

ANDRA KALNAČA. *A Typological Perspective on Latvian Grammar*. Warsaw, Berlin: De Gruyter Open, 2014. xi + 186 pp.  
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The book under review<sup>1</sup> is one of the so far very few attempts of a Latvian linguist to write about her own language specifically addressing an international audience, and as such would deserve not only attention but also sincere welcome, enhanced by the fact that the book is an open access publication. The book's author, Andra Kalnača (henceforth AK), professor of the Department of Latvian and General Linguistics of the University of Latvia in Riga, together with her associate and frequent co-author Ilze Lokmane is one of the very few Latvian linguists who regularly participate in international conferences outside the Baltic countries and publish in English (cf. e.g. Kalnača & Lokmane 2010, 2012), thus showing the broader linguistic world the wealth of treasures Latvian can offer, and, on the other hand, seeking to overcome the isolation of the linguistic tradition of her own country.

The book consists of a brief Introduction (pp. ii–iv) and seven chapters. The Introduction makes certain sound observations about the current state of Latvian linguistics and of the knowledge of the Latvian facts by the broader linguistic community, as well as giving a summary of the issues discussed in the rest of the book. On p. iii AK says that this book “is an attempt to place [Latvian facts] in a broader perspective with the help of, among other things, certain functionalist and typological principles”, thus opening her book up to evaluation from the point of view of whether and to what extent this attempt has been carried out. Importantly, on p. iv it is said that the book has not been written in English by AK herself, but translated from Latvian by her colleagues and students, and then “improved” by another colleague of hers.

Of the seven chapters of the book, six deal with the verbal system, while only the first chapter is devoted to nominals, more precisely to nouns. Not a single chapter is devoted to syntactic issues, even though in many chapters some of them are touched upon, such as case alternations,

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<sup>1</sup> I am grateful to four members of the editorial board for reading the first version of this review and making a number of important suggestions. The responsibility for any errors and misinterpretations, let alone potential ethical issues, remains solely my own.

passive or reflexive pronouns. Chapter 1 “Paradigmatics and the Declension of Nouns” is the longest one in the book (pp. 1–73). It describes the inflectional morphology of the Latvian nouns and addresses such issues as the structure of nominal paradigms (declension classes, indeclinable nouns, case syncretism and its relation to the old and still burning problem of the instrumental and vocative cases, defective paradigms of reflexive deverbal nouns), functions of cases and case alternations, and gender (including the problem of gender variability and “common gender”). Unfortunately, such issues as nominal number as well as the grammatical categories of adjectives (e.g. definiteness) are not covered at all.

The six remaining chapters of the book deal with various issues of the verbal domain. It is worth mentioning here that many of the topics covered by AK, as well as quite a few of those not touched by her, have been extensively discussed from a typological and diachronic perspective in Holvoet (2001) and Holvoet (2007). Chapter 2 “The Paradigmatics and Conjugation of Verbs” (pp. 74–88), perhaps too short in comparison to the corresponding chapter on nominals, is devoted to the morphological structure of verbs, i.e. distinction between finite vs. non-finite and synthetic vs. analytic forms, the structure of verbal stems and paradigms, and verbal inflectional classes. The major inflectional categories of tense and person are also discussed. Unfortunately, the morphology and syntax of participles, converbs and the infinitive is not described. Chapter 3 “Aspect” (pp. 89–114) deals with the problems of aspectual interpretation of Latvian verbs, which do not have inflectional expression of aspect and manifest aspectual opposition by means of derivation (mostly prefixation) and syntactic constructions with adverbs. The chapter discusses the oppositions between “perfective” and “imperfective” verbs formed respectively by prefixation or combination with adverbs (for the latter, parallels from the neighbouring Finnic languages are provided on p. 101), and “biaspectual” verbs not fitting into these oppositions, as well as the less productive aspectual derivations such as semelfactive and iterative and their relation to perfectivizing prefixation. The last section of the chapter addresses the interaction between aspect and simple vs. compound (perfect) tenses.

Chapters 4 “Mood” (pp. 115–133) and 5 “Modality and Evidentiality” (pp. 134–140) address largely similar issues from somewhat distinct perspectives. It could be argued that while chapter 4 looks at the Latvian data from a semasiological perspective (which grammatical forms exist

and what their functions are), chapter 5 assumes an onomasiological one (how certain semantic domains are expressed), but then it is unclear why this double perspective is not applied to all functional fields discussed in the book. Chapter 4 presents the traditional five-mood system of Latvian comprising indicative, imperative, conditional, debitive and oblique (reportative) moods, describing their formal expression and functions, including such interesting issues as the use of the indicative in non-realis contexts (pp. 120–122), the interactions between the oblique mood and the perfect tenses (pp. 124–126), as well as combinations of the morphosyntactically peculiar debitive with various tenses and moods. In Chapter 5 AK describes the expression of deontic and epistemic modality as well as of evidentiality and of their mutual combinations. Perhaps the most interesting point concerns the limitation of the epistemic interpretation of the debitive to stative verbs (p. 137, repeated on p. 139); this, however, requires elaboration, e.g. by contrasting the meanings of the debitive with dynamic vs. stative verbs. The chapter appears to be too short and could well be incorporated into Chapter 4 for the sake of coherence of the book.

Chapter 6 “Voice” (pp. 141–155) addresses not only grammatical voice proper, i.e. the distinction between active and passive, but also causative and anticausative verbs. It is shown that the passive can be formed from both transitive and intransitive verbs in Latvian, and the distinction between the stative passive (with the auxiliary *būt* ‘be’) vs. the actional passive (with the auxiliary *tikt* ‘get’) as well as the interaction of voice with various verbal forms including the perfect and the non-indicative moods are discussed in more or less detail. Moreover, the chapter includes discussion of the notion of transitivity and its relation to voice and a brief description of the Latvian causative verbs.

Chapter 7 “Reflexive Verbs” (pp. 156–175) is in fact the only one in the book where the Latvian data are indeed discussed from a typological perspective. Drawing mainly upon the seminal work by Geniušienė (1987) as well as on work on the grammaticalization of reflexive elements (Haiman 1983, Kemmer 1993), AK offers a semantic and syntactic classification of the Latvian reflexive verbs and their different uses as well as a discussion of the uses of free-standing reflexive and emphatic elements like *sevi* ‘oneself’ or *pats*, which is clearly an advance in comparison to the traditional grammar with its focus on morphological expression.

There are also lists of references (pp. 176–182), including many entries in languages other than Latvian, and of sources of examples (pp. 183–

184), as well as an index of terms (pp. 185–186). Unfortunately, the book does not contain a concluding chapter summarizing its findings and implications, and the same concerns individual chapters, which always end abruptly.

All in all, the book contains an overview of the major features of Latvian grammar and discusses several non-trivial and less studied issues. (An overview of the phonology would have been useful, since phonological issues such as vowel alternations and tones are touched upon in some sections without any explanations, see e.g. p. 11 or p. 106.) Most of the Latvian examples are authentic and mainly come from contemporary literature, press and the Internet; most examples are glossed according to the international standards, though the decision to refrain from segmenting wordforms can be contested. The range of topics discussed and the wealth of data presented, let alone its being open access, could make AK's book a valuable if not standard reference on Latvian grammar for the non-Balticists, mainly for typologists, for whom the book appears to be written.

