Journal of Northern Studies

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What Makes a Grammar a Modern Grammar? Review of Mikael Svonni, *Modern nordsamisk grammatik*, Kiruna: Ravda Lágádus, 2018, ISBN 9789198279634, 308 pp.

Introduction

North Sami, by any means the most and probably best researched of the Sami languages, occupies a special, if not unique, role because its traditional core area stretches over three countries. Although Sami discourse often downplays the role of national borders because family relations can cross national borders (especially for those whose languages are spoken in more than one country), North Sami is certainly split by a major linguistic border: individual national languages—Continental Scandinavian (bokmål, nynorsk, Swedish) and Finnish—are known obstacles in North Sami language pedagogy, research and last, but, not least grammaticography. Whereas Latin grammar served as *tertium comparationis* for early Sami grammaticography, this was replaced by a mixed Finnish/Latin perspective in the nineteenth century to which a Continental Scandinavian perspective was added in the later part of the twentieth century, especially in Norway and Sweden (though for obvious reasons not in Russia). Even though the role of Finnish/Finnic in Sami studies has changed significantly and is certainly less prominent today, Finnish/Finnic remains a valid tertium comparationis. Nevertheless, the relationship of Sami linguistics and Finnish/Finnic linguistics outside Finland is probably best characterized as uneasy.

Due to the fact that the majority of North Sami speakers reside in Norway, it does not come as a surprise that most of the pedagogical materials, including concise reference grammars, have been produced there (e.g., Nickel [1990] 1994; Nickel & Sammallahti 2011). With the publication of Mikael Svonni's Modern North Sami Grammar, the first comprehensive pedagogically oriented grammar of North Sami published in Swedish has finally become available.[1] For this, the Swedish-speaking learner of North Sami and a North Sami from Sweden are certainly thankful—an existing gap has finally been closed.[2]

Grammars and their Users

The preface of *Modern nordsamisk grammatik* (pp. 5–6) sketches the emergence and the target audience of this grammar. The grammar is tightly connected to Svonni's "Introduction to North Sami linguistics" (2015), but a different book written for a different audience. Nevertheless, the overlap is extensive and remains visible on almost every page.[3] As Svonni himself mentions, the grammar is the result of 25 years of teaching and research; this means that work on this grammar was started after the publication of the first edition of Nickel's grammar, but before the appearance of its revised edition (Nickel [1990] 1994). Svonni's grammar is targeting university students and to a lesser degree high school students and language professionals, but likewise linguists interested in North Sami (p. 6). The place of this reference grammar is therefore in North Sami philology/linguistics and/or Sami studies. The grammars by Nickel ([1990] 1994) and Nickel & Sammallahti (2011) were also compiled for a similar audience. This point needs to be

emphasized, because North Sami is still taught and studied outside Sápmi, e.g., within Finnic and Finno-Ugric Departments and occasionally even in Departments of Scandinavian Studies which have a somewhat different perspective on the language. Svonni's approach to cover North Sami "on its own" is certainly justified, because the need of grammatical materials for language learning within the context of native pedagogy as well as language revitalization remains a critical task, even for the biggest of all Sami languages.

When Metalanguages Clash

From the perspective of the language learner with a Continental Scandinavian linguistic background who has been educated in Continental Scandinavian grammar and may have learned two or more Indo-European languages as foreign languages during secondary education (e.g., English, French, Spanish, German), virtually everything in the context of Sami grammar is unfamiliar: agglutinative morphology,[4] consonant gradation, case, attributive versus predicative forms of adjectives, the lack of a transitive verb of possession, postpositions, verbal agreement markers just to name a few. For the language learner from Finland or with a background in Finnish or more general Finnic, most of these categories are unproblematic.[5] Although this observation is indeed trivial, the role of Finnish and Finnish grammaticography for Sami studies is often considered as a burden from which Sami linguistics must free itself. It is of course true that the historical-comparative perspective which has occasionally overemphasized the role and importance of Finnish has left traces; after all, insights from historical grammar (e.g., that most Sami cases are cognates of similar cases in Finnish/Finnic) cannot be converted into synchronic, let alone grammaticographic, arguments. Nevertheless, Finnish and in fact Finnic, remain a valid tertium comparationis because the historical proximity between Samic and Finnic implies typological proximity as well. However, this certainly does not mean that the use of similar labels would imply similar functions, nor that North Sami, or Sami grammaticography, in general, should be degraded to a kind of "comparative grammar" with Finnish as the preferred or only point of reference. This perhaps naive excursion becomes, unfortunately, quickly relevant in the context of Svonni's grammar. The central and most controversial innovation of Svonni's grammar is a new classification of the spatial case system of North Sami (Svonni 2015: 43–45, 52–56; Svonni 2018: 44–47). Svonni has broken with earlier grammaticographic traditions (he explicitly refers to Finnish grammaticography in this context) and postulates new case labels and partly new functions. What Svonni has overlooked is that case labels should be motivated based on their primary function, and not via "potential problems" which similar Finnish case labels could imply.[6] The overall motivation to break with grammaticographic traditions is Svonni's interpretation that spatial cases in North Sami encode in one "internal" spatial case series what Finnish does with two case series; this approach is certainly new for the reviewer, but Svonni claims that, this interpretation would derive from Bo Wickman's teachings in the context of a lecture on Sami language history (sic!) in Uppsala in 1984. This footnote remains the only reference in this section; any reference to published accounts are missing. Svonni also assures the reader that his new classification is more adequate because it would "follow contemporary linguistic terminology," but a reference is missing here as well. Even though the reviewer understands Svonni's attempt to separate North Sami grammaticography from the influence of Finnish grammaticography, the spatial case system is perhaps not the best candidate to start with when the other language of comparison available is Continental Scandinavian. Interestingly, and a bit

