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Dirk Geeraerts & Hubert Cuyckens (eds.), *The Oxford handbook of Cognitive Linguistics*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, 2007. Pp. xxx + 1334.

Reviewed by VYVYAN EVANS, Bangor University

The Oxford handbook of Cognitive Linguistics is, with certain qualifications elaborated on below, an impressively comprehensive single-volume overview of the research paradigm known as Cognitive Linguistics. Cognitive Linguistics as a movement has its origins in the research programmes associated most notably with scholars such as Gilles Fauconnier, George Lakoff, Ronald Langacker and Leonard Talmy. Its roots emerged in work that began to appear in the late 1970s and early 1980s. Cognitive Linguistics is distinct from other movements in linguistics, both formalist and functionalist, in two respects. Firstly, it takes seriously the cognitive underpinnings of

language, the so-called cognitive commitment (Lakoff 1990). Cognitive linguists attempt to describe and model language in the light of convergent evidence from cognitive and, increasingly, brain sciences. Secondly, cognitive linguists subscribe to a generalisation commitment: a commitment to describing the nature and principles that constitute linguistic knowledge as an outcome of general cognitive abilities (see Lakoff 1990) – rather than viewing language as constituting, for instance, a wholly distinct encapsulated module of mind. Cognitive Linguistics, whilst functionalist in spirit, embraces the need for descriptive adequacy and rigour. This has resulted in an impressive battery of technical and descriptive formalisms (see Evans & Green 2006 for a review, and Evans 2007 for a glossary of the technical language employed). Cognitive linguists have typically adopted a number of distinct (although complementary) foci. Some have been exercised by the study of language structure and organisation. This constitutes a sub-branch of Cognitive Linguistics sometimes referred to as Cognitive Approaches to Grammar. Notable exemplars include Lakoff (1987, case study 3), Langacker (e.g. 1987, 1999, 2008), Goldberg (1995, 2006), Talmy (e.g. 2000) and Croft (2002). Others have employed language as a means of studying aspects of conceptual organisation and structure. The study of aspects of the mind, such as knowledge representation and meaning construction, employing language as a lens for doing so, is sometimes referred to as Cognitive Semantics. Notable exemplars include Lakoff & Johnson (1980, 1999), Fauconnier (1985) and Fauconnier & Turner (2002). A further sub-branch relates to the study of word meanings, sometimes referred to as Cognitive Lexical Semantics. Notable exemplars include Geeraerts (1997), Tyler & Evans (2003) and Evans (2004). Finally, some scholars have attempted to integrate the study of all three areas. A notable recent example is Evans (to appear).

Since the 1990s, the rise and take-up of Cognitive Linguistics has been both rapid and inexorable. At the time of writing, Cognitive Linguistics is arguably the most rapidly expanding perspective within the discipline of linguistics, and exerts an increasing influence in many sub-branches of linguistics (including discourse analysis, pragmatics, semantics, sociolinguistics, stylistics and syntax) as well as cognate and related disciplines and sub-disciplines in the cognitive and social sciences and the humanities. One symptom of this success is the range of textbooks and collections of readings that now abound (e.g. Lee 2001, Croft & Cruse 2004, Evans & Green 2006, Evans 2007, Evans, Bergen & Zinken 2007). However, the present *Handbook* is by far the most wide-ranging and, in certain key respects (e.g. in terms of authority and scope), the most impressive work of reference yet to appear that addresses research within the Cognitive Linguistics movement. Running to 1334 pages, the *Handbook* is certainly the longest single-volume work in the field, and can claim with some credibility to be more fully representative of the Cognitive Linguistics movement and its various spheres of influence than earlier overview works.

The *Handbook* consists of forty-nine specially commissioned chapters, divided into six thematically arranged parts, written by leading experts in Cognitive Linguistics and/or related areas of enquiry. Each chapter provides a synthesis of a particular issue, topic or area that directly concerns or bears on some aspect of Cognitive Linguistics. As such, each chapter gives an introductory overview of central aspects of the findings, theories and/or methodologies relating to the specific issue or area addressed. The level of complexity and familiarity assumed of linguistics and/or various aspects of Cognitive Linguistics means that the chapters are pitched at the level of the practitioner rather than the neophyte. Hence, the *Handbook* is likely to be less helpful to those hoping for an introductory primer in Cognitive Linguistics, despite the editors' suggestion to the contrary in their introductory article ('Introducing Cognitive Linguistics'). This in no way, however, detracts from the overall achievement of the *Handbook*, which performs an important service to the research community in synthesising and presenting, in bite-sized chunks, ideas relating to many of the key theoretical constructs and a number of the theories that populate Cognitive Linguistics, and phenomena addressed by researchers directly working in Cognitive Linguistics or related areas and disciplines. For introductory overviews more suitable for the neophyte, see Croft & Cruse (2004) or Evans & Green (2006), the latter being the more comprehensive introductory text. Collections of representative examples of primary literature in Cognitive Linguistics can be found, for example, in Evans, Bergen & Zinken (2007).

