oxford English Dictionary.*

Teresa Fanego's contribution "Dictionary-Based Corpus Linguistics and Beyond: Developments in the Expression of Motion Events in the History of English" is an exhaustive analysis of *sound emission to motion* construction (SEtoM Cxn, as in *Sir Ascelin clanked into the hall*). This is studied within the framework of Construction Grammar (Goldberg 1995, for example) and Cognitive Linguistics, following Talmy's (2000)

classification of world languages into *satellite-framed* ones (such as English) and *verb-framed* ones (such as Spanish). Based on data from several historical dictionaries, the emergence of this SEtoM Cxn proves to have been motivated by the existence of similar constructions where manner of motion is encoded in the verb (e.g., *crawl*). The paper also contributes to the expanding horizons of Corpus Linguistics, showing that "dictionary-based corpus linguistics," a term coined by Mair (2004, 123), is the most appropriate methodology for studying the development of language with a focus on particularly infrequent lexical items.

The paper "The Use of *if* as a Declarative Complementizer in English: Theoretical and Empirical Considerations," by María José López-Couso and Belén Méndez-Naya, studies constructions such as *It would be a good idea if you hired a bodyguard*, where the link *if* functions as a complementizer. With the exploration of two historical corpora, the authors find more than 8,000 examples of *if*-clauses from Old English to the very late twentieth century, and analyse some 90 examples from different theoretical angles. By applying a series of semantic and syntactic criteria to categorize *if*-clauses along two continua—(i) between conditional and declarative *if*-clauses, and (ii) between interrogative and declarative *if*-clauses—, the authors show that the complementizer *if* differs from central *that* in a number of ways, such as their preference for non-assertive contexts, the fact that they function as the subject of the main clause (usually introduced by an anticipatory pronoun), and their strong tendency to occur in informal contexts.

Matti Rissanen's contribution "On English Historical Corpora, with Notes on the Development of Adverbial Connectives" is an encyclopaedic review of the major English historical corpora combined with the study of three adverbial connectives from Old to Late Modern English, namely *nemne/nympe* ["except"], *according to* and *concerning*. Although the chapter does not seek to provide a complete evolution of these items, important conclusions are drawn, such as the steps followed in their grammaticalization process. Making use of the motto of the author's team, "Research begins where counting ends" (112), Rissanen includes ample evidence to illustrate the frequency of the three connectives, their distribution in genres and their evolution over time, with data taken from a careful selection of the most authoritative corpora of the different periods studied, from "focused small corpora" to "[l]arge general" ones (132). His invaluable conclusions regarding the usefulness of all ten corpora explored here are the perfect complement to the *Corpus Resource Database* (*CoRD*).

The final paper in this section on diachronic linguistics is Ondřej Tichý and Jan Čermák's "Measuring Typological Syntheticity of English Diachronically with the Use of Corpora." Inspired by Benedikt Szmrecsanyi's (2012) work, which challenges the widely held idea that English has evolved typologically from a synthetic to an analytic status, Tichý and Čermák propose a different measure, by using the standard Shannon entropy formula, which allows them to confirm the traditional assumption quantitatively and thus reject that of Szmrecsanyi (2012). My only concern with this chapter is of a methodological nature, in that it is not clear how the authors have found

the forty-one words they consider in the study. They claim that these words are high-frequency items in all the periods, and they appear to have extracted them from various dictionaries, but the specific sources are not cited.

The first paper in the second part of the volume (after the introduction by Valera-Hernández) is Miguel-Ángel Benítez-Castro's "Formal, Syntactic, Semantic and Textual Features of English Shell Nouns: A Manual Corpus-Driven Approach." Shell nouns, described as abstract nouns that "help to condense long stretches of discourse into smaller discourse entities" (171), include *time*, *thing*, *way*, *example*, *issue*, *lie*, etc. The major strength of this chapter lies in the large amount of manual work done by the author, who finds 922 shell-like units in a two-million-word corpus, classifies them into three frequency-determined groups with three sub-groups each, and analyses them according to nine variables. The findings, which bring into question some common claims in the literature, such as the preference of these forms for postmodifier and cataphoric use, leave the reader intrigued: why use a classification of items into nine frequency-determined groups if no differences between these groups are subsequently discussed?

Eduardo Coto-Villalibre's contribution "From Prototypical to Peripheral: The '*get +* *Ven*' Construction in Contemporary Spoken British English" provides a reassessment of the classification of constructions involving *get* and a participial element, which ranges from being purely verbal to adjectival and idiomatic. The main strength of this paper, which analyses a 600,000-word spoken corpus, is its proposal of a prototype-based account of these constructions, which the author classifies into six groups: (i) central *get*-passives, (ii) semi *get*-constructions, (iii) pseudo *get*-constructions, (iv) adjectival *get*-constructions, (v) idiomatic *get*-constructions, and (vi) reflexive *get*-constructions. Starting with a list of prototypical features of central *get* passives, as found in the literature, the study confirms only some of these (such as the tendency to occur without an agent *by*-phrase), while others are proved to be erroneously attributed to the central class (such as the assumed responsibility of the subject).