Unfortunately, these expectations, aroused by the book's title and by the advertisement at the Linguist List (<https://linguistlist.org/issues/26/26-1485.html>), are not borne out, and I must confess that for me reading this book was a difficult experience and an utter disappointment. The newly established De Gruyter Open, a branch of the reputable international publishing house, has failed to assist AK by providing critical and helpful refereeing of her manuscript, which would have helped to make the contents of her book more coherent and to avoid at least some of its shortcomings to be discussed in detail below, as well as by careful editing and proofreading of her English, which would have made it more readable.

First of all, the very title of the book is misleading, since the book does not in fact discuss Latvian data from a typological perspective, at least in the sense of this expression accepted in modern linguistics. A "typological perspective" on a particular language requires a description informed as to the typological variation in the domains described and should aim at situating the language in question in the typological space, if necessary rejecting the preexisting analyses, however authoritative they may be, if they prove to be inadequate for a cross-linguistically informed account of the facts, let alone outright incoherent. The text of the book, with a few exceptions such as Chapter 7, does not address the issue of cross-linguistic comparison and does not reflect recent typological work (e.g. there is not a single direct reference to the World Atlas of Language Structures,

where Latvian data is included; for a critical assessment of the treatment of Latvian in *WALS* see Arkadiev *et al.* 2015, 63–64). Instead of couching her analyses of the Latvian data in typologically informed terms, in most sections of the book AK advocates the traditional accounts of the Latvian academic and prescriptive grammars, rarely providing any arguments in their favour apart from references to the long-standing tradition itself (e.g. “the five mood system is to be found in all Latvian grammars and textbooks, and also will be preserved in this study”, p. 115). The same could be said about the terminology used in the book, which is largely the literal translation of the traditional Latvian terms, often themselves translations of the terms from the Russian/Soviet academic grammars (incidentally, AK is evidently reluctant to acknowledge that the Latvian grammatical tradition of the second half of the 20th century has been influenced by Russian/Soviet grammaticography to no less an extent than by Prague structuralism, see pp. ii–iii).

Some of the concepts appealed to in the book are anti-typological, e.g. the notion of “semantic invariant” used in Chapter 1 to describe functions of cases and analyze case alternations, since modern typology doubts the validity of invariant meanings (cf. Haspelmath 2003). The blunt statement that “[e]very case form has its representative function or semantic invariant” (p. 54) with a reference to Lyons’ 1968 textbook, valuable more as a source on the history of science than as a reference book on contemporary linguistics, reflects outdated views hardly compatible with the alleged typological orientation of the book.

The only typologically oriented parts of the discussion of nominal and verbal morphology in Chapters 1 and 2 consist in the evaluation of the Latvian declension and conjugation from the point of view of “markedness” and “exponent differentiation” (see pp. 7–9 on nominals and pp. 87–88 on verbs). This discussion is hardly satisfactory because, first, it is never explained how the typological principles referred to in the text actually work and what kind of implications they make, second, because AK never explains how she made the necessary counts, and, third, because when making appeals to the frequency of case or person forms in Latvian, AK does not provide any real figures, which would justify, e.g. the following (hardly true) statement: “the vocative ... is the most frequent case in spoken language as well as in business texts” (p. 9).

Sometimes it is unclear whether AK refers specifically to Latvian or to other languages or even to typological generalizations, cf. e.g. the passage

relating the cross-linguistic generalizations regarding the dative and its putative validity for the treatment of the Latvian dative on p. 62, especially the following: “A historic link between the meaning of the genitive indicating possession or content and the meaning of the dative indicating purpose or the addressee (i.e. *dativus commodi / incommodi*) has been established”, where it remains unclear if the “historic link” has been established for Latvian or in general.

Moreover, AK often fails to distinguish between synchronic and diachronic observations and notions. E.g. the discussion of stem palatalization in nominals makes reference to “j”, which “historically ... was a suffix which phonetically has blended with the preceding [sic!] morpheme”, but the reader is left with no clue as to why this “j”, which never appears in many of the actual Latvian forms, is discussed at all. AK calls synchronic phonemic alternations “sound shifts” (p. 77) and refers to them as “historic” despite their role and productivity in the grammar of the contemporary language. Describing alternations like *krist* ‘to fall’ ~ *křitu* ‘I fall’ as “determined by the following consonant *n*” (p. 78) is again an illegitimate introduction of diachrony into synchrony, since this *n* can only be reconstructed on the basis of external comparison. The formulation on p. 168 appears to imply that the meaning of subject-object coreference was “original” for all reflexive verbs, which is clearly not the case. “Origin and function” jointly referred to on p. 169 are not the same and should never be confused.

The book contains numerous references to theoretical and typological literature, however on closer inspection it turns out that they refer to whatever textbook or random book or article came to the author’s attention and are not up-to-date (e.g. AK refers to Haspelmath 2002 instead of the considerably revised Haspelmath & Sims 2010, and to Blake 1997 instead of the revised 2001 edition), let alone comprehensive or even systematic in citing general linguistic works. There are numerous gaps even in the coverage of the literature on Latvian itself, e.g. in Chapter 1 on nominal morphology the recent paper Nau (2013) on action nominals is not taken into account, and in the discussion of the “instrumental case” the works written in languages other than Latvian and therefore accessible to the target audience of the book are not mentioned, e.g. Fennell (1975), Andronov (2001), Holvoet (2010). Mentioning evidentiality in the languages neighbouring Latvian on p. 137, AK does not refer to important areal-typological work by Wälchli (2000) and Kehayov (2008).

Matthews (1997) and Crystal (2000) (not included into the reference list) are anything but standard references in discussions of transitivity (p. 19) or mood (p. 115), and Plungian (2011) is not a standard reference on semantic roles, especially for the English-speaking audience. In the discussion of the vocative on p. 25–34 the highly relevant work by Daniel & Spencer (2009) is not taken into account. In chapter 4 on moods, no reference to the numerous typological works on mood, modality and irrealis is included, not even to the classic textbook by Palmer (2001). Moreover, even in those cases where relevant references to theoretical and typological work are given, they sometimes appear misplaced or misunderstood. For instance, though Chapter 3 on aspect includes references to classic and more recent theoretical work on aspect (books by Comrie, Dahl, Klein, Smith etc.), AK erroneously attributes to these authors, who clearly and unequivocally distinguish between grammatical aspect and lexical actionality, “a marked tendency of refraining from making a distinction between aspect and Aktionsart” (p. 91).

The book also contains some factual errors, for example, in the description of the accusative vs. genitive alternation in the domain of direct object, in particular under negation, on pp. 56–58. Contrary to what is stated in many works on contemporary Latvian (e.g. Nau 1998, 59; Berg-Olsen 2004, 125; Menantaud 2007; Holvoet & Nau 2014, 7–9), including the new Academy grammar (Nītiņa & Grigorjevs, eds., 2013, 348–349), AK claims that “genitive and accusative function in Latvian as grammatical synonyms for the function of object in all possible instances”. Further she draws unwarranted parallels with Lithuanian, saying (with reference to Paulauskienė) that there is “a tendency to use the uniform construction of the accusative for affirmation and negation in Lithuanian”, which is clearly not so, see Ambrazas, ed. (2006, 486); giving *nerāšau laiškā* NEG.write.PRS.1SG letter.ACC.SG ‘I am not writing a letter’ as a neutral grammatical sentence in Lithuanian is very strange, to say the least. The statement on p. 116 that “the non-indicative moods usually express a relative time meaning, as their forms adjust by synchronising, preceding [sic!], or following the contextual tense forms of the indicative mood” is clearly wrong, since, first, the non-indicative forms like those presented in the examples (4.3)–(4.5) on pp. 116–118 can all have deictic time reference, and, second, as in all examples but one the tense of the matrix verb is present, it is impossible to distinguish relative from absolute tense interpretation in these instances.

