The possibility should be considered that English grammar has been misanalyzed for centuries because of grammarians' accepting fundamentally flawed assumptions about grammar and, even more so, about the history of English—and that this has resulted in a huge disconnect between English grammars and the genius of English that really exists. The development of the information age and of English as a world language means that such lapses have greater import than formerly. But what is available on the shelves has fallen into sufficient discredit for grammar to have forfeited its place in the curriculum, unrespected and little heeded by the brighter students. An adequate approach might offer some insight as to why "grammar gurus" unwittingly write things contrary to their own prescriptions. Many grammarians "lamely" resort to referring to good English as "standard English," as though there were an English language academy or other body authorized to "standardize" it. It is a vain and losing battle to contend against technically natural processes like making "lay" a contraponent, making "loan" a causative verb, and using "less" for "fewer." (Contains 13 notes.)
HOW GRAMMARS OF ENGLISH
HAVE MISSED THE BOAT

There's been more flummoxing than meets the eye

by

Charles-James N. Bailey

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HOW GRAMMARS OF ENGLISH HAVE MISSED THE BOAT

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Consider the possibility that English grammar has been mисanalysed for centuries because of grammarians' accepting fundamentally flawed assumptions about grammar and, even more so, about the history of English—and that this has resulted in a huge disconnect between English grammars and the genius of the English that really exists. The development of the information age and of English as a world language means that such lapses have greater import than formerly. But what is available on the shelves has fallen into sufficient discredit for grammar to have forfeited its place in the curriculum, unrespected and little heeded by the brighter students.

Consider the English pronoun pairs, her : she, him : he, me : I, us : we, and them : they. It is easy to show that the uses of these paired forms are not directly related to functional (subject and object) “cases” in the manner of Latin and Anglo-Saxon, but only in a very round-about way that partially reminds one of the Romance languages. If the educated generally say a rather Frenchified “Martha and myself arrived late” and “That’s me” (Marilyn Monroe was made to sound silly by saying “That’s I!”), why do grammarians ignore the significance of such usages for the system of English? Aren’t they interested in why quasi-French usages like “Me and my father cleaned the house up today”—typical of that legendary 13¾-year-old British adolescent, Adrian Mole—are so ineradicable?

Shouldn’t your grammar offer you some hint of an explanation for usages of pronoun forms in the English of educated people—individuals who would never say to I, to she, or for we—but who nevertheless use constructs like the following: to she and I; Let’s you and I do it; to she who knows; on we in Europe; and “for we Europeans”—the last from the mouth of a British prime minister and former university professor? Shouldn’t a grammar offer some hint of a reason why many educated speakers insist that for her and me is ungrammatical? Grammarians can hardly avoid conceding that many usages violating their prescribed “case” rules (like “Who’ll do it if not me?” and “Someone—probably me—will do it”) are in fact quite unexceptionable. To contend that these deeply ingrained, ineradicable, and Romance-derived usages are contrary to the genius of English
amounts to no more than the unconvincing arguments of a seriously
defective analysis. The system, a very strict one, of real English
grammar is missing from the books. An adequate approach might
offer some insight into why grammar gurus unwittingly write things
contrary to their own prescriptions like “the one whom the residents
of that settlement had assured me would repair it” and “It was for
whomever over there wanted to win quick acclaim.” Even the 1611
Bible has the Lord making a grammatical error in “Whom say ye that
I am?” When a columnist (in an international newspaper) wrote about
problems having to do with “instability in [Europe’s] new currency,
with who consulting whom about what to do,” he evidently thought
of all that follows with as being a quoted object of the preposition.
Latish whom is not the Anglo-Saxon dative; it got a new, unsystematic
-m like the Latin accusative. Though whom has never been inte-
grated, the French for him and them suggest why these forms
endure. If your grammar calls makes a “present tense” in “This factory
makes machines”—say, on Saturday night when the place is closed—
is that a designation that makes sense? Would it not imply contradic-
tions—which are in fact absent—in “She speaks Japanese but she’s
speaking English” and in “He comes from Honolulu but he’s coming
from Hilo”? Isn’t there a difference between “The child is good” and
“The child’s being good now” such that there is no contradiction in
saying, “The child’s good in the mornings, but she isn’t being good
now”? Would a grammar that calls makes, speaks, and comes “pres-
ents” be expected to do any better with the two posterior uses in “The
president speaks at ten tonight” and (with different force) “When she
speaks at the meeting tomorrow, . . .”? Treating speaks as a present
in “Hamlet speaks to Ophelia in this scene,” “St. Paul speaks of that
in Galatians,” and “She speaks about that every time I go there”
conflicts with the obvious. (In “He smokes now,” now means “nowa-
days.”) Doesn’t the reader know a language studied by many Ameri-
cans in which speaks would be a subjunctive in the context found in
“Make sure [a causative expression] that your report speaks directly
to the issue”—and in several other contexts?

