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T. Givón, *Syntax: an introduction* (2 vols.). Amsterdam & Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2001. Pp. xvii + 500, x + 406.

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Talmy Givón is one of the most authoritative American linguists and typologists. Remaining outside the formalist (Chomskian) approach, Givón also refrains from offering (or joining) any particular version of functionalist linguistics (as many functionalists have). He describes his own approach as merely ‘functional(ist)’ (sometimes adding ‘-typological’). Such an isolated theoretical position makes his judgments on current syntactic trends and developments particularly interesting.

The book under review was announced as the second revised edition of the author’s 1984/1990 *Syntax*, which has been received, in general, quite positively (except for a very negative reaction in Carroll (1985); many of the main reviews are listed in the references) and has become one of the most popular books on syntax. In fact, however, this is more than a radical revision. The majority of chapters and sections have been written anew, even where the titles have remained unchanged. Some of Givón’s theoretical opinions have been reconsidered and/or reformulated, and a number of new ideas and developments have found their place in the new edition. Furthermore, the presentation of material is improved in many respects: some classifications have become more detailed; the discussions are enriched with additional examples and illustrations. Even purely (typo)graphic features have undergone essential changes for the better: apparently, the author (and publisher) did not attempt to save as much space as possible, as can be seen from the liberal use of bulleted sub-headings, indented material and the presentation of lists in columns, rather than as running text.

On the other hand, the total length of the book has been cut considerably by omitting three chapters from this edition: 7, ‘Information-theoretic preliminaries to discourse pragmatics’; 20, ‘The grammar of referential coherence: a cognitive re-interpretation’; and 21, ‘Markedness and iconicity in syntax’.

Last but not least, the author has purged from the book the (alas) quite numerous instances of typos, sloppiness in terminology and mistakes in examples, noted by the reviewers of the first edition (see e.g. Campbell 1992: 494, 496f.; Heath 1986: 162, 1992: 841; Blake 1992: 497–500).

As for the essential intrinsic differences between the two editions of this voluminous work, it is of course impossible to discuss all of them in detail in a short review. In what follows, rather I will attempt to briefly survey at least some of the major differences that appear most important,

focusing on some of the issues that have received special attention from the author.

Some of these points and, in general, some of the reasons that led Givón to undertake a new edition are listed in the Preface. In particular, the reader will find here a list of theoretical issues which demarcate the gap between the generative and functionalist approaches: abstractness, grammatical relations, *lingua mentalis*, etc. Needless to say, Givón's disagreements with the formalist approach and Chomskian linguistics have further increased over the last two decades, and the recent theoretical developments damned by the author as 'the most extravagant mad-hatter abstractness of Minimalism' (xvi) are only partially absolved by the fact that they are 'still inspired by a germ of perfectly good intentions – the search for universals that are NOT about uttered concrete structures, but about the neuro-cognitive organization that accounts for such structures' (xvi).

Methodological issues are further treated at length in the introductory chapter 1, 'The functional approach to language and the typological approach to grammar' (thus, two theoretical aspects which were included in the title of the first edition), which merges two chapters from the first edition: 1, 'Background', and 2, 'Methodological preliminaries: communicative function and syntactic structure'. As in the first edition, the author justifies here his own approach to language, paying more attention now to placing it in a historical perspective, offering a rich collection of quotations from several classical works, starting with Aristotle (whose WORK is regarded as synonymous with FUNCTION) and continuing with such luminaries as Edward Sapir, Otto Jespersen and Simon Dik.

Another issue that receives more attention in chapter 1 is the typological approach to grammar (section 1.6, corresponding to 1.4 and 2.6 of the first edition). Demonstrating the relevance of the typological diversity of linguistic data for the functional study of language, the author supplements it with an important element, diachronic analysis, explaining cross-linguistic diversity as resulting from a variety of historical sources (thus, passives may originate in stative and resultative adjectives, nominalizations, reflexive and impersonal constructions, etc.).

