English Faculty Publications

English

6-2015

Kayardild morphology and syntax, by Erich R. Round (Review)

Gregory Stump

University of Kentucky, gregory.stump@uky.edu

Click here to let us know how access to this document benefits you.

Follow this and additional works at: https://uknowledge.uky.edu/english_facpub

Part of the English Language and Literature Commons

Repository Citation

Kayardild morphology and syntax, **by Erich R. Round (Review)**

Notes/Citation Information
Published in *Language*, v. 91, no. 2, p. 497-500.

Printed with the permission of Gregory Stump. © 2015.

The copyright holders have granted the permission for posting the article here.

ponents of language might have developed gradually. And Merge itself needs to be restricted in various ways, since there are conditions on what can merge with what. These conditions could well have appeared gradually over evolutionary or historical time.

To summarize, *The origins of language: A slim guide* is an outstanding work. James R. Hurford is to be congratulated for writing what is uncontestably the best general introduction to the issues surrounding language origins and evolution.

REFERENCES

BERWICK, ROBERT C. 1997. Syntax facit saltum: Computation and the genotype and phenotype of language. *Journal of Neurolinguistics* 10.231–49.

CLARK, BRADY. 2013. Syntactic theory and the evolution of syntax. *Biolinguistics* 7.169–97.

HAUSER, MARC D.; NOAM CHOMSKY; and W. TECUMSEH FITCH. 2002. The faculty of language: What is it, who has it, and how did it evolve? *Science* 298.1569–79.

HURFORD, JAMES R. 1989. Biological evolution of the Saussurean sign as a component of the language acquisition device. *Lingua* 77.187–222.

HURFORD, JAMES R. 2007. *The origins of meaning: Language in the light of evolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

HURFORD, JAMES R. 2012. *The origins of grammar: Language in the light of evolution*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

JACKENDOFF, RAY. 2010. Your theory of language evolution depends on your theory of language. *The evolution of human language: Biolinguistic perspectives*, ed. by Richard K. Larson, Viviane Déprez, and Hiroko Yamakido, 63–72. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

1068 Seymour St.
Vancouver, BC V6B 3M6, Canada
[fjn@u.washington.edu]

Kayardild morphology and syntax. By ERICH R. ROUND. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2013. Pp. xix, 295. ISBN 9780199654871. $135 (Hb).

Reviewed by GREGORY STUMP, *University of Kentucky*

Since its introduction by Aronoff (1994), the concept of the morpheme has had profound effects on the field of morphology. Once one acknowledges that a language's morphology may be sensitive to properties, categories, and patterns to which the rest of its grammar is simply blind, one is naturally inclined (or more inclined) to think of morphology as an autonomous grammatical component. Formerly tolerated as pesky anomalies, morphomic phenomena now invite closer examination for the insight they give into the organization of a language's morphology—and they do so pervasively.

In *Kayardild morphology and syntax*, Erich Round discusses a system of morphosyntax that, in his words, 'provides the clearest example yet of a linguistically significant morphomic level of representation, in the sense that a significant range of generalizations are accorded their simplest and most elegant expression in terms of the same, morphomically represented units' (38). The analysis that R proposes for Kayardild morphosyntax provides convincing support for this claim; in particular, his analysis provides a systematic account of the fact that, repeatedly in Kayardild, a heterogeneous set of morphosyntactic feature values is realized by precisely the same inflectional morphology (for example, the locative case, the TAM (tense/aspect/modality) properties 'instantiated', 'present', and 'immediate', the clausal property of complementization, and the derivation of place names are all independently subsumed by a morpheme 'μLOC' whose realization is the suffix -*ki*).

Kayardild is doubly remarkable for the intricate system of syntax in which such morphemes do their work. R argues that the distribution of morphosyntactic feature values in Kayardild syntactic structure is most cleanly definable not with respect to sentences' superficial constituent struc-

ture, but with respect to richly layered 'nonsurface' structures from which superficial syntax may be projected. In his analysis, these layers are motivated primarily by the notion of CONCORD—'[t]he morphological realization, on multiple words dominated by a syntactic node **n**, of a morphosyntactic feature value associated with **n**' (76). In accordance with this notion, nonsurface syntactic structures are postulated in which each phrasal node may serve as the initial attachment site from which a morphosyntactic feature value v percolates to word forms whose morphology expresses v; the nesting of a nonsurface structure's phrasal constituents therefore reflects the nesting of morphosyntactic feature values' domains of concord. The inflection of a given word form may therefore involve the morphological realization of morphosyntactic feature values inherited from several dominating nodes, of greater or lesser hierarchical proximity; indeed, a word form may even inflect for contrasting values of the same feature.