ironic in this context, Svonni decides to postulate separate genitive and accusative cases (pp. 53–57), which are motivated in the same "historicizing Finnish approach" (with a historical-comparative footnote on South Sami!), but several pages later this approach is considered unsuitable for the spatial cases. In the following, I will subsume a number of examples which show why the proposed re-classification stands in sharp contrast with the new proposed labels. First, I will have a look at the illative case which has become an allative case in Svonni's grammar. The prototypical semantic difference between an allative case and an illative case, as the Latin label suggests, lies in the encoding of movement in relation to the point of reference (INTO vs. ON TOP). Whereas the allative prototypically encodes movement above/on top/upon a surface (e.g., to put a book on a box), the illative prototypically encodes movement into/inside (e.g., to put a book into a box). When looking at the examples provided by Svonni (2018: 58–59), the prototypical examples encode INTO and not UPON/ON TOP. This does not mean that an interpretation on top would be impossible, but this is nevertheless far from being the prototypical use of this case: *Galgá ballat iđđesárrat go vuolgá meahccái leago vuojáhallan vai leatgo dál beassan sisa áiddiid gaskkii*. 'One has to fear early in the morning, when going into the forest, whether (a reindeer) has been driven over or whether they (=reindeer) got into (=the railway corridor) between the fences' (Sameradion).[7] As reference grammars are required to cover prototypical functions first and secondary extensions later, the proposed new classification is misleading. Whereas the illative can be paraphrased with a postposition such as *sisa*, as seen in the example above, the prototypical encoding of the concept ON TOP remains the task of the postposition *alde* and its illative case-marked form *ala: Mii leat olles áiggi figgan oažžut ráđđádallamiid ja ođđa evttohusaid beavddi ala*. 'We have tried many times to get negotiations and new proposals on the table' (Yle Sápmi). Finally, as for the functions of the illative, this section does not mention the encoding of the agent of adversative passives with *-hallat*. This is at least mentioned in the grammar later (Svonni 2018: 209) but without any cross-reference between the two sections, which would be required.

Turning to the locative case (whose label is the only one which as such remains unproblematic), its coverage (Svonni 2018: 60–62) contains two major shortcomings. First, the locative case encodes, as its name suggests, a general location, but not prototypically ON TOP, which the following pair of examples demonstrate: *Mii leat sápmelaččat*, *geat leat bivdán min jogas*, *nu go leat čuđiid jagiid dahkan ovdal dán*. 'We are Samis who have been fishing in our river, so as Samis have been doing this for hundreds of years before' (Yle Sápmi). *Gáva-Ilmár ja Gáva-Ilmár Raine loaktiba joga alde oppa geasi*. 'Ilmari and Raine Tapiola spend the whole summer on the river' (Yle Sápmi). In this context, another grammaticographic shortcoming needs to be mentioned. Svonni covers only the locative's function encoding location in space, for which two examples were reserved. The metaphorical extension that the locative can express location in time as well is not mentioned in this section where it actually requires mentioning:[8] *Eanodaga gielda ja Sámediggi čoahkkanit oktii jagis ovttasbargočoahkkimii*. 'The parish of Enontekiö and the Sami Parliament meet once a year [lit: in a year] for a joint session' (Yle Sápmi); *Oktii mánus deaivvadit Jiellevári vuorrasat boradit ja ságastallat sámi čoahkkananbáikkis Valljes* ...'Once a month [lit: in a month], the elder Gällivare Samis meet in order to eat and chat in Sami at Vallje community center...' (Sameradion). The remaining four examples in this section sketch the role of the locative for the encoding of possession, but again, a number of grammatical properties which should be mentioned in a pedagogical grammar remain uncovered. Whereas a regular locative marked noun phrase can be fronted