Chapter 2, 'The lexicon: words and morphemes' (=chapter 3 of the first edition, 'Word classes'), as the author explains, 'covers what has been called traditionally *parts of speech*' (43). In fact, however, the classification offered in this chapter deals with two partly overlapping classes of linguistic objects, words and morphemes. Although the title of the chapter now more exactly renders its content, the classification itself remains inconsistent in some respects. In the first edition, Givón distinguished between LEXICAL WORDS and GRAMMATICAL MORPHEMES (further divided into INFLECTIONAL and DERIVATIONAL MORPHEMES), thus hinting at the fact that most lexical morphemes are free and thus behave as words, while most grammatical morphemes are bound; but, obviously, lexical bound morphemes and

grammatical free morphemes (auxiliary words) somehow remained outside the classification. Now Givón makes a distinction between LEXICAL and NON-LEXICAL WORDS, but, quite inconsistently, the latter class turns out to consist of GRAMMATICAL (= older INFLECTIONAL) and DERIVATIONAL MORPHEMES.

Another difference in the new edition is the much more detailed and elaborated classification. The general character of the changes made both in the structure of classifications and in terminology can be illustrated with just two examples. Thus, to the four types of adverbs of the first edition (manner, time, place and speaker's comments) Givón adds instrumental adverbs, wisely renames the second class TIME AND ASPECTUALITY ADVERBS and splits the last class into EPISTEMIC and DEONTIC-EVALUATIVE adverbs. Likewise, the list of minor word classes, consisting of pronouns, demonstratives and articles (\Leftrightarrow DETERMINERS, which now also include possessive pronouns), SENTENTIAL CONJUNCTIONS and SUBORDINATIONS (NOW INTER-CLAUSAL CONNECTIVES), and INTERJECTIONS is supplemented with (1) ADPOSITIONS, (2) QUANTIFIERS, NUMERALS and ORDINALS, and (3) AUXILIARY VERBS.

The next two chapters, 3, 'Simple verbal clauses and argument structures', and 4, 'Grammatical relations and case-marking systems', deal with two layers of the representation of the clause structure, semantic roles and grammatical relations. They essentially correspond to the first edition's chapters 4, 'Simple sentences; predications and case-roles', and 5, 'Case-marking typology: subject, object and transitivity'. The syntactic classification of verbs, distinguishing between SUBJECTLESS VERBS (NOW DUMMY-SUBJECT VERBS), INTRANSITIVES, TRANSITIVES, etc., remains essentially unchanged, but the presentation of case-roles, one of the central points of the book, has undergone some crucial changes. In the first edition, Givón mostly concentrates on the ordering of the three MAJOR roles, Agent, Dative and Patient, arranged according to Givón's hierarchy of topicality: AGT > DAT > PAT (Givón 1984: 87–89, 134, 139f., et passim). The main point of controversy in this hierarchy is of course the relative position of Dative and Patient. Traditionally, Patient is ranked higher than Dative, which more straightforwardly corresponds to the hierarchy of grammatical relations, Subject > Direct Object (DO) > Indirect Object (IO), but, in fact, there is a mass of evidence for both orderings, PAT > DAT and DAT > PAT, as rightly noted by Van der Auwera in his review (1985: 506f.). In the new edition, Givón's answer to this criticism basically amounts to reprising the argumentation of the first edition:

The primacy of the dative-benefactive in the competition for direct-objecthood is supported by the fact that in most languages it is obligatorily made the DO. And in the few languages such as English where it can be either the DO or IO, it is nonetheless overwhelmingly the DO at the level of text frequency. (vol. I: 200)

Givón's statistical claims ('in most languages ...', 'the few languages such as English') do not appear convincing. Apparently, languages differ as far as

the relative ordering of Dative and Patient is concerned. Here it might be in order to refer to the important paper by Dryer (1986).