The paper "Encoding '*Throughness*' in English and French," by Thomas Egan, studies the translation of the Norwegian preposition/particle *gjennom* into English and French using a multilingual corpus. The results show that the two languages overlap only in 21% of the occurrences (a total of 313 tokens are analysed). A detailed analysis of the four most common meanings expressed by *gjennom* (eight meanings are identified) shows that the most intuitive sense, namely motion, is in fact the meaning in which the two languages are most distant. Such distance is explained in typological terms, and the author, like Fanego (this volume), refers to the influential work of Talmy (2000) which classifies languages according to the way in which they encode motion. While English behaves like a *satellite-framed* language, French displays a more varied picture. This inspiring study has only one weakness: while the conclusions state that the differences between English and French are statistically significant, no results from statistical tests are cited.

The paper "*If You Would Like to Lead*: On the Grammatical Status of Directive Isolated *if*-clauses in Spoken British English," by Beatriz Mato-Míguez, includes a fine analysis of the literature on *if*-clauses with special emphasis on those that are non-canonical, that is, those which exhibit ellipsis and those considered to be isolated (the study thus complements that by López-Couso and Méndez-Naya in this volume). The author's plea for the consideration of directive isolated *if*-clauses as a case of insubordination (along the lines of Evans 2007) is perhaps the most interesting contribution of this paper. Although the author uses a diachronic corpus, owing to the scarcity of data (only fifty-eight relevant examples), no diachronic picture can be drawn. The topic of the study, however, is highly promising, especially as far as the semantic interpretation of these clauses and their interrelation with modal verbs are concerned.

The next paper differs from the previous ones in this part, and indeed in the volume as a whole, in that it focuses on language acquisition. Detmar Meurers, Julia Krivanek and Serhiy Bykh's contribution "On the Automatic Analysis of Learner Corpora. Native Language Identification as Experimental Testbed of Language Modeling between Surface Features and Linguistic Abstraction" aims to improve tools for Native Language Identification (NLI). With this aim in mind, the authors conduct two types of experiment. Firstly, a data-driven experiment shows that analysing sequences larger than three n-grams reveals important information about NLI. Secondly, a theory-driven experiment shows that some syntactic alternations, such as the locative preposition drop alternation (*climb a mountain* vs. *climb up a mountain*), proves to be revealing for NLI of Chinese speakers of L2 English. The successful application of the two approaches adopted by the authors highlights the need for further research into this hybrid perspective, which may yield a much better understanding of linguistic theories in general and of language acquisition in particular.

Juan Santana-Lario's "'Adjective + *whether/if*-clause' Constructions in English. An Exploratory Corpus-Based Study" is the third study on non-conditional *if*-clauses in the volume. With the aim of describing these constructions within the framework of Construction Grammar (Goldberg 1995, for example), the author analyses the twenty most frequent adjectives preceding *whether* and *if* in a corpus of contemporary British English. Almost 1,800 examples are analysed with regard to (i) the syntactic function of the *whether/if*-clause (extraposed subject, extraposed object and complement of the adjective), and (ii) the lexico-grammatical associations of any of those constructions (including the semantic classification of adjectives, [non-]assertiveness, and the presence of an *or {not}* construction). The author convincingly concludes that it is the interaction between all these factors that gives these constructions some modal non-factual meaning.

The last contribution to the section, and in the book, is Paul Thompson's "Exploring Hoey's Notion of Textual Colligation in a Corpus of Student Writing." With the twofold aim of (i) revising the concept of textual colligation, and (ii) exploring the writing of UK undergraduate students of different levels, the author studies how certain

contiguous (n-grams) and non-contiguous (P-frames) sequences are used by students in their academic essays. The conclusions show that the sequences *this essay* and *one of the* *, which have a strong tendency to occur in paragraph-initial sentences, exhibit an increasing frequency year by year and help the writers to construct a critical *persona*. Likewise, modal verbs, which show a tendency to occur in paragraph-final sentences, exhibit an interesting evolution over the years: *will* and *shall* drop, while *would, may* and *should* increase, which, as the author hypothesizes, is the result of students learning to qualify claims, something which they do progressively and gradually.

Summing up, the contributions selected for this edited volume are all of a high quality, innovative and undoubtedly relevant for quite a diverse number of areas of the field of Corpus Linguistics, notably lexicological studies, language variation and change, translation studies and language acquisition. If any improvement could be made, it would be the structure of the volume. The division into two parts, based on diachronic/synchronic grounds, leads to two unbalanced sections, each with an introductory chapter written by a different editor in two obviously different styles. While the introduction by Alcaraz-Sintes follows a traditional outline, with a sound framing of historical corpus linguistics supported by reference to authoritative works and a short summary of each of the five papers, the introduction to the second part by Valera-Hernández is rather heterodox. Here, the co-editor tries to discuss the similarities and differences in the use of dictionaries and corpora as sources of data, this based on a forthcoming paper by Laurie Bauer and Valera-Hernández himself, which, unfortunately, is not included in the reference list. The co-editor's intention is not successful because none of the papers in the second part of the book in fact relies on dictionaries and, therefore, he has to refer to works in the first part (Calvo-Cortés and Fanego); he also fails to include a summary of one of the chapters included in the second part (that by Mato-Míguez). Given the asymmetry between both introductory chapters, it seems to me that the volume would have had greater consistency with a single introduction combining the information offered by both editors. Additionally, organizing the chapters thematically rather than following alphabetical order would have led to a more coherent volume (where, for example, the three contributions on non-conditional values of *if*-clauses, would have been connected). Notwithstanding this minor structural weakness, the editors' work must be praised, as all the papers have undoubtedly been rigorously selected and carefully edited.

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