(though requiring extra stress and perhaps some additional discourse particles) *Gávppis mii oastit biepmu* 'In the shop we buy food,' the locative marked possessor is bound to initial position: *Máhtes lea beana* 'Mattias has a dog' (Svonni 2018: 61). Switching constituents to *Lea beana Máhtes.* 'A dog has Mattias' would hardly be grammatical (even with heavy stress). Finally, regardless of Svonni's approach to discard the possessive function and replace it with a new term "locative of disposal" (Swe: *dispositionslokativ*), his idea that this locative-of-disposal-construction encodes a kind of temporary possessive relation remains questionable. In the following example with an inanimate possessor, the possessive relation is permanent: *Biillas lea manuálala giirakássa, njealljejuvllatgeassi ja dieselmohtor* 'The car has stick shift, all-wheel-drive and a diesel engine.'[9]

As for Svonni's decision to split the traditional locative case into two cases, locative and ablative, with one homonym case marker, this solution is perhaps suitable from the perspective of language learning, but has no linguistic reality—neither in synchrony nor in diachrony. From a diachronic perspective, it is well-known (and shortly mentioned by Svonni) that the two former independent cases locative and elative have fallen together in North Sami and beyond (see e.g., Korhonen 1981: 223–224).[10] The postulation of a tripartite system in North Sami, which as such is attested in South, Ume, Pite and Lule Sami would of course make North Sami appear closer to its southern relatives, but the point of reference requires the postulation of two separate cases (locative and elative) which cannot be distinguished by morphological means at all. In the Sami languages to the south, the function to form mapping is synchronically and diachronically unproblematic as distinctive case morphology exists. For convenience, this is exemplified with data from Ume Sami around Arvidsjaur (Siegl 2017*a*: 273–274): *tsākij sēbiuv prütnaj* 'And (he) put his tail into the ice hole' (illative *-j ~ -je)*; *riebbie biessij ja etnij gaihkide del bierguide jugo lin datne lüöptesne.* 'The fox got inside and got all the meats which were in that njalla' (inessive *-sne*); *die suoladij gūlijde almatjijste* 'And he stole fish from the man' (elative *-sta ~ -ste)*. Summing up, the overall benefit of reclassifying the illative case as allative case and splitting the locative case into two separate cases remain unconvincing and unmotivated, even without taking Finnish as tertium comparationis. Therefore, the allative remains better to be covered as illative and if a case encoding separation/movement should really be required for pedagogical reasons, a more appropriate case-label is indeed elative (movement from inside): *Bensiinna dahje eará boaldámušaid biila ii geavat ollege, buot johtinfámu oažžu elrávnnjis* 'Gasoline or other kinds of fossil fuel the car does not require at all, all its power it gets from electricity' (Yle Sápmi).

Grammaticography, Linguistic Theories and Endangered Languages

A reoccurring concern in the discussions focusing on grammaticography in the context of endangered languages is the role and place of linguistic theories for grammar writing (e.g., Mosel 2006; Rice 2006; Genetti 2014). A major argument brought forward in this discussion has obvious parallels in North Sami grammaticography—a comprehensive grammar can remain valuable and relevant for a long time, an argument which applies without any doubts to Nielsen's grammar (Nielsen 1926–1929). The ultimate reason why Nielsen's grammar has remained "readable" and "comprehensible" is its design, because it was based on a fairly traditional concept of grammaticography. A similar, theory-low[11] approach is propagated in functionally-based approaches to endangered languages. As this review article is not the place to reproduce this discussion, its central concerns are the following: first, grammatical theories are scientific trends. A grammar cast into a specific analytical framework may become incomprehensible quickly, especially if the

theory develops, fails or is altered to such an extent that grammar reading three decades later requires a comprehensive research-historic background which cannot be expected or taken for granted by followers of the theory, let alone outsiders.[12] Second, grammar writing is certainly a marginal genre in linguistic writing because it requires a fairly comprehensive approach to language and skills, starting with phonology and ending in semantics/pragmatics, which in days of ongoing specialization cannot be taken for granted (e.g., Mosel 2006).[13] Third, endangered languages have few researchers at their disposal and the "life expectancy" of a grammar of an endangered language is by definition much longer, which a look at the history of North Sami grammaticography easily proves.[14]