Let us turn to a more detailed discussion of individual chapters and sections of the book. Chapter 1 contains no references to any theoretical literature on paradigms. AK appears to adopt Corbett's "canonical approach" (e.g. Brown *et al.*, eds., 2013), but without definitions or acknowledgements and not systematically. It remains unclear how and why paradigms are classified into "full" vs. "defective", "mixed" or "syncretic" and not into any other conceivable classes. Neither is there any motivation for the peculiar treatment of stem alternations as a property of inflectional endings (p. 7).

A substantial part of the chapter (mainly section 1.3.1 on pp. 18–25, but also *passim*) is devoted to the question of the "instrumental case"; as elsewhere, AK just takes pains to argue for the traditional approach in Latvian grammar postulating the instrumental case despite its being syncretic with the accusative in the singular and with the dative in the plural, while arguments against it are either neglected or dismissed without any scientific discussion. Arguments provided in favour of the traditional treatment are ill-founded and their logical conclusions are not explored. E.g. if the alleged justification for including the prepositional phrases with *ar* into the case paradigm as an "analytic noun form" (p. 4) by appeal to "the historical development of case endings towards homonymy that has required the use of the preposition *ar* 'with' for the comprehensive formal distinction of the singular instrumental and accusative or the plural instrumental and dative" (p. 4) is taken seriously, then probably all combinations of prepositions with nouns should be included into the case paradigm as well, since there are no grammatical or functional differences between *ar* and other Latvian prepositions but for the fact (irrelevant for synchronic grammar) that there used to be a morphologically distinct form with which *ar* formerly combined. The argument that "semantics and functions of the instrumental in morphology and syntax ... obviously does [sic!] not correlate with the usage of the accusative and dative in Latvian" (p. 18) is clearly invalid since AK mentions herself that cases are highly polyfunctional (and the Dat.Pl takes over all prepositions anyway, an outstanding fact of Latvian grammar, which is never mentioned explicitly in the book). The only valid evidence in favour of the instrumental case, i.e. the existence of constructions where the relevant singular and plural forms are used without the preposition, is not given enough prominence and is lost among pointless repetitions of the received traditional wisdom and appeals to non-defined notions such as "primary form"



(p. 18) or “versatile function” (p. 24), or even to comparison with Lithuanian, which is not a legitimate argument for language-specific description at least since Saussure. Finally, citing the possibility “to postulate the main meaning of the case or the semantic invariant that has served for the contextual derivation of the other meanings” (p. 24) is not only an invalid argument (why not postulate, e.g. two different semantic invariants for the direct object accusative and for the temporal accusative, thus separating them into two distinct cases?), but, as has already been mentioned, is inconsistent with the assumed typological orientation of the book.

Incidentally, if the “instrumental” is an “analytic form” then it by definition cannot display syncretism with the “synthetic” case forms, contrary to what AK writes on p. 14. On the other hand, it is hardly conceivable how the “instrumental” can be “minimally involved in syncretism” (p. 17) if it is **always** syncretic with some other case; note also that the list of the “instances of syncretism” involving the “instrumental” on p. 17 lacks the dative plural. With respect to syncretism, treating the Lithuanian dialectal Dative and Instrumental forms as syncretic (p. 21) is wrong since they show different syllable intonations as seen in ex. (1.26).

Table 1.5 on p. 6 presenting the Latvian system of declension classes is just a reuse of the traditional system inspired by diachrony and not paying attention to synchronically valid distinctions (see e.g. Nau 2011, which is referred to but not really taken into account); moreover, the table is poorly formatted and hard to read. The corresponding tables 1.6 and 1.7 on p. 8 showing only the endings are virtually unreadable, and the same applies to tables 2.5 and 2.6 listing the verbal endings on p. 86. The description of declensions curiously starts with the “second declension” and not with the “first”; the declension is subdivided into two classes: “2b (consonantal stem nouns), 2a (all other nouns)” —but the members of “2a” also have stems ending in a consonant, so the basis for classification remains totally unclear for a reader not knowing the traditional diachronically inspired account.

In her remarks on the vocative on p. 9 AK mixes morphological allomorphy and syntactic case alternation: “alongside morphologically vocative forms, it is possible to use nominative forms ... in the function of vocative. This use of nominative forms has enriched the number of vocative exponents”. The following formulation on p. 11: “morphological marking of cases in the Latvian language in general occurs only in relation with consonant palatalization” can only be added to a large collection of in-

comprehensible passages abounding in the book. On p. 28 the vocative forms are discussed in the text, but in the examples the relevant forms are glossed as nominative; besides that, though the relevant passage discusses number distinctions in the vocative, number is not glossed. The passage on p. 31 regarding the functional affinity between the vocative and the nominative strikes one as running counter to the basics of contemporary syntactic theories and related views on case: “Both cases are linked by a common function (naming), and therefore they are in semantic opposition to the rest of the cases that (in a broad sense) express the relationship among constituents”. The function of the nominative case is by no means limited to “naming”, and the very “naming” function is rather peripheral and largely an artifact of traditional grammar; rather, the primary function of the nominative is to “express the relationship among constituents”, i.e. between the subject and the predicate. The reference to Blake’s famous textbook on case here is misplaced and seems to attribute to the modern scholar the views expressed by ancient grammarians. The treatment of nominative and vocative (in the text “accusative”) as “not polyfunctional” (p. 32) is clearly wrong at least with respect to the nominative.

The reference to gender of indeclinable nouns on p. 12 is vacuous since the gender of nouns is not self-evident and is not shown in the glosses or by agreement. Likewise, the examples and classification of *genitivi tantum* nouns on pp. 13–14 are incomprehensible without glossing and explanation of the morphological makeup of the relevant wordforms.

There is no such commonly accepted term as “paradigm syncretism” (p. 14), and AK does not distinguish syncretism of whole word forms and homonymy of inflectional endings attaching to distinct stems. The speculations regarding the links between syntactic case alternations and case syncretism on pp. 16 and 17 are clearly unwarranted (and what is meant by “Case syncretism in Latvian is caused by ... alternation of the syntactic usage of these case forms” on p. 17 remains unclear).

The section on reflexive nouns (pp. 34–47) is interesting, but does not contain enough explanations for a non-speaker of Latvian. The uninitiated reader can only guess why *iesāpēties* translated as “ache” on p. 36 denotes “unexpected action” (again, contemporary linguistics has ceased to use the term “action” with respect to any situation denoted by a verb) or why the term “passive reflexive” is used with respect to *glabāties* translated as “keep” on the same page. The statement that “in Standard Latvian, non-reflexive nouns are normally used instead of reflexive nouns with the

terminations *-umies*, *-ējies/-ējās*, *-tājies/-tājās*” (p. 43) is not illustrated by examples of actual usage.

The section on “Case Polyfunctionality and Case Alternation” (pp. 47–66) is claimed to “analyse the reasons for the alternation of case forms” (p. 47), but in fact only presents a poorly structured list of instances of case usage and case variation. The uses of cases with prepositions are not even mentioned, and the criteria for discerning different function of cases from each other and attributing particular examples to functions are not explicated (e.g. why *rudens lietus* ‘autumn rain’ on p. 48 or *futbola čempionāts* ‘football championship’ on p. 64 are instances of the “possessive genitive”, or why the dative of the predicative possessor in ex. (1.87c) on p. 62 is called “beneficiary”?). Curiously enough, the notorious “naming function” of the nominative is not even mentioned in the list of its functions on p. 48, nor is its function as a nominal predicate.