The discussion of case-roles in chapter 4 has been radically revised. Now the author pays particular attention to the behavior-and-control properties, formulated in terms of syntactic processes which serve to identify grammatical relations: passivization, reflexivization, relativization, equi-NP reference in complementation, etc. (177f.). He further focuses on the main types of conflict between overt-coding and behavior-and-control properties. The most famous example of such a conflict is morphological vs. syntactic ergativity (217–219). In the first edition, Givón is quite sceptical regarding the reality of syntactic (deep) ergativity. Now he apparently admits the existence of some languages where ‘several behavior-and-control properties align with the ergative-absolutive morphology’ (217), but his ‘diachronic explanation’ of the common mismatch between morphological ergativity and syntactic nominative-accusativity does not appear convincing:

Most ergative languages are old ergative languages. Their behavior-and-control properties have had enough time to realign themselves with the *nominative* control principle. Only their morphology remains a relic of their old syntax. Hence their ‘surface’ ergativity.

‘Deep’ ergative languages, in Australia, Eskimo, Philippine and Indonesia, have become ergative relatively recently. Their behavior-and-control properties thus still reflect those of an *inverse* clause in a nominative language. (vol. I: 219)

Both claims appear to be speculations not relying on any historical evidence. They have already been the subject of criticism by one of the reviewers of the first edition (Verhaar 1985: 151), who rightly points out that at least two of the languages mentioned by Givón, Malay and Tagalog, were syntactically ergative as early as the 16th century; he also questions the correctness of the account of syntactic/deep ergativity in terms of topicality. This criticism is left unanswered, and so are a number of related questions: how do we know that ergativity in Australia and Eskimo is ‘relatively recent’? How old is ergativity in ‘old ergative languages’? Does any of this hold true for languages with well-documented history which attest the rise of ergativity, such as Indo-Aryan?

Unfortunately, such speculative diachronic explanations are quite typical of Givón. Particularly annoying for historical linguists, they have already caused severe criticism, for instance by Campbell (1992: 494f.). Instead of a synthesis of synchronic and diachronic analyses (which may be fruitful in many cases), they rather exemplify a sort of PSEUDO-PANCRONIC approach, which hardly contributes to a better understanding of linguistic facts.

Chapter 5, ‘Word order’, is supplemented with an important section on ‘so-called non-configurationality’. The very title shows the author’s scepticism regarding the notion of (non-)configurationality (coined within the

generative tradition) and the claim that ‘in flexible-order languages, the subject and object [are] not “real” independent syntactic constituents (“nodes”), but rather [are] “indexed in the verb”’ (279). Givón further argues, convincingly, that this and similar claims are ‘founded upon a number of rather questionable interpretations of the empirical evidence’ (279). In addition, it is pertinent to note quite an annoying abuse of the term NON-CONFIGURATIONAL, employed in several, quite traditional, descriptive studies as a newly-fashionable term referring to languages with free word order – which of course has little scientific value.

Givón wisely omits the next chapter which was present in the first edition, 7, ‘Information-theoretic preliminaries to discourse pragmatics’ (its place in a syntactic textbook is indeed quite problematic), but some of its remnants are scattered throughout several chapters of the new edition, in particular, section 9.1 of chapter 7, which deals with the PRESUPPOSED/ASSERTED INFORMATION distinction. On the other hand, the next chapter, devoted to tense, aspect and modality (TAM), is now split in two, giving chapter 6, ‘Tense, aspect and modality I: functional organization’, and chapter 7, ‘Tense, aspect and modality II: typological organization’. As in many other chapters, several improvements are made in the typological discussion of the categories in question: while the first edition simply picked up several individual languages as representative examples of TAM-systems, now the author concentrates on possible types of systems.

The range of topics discussed in chapter 8, ‘Negation’ (=9 in the first edition), remains essentially the same, although several new (and popular) issues, such as NEGATIVE POLARITY, are added.

Finally, the two concluding chapters of volume I, 9 and 10, have been combined, and now appear under the general heading ‘Referential coherence’: ‘I: pronouns and grammatical agreement’ and ‘II: reference and definiteness’.

Volume II opens with chapter 11, ‘Noun phrases’, where only minor changes have been made (thus, the discussion of restrictive vs. non-restrictive modifiers is more elaborated, which, as in many other cases, has essentially enhanced the clarity of presentation).