As Svonni (2018) has stated in the preface, his grammar is a reworked version of Svonni (2015), which was written in a generative framework (fortunately not incorporating the most recent trends) based on his lecture manuscripts. But even a superficial look quickly reveals that quite a few generative concepts have found their way into the pedagogical grammar, such as "thematic roles," "phi-features," "VP," "ergative verbs," "small clauses." Whether such concepts should be incorporated into the analytical framework of a pedagogical grammar is a controversial question. In most instances where such terminology is used, Svonni offers at least a short explanation and further references to contemporary general linguistic textbooks. Presumably, the generative framework on which the grammar is based is also responsible for the adjective 'modern' in its title; the header is otherwise not motivated.[15] However, it is a bit surprising that the grammar's structure and the major linguistic terminology of this grammar are otherwise rather traditional, relying on concepts such as supines, gerunds, auxiliary (Swe: *hjälpverb*) or surprisingly "old-fashioned" and indeed misleading terminology such as "verbgenitiv" or a newly coined category "verbessiv," labels mixing morphological concepts belonging to different parts of speech merged into a terminus technicus which can only be motivated diachronically. The terminological imprecision of this label is that it is not the verb which is marked, but its nominalized form. As for the overall structure of the section focusing on infinite verb forms, a morphologically centered approach should cover forms belonging morphologically together in the same section. Svonni's decision to cover the past participle after the infinitive and the present tense participle much later is morphologically unmotivated. In the remainder of this section, I will approach the controversial topic "ergative verb" (pp. 173–175). Even though this is but a minor section in the grammar and a minor category, its theoretical impact is certainly not trivial. In Swedish generative syntax, "ergative verbs" (in English generative syntax more often referred to as unaccusatives) is a class of verbs which allows both intransitive and transitive use e.g., 'to melt' (Platzack 1998: 118): *Isen smälte* 'The ice melted' vs. *Solen smälte isen.* 'The sun melted the ice'. Its translational equivalent *suddat* 'to melt' is also discussed by Svonni (2018: 173–174) in this context: *Muohta suttai* 'The snow melted.' What makes the comparison between Swedish intransitive *smälta* and North Sami *suddat* futile is the fact that the verb in North Sami undergoes causativization (and thereby transitivization) and becomes *suddadit* 'to melt' (transitive); furthermore, this is indeed the regular causative, but not an "ergative verb ending" which is discussed in this section; conspicuously, Svonni mentions the causative form, but does not offer a clausal example, although such can be found without problems: *Stuora osiin Norggas leat lieggagrádat leamaš mannan vahkkoloahpa, mii suddadii muohttaga ja ráhkadii sovlliid.* 'In most parts of Norway, the temperature had been above 0° last weekend, which melted the snow and created slush' (online *Ávvir* 25 April 2019). The text continues with several diagnostic tests employed in generative syntax, which as such are not really expected in a pedagogically oriented reference grammar and are out

of place. For example, *suddat* lacks a passive form which is actually expected, because intransitive verbs cannot be passivized in North Sami. Why *suddat* should be called ergative/unaccusative although its transitive counterpart is in fact a regular causative[16] [17] and why a group of verbs in North Sami should possess a set of "ergative verb endings" remains unclear. It is highly appreciated that Svonni covers derivational morphology in depth (pp. 156–189), for which language learners will be thankful. On the other side, the practicality of a generative label deriving from Germanic generative syntax, which in its original sense cannot even be applied to North Sami, is dubious. When approaching the label "ergative" from the perspective of typology, the pair *suddat/suddadit* cannot be ergative either. Causativization of *suddat* results in transitivization and the subject *muohta* becomes the object *muohttaga*, all following the standard nominative-accusative case marking pattern of Sami. In prototypical ergative languages such as Chukchi (a Siberian isolate), ergativity results in a different case marking pattern where the only argument of an intransitive verb is marked by the same case as the second argument of the transitive verb (in Chukchi called *absolutive*; note that both nominal arguments must be marked on the transitive verb in Chukchi as well). The first argument of the transitive verb is marked by the ergative case, a case reserved for this argument only:[18] *Cawcəw raγtə-γʔe* <Chukchi[ABS] go.home-3SG> 'The Chukchi went home' (Tyn'etegyn 1959: 8) vs. *Kejŋ-e cawcəw iw-nin* <bear-ERG Chukchi[ABS] say-3SGA.3SGO 'The bear told the Chukchi' (Tyn'etegyn 1959: 8). The same case-alignment is triggered in Chukchi when an intransitive verb undergoes causativization and becomes transitive: *uttuut eret-γʔi* <stick[ABS] fall-3SG> 'The stick has fallen down' vs. *ətłəγ-e uttut r-eren-nin* <father-ERG stick[ABS.SG] CAUS-fall-3SGA.3SGO> 'Father made/let the stick fall down' (both examples from Nedjalkov 1976: 191). Whereas the concept ergativity in generative linguistics differs markedly from what ergativity means in functional-typological linguistics (e.g., Dixon 1994: 18–22), the verbs in this section of the grammar do not belong to either type. Leaving the theoretical perspective behind, the reviewer wonders whether this concept is really of benefit for the language learner and the instructor relying on this grammar. The concept ergative is certainly not general knowledge for either user and its place in a pedagogical reference grammar is unmotivated.