While the *Handbook* constitutes a significant resource that will be staple reading for all cognitive linguists, as well as those interested in the Cognitive Linguistics enterprise, the book nevertheless, and perhaps inevitably in a work of this scope, manifests several drawbacks. I discuss two below. These relate to (i) its organisation and (ii) its conceptualisation, i.e. the way Cognitive Linguistics is conceived as it emerges through the selection of topics covered and their arrangement. I briefly elaborate on each of these points, before expanding in more detail.

The *Handbook* arguably exhibits something of a lack of balance in its treatment of topics and theories relating to two of the main sub-branches of Cognitive Linguistics: Cognitive Semantics and Cognitive Approaches to Grammar. Overall, there is a greater weighting, in terms of number of chapters and topics selected, given to Cognitive Approaches to Grammar. While this is not in itself problematic, for a volume that aspires to provide full coverage of the enterprise, the *Handbook* is less fully representative than it might otherwise have been. This situation appears to be a consequence of the perspective adopted by the editors in terms of the nature and central concerns of Cognitive Linguistics as an enterprise, as advocated in their introductory chapter, as I discuss later.

Secondly, the structure and organisation of the *Handbook* gives rise to a view of Cognitive Linguistics as being perhaps more dislocated and

fragmented than it actually is. This, I suggest, is due to lacunae in topics treated. In particular, there are no chapters that directly address the key commitments and guiding principles that make a particular account 'cognitive linguistic', as opposed to something else.

For instance, one of the things that a reader might reasonably expect a volume of this size and scope to provide is specific guidance as to what makes Cognitive Linguistics a self-conscious and coherent intellectual, theoretical and methodological enterprise. In short, what is it that makes a given theory or descriptive account cognitive linguistic? As the overwhelming majority of chapters focus much more narrowly on theoretical constructs, phenomena of enquiry or the interrelationships between Cognitive Linguistics and other areas, such a chapter-length characterisation would appear to be indispensable. Yet, apart from a brief section on the theoretical perspective of Cognitive Linguistics in the introductory chapter, the *Handbook* does not provide explicit guidance on this in a way that is easily located. Moreover, the framing of Cognitive Linguistics in the introductory chapter as an enterprise which has 'not yet stabilized into a single uniform theory' (4), and repeated references to this apparent drawback of the enterprise throughout the introduction, potentially give rise to the (incorrect) impression that Cognitive Linguistics is less coherent than it actually is.

For many scholars who self-describe themselves as being cognitive linguists (and I include myself here), one of the strengths of Cognitive Linguistics is exactly that it constitutes an enterprise, consisting of a range of distinct theories and methodologies, rather than being subject to the *ex cathedrâ* pronouncements of a single theoretical authority. What makes something cognitive linguistic concerns a number of shared assumptions and corresponding methodological practices. While these do emerge at various points in the forty-nine chapters in piecemeal fashion, there is no systematic or coherent introduction or overview. One of the central issues that a work such as this might be expected to address is precisely the tenets and guiding assumptions that inform the scholarship of practising cognitive linguists. The reader is left to infer what makes the enterprise a unified intellectual movement from the abbreviated comments in the various chapters which allude to particular assumptions of Cognitive Linguistics, before moving on to the issue being addressed in the chapter. There are two chapters which contrast Cognitive Linguistics with functional and formal (or autonomous) linguistics. And these are helpful. But in reading the *Handbook*, I could not help but wonder if there would not have been benefit in more explicit framing of the range of theoretical constructs, issues and topics covered by the various chapters. This could have been achieved with a chapter (or chapters) addressing the key commitments that characterise any given theory or approach to a particular linguistic and/or conceptual phenomenon as being cognitive linguistic.