The blunt statement on p. 51 that “[g]rammatical polyfunctionality causes an alternation of grammatical forms” expresses a wrong and simplistic view, which does not explain anything in the actual distribution of case forms in Latvian, just as the following passage hardly making more sense: “the alternation of case forms is an old process, which is associated with the unification of functions and specialisation of semantic, grammatical, and morphonological systems of language” (p. 51–52). The formulations like “[t]he semantic invariant of the subject is nominative; the accusative is the invariant of the direct object, but the semantic invariant of the attribute is the genitive” (p. 54) and “the genitive, which functions as the semantic invariant of the attribute” (p. 55) are clearly erratic. The reasoning underlying AK’s “explanations” of diachronic changes in case usage is hardly clear, cf. the following passage on p. 55, where the logical connections between the premises and the conclusion seem to be lacking altogether or are so non-trivial that they beg for a detailed explication.

“The semantic and syntactic invariant of the nominative case is the subject of the utterance which is the basic function of the nominative in the language. The genitive can be the subject of an utterance if the predicate is the verb *nebūt* ‘not to be’ or *trūkt* ‘to lack’, or if the subject is linked with the numerals *desmit* ‘ten’, *simt* ‘hundred’, *tūkstoš* ‘thousand’, or *vienpadsmit–deviņpadsmit* ‘eleven-nineteen’. Perhaps this is the principal reason why the nominative tends to challenge the genitive for the position of subject.”

In the section on gender (pp. 66–73) AK uses the very strange term “gender deixis” (p. 66) and appears to mix the terms “suffix” and “ending” (ibid.), as well as, most unfortunately, grammatical (reflected in agreement) and purely stylistic/pragmatic phenomena, saying with respect to all types of “common gender nouns” merely that “the real gender marker is the context not the ending of a noun, as context shows whether a female or a male person has been described” (p. 68). Thus, AK does not draw a grammatical distinction between common gender nouns proper, which can trigger both masculine and feminine agreement, and nouns like *sievietis* ‘woman’, which, as can be judged from examples on p. 71, though it is not mentioned explicitly, trigger masculine agreement. Moreover, it remains unclear whether AK is at all aware of the fact that gender first of all manifests itself in agreement, and not in the morphology of the nouns themselves, since gender agreement is never mentioned in this section.

Chapter 2 on verbal morphology starts with such non-conventional terms stemming from traditional grammaticography as “one-part sentence” (p. 74) and “lexico-grammatical groups” (p. 75). The following statement looks tautological (p. 74): “The verb can be the principal part of a one-part sentence, if it forms the syntactic centre in the one-part sentence” (and the non-conventional term “syntactic center” is never explained). The way the so-called “lexico-grammatical groups” of verbs are “connected” with verbal morphology and grammatical categories (see p. 75) is not clearly explained, just as what is “lexico-grammatical category” (ibid.) and how it differs from grammatical categories or “lexico-grammatical groups” in the first place (cf. the statement on the same page: “[a]spect is also connected with the lexical meaning of the verb, its contextual use, and its prefixal and suffixal formation”). The language-specific distinction between “suffixes” and “endings” (p. 75) is not explained, and the fact that the verb *iet* ‘go’ is suppletive in the present tense with distinct stems for the 1st and 2nd persons vs. 3rd person is not mentioned (p. 76). Saying that “grammatical forms of the verb ... are typically synthetic and formed through affixation” (p. 77) just after showing an array of periphrastic verbal forms is self-contradictory. The morphophonological alternations (called “sound shifts”) attested in the verbal inflection are only listed but not explained in any comprehensive manner (pp. 77–78). Moreover, AK does not mention the important alternation between the “open” and the “closed” *e*, probably because it is not reflected in the standard orthography. The blunt statement on p. 78 that

“[t]he basis of the grammatical verb forms is the stem of the infinitive ... All the indefinite tense forms ... are constructed on the basis of the infinitive stem with the help of different morphonological and morphological means” cannot be true given that the infinitive neutralizes most of the distinctions present in the other stems and therefore is the least predicative verbal form, and ignores the current ideas on stems and basic forms advanced in morphological theory (e.g. Aronoff 1994; Finkel & Stump 2007; cf. also Arkadiev 2012a on Lithuanian and, importantly, Andronov 2000 on Latvian), despite AK’s claim that her view “agrees with general morphological theory” (ibid.).

The presentation of verbal paradigms in Table 2.2 on p. 81 makes it very difficult to understand the structure of the forms and relations between them. It would have been better to give the perfect tenses in a separate table and to arrange different conjugation types in separate columns. In Table 2.3 on p. 84 it would have been better to center-align the 3rd person forms, in order not to create the impression that there are no 3rd person forms in the plural. The inclusion of morphologically present and future forms into the paradigm of the imperative in Table 2.4 on the same page is never commented and justified (see also below). The classification of moods on p. 85 is based on the expression, and not “function”, of person; it remains completely unclear how the purely formal distinction between those moods which have morphological person forms and those that don’t inflect for person “is based on the semantics and functions of the moods in the language system” (p. 85).

In Chapter 3 on aspect AK, instead of a clear, detailed and unbiased presentation of the empirical facts, again argues in favour of the traditional division of the Latvian verbs into “perfective” and “imperfective”, inspired by the Slavic grammaticography and considerably simplifying the actual state of affairs in the language. AK does not refer to important work on Latvian aspect, e.g. Hauzenberga-Šturma (1979), and to recent work on Lithuanian aspect, e.g. Wiemer (2001) or Arkadiev (2011, 2012b), as well as to Wälchli (2001) on Latvian-Finnic contacts. The introductory section of the chapter is very general, repetitive, unclear, and ill-informed; suffice it to say that AK does not adequately define the terms “perfective” and “imperfective” and does not explain what the basis of classifying Latvian verbs according to “aspect” is; the explanation of “semelfactive/iterative” on p. 91 is just circular. It appears that AK fluctuates between understanding “perfective” vs. “imperfective” as grammatical vs.

purely semantic notions. The chapter abounds with general and vacuous statements like “the aspect of the verb is simultaneously a word formation and a contextual phenomenon; the expression of the form is connected with different linguistic features: derivative, lexical, morphological, morphonological [sic!], and syntactic” (p. 89), some of them remaining unclear, e.g. “[a]spect, unlike tense, mode, person, and voice, is not a homogeneously formalised category” (ibid.) or “the lack of abstraction of the grammatical meanings” (pp. 90, 91). Translating Latvian “perfective” prefixed verbs by means of the English perfect (e.g. “*no-dziedāt* ‘to have sung’”, p. 91) is a bad idea since it raises an obvious question concerning the distinction between the “perfective” and the perfect.