General Remarks

Modern nordsamisk grammatik follows standard arrangements of grammar writing and as such is certainly not particularly modern but rather structuralist; the morphology part is entirely semasiological, the syntax part predominantly semasiological as well; clearly onomasiological chapters are absent. This statement should, however, not be considered negative, because the semasiological perspective is mandatory for languages rich in morphology, especially for the language learner who has to acquire form first.

Chapters 1 and 2 cover "front matters" in the sense of Mosel (2006: 47). Chapter 3 covers phonology and gradation (pp. 20–40). It may be argued why gradation should be considered a phonological feature, as gradation is not triggered by phonological constraints; the appearance of gradation is bound to certain syllable types and certain inflectional forms whose pairing does not match; after all, the distribution of strong versus weak forms in the finite verb paradigm is not bound to the same paradigmatic cells. This would allow the use of stems and stem distribution and a distinctive section on morphonology. By addressing consonant gradation in the chapter on phonology, Svonni follows the conventions of Nickel ([1990] 1994) and Nickel & Sammallahti (2011). Due to the fact that morphology is outsourced to phonology (a standard procedure in most generative

approaches), chapter 4 on morphology is short (pp. 41–43) and as such uninformative, discussing morphemes and parts of speech. Chapter 5 (pp. 44–87) covers nominal morphology and chapter 6 finite verb morphology (pp. 88–128). Infinite verb forms are covered in chapter 7 (pp. 129–144). Chapter 8 (pp. 145–155) covers the remaining parts of speech, adverbs, particles, pre- and postpositions, coordinators, subordinators and interjections. Chapter 9 covers word formation (pp. 156–189) followed by chapter 10 (pp. 190–235) on phrasal and clausal syntax. Chapter 11 (pp. 236–251) covers the syntax of the noun phrase and a short chapter 12 the phrase types adpositional phrase, adjective phrase and adverb phrase (pp. 252–253). An appendix of almost fifty pages length (pp. 254–302) subsumes inflectional paradigms. A short list of references of two pages length and an index (pp. 305–308) finalize the text.

As already mentioned above, although the grammar calls itself modern, it is not particularly modern in structure and other technicalities. Linguistic explanatory materials are a typical example of *linguese*. Linguistically, there is nothing wrong with examples such as *Bárdni liikui niidi* 'The boy liked the girl' (p. 59), but due to the fact that North Sami is indeed a privileged indigenous language with a belletristic tradition and electronic corpora at its disposal, such resources have yet to be implemented in North Sami grammaticography. Furthermore, when comparing written North Sami with spoken North Sami, where discourse particles and clefting play a prominent role, grammaticographic linguese has a strong artificial flavor. This means that spoken language would have required at least some kind of coverage. A second shortcoming, again of a more technical nature, is the lack of a comprehensive chapter on the major varieties of North Sami in Sweden.[19] Given that Svonni is a North Sami from the Swedish side who has published several papers on North Sami as spoken in Sweden, one would have hoped to find a compact section subsuming these varieties. This does not mean that Svonni has excluded such information, but this cannot be retrieved without considerable browsing (e.g., a footnote on locative formation on p. 60, morphology of conditionals and its dialectal variation on pp. 112, 113; a dedicated conditional paradigm on p. 289 and possibly even more). Third, a short note on written North Sami and variation within the North Sami speech area continues to be a *desideratum*. The benefit of such an overview for the language learner is to be expected because orthographic variation beyond "lexical dialectal features" (e.g., *ipmirdit* vs. *áddet* 'to understand' or *ustit* vs. *skibir/skihpár* 'friend') is well-known. A good example is the orthographic representation of North Sami clitics. From the perspective of grammaticography, it is a bit surprising to see that Svonni has opted for an approach which puts particles and clitics into a category *particles* (pp. 148–152). Clitics such as *=go*, *=han*, *=ge*, *=bat* etc. are not particles like *gal* or *dal*, as the latter may, but need not, cliticize, while the former have to. Moreover, particles like *gal* or *dal* are not even mentioned in this section, even though such discourse particles appear in written Sami, both in quoted direct speech and in formal written registers: *Die dal de lea min trenen, muitala Länsman.* 'This is so, well, our training, says Länsman' (Yle Sápmi); *Sulo gal ii áiggo reiset gosage.* 'But Sulo does not intend to travel anywhere' (Yle Sápmi). Moreover, Svonni's analysis and orthographic representation of clitics is indeed an unconscious application of Finnish grammaticography. What Svonni considers to be particles but then analyzes as clitics are written bound to their hosts; this is also their standard orthographic representation in North Sami in Finland where this practice is certainly influenced by Finnish orthographic principles. Nevertheless, in North Sami writings from Norway and Sweden, clitics are often written as separate words e.g, *Earát* ***go*** *don maid hálidit suohtastallat, dadjá Pippi sirkusniidii. Mon* ***han*** *maid lean máksán* 'Did

