Francard, M. (1990) Le français parlé des corpus oraux. *Travaux de linguistique* 21: 53–63.

Green, J. & Ayres-Bennett, W. (1990) *Variation and Change in French: Essays Presented to Rebecca Posner on the Occasion of her Sixtieth Birthday.* Londres: Routledge.

Hausmann, F. J. (1979) Wie alt ist das gesprochene Französisch? *Romanische Forschungen* 91: 431–444.

Hausman, F. J. (éd.) (1983) *Die französische Sprache von Heute.* Darmstadt: Wissenschaftliche Buchgesellschaft.

Holtus, G. & Radtke, E. (1986) *Sprachlicher Substandard.* Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Holtus, G. & Radtke, E. (1990) *Sprachlicher Substandard: Standard, Substandard und Varietätenlinguistik.* Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Holtus, G., Metzeltin, M. & Schmitt, C. (éds.) (1990) *Lexikon der Romanistischen Linguistik,* Tome v. Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Lodge, R. A. (1993) *French, from Dialect to Standard.* Londres et New York: Routledge.

Müller, B. (1985) *Le Français d'aujourd'hui.* Paris: Klincksieck.

Offord, M. (1990) *Varieties of Contemporary French.* Londres: Macmillan.

Radtke, E. (1990) *Gesprochenes Französisch und Sprachgeschichte: zur Rekonstruktion der Gesprächkonstitution.* Tübingen: Niemeyer.

Sanders, Carol (éd.) (1993) *French Today: Language in its Social Context.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Stimm, H. (éd.) (1980) *Zur Geschichte des gesprochenen Französisch und zur Sprachlenkung im Gegenwartsfranzösischen.* Wiesbaden: Steiner.

Jacques Durand
Department of Modern Languages
University of Salford

Lazard, Gilbert, *L'Actance.* (Linguistique Nouvelle.) Paris: Presses Universitaires de France, 1994, xi + 265 pp. 2 13 045775 4, 0292-4226

In this atheoretical typological study of the morphosyntactic realisation of argument structure, Lazard defines 'actance' as 'les faits relatifs aux relations grammaticales qui s'établissent entre le prédicat [verbal] et les termes nominaux qui en dépendent' (p. ix). As for a translation of the term 'actance', the author uses 'actancy' in the titles of recent work in English, e.g., Lazard (1990, 1995).

Chapter 1, 'Les instruments de l'actance' (1–23), contains an overview of the various means by which languages indicate the relationship between a verb and its arguments, e.g., by overt or non-overt markers on the verb (agreement) and/or on the argument (affixes, adpositions), word order (somewhere between totally free and totally fixed, rarely at either extreme) or coalescence/incorporation (e.g., *prendre feu/maintenir*) in which latter case the noun loses its status as an argument. The important point made is that languages are rarely (if ever?) restricted to a single means.

Chapter 2, 'Structures d'actance' (24–63), addresses the important (yet not entirely unproblematic) typological contrast between accusative and ergative (and mixed (and dual)) systems, a distinction whose relevance is not restricted to those languages with overt accusative/ergative morphology. Of course, the distinction is familiar and the

informed reader will probably be able to follow Lazard's presentation of the range of cross-linguistic variation. The beginner in contrast may well be confused by the unnecessarily complicated notation system. The following is from p. 28:

(6') $X_a Y_a V_x$ (où a = accusatif)
(7') $Z_a V_z$
(8') $Y_a V_y X_b$ (où b = instrumental)
(9') $Z_a V_z$

The recapitulation (pp. 34–35) only serves to compound the confusion.

Chapter 3, 'Les actants' (64–128), the longest of the six chapters, discusses argument hierarchies, whereby the term argument is to be understood as thematic role (Gruber 1965; Fillmore 1968). Here, Lazard distinguishes between an 'onomasiological' approach – by which he characterises most work done in this area and which investigates how given processes, etc., are represented grammatically – and his own 'semasiological' approach which starts from the grammatical relations and attempts to derive a set of presumably universal semantic relations.

In chapter 4, 'Les classes de verbes' (129–169), Lazard introduces a verb taxonomy in terms of valency, which is more or less determined by meaning. While monadic (unergative and unaccusative) and diadic (transitive) verbs seem to be universally attested, other classes of verb are not. In chapter 5, 'Variations d'actance' (170–220), he discusses ways in which the valency of verbs can be affected by, for example, the properties of the argument(s), tense, aspect and polarity as well as pragmatic and strictly syntactic factors. In the same way though that verbal morphology is not a perfect isomorphism of valency, neither in the domain of valency alternation is there a one-to-one correlation between cause and effect.