Does your grammar of choice tell you why was being aimed at
(in “It was being aimed at”) gets changed to was getting aimed at in
“It was getting aimed at for a take-over next month”; and why got
shot (in “He got shot yesterday”) switches to was being shot in “He
was being shot at dawn the next day”? You can test your grammar by
checking whether it offers a subjective, ad hoc listing of usages in
place of grammatical explanations, say, for the difference between
Don’t get caught (or Don’t be caught doing that!) and Don’tchu be caught now! (or Don’tchu get caught doing that!).

Calling the posterior forms, will and be gonna (so written to distinguish it from the literal sense of be going to) “future tenses” leaves one wondering how it is possible to find a future in was gonna leave yesterday, seeing that yesterday is past; and why now sounds all right in “They’ll now be arriving late.” These are not minor issues. What “tense” is found in “Those problems had been going to have been getting investigated by now”? In the improbable event that your grammar tells you why—or even that—was gonna rain usually gets changed to would rain in an indirect quotation, does it explain that, let alone why, we negate It’s gonna rain with It won’t rain and It’ll rain with It’s not gonna rain? Why is be gonna avoided in the main clause of “If it arrives safely, we’ll let you know”?

Why do we avoid both be gonna or will in “If the president speaks tomorrow, we’ll know the answer,” except in infrequent instances when we have good reason to presume that the posterior event is pretty much of a sure thing? The foreigner’s “When she will speak” sounds bizarre for “When she speaks.” (The environment here, technically called the surrealis environment, is different from the plain environment of “She speaks tomorrow,” where speaks indicates a routine or scheduled event or state. The nine posterior modalities of English indicate, in non-surrealis uses, progressively greater degrees of predictability.) We say, “After (or before) she speaks, the committee will meet,” “Tell whoever speaks at tonight’s session about it because he will want to know,” “Till she speaks about it, we won’t know,” and “Whoever speaks tonight will announce the result as soon as he speaks.” Are you told what is systematically going on here—what categories belong to the surrealis environment and what is common to them? Are you told why it is un-English to say “To speak that way is being cool”—let alone why the replacement of is being in this example with the class of verb modalities partially represented by is, has been, will be, may be, or might be makes the example grammatically acceptable? Of course, there’s nothing wrong with saying, “Speaking that way is being (regarded as) cool.” The correct analysis of this solves the next quandary.

What grammatical grounds does your grammar give for the acceptability of “As long as I can remember, she has always done that at ten o’clock” and “This is the first time it has been done at ten o’clock” in view of the fact that “She has done that at ten o’clock” is un-English? Although English does not lack a strict system of grammar, what that system is is far from being transparent in grammars.
that call has stood a “present perfect” in “That building has stood for ten years [and is likely to last a lot longer].” This action or state cannot be a “perfect” since it has not been completed but is continuing in the present, though it doesn’t have to do so for it to be a present-anterior. The English present-anterior modality refers to actions or states occurring (without necessarily being concluded) in a block of time that includes the present, whereas a perfect is an event or state “completed” at no specific time within a block of past time lasting up to, but not including, the present. This explains why people are now saying, “I just did it”—which is more logical than using a past for the present-anterior in “I didn’t do it yet” and “I did it already.” Grammars are defective in failing to give some hint of the two or three striking behaviors common to the following (irrealis) categories: timeless (exochronous) forms (e.g. speaks), anteriors (formed on have), posteriors (nine in English vs. two in Latin and three in French), imperatives, infinitives, and modal verbs.

