

see) there is a tantalizing two-paragraph section suggesting that scholars interested in identity formation as well as language planning can find interesting material in the Adyghe case. Höhlig notes the proposal for a unified literary language combining Adyghe and Kabardian, which is apparently supported by Kabardians and some Adyghe but resisted by others. Since at one time these West Caucasian speech communities were considered to speak dialects of a single language, Circassian (Adyghe being designated “West” or “Lower” and Kabardian “East” or “Upper”), the situation hinted at by Höhlig suggests comparisons with political and sociolinguistic processes underlying efforts at unity and differentiation across the Black Sea, in the Balkans.

T. Meier’s paper addresses the typological question of phonological markedness on the basis of glottalized consonants in the languages of the Caucasus, both indigenous (primarily Georgian, Lezgi, Avar, and Abkhaz, but with data from Hunzib and Budukh) and Indo-European (Armenian). The author’s brief history of markedness does not agree in its details with that given in Edna Andrews’ *Markedness Theory* (Duke University Press, 1990, pp. 13–19), and it is not so much a brief history as a fragment of relevant background that suffices for the purposes of the article. The characterization of (phonological) markedness as being determined by statistical frequency accurately reflects the presence in the literature of a “myth of markedness” (Andrews 1990:136–65). Already in 1930 Trubetzkoy wrote (in Russian): “Statistics has nothing to do with it. The crux of the matter rests in the so-called ‘intrinsic content’ of the correlation.” (cited in Andrews 1990:136–37, her translation). Although Meier’s treatment reflects some authors’ equation of statistical frequency with markedness, the article is extremely useful for its wealth of clear empirical data that refutes claims about glottalization based on statistical frequency. After presenting the data, Meier briefly discusses neutralization, child language acquisition, and the adaptation of loanwords as criteria for markedness, with a couple of examples. The author concludes that while markedness remains a useful concept, it can only function in language-specific terms, and therefore, while it is in principle possible for language-specific markedness to show universal tendencies for specific features of phonemes, at present the evidence does not suffice to support such a thesis.

F. Thordarson (279–285) discusses various lexical borrowings between Georgian and Ossetian. J. Cheung (286–292) gives a useful summary of accentuation in the two main Ossetian dialects, Iron and Digoron, comments on their historical reconstruction, and addresses questions of external influence, which he concludes is rather minimal.

This collection has something of interest for any linguist and quite a bit for any Caucasologist. It is well worth reading.



**Howe, Stephen.** *The Personal Pronouns in the Germanic Languages. A study of personal pronoun morphology and change in the Germanic languages from the first records to the present day.* [Studia Linguistica Germanica, 43]. Berlin: de Gruyter, 1996. (xxii + 390 pp.)

Reviewed by Michael Cysouw (Zentrum für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft, Berlin)

This book is originally a PhD thesis written at the University of London in 1995. The main goal of this study is to present a survey of all that is known about the historical developments of the personal pronouns in the Germanic languages. The result is an impressive encyclopaedic collection of data on the Germanic pronouns in different stages of their history. This collection is indispensable for anyone who wants to put forward any generalisations, be it diachronic or synchronic, involving the Germanic pronouns.

The book consists of 18 consecutively numbered chapters (and a short introduction and conclusion, which are not numbered), yet these chapters can be divided into two clearly different parts. The first three chapters deal with general issues and generalisations over the various pronoun systems of the Germanic languages. In contrast, the Chapters 4 till 18 present detailed descriptions of the pronouns in individual languages. The organisation of these chapters is not ideal. A separate part on “extinct varieties” could have summarised the extremely short chapters on Gothic (Ch. 4), Runic inscriptions (Ch. 5) and Langobardic (Ch. 10). Further, Chapter 13 (“Scandinavian”) and the Sections 16.3.1 and 16.3.2 seem to belong together. They all deal with the development of the third person pronouns throughout the various Scandinavian languages and might have been placed as a separate section within Chapter 3. In general, the book would have benefited greatly from a more tightly organised structure.

Chapter 1 deals with the morphological structure of personal pronouns. In this chapter the important but somewhat obvious point is made that the morphological form of personal pronouns is neither completely semantically transparent nor completely opaque. There are many portmanteau pronouns that cannot be further morphologically analysed, yet, there are also many cases of overt morpho-semantic relationship, like, for example, the German /m/ for first person and /d/ for second person in the forms *mir-dir*, *mich-dich* and *mein-dein*. Although the interaction between completely transparent and completely opaque morphology is discussed at great length in this chapter, Howe does not propose any method to measure the continuum in between the two. His conclusion that ‘the personal pronouns are primarily representative, i.e. portmanteau forms rather than active indicators of each category/property’ (p. 58) is thus only an impressionistic statement, although undoubtedly true.