From the examples (3.4) on p. 92 it remains unclear which member of the pair is “perfective” and which “imperfective”, and the text below uses the term “procedural activity”, which is not explained. From the discussion of the polysemy of *pamest* on p. 95 it remains unclear whether in the meanings listed under (3.14) this verb behaves as biaspectual, and example (3.14.3) even contains a different verb. The statement regarding the “analytic imperfective” construction that “only verbs expressing movement and local meaning adverbs can be used in this construction” (p. 100) is too strong (cf. *mirt nost* lit. ‘die away’), and the immediately following sentence (“These criteria agree only with some Latvian prefixes or their meanings.”) is incomprehensible, just as the passage on p. 101: “the morphological expression has changed into a lexically syntactic expression”. The discussion of Finno-Ugric parallels to the Baltic aspectual systems on p. 101 crucially ignores Hungarian with its system of verbal prefixes and mixes up all kinds of formal expression of aspectual meanings without an informed discussion of their functions and distribution. The parallel from Lithuanian on the same page contains a factual error, since *eiti iš* can only be a combination of a verb with a preposition requiring a following noun phrase, not of a verb with an adverb like Latvian *iet iekšā* ‘go out’.

From the examples (3.29) on p. 102 it is not clear where the perfective and where the imperfective meaning is instantiated. AK’s claim that “[b]iaspectual verbs do not neutralise the opposition. The imperfective/perfective opposition is preserved, what is changed is its expression: it has turned from being morphological to syntactic instead” is unclear, since it is not explained which syntactic means of expression are employed to signal aspect with these verbs, and this statement seems to be contradicted

by the very next paragraph telling that “[th]e formal expression of the imperfective/perfective aspect opposition ... is not important, as the context has taken over the expression of perfectiveness”—but “context” does not equal “syntactic expression”. This last statement is clearly wrong, since the contexts in which biaspectual verbs are interpreted as “perfective” are clearly the same as those in which formally “perfective” (i.e. prefixed) verbs occur. Example (3.30) does not contribute to the understanding of this issue.

The general definition of aspect vs. tense on p. 109 (“[a]spect is depicting internal processes of the situation, while the tense is depicting external processes”) is unclear, since what “internal” and “external processes” mean is not explained. In the section on the interaction between aspect and perfect AK confounds perfect with perfective and repeatedly makes the wrong statement that “the perfect tense forms always expresses [sic!] perfective action, regardless of the presence or absence of a prefix on the verb” (p. 111; cf. also pp. 112, 113), which is contradicted by the observation on the next page that “the unprefixated verb suggests a partially completed action”.

Chapter 4 “Mood” does not depart from the traditional five mood system, despite acknowledging that it “has been criticised many times” (p. 115) and necessitates postulating the awkward and poorly defined notion “submood” in order to account for the fact that different “moods” can combine with each other and therefore do not constitute a grammatical category by definition. (For a comprehensive and up-to-date analysis of the Latvian modal system see Holvoet 2001, Ch. 1–7 and Holvoet 2007.) The claim that all non-indicative “moods” “express unrealis actions or actions which have not occurred” (ibid.) is not true with respect to the “oblique mood” (indirect evidential), which is in fact mostly used with reference to real situations, as AK herself explicitly acknowledges on p. 122. The general description of mood as being “usually constructed by combining specific tense and gender forms” is cryptic, since it remains unexplained which “tense and gender forms” are involved and how they are combined, and is hardly correct, since gender, expressed only in participles, plays only a marginal role in mood paradigms. The following statement on p. 119 is incomprehensible: “The mood category of the verb is morphologically syntactic from the point of view of meaning as well as use, because the semantics of the mood are expressed contextually.” One may only guess what is meant by “morphologically syntactic” and

how semantics can be “expressed contextually”. The statement that “the indicative mood can be used in the function of non-indicative moods, expressing different modalities of meaning” (p. 119) is not really supported by correctly analysed facts and is largely misleading; in particular, it is clearly not the case that the indicative can replace the other moods in all or the majority of contexts.

With respect to ex. (4.6) on p. 120 illustrating the modal uses of the future indicative, AK states that “the meaning of the tense is more important, while the modality is supplementary”, which is clearly wrong, since there is no future time reference in these examples and the future tense expresses epistemic modality with respect to a possible situation simultaneous with the speech time. This is possibly implied by AK’s very next sentence, which, however, remains hardly interpretable: “The future indefinite form *būs* contains the meaning of present, which is simultaneous with the time of utterance; just like the present perfect [error instead of future perfect—P.A.] form *būsi izzalkusi* [‘you must be hungry’] as it is the present assessment of the results of previously carried out action” (ibid.).

The presentation of facts is insufficient and unclear; e.g. on p. 121 AK lists several irrealis meanings the indicative mood can express, but gives only one example not telling the reader which of the meanings listed is illustrated. Anyway, the discussion makes little sense without a detailed description of the whole constructions in which indicative forms get irrealis meanings; e.g. with respect to ex. (4.8) it should have been said that the “categorical prohibition” meaning is mainly due to the hortative particle *lai* (which should not be glossed as “so”). The same concerns the presentation of the conditional mood on p. 127.

The discussion of the “oblique mood” in section 4.3 does not mention the notion of evidentiality and lacks any typological discussion (true, this is partly amended in Chapter 5, but it remains unclear why the discussion of the same phenomena has been split). It is idiosyncratic (though certainly in accordance with the tradition and against the novel proposals by “outsider” linguists like Holvoet and Andronov) to exclude the past active participles occurring as main predicates from the paradigm of the “oblique mood” (p. 123–126). In particular, it is wrong to say that “oblique mood forms containing the participle *-is*, *-usi* have a typical perfect meaning”, since perfect is not used as a narrative tense, as in the example (4.17) on p. 124; treating both *esot dzirdējis* ‘has reportedly heard’ and *dziedājuši* ‘were reportedly singing’ in ex. (4.19) on p. 125 as resultative



is at best doubtful. The reasons to consider the forms like *bijis gājis* ‘had reportedly gone’ as “the present perfect *esot* zero form of the oblique mood, but not the past perfect forms [of the oblique mood—P.A.], as they are seldom used in Latvian” (p. 125) are unclear. The treatment of the negative forms of the participles like *nevarējuši* ‘reportedly were not able’, which are clearly distinct from the negated perfect with the negation obligatorily attached to the auxiliary (*nav varējuši* ‘have not been able’) as “the contracted form of the auxiliary verb *neesot* together with the indicative mood [sic!] past participle verb form” (p. 125) is very idiosyncratic and presupposes a strange morphosyntactic rule.

The discussion of the conditional mood in section 4.4 does not reflect the semantic distinctions and terminology accepted in contemporary typologically-oriented studies of modality; e.g. the explanation of the meanings of simple vs. compound conditional on p. 127 is worded in the following way: “The present indefinite of the conditional mood expresses simultaneity or sequence in relation to the indicative mood used in context; the present perfect expresses the assessment of the consequences of the foregoing action”—without reference to such notions as hypothetical vs. counterfactual. The use of negation in the conditional is again explained with recourse to “the contracted form of the auxiliary verb *nebūtu* and the declinable past participle in the indicative mood” (evidently implying that participles are characterized by mood in Latvian, which is hardly the case), p. 128, and does not tell whether this “contraction” is obligatory or optional and what the meaning difference between the “contracted” and “noncontracted” forms is.

The section 4.5 on the debitive does not refer to Holvoet (1998, 2001, 2013) on the structure, grammaticalization and grammatical relations in the debitive construction. AK does not appeal to the notion of semantic scope, which is necessary to adequately explain the interaction between the debitive and the perfect or conditional and oblique moods; this results in unclear statements like “[t]he perfect tense forms in the debitive mood have two auxiliary verbs, whose interaction expresses the assessment of the result of the action” (p. 129) or “treating the auxiliary verbs *esot*, *būšot*, [and] *būtu* as the main modality and thus also mood markers, while considering the *jā-* form of secondary meaning” (relating to Paegle’s views) and “we consider the full meaning of the predicate with the prefix *jā-* as the criterial marker of the debitive mood in all cases” (p. 130). The description of the conditional debitive as expressing “a pos-

sible and desirable action, which should certainly take place” (p. 131) is unclear and inaccurate; in the last paragraph of p. 131 “oblique” should be read as “conditional”; it is regrettable that no examples of the compound conditional debitive are provided.