Kayardild has an unusually elaborate system of morphosyntactic features, whose values themselves vary with respect to their attachment sites. Thus, whether the word forms in a DP inflect for a morphosyntactic feature value v depends on whether that DP is dominated by v's attachment site. Although the percolation of feature values cannot cross the maximal clausal node S″, a feature value originating in a matrix clause may, for example, percolate into an embedded VP. Thus, given a feature whose value v_1 has a matrix attachment site X and whose value v_2 has an embedded attachment site Y, the percolation of these values relative to a DP contained in an embedded VP node Z may have four logically possible outcomes: DP may inherit v_1 but not v_2 (if Z is dominated by X but not Y); v_2 but not v_1 (if Z is dominated by Y but not X); both v_1 and v_2 (if Z is dominated by both X and Y); or neither v_1 nor v_2 (if Z is dominated by neither X nor Y). This is precisely what happens in the morphosyntax of the feature TAMA ('athematic tense/aspect/mood'), a fact predicted by the nonsurface structure that R proposes for Kayardild sentences (118ff.). Because of both the variety of attachment sites for values of TAMA and the complex ways in which the inflectional realization of these values is morphomically conflated with that of other feature values, the morphosyntax of the feature TAMA is exceptionally intricate; R accordingly includes an extensive appendix (260–77) categorizing the distributional possibilities of TAMA values and exemplifying their realization with dozens of glossed examples.

R's syntactic analysis interlocks with a precise account of Kayardild inflectional morphology (215ff.). This account is executed in the context of a grammatical architecture in which inflectional realization involves three levels of representation for an inflected word form: at the morphosyntactic level Σ, a word form's representation specifies the morphosyntactic properties directly pertinent to its syntax and interpretation; at the morphomic level M, its representation specifies the morphomes that determine its morphological realization; and at the phonological level Φ, its representation specifies its (underlying) phonological form. (In accordance with this view of Kayardild morphology, R's glossed examples have three levels of representation—phonological, morphosyntactic, and morphomic—rather than the usual two.)

The architecture assumed for inflectional morphology entails two mappings: the ΣM mapping and the MΦ mapping. The definition of these two mappings is mediated by a set of ranked optimality-theoretic constraints and by a constraint of 'lexical grounding', according to which each mapping depends on a lexicon of input-output pairings—pairings of morphosyntactic feature values with morphomic values for the ΣM mapping, and pairings of morphomic values with morphs for the MΦ mapping.

In R's analysis, the inflectional realization of a Kayardild word form's feature content depends on the assumption that feature values are at least partially ordered. This ordering arises in two ways—partly as an effect of the definition of the percolation relation in syntax, and partly as an effect of purely morphological constraints on linearization. R argues that the definition of percolation must play a role in the ordering of feature values because the hierarchical relations among feature values' attachment sites are sometimes mirrored by the linear ordering of those feature values' exponents; at the same time, purely morphological constraints must also be relevant, since this sort of mirroring is not always in evidence, and is indeed sometimes overridden. Besides determining the ordering relation among certain feature values (and hence among their exponents), syntactic structure has a second important effect on inflectional realization, in that certain syntactic configurations serve to establish a relation of 'antagonism' between particular

morphosyntactic features—a relation entailing that the inflectional realization of one feature excludes that of the other (169ff.).

R's three-tiered conception of a language's inflectional morphology (constraint-based realizational morphology—CBRM) is in some ways reminiscent of the paradigm-linkage (PL) approach to inflection advocated in Stump 2002, 2006, Stewart & Stump 2007, and subsequent work.[1] In this approach, the correspondence relation between content paradigms and form paradigms equates to the ΣM mapping, and the inflectional expression of form paradigms as realized paradigms constitutes the MΦ mapping. The ΣM lexicon in CBRM may be seen as an extensional definition of the property mapping between content cells and form cells in the PL approach; and the MΦ lexicon is at least loosely comparable to a language's rules of inflectional exponence in the PL approach.

Although these two approaches to inflectional morphology are both formal interpretations of Aronovian morphomics, they differ in key respects. The overarching difference is that in CBRM, morphotactic relations embody the optimal satisfaction of a set of ranked constraints; in the PL approach, by contrast, they follow from the definition of a language's paradigm function. The CBRM and PL approaches are also distinguished by numerous lower-level choices of execution whose relative merits remain to be weighed.

In the PL approach, for example, morphosyntactic property sets are invariably unordered, but may exhibit the sort of nesting defined by Anderson's layering principle (1992:94ff.); R's analysis of Kayardild therefore raises the question of whether feature layering and feature ordering are simply notational variants, and if not, whether both are necessary, and if not, whether one device should be preferred over the other.

The ΣM and MΦ lexicons invoked in defining the ΣM and MΦ mappings raise other questions. In the PL approach, the cognate mappings are formulated to take full account of lexical conditioning (e.g. by inflection-class differences) and of the possibility of nonconcatenative exponence. It is not immediately clear, however, how the ΣM and MΦ lexicons might be squared with either phenomenon. Neither one seems to play a central role in the morphology of Kayardild, suggesting that the comparative evaluation of the CBRM and PL approaches will ultimately depend on morphological phenomena proper to languages that are typologically rather different from Kayardild.