In chapter 12, ‘Verbal complements and clause union’, the author has added a section on ‘the two major diachronic routes to clause-union’ (79). Givón distinguishes between ‘*embedding languages*, where clause-integration arises diachronically from embedded complement clauses of reduced finiteness’, so that ‘syntactic clause-union ... reach[es] completion’, and ‘*serial-verb languages*, ... where clause integration arises diachronically from clause-chaining and no strong finiteness gradation exists between main and “subordinate” clause’, so that ‘the very same semantic event combinations yield incomplete clause-union’ (79). The section contains some interesting illustrative material and discussion, but the conclusion at which Givón arrives at the end is yet another example of his pseudo-panchronic

typological approach:

Full clause-union – with co-lexicalized verbs, a unified set of G[rammatical] R[elation]s, and a re-consolidated single-focused finite morphology – is but the apex of the graduated syntactic scale of clause integration. The profound scalarity of complementation merely illuminates the fact that clause-union is a gradual *diachronic* process. (vol. II: 89)

Here, a discussion of evidence from languages with full clause union AND a well-documented history (cf., for instance, English phase constructions with *finish* and causative clause-union with *make*) would have been invaluable. Without a solid basis in diachronic evidence, claims such as that just quoted are of little value, remaining pure a priori speculation.

The range of topics discussed in chapter 13, 'De-transitive voice', remains essentially the same as in the corresponding chapter of the first edition, but now the author makes a more explicit distinction between SEMANTIC and PRAGMATIC de-transitive voice constructions. The former are 'those whose functional definition does not depend on entities outside the boundaries of the event-clause' (92). Here belong reflexives, reciprocals, and middle-voice constructions (treated in the first edition under MULTIPLE PASSIVES). The pragmatic voice constructions are 'those whose functional definition depends on some facets of the wider, extra-clausal, discourse context' (92). This group includes, alongside the unmarked transitive voice (ACTIVE-DIRECT), inverse, passive and antipassive. As Givón explains, 'the semantics of transitivity is not affected in such constructions'; '[r]ather, they render the same semantically-transitive event from different pragmatic *perspectives*', which 'involve, primarily although not exclusively, the *relative topicality* of the agent and patient' (93). The relative topicality is determined by means of two parameters (rather than 'methods' (123)), (i) CATAPHORIC PERSISTENCE (in the first edition, TOPIC PERSISTENCE), which 'measures how many times a referent recurs in the next 10 clauses, following its use in a particular construction' (123), and (ii) ANAPHORIC DISTANCE (in the first edition, REFERENTIAL DISTANCE), which 'measures the gap, in a number of clauses, between the referent's current appearance in a particular construction and its last previous occurrence in the text' (123). The explanation of these parameters has gained greatly in clarity as compared with that in the first edition (rightly criticized by Blake (1992: 498–500) for its obscurity).

The structure and content of the last five chapters, 14, 'Relative clauses'; 15, 'Contrastive focus constructions'; 16, 'Marked topic constructions'; 17, 'Non-declarative speech-acts'; and 18, 'Inter-clausal coherence', have remained essentially unchanged, with only minor rearrangements and additions. Thus, in chapter 17, the author has added short but useful sections on the epistemic and deontic features of declarative and interrogative speech-acts (290f.), and the section on socio-personal dimensions of the communicative contract (17.7 = 18.8 in the first edition) has been

reshaped in terms of interaction between epistemic and deontic aspects of speech-acts.

The book concludes with a list of references and a short, five-page index. Both are worth criticizing for their incompleteness; the lack of reference to several basic works on syntax and syntactic categories is particularly regrettable. But these two shortcomings, inherited from the first edition, have been mentioned by many reviewers, so I will not dwell upon them any further.

To sum up, Givón's book is a very useful introduction to syntax. Compared to the 1984/1990 version, the new edition has gained a lot in clarity, consistency and accurateness of presentation of the material. Although some features of the book (primarily, scarcity of references and, at some points, lack of rigor in definitions and terminology) are hardly appropriate for a STANDARD textbook, the abundance of illustrative material from languages of diverse structural types, numerous stimulating and intriguing interpretations of linguistic facts, new universals and interesting ideas – an advantage noticed by nearly all reviewers of the first edition – make it well worth reading, both by experienced professional linguists and by any student of syntax and linguistics in general.

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