The *Handbook* is organised into six substantive parts. Part I, entitled 'Basic concepts', is the longest, with fifteen chapters. This part of the book provides overview articles which address both theory-specific and theory-general constructs, including construal, schematicity, prototype theory, radial categories, frames, idealised cognitive models, domains, metaphor, metonymy, image schemas, mental spaces, conceptual integration and so on. Part I also includes chapters relating to specific theoretical perspectives widely assumed in Cognitive Linguistics, such as experientalism, and also features chapters relating to particular phenomena that have either been widely invoked in cognitive linguistic studies, such as iconicity, or which have received distinctive cognitive linguistic treatments, such as force dynamics and attentional phenomena. In addition, part I also includes a chapter on a specific area of enquiry, spatial semantics, and some of the theoretical constructs and descriptions of that area that are representative of cognitive linguistic accounts.

Part I of the *Handbook* is envisaged, according to the editors, as providing a grounding in the basic concepts of Cognitive Linguistics, which are deployed, in various ways, in later sections of the *Handbook*. Yet, while the individual chapters in this, and indeed other parts of the *Handbook*, are generally written to a consistently high standard, the contents of part I provide a somewhat heterogeneous collection of topics. In particular, it is not entirely clear what the status is of the various topics qua 'basic concepts'. While some of the chapters in part I clearly address theoretical constructs that have the status of being 'basic', in the sense of foundational within one or more specific theories in Cognitive Linguistics, others are not 'basic' in this sense. For instance, Leonard Talmy's and Jordan Zlatev's chapters on 'Attentional phenomena' and 'Spatial semantics' provide cognitive linguistic characterisations of these areas, and might have fitted better elsewhere in the *Handbook*, for instance, in a part entitled 'Semantic and conceptual phenomena' – although no such part actually exists in the *Handbook* as it stands. Another example concerns the first chapter in part I, by Tim Rohrer, which deals with 'Embodiment and experientialism'. There is no dispute as to the importance of the issues addressed in this chapter, which imbues Cognitive Linguistics, in part, with its distinctive flavour and perspective. The perspective taken by cognitive linguists on the relationship between embodiment, knowledge representation and socio-physical experience has given rise to a perspective known as Experiential Realism (see Lakoff & Johnson 1980, Lakoff 1987). This is a philosophical perspective which engenders a worldview, rather than being a theoretical construct in the same way that notions such as domain, frame, idealised cognitive model and so on are theoretical constructs.

The foundational theoretical constructs are moreover addressed unevenly. For instance, the theoretical constructs of schematicity and entrenchment, both central to Langacker's Cognitive Grammar, each receive chapter-length

treatments. However, the theoretical construct of the domain, which is arguably just as central to Langacker's theory, is treated in a chapter alongside the theoretical constructs of semantic frame and idealised cognitive model (each associated with theories developed by Charles Fillmore and George Lakoff, respectively). The related but distinct construct of the domain is also central to Conceptual Metaphor Theory but is not treated at all in the same chapter, beyond being mentioned. Other basic theoretical constructs, notably the notion of the symbolic unit or construction, central to a number of cognitive theories of grammar, are not treated at all in part I.

Part I appears to be an attempt to address both foundational theoretical constructs and foundational theoretical and ideological perspectives. Yet the result is something of a mishmash. The *Handbook* might have benefitted from an additional part, perhaps entitled something like 'The cognitive linguistic worldview'. A chapter on the guiding principles of Cognitive Linguistics (see Croft & Cruse 2004, and Evans & Green 2006 for a discussion of these) could have gone here, as could the chapter on embodiment and experientialism. In addition, a chapter on the Encyclopaedic Semantics perspective, which, perhaps surprisingly given its centrality for Cognitive Lexical Semantics, is not otherwise represented, could have also been featured here.

The further advantage of this approach would have been to present Cognitive Linguistics as being less dislocated than it may otherwise be perceived as being – an issue to which I return below. Apart from the two chapters in part III ('Situating Cognitive Linguistics') which compare Cognitive Linguistics with functional linguistics and autonomous linguistics, there is not a dedicated part or chapter which defines Cognitive Linguistics in its own terms independently of a comparative foil. The danger, of course, of providing chapters that define an enterprise in terms of something else – which is to say, without first defining the assumptions and worldview of the enterprise in its own terms – is that the enterprise may be perceived by some readers as being more reaction than substance. While the development of early versions of some of the earliest theories that populate Cognitive Linguistics was, in part, motivated in reaction to the prevailing trends in linguistics and philosophy up to the 1970s, Cognitive Linguistics quickly developed into a self-defined and self-sustaining movement with real theoretical and methodological substance.