The section 4.6 on imperative does not consider the current typology of illocutionary modality (e.g. van der Auwera *et al.* 2003, 2013) distinguishing between imperative proper used only in the 2nd person and hortative/jussive used in the 1st and 3rd persons, despite the fact that Latvian makes a clear formal distinction between all three types of illocutionary mood and does not integrate them all into a single paradigm. Rather, AK states that “[t]he Latvian imperative mood is syncretic with the indicative mood present and future forms, with the exception of the plural 2nd person form” (p. 132), without explaining clearly which forms are syncretic with which (by e.g. providing a full paradigm) and what the reasons are to treat the present and future forms as imperative and not as special uses of the respective indicative forms, as has been done for the other uses of the indicative in section 4.2. Claiming that “the criterial feature for the imperative mood in spoken text is the intonation as well as the stress in the speech flow” (*ibid.*) is hardly satisfactory, since only morphosyntactic criteria are legitimate when postulating grammatical distinctions. Again, the criticism of the ill-founded traditional analysis is not clearly explained (“The imperative mood paradigm with the 3rd person and the plural 1st person imperative forms ... was questioned already in 1960 by Ozols ... who pointed out that such paradigm did not observe the form and meaning of the system [sic!]”, p. 133), and the traditional view is maintained only for the reason that it is traditional (“Nevertheless, the paradigm described above has been preserved in all Latvian grammars since the publication of Ahero *et al.*”, *ibid.*; the last sentence of the chapter).

Chapter 5 “Modality and evidentiality” is largely a reformulation and restatement of the contents of chapter 4; for instance, the very first sentence of chapter 5 with a definition of modality on p. 134 is just a reformulation of the definition of mood on p. 115. Here AK refers to Palmer (2001), but not to any other work on modality, e.g. to the fine-grained classification of modal meanings by Plungian & van der Auwera (1998), nor to any general typological work on evidentiality and its relation with modality (e.g. de Haan 1999 or Xrakovskij 2007). The following statement (*ibid.*) is hardly comprehensible: “For instance, van der Auwera *et al.* (2005, 252–258) [not included in the references list!] describe the

so-called combination of situational and epistemic modalities to express the meaning of necessity and possibility where the situational modality is non-epistemic, i.e., deontic and dynamic modality.”

The definition of deontic modality on p. 134 (“Deontic modality points to the text author’s attitude towards the proceedings of the situation, in the form of an order, prohibition, or suggestion”) is clearly wrong, since order, prohibition or suggestion have to do with illocutionary, and not deontic, modality. The reference to Palmer (2001, 9–10) here is misplaced, since Palmer does not define deontic modality in this way. It is wrong to attribute the meaning of “root modality” to the imperative (p. 135), and this term is anyway not defined. AK acknowledges that “root modality” is also expressed by other means, e.g. modal verbs, but does not discuss them, which is surprising given the putative onomasiological perspective of the chapter. In a similar fashion, treating “invitation” or “polite request” (*ibid.*) as subtypes of deontic modality is wrong, just as classifying “need” under epistemic modality (p. 136). It is wrong to use the term “author of the text” instead of “speaker”, especially with respect to examples from fiction with direct speech of characters, as e.g. (5.5) on p. 136. It is unclear why examples (5.6) (“To accept the post, you need courage.”) on p. 136 or ex. (5.7b) (“And she would call herself a friend!”) on p. 137 illustrate epistemic modality, and the proper interpretation of ex. (5.7c) with the debitive requires broader context. No example of future perfect in the epistemic meaning is provided. Curiously, the description of the “conditional submood of the debitive” on p. 140 differs from that on p. 131.

The discussion of evidentiality in section 5.4 starts with the verbatim repetition of the definition of evidentiality (cf. p. 134 and p. 137); limitation of evidentiality to “quotations” (p. 137) is incorrect, and the discussion of the evidentiality vs. modality issue should refer to at least some of the vast literature on the topic mentioned above.

Chapter 6 starts with the statement that voice is “a lexico-grammatical verb category, which expresses the relationship between the subject of the action, the action itself, and the object of the action” (p. 141), which, first, rests on the undefined and unconventional notion of “lexico-grammatical category” (cf. the discussion of aspect above) and does not refer to any of the notions usually invoked in the discussions of voice, e.g. semantic roles and syntactic arguments, diathesis change etc. (for a discussion of voice in Latvian see Holvoet 2001, Ch. 10–11), which results in uninterpretable statements like “This kind of passive voice form can be

considered a direct object in passive” (p. 142), calling subjectless passive “objectless” on p. 143 or referring to “passive with a direct object” on p. 144. The “middle voice” referred to on page 141 is not explained, and the reasons to reject it are formulated unclearly, cf. “there is no particular description of the middle voice in the grammar, the transitive verbs are examined as a lexico-grammatical verb group in the context of the voice category” and “there is no grammaticalised expression for the middle voice in Latvian” (ibid.) (this may well be true, but since it is not defined what “middle voice” is and why some researchers have postulated it in Latvian in the first place, the reader is left without any clues about the content of this discussion; on “middle voice” in Latvian see e.g. Holvoet 2001, Ch. 11, and Holvoet *et al.* 2015), and neither is it explained to the uninitiated reader what reflexive verbs have to do with voice.

The question of the agent expression or suppression in the passive is not addressed with full clarity on p. 142; from AK’s formulations it remains unclear whether the genitive agent is possible only with the perfect passive and whether it is just uncommon or completely prohibited in other forms of the passive (cf. Nau 1998, 37–38, who explicitly states that the agent is never expressed; cf., however, Nau & Holvoet 2015, 13–14). The description of different kinds of passive construction, i.e. those involving distinct auxiliaries and different case frames of the base verb is very unclear and is hardly informative for a reader not knowing Latvian. E.g. the structure of the non-indicative forms of the passive is commented in the following fashion: “The particular mood form of *tikt* is placed next to the past participle for the indefinite tense form and *būt* for the perfect tense form (it is possible to combine both auxiliary words: *būt* together with *tikt* or *būt*)” (p. 147). The following statement on p. 144 appears self-contradictory: “In the sentences with intransitive non-reflexive verbs we cannot talk about an agent and patient relationship, as the sentence structure with these kinds of verbs can contain only the subject (i.e., the agent) of the named action”, and the following formulation on p. 145 “predicate forming the agreement in the syntactic centre of the sentence with its semantic object” is the way of saying “predicate agreeing with the subject expressing the patient”. The forms of the perfect passive in (6.13) on p. 146 should have been translated as “has been read” etc. instead of “is read”. In the table 6.1 on p. 147 “perfect” is an error instead of “passive”, and it is unclear why “stative passive” is exemplified by complex forms like *ir bijušas slēgtas* ‘have been closed’ while forms like

*ir slēgtas* ‘were closed’ are statal as well, and it remains cryptic why the tense-mood paradigm of the *būt*-passive is not included into table 6.2 on p. 149. It is also unclear why the distinction between dynamic vs. statal passive, which, as AK points out on p. 147, is “evident in actual language use”, is not described in her text in any detail. The formulation “debitive mood passive voice participle” on p. 148 is misleading since the participle itself does not appear in the debitive. The perfect debitive passive forms like *ir jābūt tikušam sauktam* ‘has had to be called’ included into table 6.2 on p. 149 are extremely marginal,<sup>2</sup> and therefore it was necessary to include authentic examples of them and provide a more detailed discussion.