Chapter 2 and Chapter 3 contain the most interesting results of Howe’s investigation. Chapter 2 presents an extensive survey of all changes that are attested in the personal pronouns in the Germanic languages, ordered according to various characteristics. For instance, there is a list of all instances of merger (pp. 91–93), a list of all instances of reinterpretation of the former dual forms as plurals (pp. 95–96), and many more such lists. Again, this impressive collection of changes could have been made more accessible by a clearer organisation. Howe distinguishes four types of change, labelled [A] through [D], yet it remains a puzzle what makes these four so special. For example, the label *change type [D]* is assigned to analogy, while changes through functional reinterpretation or general phonological processes do not get an own label. Also, the labels [A] through [D] are not mutually exclusive. One and the same change can (and often does) show up in more than one of these types of change. For convenience, I will summarise this chapter here in a different presentation as in the book. The contents of this chapter can be classified on the basis of three questions: “What did change?”, “How did these changes come about?” and, finally, “Why did these changes happen?”

Howe answers the first question, “What did change?”, in an exemplary way. The collection of changes in personal pronouns in the Germanic languages is complete and thoroughly documented. Howe distinguishes three kinds of change in personal pronouns. First, pronouns can be lost (§2.2, especially pp.64–68). Second, new pronouns can be added (§2.3, especially pp.78–80). Finally, pronouns can get a functional reinterpretation (§2.7). The next question is how did these changes come about? Howe differentiates three processes of change. First, changes can happen through analogy (§2.4). Second, changes can come about through phonological reasons like accent variation, sandhi or merger (§2.5). Finally, new personal pronouns can be made out of various other linguistic materials like demonstratives, reflexives, compounds, titles or they can be borrowed (§2.8). Each of these processes is illustrated with ample examples from the history of the Germanic languages. Finally, the most difficult, but also the most interesting question is why these changes did occur. A separate, though rather short, section discusses socially motivated changes (§2.6). Howe does not delve into this theme because he did not consequently include the various forms of respect marking in his investigation (p.5). More thoughts are spent on structural explanations of the changes. Howe presents three possible factors involved. First, the loss of a distinction in the marking of full nouns might lead to a subsequent loss of the same distinction in the personal pronouns (§2.1 and §2.2.4). Second, if a distinction is marked elsewhere in the language this might facilitate this distinction to be lost in the personal pronouns (§2.2.3). Finally, ambiguity in the personal pronouns might lead to therapeutic change, restoring veiled oppositions (§2.3.1 and §2.3.2). All these factors undoubtedly play a role in the explanation of linguistic change, yet the most difficult part is to account for the precise conditions under which these factors apply. Howe makes the interesting observation that the loss of noun distinctions only leads to a subsequent loss of pronoun distinctions in the case of purely grammatical characteristics (i.e. case and grammatical gender), but not in the case of “real-world” characteristics (i.e. number, natural gender, respect, person). However, the other two explanations remain *post-hoc*: once changes have occurred, they can be correlated with one of these facilitating factors, yet these factors are not necessary nor sufficient reason for change. In general, Howe’s answers to the why question are somewhat dissatisfactory compared to the answers to the what and how question. Yet, the large and varied collection of changes attested makes it difficult to come up with a neat story. Language change is not one-dimensional, and neither will be its explanation.

Chapter 3 summarises those changes that are found throughout the Germanic languages. Howe discusses the accusative-dative levelling (§3.1) and the loss of dual pronouns (§3.2). In the discussion of the accusative-dative levelling, Howe shows that the levelling can go both ways: either the original dative or the original accusative can replace the other. He concludes that ‘in view of the occurrence of both directions of levelling perhaps the best conclusion to be made is that generalization was possible either way and that no theory is at present able to account fully satisfactorily for both these directions’ (p.111).

The other category that is discussed in this chapter, the dual, is lost in all extant Germanic languages. Interestingly, this seems to have happened only fairly recently in the North Frisian dialects (pp.193–195). Howe does not present an explanation for this universal Germanic development. On theoretical grounds, he dismisses the obvious explanation, that a pronominal dual cannot be upheld indefinitely when there is no nominal dual. He argues that the correlation between nominal marking and pronominal marking only holds for

“grammatical” properties and not for “real world” properties; and dual, he presumes, is a “real world” property (pp.61–64). It seems like Howe considered this nice theoretical generalisation as more important than an explanation for the loss of the dual.

In Section 3.2, Howe concentrates on the cases among the Germanic languages where the original plural forms were lost, and the dual forms are reinterpreted as plurals. This happened to various extents in Icelandic, Faroese, Norwegian, Swedish, Bairisch and Yiddish. He discusses two explanations from the literature for this retention. First, Guðmundsson’s proposal that the original plural forms were reinterpreted as honorific forms, which caused the dual forms to take over the plural reference and, second, Schirmunski’s proposal that a phonological reduction of the plural forms led the way for the reinterpretation of the duals as plurals. However, Howe concludes that ‘neither explanation [...] accounts particularly well for where dual forms were retained in the 1st person plural’ (p. 124). From his large collection of data, Howe is able to demonstrate the faults and shortcomings of explanations from the literature. Yet, just as in other parts of the book, he is not able to come up with an improved explanation.