Part II of the *Handbook* is entitled 'Models of grammar' and consists of three chapters. These address, respectively, 'Cognitive grammar' (written by Ronald W. Langacker), 'Construction grammar' (written by William Croft), and 'Word grammar' (written by Richard Hudson). The second of these three chapters in fact deals with a number of theories, there being a number of distinct theories of Construction Grammar, which have had differential levels of influence within Cognitive Linguistics. These distinct theories include what we might refer to, following Goldberg (2006), as Unification

Construction Grammar (e.g. Fillmore, Kay & O'Connor 1988), Radical Construction Grammar (Croft 2002), and Cognitive Construction Grammar (Lakoff 1987; Goldberg 1995, 2006). Langacker's Cognitive Grammar is also constructionist in that Langacker adopts the symbolic thesis – the view that the mental grammar is comprised solely of symbolic assemblies of form and meaning – as a central principle of grammar (see Evans & Green 2006 for discussion). Much of the chapter on Construction Grammar provides arguments for a constructional perspective, detailing the nature of the construction qua symbolic assembly of form and meaning. This discussion might have been more usefully assigned its own chapter in part I, along with other basic concepts: the symbolic assembly/construction is surely one of the foundational concepts in Cognitive Linguistics. Such a reorganisation would have freed up space to address specific models of Construction Grammar in chapter-length treatments. The most important, in terms of influence, is Cognitive Construction Grammar, developed initially by Lakoff (1987) and famously by Goldberg in two more recent monographs (1995, 2006). While the chapter on Word Grammar by Richard Hudson is useful – his theory is consonant with the guiding assumptions of Cognitive Linguistics, and complements other cognitive linguistic theories of grammar in various ways – Hudson's model cannot claim the same influence as other cognitive linguistic models of grammar. Nor has it had anything like the impact of Cognitive Construction Grammar, for instance, in terms of facilitating the development of aspects of Cognitive Linguistics, notably the cognitive perspective on language acquisition. For this reason, the space might have been better deployed by assigning Goldberg's theory of Construction Grammar greater prominence in the form of its own chapter.

One of the peculiarities of the *Handbook*, in terms of organisation, is that far more space is given to Cognitive Approaches to Grammar than other areas of the enterprise. For instance, while part II addresses cognitive models of grammar, there is no corresponding section of the *Handbook* that addresses models of Cognitive Semantics. A number of extremely influential cognitive semantic theories exist, including Conceptual Metaphor Theory, Mental Spaces Theory, and Conceptual Integration (or Blending) Theory. There are also more recent cognitive semantic theories including Principled Polysemy (Tyler & Evans 2003, Evans 2004) and the Theory of Lexical Concepts and Cognitive Models (Evans, to appear), although articles in the *Handbook* were commissioned before research in these approaches was well developed or well known. While there are chapters in part I that do indeed address metaphor, mental spaces and conceptual integration, the focus of these chapters is primarily on the theoretical constructs rather than on the theoretical architectures themselves. Moreover, Joseph E. Grady's chapter on 'Metaphor' deals, in part, with how the construct of conceptual metaphor is interpreted in two distinct cognitive semantic theories: Conceptual Metaphor Theory versus Conceptual Integration Theory. The lack of

balance between sub-branches of Cognitive Linguistics is all the more apparent as part I features several chapters which address key theoretical constructs from Cognitive Grammar, which additionally receives a chapter-length theoretical overview in part II. While Cognitive Grammar is arguably the best developed, and probably the hitherto most influential model of language in Cognitive Linguistics, Conceptual Metaphor Theory has been no less influential as a linguistically-informed model of conceptual structure. And outside Cognitive Linguistics, Conceptual Metaphor Theory arguably has a far greater sphere of influence. In addition, Conceptual Metaphor Theory has significant internal theoretical sophistication and has undergone various revisions, including the development and subsequent abandonment of the Invariance Principle, which was superseded by positing different levels of metaphor, including a superschematic level (what is known as primary metaphor; see, for example, Lakoff & Johnson 1999).