In the final chapter, 6 'Corrélations' (221–265), Lazard considers universals within the context of a possible theory of transitivity. For example, if the presence or absence of overt marking is determined by the [± HUMAN] or [± DEFINITE] features of the argument, then it is always the [+ HUMAN] and [+ DEFINITE] argument which will be overtly marked rather than the [− HUMAN] or [− DEFINITE] one.

The overriding quality of this book for me is the wealth of data reviewed – the index contains references to over 130 languages – and this is doubtless an ideal starting point for anyone needing basic information about morphosyntactic variation. As such, this is probably as much a textbook as a presentation of original research.

It is, of course, not without its shortcomings. Most are fairly trivial and some have been alluded to already. On a final note, though, example (14) on p. 31 is supposed to be identical to example (3) on p. 26 but isn't. The abbreviations PTCP and PTC are used on pp. 33 (20)–(22) and 46 (36)–(37) (to mean the same thing?) but are not given in the list of abbreviations. On p. 33 (20), the -*ko* suffix in Hindi is glossed as OBL(ique)-ACC(usatif) but referred to in the text as 'une marque d'accusatif/datif'. The German and English quotations on pp. 38–39 and 56 are not translated into French. The meaning of the second tree diagram on p. 101 is unclear (S = subject, V = verb, O = object):
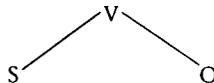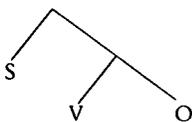
REFERENCES

Fillmore, C. (1968) The case for case. In: E. Bach & R. T. Harms (eds.) *Universals in Linguistic Theory*. New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, pp. 1–88.

Gruber, J. S. (1965) Studies in lexical relations. Ph.D. dissertation, MIT.

Lazard, G. (1990) Researches on actancy. *Actances* 6: 3–58.

Lazard, G. (1995) Typological research on actancy: the Paris RIVALC group. In: M. Shibatani & T. Bynon (eds.) *Approaches to Typology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press, pp. 167–213.

Paul Rowlett
European Studies Research Institute
University of Salford

(Received 26 April 1996)

Magri, Véronique, *Le Discours sur l'autre: à travers quatre récits de voyage en Orient.* (Travaux de linguistique quantitative, 55.) Paris: Honoré Champion, 1995, 426 pp. 2 85203 411 5

This volume approaches the classic problem of the relationship between the language of a text and a reader's construction of meaning with the intention of describing 'de fructueuses rencontres entre les systèmes formels de production, de réception du discours et le système linguistique de l'altérité' (4). It does so in a way that raises some interesting questions of method. The author chooses a corpus of four works belonging to the Institut National de la Langue Française FRANTEXT data base, where they have been categorised into a 'sous-ensemble générique intitulé "récit de voyage"' (2). They are Lamartine's *Souvenirs, Impressions, Pensées et Paysages pendant un voyage en Orient ou Notes d'un voyageur*, Du Camp's *Le Nil, Egypte et Nubie*, and Fromentin's two volumes, *Un Été dans le Sahara* and *Voyage en Egypte*. Distributions of lexical and syntactical items are measured by means of a statistical instrument provided by Charles Muller, 'l'écart réduit . . . il est positif si l'auteur privilégie le terme concerné' (60, 61). From time to time, the information yielded by the data base is completed by manual procedures, notably by observations of co-texts. In this study, the quantitative material, presented in tables or graphs, is very clearly a means, and its implications are considered in the light of a solid linguistic and literary culture.

V. Magri analyses the language of each of these texts with reference to the notions that she considers to be constitutive of any discourse: 'qu'est-ce qui est dit?, comment est-ce dit?, dans quel but?' (5). For her, the 'qu'est-ce qui est dit' is constructed – 'les images d'Orient telles qu'elles sont développées dans notre corpus' (58) – by specificities of vocabulary and syntax, and by sequences of description, 'l'acte obligé du récit de voyage . . . caractéristique du genre' (129). The vision of the Orient that emerges at this level is stereotypical and prejudiced, founded on an 'incompréhension de l'Autre' (204).

Now description was made possible by an earlier process of 'maîtrise' (206) of the otherness of the Orient. This involved four strategies. The first is measurement of 'les écarts à *la norme* que constitue la culture des voyageurs' (207) of a world whose differences provoke a choice of evaluative and axiological adjectives. The second is 'la traduction . . . acclimater l'étrangeté à son discours pour l'y insérer' (259). Figures of