In this Chapter 3, a summary of the various processes of gender levelling in the third person pronouns is missing. In the preceding Chapter 2, Howe noted that the functional reinterpretation of third person grammatical gender according to natural gender is found in “English [and] to varying extents also in other Germanic languages” (p.96). This functional reinterpretation in English is even presented as an exemplary case of reinterpretation in the conclusion (p.359). However, I was unable to find this change described in detail anywhere in Chapter 6 on English, nor in any other data-chapter on the various Germanic languages. This omission is a pity as this development seems to be “a counterexample to the unidirectionality hypothesis in grammaticalisation theory”, as is noted by Howe himself (p.359). Also, the ill-placed Sections 16.3.1 and 16.3.2 on the development of the third person pronouns in the Scandinavian language could find a better place in this context. Finally, a survey of the correlation between gender levelling in pronouns and gender levelling in nouns would probably add a strong case for the influence of changes in noun structure on pronoun structure.

From Chapter 4 onward, Howe dives into very detailed descriptions of the personal pronouns of the various Germanic languages through their recorded history. These chapters are fine collections of facts and theories of the history of Germanic pronouns. Especially the discussion of the various theories of the origin of English *she* (§6.3) and the extensive presentation of data from the less well-known Frisian varieties are exemplary. It seems, though, as if Howe grew a bit tired to the end of his arduous task. First, he spends 160 pages on the West Germanic languages, but then, suddenly, the North Germanic languages are done in only 60 pages. Another point of consideration is the very traditional division between (national) language and dialectal variants. Each of the Chapters 4 till 18 deals with a particular (national) language, although this socio-political division is not always overtly correlated with the linguistic variation. The variation within the various languages is often just as great as the difference between them. Yet, given the incredible amount of data that has to be put in a readable format, this presentation is probably the best solution reachable.

To conclude, Howe’s study is an ambitious project to collect everything that is known about the history of the Germanic pronouns. He has succeeded to bring together many different strands of analysis and still produced a readable book. Given the amount of data, it

is remarkable that it is rather easy to find a specific piece of information. This indicates that Howe has condensed the information into the right strands. It is unfortunate that the first three chapters of the book, which try to bring together the various developments in the Germanic pronouns, do not reach to the same level of readability and clarity. But maybe the diversity of linguistic change is simply too overwhelming to allow for such a bold wish.

*Reviewer's address*

Michael Cysouw  
Zentrum für Allgemeine Sprachwissenschaft  
Jägerstrasse 10/11  
10117 Berlin  
Germany  
tel.: 0049–30–20192564 (institute)  
0049–30–69517771 (home)  
fax: 0049–30–20192402  
e-mail: cysouw@zas.gwz-berlin.de



**Estraikh, Gennady.** *Soviet Yiddish. Language Planning and Linguistic Development.* [Oxford Modern Languages and Literature Monographs]. Oxford: Clarendon Press, 1999. — x, 217 pp.

Reviewed by Yuri Kleiner and Natalia Svetozarova  
(University of St. Petersburg)

Gennady Estraikh begins his book by saying that ‘Soviet Yiddish ... has attracted the attention of many scholars and writers’. This is true of course, although the majority of Soviet works, on which his research is based date from the 1920s and ‘30s, which reflects the situation in Soviet Yiddish linguistics that practically ceased to exist thereafter. Later on, Yiddish generally was a more or less forbidden topic in the Soviet Union and an ideological (anti-communist) issue in the West. It was safer, in this context, to regard Yiddish as an artefact, a kind of Esperanto, non-existent outside Sholem Alejkhem’s works or the pages of *sovetish hejmland*. Besides, many works on Yiddish are in Yiddish, therefore they were inaccessible to many of the students of Germanic, socio-linguistics, etc. In this situation, E.’s book is a timely publication, especially valuable since its author relies not only on a very comprehensive bibliography (pp. 176–200), but also on first-hand information resulting from his (grand-)parents’ experience, as well as his own (cf. p. 16).

The book pursues two major lines, describing (1) the extra-linguistic context of the processes involved and (2) the reflection of these processes in Yiddish; both are illustrated by statistics concerning the dynamics of Russification of Jews.

To a number of stereotypical views concerning the language of Russian/Soviet Jews E. opposes statistics reflecting percentages of linguistically assimilated (resp. non-assimilated) Jews at various times and in different places (pp. 18, 31, 33), views on Jewish national languages (p. 19), distribution of Yiddish periodicals (p. 52), certain linguistic problems (the