That said, it is amply clear that CBRM affords an exceptionally precise account of Kayardild concord and the morphomic inflection that expresses it. *Kayardild morphology and syntax* accordingly deserves the careful attention of at least two audiences. It will surely attract wide interest among Australianists; R's meticulous account of Kayardild's intricate morphosyntax is remarkable both for its detail and for its theoretical sophistication, and will surely suggest new ways of analyzing similar phenomena in other, related languages. Readers will appreciate the considerable pains that R has taken to identify the exact points of similarity and contrast between his analyses and those proposed in Nicholas Evans's (1995) landmark *Grammar of Kayardild*; for example, he includes an appendix explicitly listing the correspondences between the features and values assumed in his and Evans's analyses (256–59).

Morphologists, the other major audience for R's book, should devote particular attention to R's analysis of Kayardild for its rigorous and extensive application of the morpheme concept. It demonstrates that the most explanatory account of Kayardild inflectional morphology demands the postulation of a level of pure morphology mediating between word forms' morphosyntactic representations and their inflectional realization; in so doing, it points the way to new possibilities for the analysis of languages worldwide.

REFERENCES

ANDERSON, STEPHEN R. 1992. *A-morphous morphology*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

ARONOFF, MARK. 1994. *Morphology by itself*. Cambridge, MA: MIT Press.

EVANS, NICHOLAS. 1995. *A grammar of Kayardild: With historical-comparative notes on Tangkic*. Berlin: Mouton de Gruyter.

[1] See likewise O'Neill (2013a,b), who proposes a similar three-tiered approach.

O'NEILL, PAUL. 2013a. The morpheme and morphosyntactic/semantic features. *The boundaries of pure morphology: Diachronic and synchronic perspectives*, ed. by Silvio Cruschina, Martin Maiden, and John Charles Smith, 221–46. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

O'NEILL, PAUL. 2013b. The notion of the morpheme. *Morphological autonomy: Perspectives from Romance inflectional morphology*, by Maria Goldbach, Martin Maiden, and John Charles Smith, 70–94. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

STEWART, TOM, and GREGORY STUMP. 2007. Paradigm function morphology and the morphology/syntax interface. *The Oxford handbook of linguistic interfaces*, ed. by Gillian Ramchand and Charles Reiss, 383–421. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

STUMP, GREGORY. 2002. Morphological and syntactic paradigms: Arguments for a theory of paradigm linkage. *Yearbook of Morphology* 2001.147–80.

STUMP, GREGORY. 2006. Heteroclisis and paradigm linkage. *Language* 82.279–322.

Department of English
University of Kentucky
1215 Patterson Office Tower
Lexington, KY 40506-0027
[gstump@uky.edu]

Rightward movement in a comparative perspective. Ed. by GERT WEBELHUTH, MANFRED SAILER, and HEIKE WALKER. (Linguistik aktuell/Linguistics today 200.) Philadelphia: John Benjamins, 2013. Pp. viii, 476. ISBN 9789027255839. $158 (Hb).

Reviewed by MICHAEL S. ROCHEMONT, *University of British Columbia*

Rightward movement in a comparative perspective is a useful and wide-ranging collection of papers on constructions that patently display rightward movement, though one of the major issues that arises in discussion of such cases, and no less so in this book, is whether they involve 'movement' at all. Indeed, when syntacticians speak of rightward movement they speak metaphorically, since even syntacticians who believe in literal movement do not believe that all nonadjacent dependent relations from the right must involve movement. In fact, at least some rightward movement configurations are generally agreed not to involve movement of a dislocated and rightward-positioned dependent phrase at all (e.g. English relative clause extraposition).

It is fitting that this title appears in John Benjamins's 'Linguistik aktuell/Linguistics today' series, following on from *Rightward movement* (Beermann, LeBlanc, & van Riemsdijk 1997). The present volume's perspective is comparative in several ways: theoretical (different frameworks), empirical (different types of data: corpus-based, experimental, reported grammaticality judgments), and crosslinguistic (different languages and language families). In addition, the chapters overall compare different motivational sources for rightward movement (processing/parsing, syntax, prosodic phonology, or some combination thereof). The book is enhanced by a comprehensive and compelling introduction by the editors that makes a contribution to the study of rightward movement configurations in its own right. This introduction gives an overview of the analytical challenges that characterize rightward movement configurations in general and relative clause extraposition in particular, and critically surveys existing proposals, including those to be found in the papers that follow in the book. Among the descriptive and explanatory issues that arise are: (i) construal (how does the rightward-positioned dependent constituent recover those aspects of its interpretation that are dependent on a leftward-situated nonadjacent position or host?); (ii) locality/boundedness (what is the source of the varying boundedness effects that govern the relation between the rightward-positioned dependent phrase and its dependent host position, and why do these differ across constructions?); (iii) whether a uniform account of (subsets of) rightward movement configurations is at all possible; (iv) why it is just the constructions so