you want to entertain the others as well, says Pippi to the circus woman. I have paid as well' (Lindgren & Nyman 1996: 18) or *Mánát* ***han*** *liikojit go lea liekkas*, *dan gal oaidná*. 'Children really like it when it [the water] is warm, one can see this' (Sameradion). In fact, both orthographic solutions are given in a prominent North Sami pedagogic handbook whose use is certainly not restricted to language pedagogy alone (Pope & Sárá 2004: 185–187). This orthographic variation is unfortunately not mentioned by Svonni, even though it is pervasive in North Sami texts published in Sweden or Norway: *Ledjet go gullan ovdal?* 'Have you heard it before? (NRK Sápmi); *Jo*, *lean sápmelaš'*, *leago dat dutnje váttisin?* 'Yeah, I am a Sami, is this a problem for you?' (NRK Sápmi). *V*ariation can even appear in two adjacent sentences: *In leat* ***goassage*** *leamaš riegádanbeaivvis*, *gos heasta lea leamaš mielde...* 'I have never been at a birthday party where a horse was along' (Lindgren & Nyman 1996: 24); *In mon* ***ge*** *leat leamaš dákkár feasttas ovdal...* 'I have never been at such a party before either' (Lindgren & Nyman 1996: 25).

Finally, as already mentioned above, Svonni's grammar and his "Introduction" part in several respects from earlier approaches, though not all of them can be covered in this review. Although one finds occasional statements that other terminology has been used in earlier research, direct references are seldom provided. An exception is the concept "verbal essive" which appears to be new and restricted to Svonni (2015; Svonni 2018: 135–137), which covers what Nickel & Sammallahti (2011: 296–298) call *aktio essiv*. Whereas occasional cross-referencing with Nielsen's grammar is found (e.g., concerning the verbal essive pp. 135–137 which Nielsen called *gerundium II*), cross-referencing with Nickel & Sammallahti (2011) is almost entirely absent.

Final Evaluation and Outlook

With the publication of *Modern nordsamisk grammatik*, Mikael Svonni, who has already contributed to Sami Studies and Sami cultural life with several monographs as lexicographer (Svonni 2013),[20] editor (Turi 2010; Turi 2018), translator (e.g., *Varra mii lea golgan*), sociolinguist, educational linguist and theoretical linguist (e.g., Svonni 1993; Svonni 2015), has now contributed to another field of Sami studies, namely grammaticography. Svonni's grammar is, regardless of the criticism uttered above, a very valuable and long-awaited resource filling an enormous gap. In comparison to its direct predecessor (Ruong [1970] 1974), *Modern nordsamisk grammatik* is a remarkable step forward, not only because this grammar was written by a native speaker of North Sami, but because it is the first truly comprehensive grammar on North Sami[21] published in Swedish. Two properties deserve to be highlighted from the perspective of pedagogical grammar writing. First, in all major recent grammars, whether in Ruong's pedagogical grammar or the descriptive and/or reference grammars compiled by Nielsen, Nickel and Nickel & Sammallahti, the coverage of possessive suffixes results in several pages of tables (e.g., Nickel & Sammallahti 2011: 103–111). Svonni's decision to discuss the basic properties of possessive suffixes shortly and relegate the tables to the appendix (pp. 267–273) is more than justified, because possessive suffixes are indeed marginal in contemporary Sami and do not justify a lengthy discussion spanning several pages. By relegating them to the appendix, this category remains retrievable for the language learner and language professional if encountered; here the emancipation from Finnish grammaticography is indeed more than justified. The second merit is Svonni's decision to present all paradigms also in the appendix of his grammar. This solution, already found in Svonni (2015) and fortunately preserved, saves both the language learner and reader from extensive browsing in e.g., Nickel's and Nickel & Sammallahti's grammar when a simple form needs to be cross-