As noted above, the lack of even-handedness in the space allocated to Cognitive Semantics versus Cognitive Approaches to Grammar can perhaps in part be attributed to the position that the editors appear to take on what Cognitive Linguistics, as an enterprise, studies, and hence what the central concerns of the enterprise are. In their introductory article, the editors argue that the subject matter of Cognitive Linguistics is the study of language, albeit informed by the cognitive and generalisation commitments discussed above – although they do not use these specific terms. Yet, while cognitive linguists do indeed study language for its own sake, as do other linguists who take a different perspective on how language is constituted and hence how it should be studied, cognitive linguists have sought to deploy language as a key methodological tool for studying otherwise hidden aspects of the mind. Indeed, as pointed out by Croft (2002), the semantic structure evident from the study of language provides a more powerful and revealing means of studying the conceptual organisation of the mind than the most powerful brain-imaging techniques presently available. That is, what is distinctive about that sub-branch of Cognitive Linguistics known as Cognitive Semantics is that it views language as a lens whereby aspects of conceptual structure can be directly investigated. This is a key feature of research conducted by Lakoff & Johnson (1980, 1999), Fauconnier (1985), Fauconnier & Turner (2002) and Evans (2004, to appear), among others.

The lack of even-handedness is also apparent in terms of the topics treated in part IV of the *Handbook*. Part IV, which consists of thirteen chapters, is entitled 'Linguistic structure and language use'. According to the editors, this section is meant to exemplify the specific areas that cognitive linguists study, deploying the basic constructs introduced in part I and making use of the theoretical architectures covered in part II. Unsurprisingly then, the vast majority of these chapters relate to grammatical topics and phenomena. For instance, topics covered include inflectional morphology, word formation,

nominal classification, relational constructions, grammatical voice, tense and aspect, and pronominal anaphora. These are all important topics and, with the possible exception of inflectional morphology, have received distinctive treatments in Cognitive Linguistics. Moreover, part IV additionally includes programmatic chapters on 'Phonology' (by Geoff Nathan) and 'Discourse and text structure' (by Ted Sanders & Wilbert Spooren), topics which have received relatively less treatment in Cognitive Linguistics. In including chapters on these two topics, the *Handbook* provides an important service by allowing leading experts to outline the ways in which Cognitive Linguistics may be able to contribute to research in these areas.

Nevertheless, many of the phenomena studied by cognitive linguists are conceptual rather than purely linguistic in nature. The study of referential shifts in viewpoint during discourse, and the compression of vital relations in meaning construction involve cognitive linguistic study of conceptual rather than purely grammatical phenomena. The study of fictive motion, the encyclopaedic nature of meaning, metonymic sources of typicality effects, the role of metonymy in meaning construction and language use, the protean nature of word meaning, the influence of context on word meaning, the voluminous literature that addresses the range of arenas of metaphoric study (relating to topics such as event structure, emotion, time, and the role of metaphor and metonymy in semantic change) are not apparent. In short, the balance of topics selected for coverage privileges those that relate, primarily, to linguistic structure and organisation, without also addressing some of the conceptual/semantic phenomena that have arguably received just as much attention during the development of Cognitive Linguistics as an enterprise.

In certain respects, this serves, in my view, to misrepresent the concerns of the enterprise. While cognitive linguists have always been concerned with language structure and use, one of the notable achievements of the Cognitive Linguistics enterprise has been to refocus and enlarge the purview of language science to include the intersection and interaction of language and cognitive structure and function, especially the embodied basis of meaning and the role of the human imagination in meaning construction. Language both reflects and transforms conceptual structure, and cognitive linguists have been in the vanguard in employing language in order to model conceptual structure and conceptualisation. In particular, this has been the primary focus and indeed the impulse behind research in the Conceptual Metaphor and the Conceptual Blending traditions – two traditions whose importance is arguably under-represented in the book, based on the space allocated, as compared, for example, with the space allocated to research in the tradition of Cognitive Grammar.