One of the more widely used books on grammar (a fairly recent British example) calls a form like was standing a past-continuous tense. Yet, this form is utterly out of place (the corresponding Romance form is also strange, as also is English used to stand) in continuous past examples like “Troy was standing 600 years.” Why is “I hear [or “see”] it” not a so-called present-continuous tense? (Actually, it’s not even a tense: It is a modality.) The grammar just referred to achieves the ridiculous in pointing out that a so-called past-continuous verb form “can also be a way of showing your interest in the other person” and “to show a change of mind”? But can’t all of the other time forms of the verb do the same things (cf. “I’d been planning to stay home this afternoon, but I won’t”)? Whatever happened to grammatical reasons for using a form? Even if the approach just cited could go so far as to list all of the usages of every verb form, that would still fall short of being an analysis or a grammar!

Does your favorite grammar explain the grammatical reason why you’ll have to is politer than you must and why you can is politer than you may? You should check whether your grammar makes clear—something that those who understand what is going on in English will be clear about—why the three non-posterior woulds can be pasts, while a posterior would cannot function as a past (but only as a past-posterior or [non-past] conditional). Also to be checked is whether your grammar helps foreign teachers and learners of English to see what is so gratingly wrong when they say until or till instead of by in contexts like “They will begin it till ten o’clock” and “They will kill the hen till ten o’clock”—even though there is no problem in
saying (a) “They will kill hens till ten o’clock,” (b) “She is not gonna kill the hen till ten o’clock,” (c) “He was gonna kill time until ten o’clock,” and (d) (one sense of) “Lock the door till ten o’clock”—all of which are good English!

A grammar should provide grammatical reasons for the difference between doesn’t need to and needn’t as well as that between don’t have and haven’t. (But don’t have to = haven’t got to.) And it ought to tell a reader why needn’t occurs in the same class of environments as those in which could can be a true past—equivalent in sense to “was/were able.” (Could stay is not equivalent to “was/were able to stay” except in the special environment of an indirect quotation.)

Consider should, which is usually dubitative (as in “If we should be late, . . .”) when not obligative—both are irrealis—but is factual in “They were surprised and disgusted that he should say such things”—something that would not be said unless the “he” in question really was saying such things. After all, even a child’s Uncle Remus stories are full of examples of factual should; e.g. “An’ who should ’e meet but Brer Fox!” A reliable grammar should tell you about the four uses of should—what they are, how they are to be analysed, where they occur, and why they differ. You can test whether, in an example like “It was for the good of the country that she not remain,” your grammatical authority misnames the deletion of should (before remain, which explains its lack of inflection) a “subjunctive”—despite the logic by which the processual modality of should-DELETION explains three anomalies that no subjunctive, past or present, can account for. (See more on this analysis below.)

Check what your favorite grammar has to say about the difference between are or am and be in “Why don’t you just be more attentive?” as well as “If you (don’t) be good tomorrow, . . .” and “I always just be myself whenever she’s around”—where be says more than are and am? Is your grammar’s answer satisfactory to you? Does it state the meaning of this be and the conditions for its use? Does it misname this be a “subjunctive”?

Consider the difference between in and into in “I put my money in my safe, but she put hers into stocks and bonds” and in “When the ball flew in the window, he flew into a rage.” In typical examples, into signals an ontological or situational change—something very different from the change of place found in Germanic usage but not lacking in affinities with French dans and en. Consider now the difference between prepositional and postpositional by, in, etc. We always prepose by and in in “By what right are they claiming that?” (contrast un-English “What right . . . by?”) or “By how many inches is
she taller than me?” (cf. unacceptable “How many inches . . . by?”), and “In what instances [or ways] are they different?” (contrast un-English “What instances [or ways] . . . in?”). And so with other prepositions. The foregoing examples contrast with the unforegrounded by and in that we naturally prefer in “What time have we got to be home by?” and “What kind of trouble are they in?” And so with most other postpositions. An infelicitous example by a professional columnist, recently encountered, shows how the “grammaticality” of current grammars misses the boat: “[It] identifies in what relation they stand” — where in needs to come at the end.