checked. A third merit is technical. Whereas Svonni (2015) was published as a soft cover, a book format not necessarily useful for long-lasting and intensive use, the reference grammar is published in hard covers and a much more pleasing typesetting. This decision enhances usability, readability and will certainly increase the book's "life expectancy."

As Svonni's conscious and subconscious effort has also shown, it is far from simple to untie North Sami grammaticography from Finnish grammaticographic traditions. In any case, untying calls for cautious implementation. In the context of spatial cases where Svonni has attempted this, the emerging re-classification does not convince the reviewer. Whether Svonni is aware that his approach to clitics is equally "Finnish" remains unknown to the reviewer. In the eyes of the reviewer, complete separation is hardly possible and impractical: Finnish remains an essential tertium comparationis from a structural-typological perspective, for better or worse.

Last but not least, as all recent pedagogically oriented grammars of North Sami saw revised editions after several years (Ruong [1970] 1974; Nickel [1990] 1994 → Nickel & Sammallahti 2011), the reviewer hopes that a possible second edition will incorporate a number of changes targeting the primary audience of this grammar—this will make a good book even better. Although linguese is certainly a valid genre in grammaticography, it should be enhanced with corpus data and data from spoken language; it needs to be emphasized once more that North Sami is a privileged endangered indigenous language as such resources are available; therefore, such means should also be used. Furthermore, the example base requires extension, because too many basic case functions have remained uncovered; additional cross-referencing within the book is required as well. Also, the index must certainly be expanded; whereas the verbal abessive can be found with ease because it has a header of its own and is mentioned in the index, nominal caritive forms must be found by browsing. Whereas these suggestions are all technical, the overall role of generative terminology/theorizing should be reconsidered as well. Especially for the language learner without obvious interests in Sami linguistics (according to the grammar's preface, such users are considered to be part of the target audience), reduction of generative terminology would be of obvious benefit as well, because this saves the learner from learning both a language and a metalanguage at the same moment. The target audience for those who are interested in such categories have likely acquired language skills and can be directed to Svonni (2015).

This brings the reviewer to the question asked in the header: what makes a grammar a modern grammar? Regardless of the analytical framework a grammar is based on—whether generative or functional—a modern grammar should not rely on categories whose terminological history has proven to be problematic such as supines and gerunds. Furthermore, a modern grammar should not rely on "traditional" terminological misnomers such as verbal genitive and create similar new ones such as verbal essive. The place of such labels where the morphology of different parts of speech are merged should be in a footnote, but no longer in the running text.

NOTES

[1] However, this is not the first pedagogical grammar of its kind in Sweden. The first pedagogical grammar was compiled by Israel Ruong ([1970] 1974). Because Ruong's grammar was written while the so-called Bergsland-Ruong orthography was in use, it fell into oblivion after the introduction of the current North Sami orthography in 1979 because it was not updated.

[2] Whereas Norwegian is not a serious obstacle for those whose native or second native language is Swedish, Norwegian is an obstacle for university students of Sami from Finland. Even though every Finnish

student is still exposed to varying degrees to Swedish in secondary education, Continental Scandinavian "in a different orthography" is, in fact, beyond reach (which the reviewer could witness while working in Finland). Although Finnish students struggling with Continental Scandinavian could also find a Swedish grammar "more comprehensible" this audience is certainly not the main target of Svonni's grammar.

[3] One "slip of the pen" needs to be mentioned; on p. 178, the original Sami header *kausatiivgeažus* (causative suffix) *-dit* remained untranslated.

[4] The fact that all languages within the Samic branch are far from being prototypical agglutinative languages is not important in this context.

[5] This Swedish learner, who is not the primary target of Svonni's grammar, is certainly privileged and language teaching has a more favorable starting point. This audience has recently received a dedicated textbook in two print runs (Hedlund & Larsson [2011] 2015) which can draw on ample comparisons with Finnish.