An important issue that arises in regard to the foregoing concerns the picture of Cognitive Linguistics that emerges. One of the challenges for a volume of this sort is to convey the breadth of the enterprise, as reflected by its coverage, while also illuminating what makes Cognitive Linguistics a

unified and coherent perspective, so that there should exist a handbook of Cognitive Linguistics at all. In their introductory chapter, the editors tell us that 'Cognitive Linguistics has not yet stabilized into a single uniform theory' (4). The consequence of this appears to be that

> the absence of a single unified theoretical doctrine means that a handbook of this type cannot simply start off with an exposé on the architecture of Cognitive Linguistics as a theory. (9)

This then sets the scene for the editors' attempt, 'in the course of compiling and editing the *Handbook*, not to make the enterprise of Cognitive Linguistics look more unified than it actually is' (18). The problem is that the enterprise of Cognitive Linguistics is, to my mind, in fact more unified (or at least more coherent) than it appears to be, based on the way the *Handbook* has been conceived and organised. And in having an apparent intellectual chip on their shoulder, so to speak, about coherence and stability, the editors' deliberate attempt to waive their right to present Cognitive Linguistics as 'more unified than it actually is' leads potentially to the incorrect impression that (i) there is somewhat less coherence than there actually is, and (ii) Cognitive Linguistics is 'not a unified and stabilized body of knowledge'. Yet, in key respects, Cognitive Linguistics is exactly this: a unified (in the sense of coherent) and stabilised body of knowledge. What distinguishes, for instance, Fillmore's version of Construction Grammar from Goldberg's is that it does not take a thoroughgoing usage-based perspective and does not subscribe to both of the guiding assumptions that make a given theory a cognitive linguistic theory of grammar: the symbolic thesis and the usage-based thesis (see Evans & Green 2006).

Moreover, without seeking to undermine the need for stability or the value of individual theories, I suggest that Cognitive Linguistics would lose aspects of its richness, its diversity and its appeal if it were to stabilise into a single theory. What makes Cognitive Linguistics distinctive is that it is united by a common set of core assumptions, which serve to render the individual theories that populate Cognitive Linguistics all the more powerful by virtue of cohering in a unified worldview.

That all said, the treatment in the *Handbook* of the relationship between Cognitive Linguistics and other areas of enquiry, i.e. its 'borderland', is exceptional. Part III, 'Situating cognitive linguistics', consists of three chapters. One of the chapters addresses the historical antecedents of Cognitive Linguistics, while the remaining two address the relationship between various types of functional linguistics and formal or autonomous (in particular Chomskyan) linguistics.

Part V, entitled 'Linguistic variation and change', includes chapters on diachronic linguistics, linguistic relativity, anthropological linguistics, linguistic typology, first language acquisition and signed languages. Each of

the chapters in this section is to be commended on showing, in various ways, either the influence of Cognitive Linguistics on aspects of the areas in question and/or the interconnection between ideas from Cognitive Linguistics and the given phenomena. Part V is thus concerned with the relationship between Cognitive Linguistics and sub-domains of research within linguistics as a discipline.

The final section of the book, part VI, is entitled 'Applied and interdisciplinary perspectives' and features some excellent and highly enlightening chapters. This part of the book is concerned both with applications of Cognitive Linguistics, including second-language learning, dictionary writing and culture, and with the interface between Cognitive Linguistics and related and cognate disciplines, such as literature, cultural studies, philosophy, psychology and cognitive science.

Overall, the *Handbook* is an important and impressive contribution to the field. It will, I have no doubt, be required reading for all practising cognitive linguists, and will prove to be an extremely useful resource for those less well acquainted who wish to gain further insight into the Cognitive Linguistics enterprise. On balance, the editors are to be congratulated on having provided the research community with such a resource.

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Bernd Heine & Derek Nurse (eds.), *A linguistic geography of Africa* (Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2008. Pp. xviii + 371.

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Published as part of the Cambridge Approaches to Language Contact series, Bernd Heine & Derek Nurse's (henceforth H&N) latest edited volume at first glance promises to make an important contribution to the field of language contact and areal linguistics in Africa; it is a data-driven volume written by experienced Africanists with expertise spanning the continent. However, despite the anticipated quality of the volume's authorship, the articles vary greatly in terms of their focus on language contact, their methodological rigour and their originality. Given this fact, each contribution is best considered in terms of its individual merit. The empirically rigorous chapters will appeal to those concerned with developing theories of language contact based on evidence for contact-induced change, while other chapters exhibit a more impressionistic approach to 'areal' data from across the continent.

In the 'Introduction' in chapter 1, H&N introduce the field of study with some brief comments on the nature of language contact and the objective of the book – which is to consider perspectives on Africa (or significant portions of Africa) as a macro-linguistic area – before providing an overview of the contents of each chapter. Chapters 2–4 concern Africa as a continental areal-typological unit; chapters 5–7 present evidence for some smaller linguistic areas within Africa; chapters 8 and 9 each consider a specific typological feature within an areal context.