The difference between placing a preposition before a wh-pronoun and leaving it in place as a postposition is something that grammars ought not to neglect but explain. (Exceptions like during, concerning, except, and according to have a ready explanation that your grammar should tell you about.) Though foregrounding a preposition where we don’t have to do so feels unnatural (and in fact violates an implicational universal long known from work by H. J. Greenberg), it can be done to marker insinuations (like resignation; see n. 8).

Where preposing is not used to marker irony, frustration, or some other insinuation, it can be used to create a put-down (as in “With whom do you wish to speak?” instead of the affable educated “Who d’you wanna talk to?”) or to avoid a succession of two prepositions belonging to different clauses. Just as we use of in deviation from what would be a normal ’s in order to avoid awkward constructs, so we prepose other postpositions to avoid, say, the awkwardness arising from the embedding of one relative clause within another—as in “the program that you were determined to involve all of the projects that they came up with in.” Needless preposing adpositions is otherwise unnatural enough to entrap speakers in a redundancy as old as Malory—like this example out of dozens from the BBC: “the one of whom he took advantage of.”

A half-way adequate grammar should tell you why putting a preposition at the beginning of its clause is un-English twice over in “In which subjects they excel is about what her report is.” Following current rules of grammar, you will commit three violations of proper usage in preposing on in “We wondered about on what her reports were.” Though the use of from where? (in direct or indirect questions) is a common error among foreigners, non-interrogative from where is all right in “I flew to Honolulu, from where I proceeded by water to Hilo.” It’s too bad that a “Pygmalion”—which is to say, a bookish and in fact alien-sounding—approach requires moving prepo-
sitions along with their WH-pronoun objects to the beginning of their clauses, even in the unacceptable examples mentioned here.

Consider the difference in the uses of partially similar adverb forms—hard : hardly, most : mostly, very : verily, just : justly, bloody : bloodily, right : rightly, clear : clearly, stark : starkly, pretty : prettily, sure : surely, awful : awfully, etc. Your grammar should explain the difference between “It’s sure concealed” and “It’s surely concealed”—and why it sounds silly to reply to normal requests with “Surely”! Being plain stupid is not the same as being plainly stupid; and being real special is different from being really (and truly) special. Your grammar should also clarify why pretty ugly, bloody neat, and jolly sad are not contradictory.

And shouldn’t your grammar give you the grammatical reason for why there is no contradiction in “That irresponsible person was the person responsible” or “The space available was less than the available space” . . . and why “He’s no teacher” is said of one who in fact is a teacher—though “She isn’t a teacher” refers to one who really isn’t a teacher? And aren’t these last two examples paralleled by “They’re no better than us” and “They aren’t better than us”?—where no better invites the inference that both parties are not very good, whereas not better lacks this inference? Note that in “They’re no more stupid than us,” there is no suggestion that either party is stupid.

Does your grammar help you understand the error in an editorial of a prestigious New York newspaper—the use of were instead of expected had been or (if not explicitly counterfactual) was—in “Mr. Starr should not have taken it unless he were willing to see it through”? And how about the may in “If they would’ve [for had] installed a smoke detector, this disaster may not have happened”—which makes even less sense than the televangelist’s might in “Let us pray that this child might receive healing”—itself pretty bizarre? Your grammar may not inform you what the two environments are in which ’d can stand for did and ’s can stand for does—or the context in which ’ve is pronounced with a weak vowel (e.g. had to’ve, may’ve) or where ’ve (like unstressed of) loses its “v” (e.g. coulda, musta); note how ’ve gets entirely lost in normal tempos in “You 0 gotta be joking.” What does your grammar tell you the stress conditions are for excepting an -ed that has normally got a silent “e” from becoming -èd before -ness and -ly, as in markedness and in resignedly and avowedly but not in offeredness or impassionedly?

