As Michael T. Putnam and B. Richard Page's excellent handbook of Germanic linguistics covers seemingly all of Germanic linguistics from phonology to pragmatics in one thousand pages, in order to focus on what is likely of most interest to H-TGS readers, I have opted to only review part 5, which is my area of expertise. However, the other sections not covered here (part 1: "Phonology," part 2: "Morphology and Agreement Systems," part 3: "Syntax," and part 4: "Semantics and Pragmatics") are surely also a valuable resource for scholars and researchers in other areas of linguistics and Germanic studies.

Part 5 of this volume, “Language Contact and Nonstandard Varieties” (chapters 29-35), begins with Carrie Jackson’s entry, “Second Language Acquisition of Germanic Languages.” This chapter discusses the prospect of adult learners' ability to attain native-like L2 proficiency, including differences in L1 and L2 speakers' underlying mechanisms in this pursuit. The chapter examines learner constraints in acquiring word order in German and Dutch. Jackson invokes processability theory to describe stages of word order development.[1] Ultimately, Jackson indicates that one-third of learners in this study did not respond beyond the “Basic Variety,” though this work shows the interplay of psycholinguistic research in making advances in the debate of the role of L2 linguistics representation and “real-time processing of L2 input” in interactions, pedagogy, and age of acquisition (pp. 691-92, 706).

Pia Quist and Bente A. Sevendsen’s “Urban Speech Styles of Germanic Languages” (chapter 30) presents a sociolinguistic examination of Scandinavian speech styles in multilingual neighborhoods, with a focus on young people with and without migration backgrounds. The authors present evidence for “contemporary urban vernaculars” as fully valid varieties that are still developing and argue that similar trends are exhibited not only in Scandinavian languages (here: Swedish, Danish, and Norwegian) but also in so-called urban dialects in Germany (e.g., Kiezdeutsch) (p. 714). While the varieties discussed have variable marked forms and phonetic
variation, there is no current evidence for leveling. A commonality in these varieties, likely due to similar migration backgrounds and comingling of communities, is the usage of Arabic and Turkish discourse markers. The authors also discuss community perception and social status, pointing toward evidence of age-based change, as well as the recognition of features of these varieties by both in- and out-groups.

In chapter 31, “The West Germanic Dialect Continuum,” William D. Keel presents an excellent and in-depth overview of major sociohistorical dialect trends in West Germanic. This chapter offers accessible overviews of major trends in phonology/phonetics, morphology, and syntax, as well as lexical variances across German(ic) languages and dialects. The inclusion of Frisian here is also of note. In closing, Keel notes adeptly that linguistic variation is a “truly never-ending story” (p. 759).

In chapter 32, “The North Germanic Dialect Continuum,” Charlotte Gooskens examines sociohistorical circumstances around primarily “Scandinavian” languages by expanding on the concept of the Scandinavian language continuum. In this way, Gooskens classifies Icelandic and Faroese as “Insular Nordic,” Norwegian and Swedish as “North Scandinavian,” and Danish as “Southern Scandinavian.” Gooskens also notes importantly that modern Icelandic only exhibits “very minor” dialectal differences and that Faroese stands apart in that it was only a spoken language until the mid-nineteenth century. These languages can be further subclassified as Ausbau or Abstand languages from one common origin. The largest differences between Norwegian, Swedish, and Danish are thus phonetic, yet these three languages are largely mutually intelligible today and historically (dating back to the Hanseatic League).[2]

Janne Bondi Johannessen and Putnam’s entry, “Heritage Languages in North America” (chapter 33), discusses the “primarily moribund” Norwegian—specifically Trøndsk—and German languages in the Midwest (and elsewhere) in North America. Major points of discussion in this entry are highlights of phonology, morphology, and morphosyntax in these varieties, as well as attrition and the “comparison fallacy” between monolingual and bilingual learners’ language acquisition and usage (pp. 783–84). Among the German offshoots discussed in this chapter are Pennsylvania Dutch (for more, see chapter 34 in this volume), Volga German, and Missionero German. The research presented here adds to the data we have from these mostly moribund languages and continues the important discussion of “incomplete acquisition” in learners of heritage Germanic languages.

In chapter 34, “Minority Germanic Languages,” Mark L. Louden examines the complexity of classification and typology of minority Germanic languages and “ethnolinguistic identities” as listed in Ethnologue, the comprehensive list of all the world’s languages and their statuses.[3] This results in the author grouping twenty-one Germanic minority languages, based on political and geospatial proximity (see table 31.4, p. 814). Much of the chapter is dedicated to detailing the subcategories in minority Germanic language typology; this includes addressing geographically disparate languages, such as Mócheno, Cimbrian, and Wymors orys, which Louden notes is the most “severely endangered language” discussed in this chapter (see table 34.2 for more on endangered status and language health, p. 827) (p. 816). In noting Old Order Mennonites and Hutterites as the fastest growing groups on the planet, Louden details that “maintenance from below” in modern society is evidenced by the growth seen in Amish, Mennonite, Hutterite, and Haredi communities.

Paul T. Roberge’s “Germanic Contact Languages” (chapter 35) examines contact languages per Sarah G. Thomason as new languages that arise from contact situations. Roberge details differences in pidgins (and extended pidgins, including Russenorsk), creoles (e.g., Pacific/Atlantic creoles and Dutch creoles), bilingual mixed lan-
languages (including Gurindji Kriol), and “non-canonical contact languages” (semi creoles like African Indian English) (p. 856). Roberge concludes that all languages are mixed, since all languages contain elements of “diverse, historical origin” (p. 858).

Part 5 of this volume provides new and meaningful sociohistorical contributions to the field. Linguists and language learners will benefit from the breadth and depth of scholarship in this volume, as well as the inclusion of entries focused on new Scandinavian dialects and endangered heritage languages across the globe. As with other parts of the volume, this part will function as a fantastic resource for advanced graduate students and faculty in linguistics and Germanic studies alike.

Notes


[2]. For more on this, see Kurt Braunmüller, "Semi-communication and Beyond: Some Results of the Hamburg Hanseatic Project (1990–1995)," Contact between Low German and Scandinavian in the Late Middle Ages 25 (2012): 95–111.


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