The discussion of causative, reflexive, and other “lexico-grammatical verb groups” on a par with voice should have been better motivated and it should have been clearly stated that these verb classes are not voice per se. The definitions of causatives as indicating “the agent’s role in making someone do something in the lexeme” on p. 148 and as “express[ing] the cause of an action or its purpose” on p. 153 are idiosyncratic and, as usual, do not make reference to any theoretical or typological work on the subject. The classification of reflexive verbs as “autocausative” and “decausative” is not applied consistently; e.g. in (6.22) on p. 150 “decausative reflexive verbs” are exemplified by *gatavināties* ‘to ready oneself’, which, at least according to the English translation provided, is to be understood as autocausative.

The starting sentence of section 6.4.1 on p. 150 “[t]ransitivity is one of the most important features of verbs in the voice form construction” appears to contradict the conclusion on p. 144 that “[a]s passive voice forms can be built both from transitive and intransitive verbs, this suggests that transitivity is not crucial in the category of voice”. This section does not mention any of the typological literature on transitivity and problems associated with the morphosyntactic vs. semantic definitions of this notion. This leads to potentially contradictory statements like the following on p. 151: “Transitivity expresses the capability of the verb to take on an accusative object (less often a genitive object) without a preposition” (a purely syntactic feature) vs. “Transitivity and intransitivity depend on the

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<sup>2</sup> E.g. a Google search on November 1, 2015 yielded only 8 hits for the sequence *ir jābut tikušam*, of which only 4 contain the relevant construction and do not come from linguistic works like AK’s book itself; for the past and future perfect debitive passive no such examples were found at all, which suggests that these forms are rather constructs of linguists than reflective of actual usage.

lexical meaning of the verb”. It is not explained how precisely transitivity is linked to the lexical meaning and how semantic features of verbs map onto syntactic valency frames. The wordings like “transitive verbs connect with an accusative object ... but the intransitive remains [sic!] unconnected” are idiosyncratic. Classification of intransitive verbs into those inflecting for all three persons and those occurring only in the 3rd person (p. 153) is interesting in itself, but is not provided with sentential examples. The sentence “an action without an agent which is self-animated can be considered neither active nor passive” (ibid.) is hardly comprehensible since it is not explained what “self-animated” is and “neither active nor passive” appears to contradict AK’s own definition of active and passive as grammatical, and not semantic notions. Likewise, it remains completely unclear what causatives have to do with the role of “beneficiary” (p. 153), a view erroneously attributed to Plungian (2011) and correctly contested on p. 154, but in the following erratic and hardly comprehensible way: “it can be deduced only from the semantics of the verb while its formal expression is in the form of a patient”. The accepted terminology in the description of causative constructions distinguishing the roles of the causer and the causee is not used. On p. 154 AK makes a relevant observation that the *-inā-* formations can have both causative and iterative meanings, but does not provide translations for the examples she gives. Treating the verbs *ēst* ‘eat’ and *šūt* ‘sew’ (the translations are lacking in the text!) on p. 154 as strictly transitive is wrong, since these verbs can be used intransitively to denote an activity with an unspecified object. The section on causatives does not mention the so-called curative verbs (see e.g. Nau 2015, Holvoet 2015), which normally occur without an overt causee, arguably being a typological peculiarity of the Baltic languages.

Chapter 7, despite its already mentioned merits, suffers from much the same shortcomings as the previous ones. The second sentence of the chapter “Originally, reflexive verbs in the Baltic languages had a middle voice” (p. 156) raises the obvious question of where the middle voice has disappeared from Latvian; perhaps, the sentence refers rather to the change in grammatical tradition than in the language itself. Describing verbs like *apsieties* ‘to tie around oneself’ or *sapirkties* ‘to buy for oneself’ as having an “experiencer meaning” (ibid.) is not correct, the term “possessive” would be more suitable; the description of verbs like *mazgāt* ‘wash’, *noliekt* ‘bow down’ or *kaut* ‘fight’ as “express[ing] everyday ac-

tions” (p. 156–157) or of verbs like *pārēsties* ‘overeat’ and *sārtoties* ‘red-den’ as “too active” and “too passive”, respectively (p. 158), is naive and inadequate. The observation on p. 158 that lexical differentiation of reflexive and non-reflexive verbs “has mostly happened because of the metonymy based change of meaning of the former middle voice” is very unclear and does not appear to be motivated empirically. The reference to “specific grammatical forms that are generally connected with” the reflexive marker (p. 159) is cryptic, and treating the reflexive marker -s as “an agglutinative morpheme that is not typical of Latvian” (p. 160) is very idiosyncratic; it is not explained in which respect the reflexive marker, whose unambiguous segmentation is problematic, is “agglutinative” and it is doubtful that this morpheme differs in any significant way from other verbal suffixes of the language. The following statement on the same page looks tautological: “the expression of transitive action in which an agent and patient coincide (i.e., the subject and object of the action are the same and thus they are coreferents)”, while the following is just incomprehensible: “This is because all other meanings, including reciprocity (i.e., the meaning of reciprocal action), are grammatically and lexically polysemantic in relation to prototypical reflexive verbs” (ibid.). What is “polysemantic”, and how meanings can be “polysemantic” “in relation” to verbs? It is certainly wrong to say that an intensifier “is not indispensable to a sentence because its influence on the content is insignificant” (p. 162): by contrast, intensifiers are optional (in the sense of not being morphosyntactically required) precisely because they significantly contribute to the semantics. Possible differences in meaning between the two subtypes of the “super heavy” reflexivity markers, i.e. that with the intensifier agreeing with the nominative subject (*Es redzu pats sevi spoguļī* ‘I see myself in the mirror’) vs. with the object (*Es redzu spoguļī sevi pašu* ‘id.’) (p. 163) are not discussed, despite being clearly relevant from both descriptive and typological perspectives, see e.g. Lyutikova (2002, 144–146). It is unclear why the “light reflexive” example in (7.18) on p. 163 is *saņemos* and not *saņemos rokās* lit. ‘I take myself into hands’ as in the other examples, and it is unfortunate that no glossing or at least literal translation is provided for this idiomatic expression. The terms “uncorrelated reflexivity markers” and “correlated reflexivity markers” (p. 165) are not explained; the formulation “the combination of the verb, the pronoun *sevi* ‘self’, and the reflexive pronoun in the accusative” (ibid.) should have explicitly mentioned *pats*, while the parallel formulations

below on the same page should have explained which grammatical forms *pašu*, *pašam* and *pašai* are.

The second point of section 7.3, curiously called “Conclusions”, i.e. “the Latvian system can be interpreted in a more versatile way than is offered by existing universal typology” (p. 167) is unclear and does not in fact seem to follow from AK’s presentation. The statement on p. 168 that “[a]ll the semantic reflexive verb groups have developed a variety of mood and aspect forms, which are constructed with the help of the change of the status of the agent or its absence” is unclear and apparently implies that reflexive verbs have mood and aspect forms lacking with non-reflexive verbs and being expressed by manipulation of the verb’s arguments, which is clearly wrong. The definition of reciprocity on p. 170 (“the action is carried out by several (at least two) agents or two patients”) is idiosyncratic and the example (7.40) featuring the expression *es ar tevi ... nespēlēšos* ‘I will not play with you’ is anything but a prototypical example of a reciprocal situation. The following statement is again tautological: “The meaning of passive can be observed when reflexive verbs are used in the function of the passive voice” (p. 174).