Does your grammar clarify why ’d gets deleted in “You[’d] better”—as the result of its first being assimilated to certain following consonants, after which the like consonants (two b’s in you’ll better)
get simplified to a single one in allegro speaking tempos? If your grammar doesn’t clarify this, it can hardly guide you to an understanding of why, in uttering a past counterfactual if-clause, we lose, or rather avoid losing ’d in “If we[’d] been there yesterday” by strengthening it to had’ve, hadda, or just ’da (the British playwright, D. M. Storey writes “had have” in Home). We don’t mind the loss of ’d in an “unmarked” context like “You 0 better.” If the grounds for the strengthening of ’d to avoid its loss in a past counterfactual conditional are pronunciational, the grammatical teleology of the solution achieved lies in what linguists call constructional iconism—longer forms being needed to marker more semantically complex constructs. To sum up, your grammar ought to account for the cause and the grammatical purpose of hadda and ’da—i.e. had’ve—in past counterfactual hypothesis clauses.11

You can test your grammar’s logic by checking whether it sets up an entire category—a mythical “subjunctive mode”—on the basis of the (usually optional) re-spelling of a single verb—viz. of was to were—as in “I wish she were/was here.” (The re-spelling is obligatory in “Were she here now, . . . ,” but is of course not appropriate in “If he was at home yesterday, . . .”—an open conditional). You can test your grammar’s logic also by checking whether it calls the postposition ’s in the person I spoke to’s home town a “possessive” (does she “possess” her home town?) and even a “case” ending (if so, on what word?). While some grammars distinguish the sense of “Jane and Gerri’s books” from that of “Jane’s and Gerri’s books,” the ones the writer is familiar with do not clarify why “Don and my books” is un-English (“Don and I’s books” has been heard on television), though “Don’s and his books” is all right.12

Don’t readers sometimes wonder why grammarians and grammar gurus online and offline who are unaware of the revolution taking place in our understanding of the history of English and its grammar force our language into an alien mould? Wasn’t the dummy-of in outside of (which simply calques French hors de and is quite consistent with the English system) denounced simply for not being Germanic (Anglo-Saxon)? Don’t readers see any affinity between like—in “I need that like I need a hole in the head” or “We made it like they wanted it,” usages often denounced by grammarians—and comme in French comme il faut, etc.? Isn’t un-Germanic “He’s taller than me” French-like? Doesn’t a moment’s glance at the way French forms comparatives and superlatives suggest why English writers use the superlative in “That’s the best of the two”?11
Presented with organized examples of many of the problems discussed here, even children can deduce the rules that they unconsciously follow, though they of course cannot explain them.

Grammarians seem to think that English is a lineal descendent of Anglo-Saxon because both were spoken on the same territory, though such reasoning would mean that English in Ireland descends from Gaelic! The basic failing stems from relying on lists of building blocks—easily borrowed words—instead of the unborrowable architecture of the language. It stems from treating as unborrowed what are really calques—i.e. loan words (especially functor words) used in the functions or senses of words belonging to another language system; in short, it stems from treating such items on the basis of their derivation instead of on the basis of their functioning in the system. Like all new languages a-borning, Middle English got its words wherever it could; basic words are the most borrowable thing in languages. But the system of English grew out of the language spoken by all of the bishops and all but one of the nobility of England; it simply defies all sociolinguistic credibility to suppose that the language of the underclass should have (except with respect to prosodics, e.g. intonation) prevailed over that of the gentry; what mattered was the "quality," not the quantity, of ethnic groupings. The language of the Norman rulers bears a relation to Middle English that exhibits parallels with the way modern English is related to her many daughter languages in Africa, the Caribbean, and the Pacific.