[6] The assumption that the North Sami locative would fulfill the same functions as the Finnish inessive is naive and essentially incorrect as if one would claim that the function of the North Sami accusative case would be the same as that of Dolgan, a Turkic language of Northern Siberia. Even though Dolgan has an accusative case, Dolgan, in comparison to North Sami, uses three different cases to mark objects. The function of the accusative case is to mark definite objects; indefinite objects are encoded with the nominative case. The third case used in object marking is the partitive case, whose use is otherwise heavily constrained. Even though Finnish and Dolgan have a partitive case and Dolgan's case label comes indeed directly from Finnish grammaticography, nobody ever considered that both cases "would encode the same." In fact, both cases have astonishingly little in common, but on functional grounds, the label partitive remains justified (Siegl, accepted for publication).

[7] Clausal examples come from the reviewer's collection of North Sami online news (starting 2017–) taken from the homepages of Sameradion (Sweden), Yle Sápmi (Finland) and NRK Sápmi (Norway).

[8] This is even more important as temporal relations are encoded by other cases as well, e.g., the genitive. However, Svonni's covering of the genitive case (pp. 53–55) focuses on the genitive in adnominal possessive constructions and as casus rectus and leaves the temporal function unmentioned: *Duorastaga lea bassi ja bearjadaga Ohcejoga skuvlaguovddáža oahppiin lea olgobeaivi* 'On Thursday is a holiday and on Friday is outdoor day for the pupils from the school center of Utsjoki' (Yle Sápmi). This function is likewise not mentioned in the section on adverbials (pp. 195–196); what the reviewer (and other grammar, e.g., Nickel & Sammallahti 2011: 249) considers genitive is analyzed as accusative by Svonni (p. 57). This re-interpretation and the evolving problems have to remain outside the scope of this review for restrictions of space.

[9] https://nesseby.custompublish.com/cppage.6031544-27451.html; access date 1 June 2020.

[10] Korhonen's reconstruction of the Samic/Finnic inner case series has been disputed in recent years, but this does not affect this discussion, which looks at the later simplification which happened in Sami.

[11] Even though one occasionally hears that grammaticography is a theory-neutral or at best a descriptive enterprise, this argument is futile, because the postulation of phonemes, morphemes, parts of speech, noun phrases etc. can never be done without a theoretical concept.

[12] An illustrative example from Sami studies is the South Sami grammar by Bergsland (1946).

[13] As the reviewer himself has published a grammar (Siegl 2013), though not a pedagogical grammar, the grammarian's challenges are indeed far from being trivial.

[14] By focusing on comprehensive grammars, the time depth becomes easily visible: Friis (1856), Nielsen (1926–1929), Nickel ([1990] 1994). With the publication of Nickel & Sammallahti (2011) and Svonni (2018), this picture has somehow changed.

[15] Svonni refers to Christer Platzack's (2011) textbook on minimalistic syntax, which is not available to the reviewer. An earlier textbook available to the author by Platzack (1998) has the label "modern" in the sub-header as well.

[16] The transitivity increasing function of *-dit*, among its other functions such as reflexive, reciprocal, momentanous, frequentative, continuative, diminutive and connative (the labels come from Nickel [1990] 1994: 223) and its causative semantics is, of course, mentioned by Svonni (2018: 178).

[17] When looking at the examples in the section, the degree of lexical idiosyncrasy (which is to be expected in derivational morphology) is tremendous. For example denominal *ráigánit* is derived from *ráigi* 'hole' which is a noun and most of the other examples derived with *-nit* come from nouns as well, so these examples do not follow Swedish *smälta*. The examples for the so-called *ergative derivations in -muvvat*

(and related) and *-stuvvat* are denominal again, and likewise do not follow the pattern of Swedish *smälta*. The only verbal derivation is *-sit*, but due to the lack of clausal examples, it remains unclear weather the derived verbs really alter transitivity. Based on their translations, the verbs in this group are middles, inchoatives, but certainly not examples of the kind of *smälta*.

[18] Glossing, translation and phonological transcription of Chukchi data are the author's.

[19] Even though North Sami is no longer spoken exclusively in Sweden's northernmost areas due to the forceful relocation of Karesuando Samis a century ago, at least the dialectal basics of the original area of departure could be covered. A grammar of this kind is, of course, not the forum for the discussion of grammatical features of what has become Västerbotten North Sami, a variety which is weakly covered in Sami dialectological studies.

[20] Also, the dictionary app based on Svonni (2013) requires mentioning.

[21] A peculiar though unexplained detail in Ruong's career is that after having worked on his native language Pite Sami (and extensive data gathering on other Sami languages), his further linguistic efforts focused on North Sami and North Sami language pedagogy only (Siegl 2017b).

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