A number of passages are formulated in such a way that they presuppose a fair amount of knowledge about Latvian on the part of the reader, e.g. the discussion of the adjectival paradigms on pp. 2–3 or of the meaning of reflexive deverbal nouns on pp. 35–36. The list of examples of the uses of the genitive case on p. 48 lacks glossing or literal translations, so some examples remain cryptic, e.g. “*māla trauki* ‘pottery’”, lit. “clay’s vessels”. Mentioning the dedicated 2Pl imperative ending on p. 116, AK does not indicate that it is limited to just one of the numbers and does not provide translations of examples of different moods in (4.2). The reference to “primary and secondary non-reflexive verb derivatives” on p. 154 is unclear to the reader not familiar with the traditional classification of Latvian verbs, which is not described in chapter 2 on verbal morphology.

It is not really made explicit to which language strata (e.g. standard language vs. dialects vs. informal colloquial speech) the data used in the book belongs. The text contains some normative statements (e.g. “The use of the dative and accusative non-reflexive noun forms to compensate for the missing reflexive noun forms should be considered erroneous in the Latvian literary language” on p. 43 or references to “[i]nconsistency in standardization” on p. 60), which are misplaced in a contribution aiming at a typological perspective.



Now let me turn to the important issue of the English language of the book. It is common practice of international publishing houses to require that the manuscripts submitted are proofread by native speakers of the language the book is written in, and De Gruyter Open apparently commits itself to helping the authors with language editing and proofreading (see <http://www.degruyter.com/page/859>). However, it is clear that these procedures were not applied to AK's book. In fact, the Introduction is the only part of the book which appears to be proofread by a native speaker of English. The very first sentence of the main body of the book contains an expression "this noun description" (p. 1), which is anything but an admissible way to say things in academic English. Comparable awkward and erratic wordings ("the predicate of a verb" p. 63 or "the information, i.e., subordinate rheme emphasis" p. 64, "conjunction *lai* with the syntactic function of a conjunction", p. 126), infelicitous and inconsistent terminological use (e.g. "termination" instead of "derivational suffix" on p. 35 and instead of "inflectional ending" on p. 46, "topicality" instead of "relevance" on pp. 36, 59 and passim, "concurrence" instead of "competition" on p. 47, "word sequence" instead of "word order" on p. 60, "perfectiveness" instead of "perfectivity" and "variation" instead of "modification" on p. 93, "time" instead of "tense" on p. 116 and 144, "principle" instead of "principal" or "matrix" on pp. 121, 123, etc.) and apparent literal translations from Latvian (e.g. "indicative mood tense form use cases", p. 120) abound in the text. Some passages even contain leftovers of the Latvian original, e.g. "un" instead of "and" in the first paragraph of p. 87 or the last paragraph of p. 130, "vai" instead of "or" in the fourth paragraph of p. 125, or Latvian paraphrases of reflexive verbs in ex. (7.36) on p. 169. All in all, the rather idiosyncratic contents of the book are expressed in language erratic to such an extent that even those readers who are prepared to put up with the poor quality of the English text will have trouble understanding what the author is aiming to say. As has been already mentioned, AK had her text translated from Latvian. It was the publisher's duty to make sure that the resulting English text is felicitous and readable, and the publisher, rather than the author, is to blame for this trouble.

There are clear editorial errors, e.g. "periphrasis is the *combination* of an auxiliary verb and a declinable past participle *combination*" (p. 4, emphasis mine), wrong format of the reference to König *et al.* 2008 (p. 160), or incomplete sentences like "As these case forms do not exist in the

noun paradigm in the literary language or in subdialects.” (p. 39), and numerous typos, e.g. Lithuanian *žmogaus* (GenSg) instead of *žmogau* (Voc-Sg) (p. 33), *ārs-te* instead of *ārst-e* (p. 73, ex. 1.115), “compund object” (p. 104), probably instead of “object noun phrase”; in ex. (3.39) on p. 106 it is unclear what the parentheses mean; on p. 126 “Veidemane’s Latvian language mood development”—a book title not marked as such? “*ie-sa-klausījo-s* ‘I listened in’” (p. 164)—bad translation; on p. 170 *sārtoties*, *krāties*, *glabāties* are not translated. Inconsistent use of capital letters is found in section headings (“Indicative Mood” but “Oblique mood”). As has already been mentioned, some of the titles referred to in the text are not included in the list of references.

There are also technical errors in the examples, such as misalignment, inconsistent glossing and sometimes no glossing at all, e.g. in ex. (1.61) on p. 44, ex. (4.16)–(4.21) on p. 123–126, ex. (7.35) on p. 168. Gender is glossed as an inflectional category with nouns, which is clearly wrong. In ex. (1.57) on p. 40–41 the glossing line is not on the same page as the example, and ex. (3.32) on p. 105 is misaligned. In ex. (6.6.a) on p. 143 *viņai* is erroneously glossed as NOM instead of DAT. In ex. (6.16) the oblique mood is omitted from the glosses. In ex. (1.72a) on p. 52 *neviēna vārda* // *vārdu* taken literally is incorrect, *nevienu* (ACC.SG) should have also been given. In ex. (3.10) on p. 94 and ex. (7.10) on p. 159 there is wrong segmentation, since *t* is not part of the reflexive suffix; on p. 50 there is no bold marking in the unglossed examples of the “adverbal instrumental”, which therefore remain incomprehensible for a non-speaker of Latvian; the same inconsistent bold marking is attested in many other places as well. The numbering of examples is very strange, since often whole arrays of examples are given under the same number without any subnumbering.

In sum, the book under review, despite containing interesting and sometimes novel data from an underdescribed language, clearly falls short of the accepted standards of contemporary linguistic publications. The contents of the book do not correspond to its title, since the author rarely assumes a “typological perspective” or in fact any perspective at all but the one of the traditional Latvian grammaticography, revealed in particular by AK’s reluctance to use generally-accepted linguistic terminology with respect to Latvian facts; whatever the reasons for this reluctance, such a terminological choice is clearly misplaced in a book specifically addressing the international audience. The analyses presented in the book are often logically inconsistent (as e.g. that of the “instrumental

case”), poorly supported by the empirical material and not revealing of the real structures and patterns in the data, and even contain factual errors (as e.g. that of the object case marking under negation). Last but not least, the book is written in such a poor English that many of its contents are hardly comprehensible and the book as a whole is not readable, especially to those who cannot make educated guesses about how the problematic passages look in Latvian and what they mean in the broadly defined post-Soviet rhetorical tradition. Therefore, I cannot help drawing the conclusion that this book should not serve as a reference source on Latvian grammar for typologists and theoretical linguists.

To conclude my review, I would like to emphasize the responsibility of the publisher for the shortcomings of the book. De Gruyter Open, being a branch of the highly reputable international publisher, should strictly adhere to the high standards of publication, which imply such procedures as peer-review of manuscripts before publication, language editing by native speakers, careful proofreading and other kinds of quality control. AK’s book does not bear evidence of any of these. The publication of this book betrays a very distressing failure of the accepted standards and procedures.

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