Many grammarians lamely resort to referring to good English as "standard English," as though there were an English language academy (something rejected by Samuel Johnson as contrary to the freedom of the English) or other body authorized to "standardize" it, as though the editors of three of the best-known dictionaries in England subsequent to Johnson's hadn't declined to endorse a "standard(ized)" English! Of all people, grammarians should know enough about the genius of English to avoid taking refuge in such misleading rubbish as a standard English (an artifice designed to foster the hint of privileged access to penetralia that others are thus effectively excluded from?).

While it is quite in order to protest against usages that wantonly make the grammar inconsistent, it is also in order to accept usages that accord with the genius of a language (how can a usage be wrong in English if it is right in other languages, e.g. French?). It is a vain and losing battle to contend against technically natural processes like making lay a contraponent (active in form, passive or reflexive in sense) verb (as most people do), making loan a causative verb (as is also
widespread), and using less for fewer. Putting as between the two objects of consider and name (but not of call) simply follows the analogy of regard. But what of the tag, aren't I? It was re-formed from ain't I? at a time when it had been forgotten that an increasingly proscribed ain't derives from am not as well as aren't. The widespread usage of aren't I? by educated speakers can hardly paper over the evident fact that it violates every concept of system. The Irish have neatly solved the problem with am'nt I?—with -'nt for -n't, as in (increasingly rare) mayn't (pronounced “may’nt”) and creole did’nt.

Processual modalities are naturally ruled out of the prevailing static-reic approach to grammar. (English grammar has got eight processual modalities.) A good example is the TEMPORAL THROW-BACK in “If they were here now, . . . “ and in “If they had been here yesterday, . . . ” This processual modality makes a statement less assertive; in the surrealis environment, it conveys counterfactual force in real past or present time, dubitative or counterexpectative force in posterior time. To treat the process of throwing back time as a thing—a misnamed “subjunctive”—evinces a deplorably static philosophy of language.

When grammarians leave aside lists of unconnected items and concentrate on unborrowable systematic structures, they will abandon that mythical “subjunctive” that frightens school children and needlessly adds to the inventory of items that they’re expected to master. Consider the example given earlier: “It was for the good of the country that she not remain.” There are at least four anomalies here, including the lack of a sequencing of time forms (which an alleged subjunctive cannot explain, inasmuch as the long defunct subjunctive obeyed this principle); the absence of do-SUPPORT with not; the lack of an inflection on remain; and the optional use of should before remain. We explain the usage without further ado when we indicate the results of the processual modality of should-DELETION with the notation S (a virtual should) playing the same roles that the deleted should would play—viz. the roles of having an infinitive complement and of not taking do-SUPPORT when negated. S thus functions to preserve the structure and to obviate an unsystematic “subjunctive.” Any analysis requires stating that the construct occurs after expressions of necessity and volition and those of propriety and importance.

A similar technique eliminates unnecessary building blocks—e.g. contradictions like adverbial nouns (including “datives”) and substantival adjectives. So-called adverbial nouns are really adverbial prepositional phrases with deleted prepositions—indicated by P in “She wrote P me twice,” “We stayed P home,” and “They did it P my way”; most are measurements, as in “Yesterday, we worked P eight
hours.” The virtual preposition functions just like to, at, in, and for in the preceding examples. (We don’t need to know which prepositions have been deleted—only that P has got the properties of a deleted preposition. In languages with nominals inflected for case, P governs the case of its object nominal.) As for “substantival adjectives,” consider the good in “The good 0 is what we seek” and in “The good 0 do not always have the best luck”—where O represents deleted one and ones, respectively, or quasipronominal thing and people. Since O retains the properties of the deleted nominal, the difference between singular is and plural do in the examples just given goes with the fact that a predicate will agree with the grammatical number of the deleted subject that O virtualizes. Simple devices of this sort preserve grammatical structure and eliminate unnecessary and unsystematic elements. The longish booklet mentioned in n. 1 discusses the structure-preserving X that triggers postposing of the adjective in person responsible X and space available X (in both of which X = “for that [purpose]”) as well as in the goals already achieved X (where X = “by someone/something”). The rule—very different from the one German uses to avoid interposing the modifier of an adjective between it and the noun it modifies—can be inferred from a comparison of French and English examples: With une très longue table “a very long table,” contrast the French and English: une table plus longue de trois mètres “a table longer by three meters” (cf. “a table three meters in length).

The grammar is made more rational also with rules like the “raising” of not with cognitive verbs—which explains why “We didn’t think that many attended” means “We thought that few attended,” given that few = “not many.” (Only may also be raised; it is treated as a negative in other grammatical rules.) Consider raising also in mustn’t stay. It is no trivial matter that, unlike German muß nicht bleiben, the negative enclitic on mustn’t resembles the negatives in French il ne faut pas rester in that it and they negate the complementary infinitive of the main verb rather than the main verb itself. In short, not is “raised” from rester or stay to become attached to faut or must. Can one persuade oneself that this and many other parts of the French system could get borrowed into English the way basic words can?

The facts are highly compelling for those who possess sufficient mental flexibility to abandon a focus on the “material” provenance of, say, early English the which or musn’t—as well as the silly but widespread idea that basic words don’t get easily borrowed—so as to view the forms in terms of what they do grammatically.
NOTES

1The theoretical basis of the analysis of English that the writer holds to be correct is found in his *Essays on time-based linguistic analysis* (Oxford University Press, 1996), esp. Chaps. 6 and 10. The answers to the questions raised in the present writing—and many others that the usual grammars do not address and very likely are unaware of—are answered less technically in the forthcoming booklet by Orchid Land Publications, *How it has gone so wrong with English grammars.*

3The technical term for the reversals heard in “her and myself” [for non-conjoined subject “she” + non-conjoined subject “I”], in “to she and I,” and in reversals of the passivizing and posterior auxiliary verbs is W. May-erthaler’s *Principle of reversals in marked categories and environments.* See my *Essays on time-based linguistic analysis and Variation in the data* (Orchid Land Publications, 1992).

5One can also say has been standing here; French, German, and most other languages would use their presents here.

4Volitional (“be willing, insist on, persist in”), epistemic/presumptive (used as a past only in mind-reading quotations, as in “She would’ve arrived there by now, he mused”), and characterizing (stronger than habitual “used to”).

7Consider why Germans speaking English say “involve into” as well as “evolve into”?

8Contrast Who to?, Who by?, What with?, What on?, etc. Note that formal why? has got two senses—the causal and the purposive—which in ordinary educated English are, respectively, How come? and What for? (For what? is used to express an insinuation like the resignation conveyed in “What’s the point?” or “What good would that do?”). An example with a compound preposition is: “Whose house did his car stop in front of?”; cf. stilted “In front of whose house did his car stop?”

9See *Variation in the data*, pp. 104-108.

10Cf. in earlier English passing in passing strange and exceeding for current exceedingly as well as full in full well (see *Essays on time-based linguistic analysis*, p. 178).

11Both French and German “surcomposite” verb forms have different uses from the uses of their formal parallels in English.

12See *Variation in the data*, p. 100.

13While we cannot say “It need (to) be shortened,” there is no problem with “It need only be shortened”—which is comparable with “It need not be shortened.” Further, verb-subject order occurs after an initial construct containing only in “From only one person have they learned that” just as it does after one with no or not, as in “From not just one or two persons have they learned that.”
C.-J. Bailey is univ.-professor emeritus of the Technische Universität Berlin, having held the chair of English linguistics there. He took his AB from Harvard University with highest honors in Classical philology and has a master’s degree from Harvard and the University of Chicago as well as doctorates from the last-named and Vanderbilt University. Professor Bailey has an award from the University of Helsinki and is a member of the New York Academy of Sciences and a corresponding member of the Académie Européenne des Sciences, des Arts, et des Lettres; and a life fellow of the Netherlands Institute for Advanced Studies and of the International Society of Phonetic Sciences. He has studied or done research in England, Switzerland, Italy, and Micronesia and taught in the USA, Germany, South Africa, Israël, and Brunei.
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