

Tagungsbericht / Conference Report

18th International Morphology

Meeting 10–13 May 2018;

Budapest (Hungary)

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The International Morphology Meeting is a biennial event held alternately in Vienna and Budapest. The eighteenth edition took place in Budapest in May 2018 and it was organised by the Research Institute for Linguistics of the Hungarian Academy of Sciences, in collaboration with the Department of Theoretical Linguistics and the Department of English Linguistics of Eötvös Loránd University (ELTE). The meeting has invariably dealt with all aspects of morphology, with no preference for any particular framework or approach, albeit offering a leitmotif to orient authors who wish to give a presentation in the main session. This edition's main theme was "Paradigms in inflection and word formation synchronically and diachronically", which provided potential presenters with the opportunity to submit abstracts in a wide range of topics. In addition to the main session, the conference hosted three workshops: (1) Models and methods in morphology; (2) The learnability of complex constructions from a cross-linguistic perspective; (3) Morphological aspects of Uralic and Turkic languages. Out of a total of 147 submissions 45 abstracts were accepted for oral presentation in the main session and 24 in the workshops, while 13 abstracts were accepted for poster presentation. The traditionally international nature of the conference was reflected by the 3 continents and the 27 countries (Spain, China, Israel, Austria, Croatia, Turkey, Hungary, Canada, Norway, the UK, India, France, Germany, Russia, Czechia, the USA, Greece, the Netherlands, Italy, Serbia, Slovakia, Sweden, Azerbaijan, Georgia, Switzerland, Iceland, Portugal) where the participants came from.

The kaleidoscopic nature of the conference also manifested itself in the vast array of languages, topics, approaches and theoretical frameworks. The presentations in the main sessions referenced 35 different languages, among them both extensively studied ones like English, French, German, Italian, Latin or Russian and lesser known ones such as Laki, Abaza, Nenets, Twi, Guadeloupian Creole or Tsakonian. Due to the high number of talks and the extensive range of topics, an exhaustive overview of every paper is beyond the scope of this report; instead, an attempt is made to highlight some of the subject areas that were touched upon and some of the frameworks that

were used at the conference, after briefly recapitulating the keynotes and the workshops.

The comparability of the properties of derivationally related word families and inflection systems through empirical results was the topic of Mr Bonami's keynote. His observations suggest that it makes sense to talk about the paradigmatic organisation of derivational families because of two fundamental properties that are also found in inflection: their organisation into class systems has the same general character and the predictability of the members of a paradigm is also similar in several ways. Mr Ackerman investigated the mystery behind a native speaker's correct production of fully inflected and derived word forms that they have not encountered previously by providing a word-based perspective on morphological organisation and, somewhat in line with Mr Bonami's talk, taking a closer look at the interleaving of inflection and derivation. The templatic approach also played a key role in Ms Vihman's keynote, who focussed on the similarity between child templates (whole-word phonological patterns that adapt challenging adult word targets to a partially fixed or pre-set schema rooted in the child's existing production repertoire of vocal patterns) and adult word formation where whole-word patterns are similarly extended in a templatic manner to create innovative, productive word forms. She also noted, however, that adult templates do not draw on the relevant child processes in any evident way.

The learnability of complex constructions was the main focus of the workshop organised by Marcel Schlechtweg. The types of complex constructions employed across languages differ significantly but whether and how they differ in their learnability and what role cross-linguistic influence might play are questions that have seldom been addressed. A very favourable aspect of the workshop was that it brought together papers dealing with learnability in various contexts: some studies looked at bilingual scenarios, others focussed on learning foreign language constructions, but first language acquisition and artificial grammar learning were also on the agenda.

Darya Kavitskaya, Piibi-Kai Kivik, Öner Özçelik and Anne Tamm were the organisers of the workshop that targeted the agglutinating Uralic and Turkic languages, which have a long history of contact with each other as well as other languages in the region, such as Russian. As the call for papers put it, these languages exhibit verbal and nominal paradigms of varying complexity that present a challenge for theoretical approaches, second language teaching and computational linguistics. The papers drew upon examples from a number of languages: Estonian, Hungarian, Northern Mansi, Hill Mari, Moksha, Saami, Udmurt (Uralic); Chuvash, Dolgan, Khakas, Noghay, Turkish, Uyghur (Turkic). The questions discussed included affix ordering, complex verbal predications containing converbs and the typological relatedness of the two language families, among others.

The workshop organised by James P. Blevins raised questions concerning the relationship between linguistic theories and models. While earlier models used to be implementations of previously formulated theories, the recent past has seen highly successful models of language comprehension, production and acquisition that are not rooted in any well-defined or delineated linguistic theory; instead, theories only serve as a hypothesis space for them. This resulted in an asymmetrical relation, as the influence of theoretical innovations extended to the design of models more readily than the results obtained by models could possibly be rechannelled towards the construction of theories. Therefore, the workshop set out to complement the more theoretical papers of the general session with an overview of emerging modelling paradigms. The presentations featured such topics as the establishment of a correlation between quantitative measures of morphological informativity and a learning model; the optimisation of the efficiency of communicative codes in response to environmental pressures demonstrated through the naming of individuals within linguistic communities; languages as probabilistic communication systems exhibiting continuous variation within a multidimensional space of form-meaning contrasts; a realistic perspective for inflectional morphology based on optimal morphomic paradigms that emerge from realistic data and contain cells that are defined to capture systematic syncretisms; why some compound nouns are easier to interpret than others, and what determines the range of possible meanings for any given item; the benefits of the underspecification of ambiguous forms supported by event-related potentials; the investigation of the exponentiality of the distributions of words immediately following verbs and its consequences on eye-movement patterns; desemantisation of particles and their transformation into a functional element; Recurrent Neural Networks shedding light on dynamic paradigm-based representations of morphological structure in self-organising word memories.

A wide range of papers covered different aspects of language change relying on different frameworks. Raffaella Baechler showed the steps that could have led a highly inflected Old English to an almost uninflected Late Middle English by investigating the changes in the nominal paradigms of Early Middle English, which were not only driven by phonological or syntactic changes, but also by purely morphological ones such as the reorganisation of weak and strong inflection classes and the reanalysis of suffixes. More on the diachrony of Germanic inflectional changes was provided by Hans-Olav Enger and Helen Sims-Williams, who looked at the category of adjectives, historically classed together with nouns. They suggested that labelling the diachronic development of Old Norse adjectives as simplification was misleading: the adjectival paradigm might have had more cells in Old Norse, but there are more adjectival paradigms in Modern

Norwegian, and the loss of agreement morphology is responsible for the rise of inflection classes. Another diachronic take on Old Norse came from the comparison of gender assignment within a three-gender system in six Scandinavian language varieties, among them Jämtlandic, which is in the process of changing to a two-gender system. The authors, Briana Van Epps, Gerd Carling and Yair Sapir considered two main morphological drivers of change: derivational suffixes, which are generally associated with a particular gender, and inflectional classes. To investigate the effect of inflectional classes, they classified each cognate set according to its original Old Norse/Old Swedish stem class and looked at the likelihood for nouns in each class to change their gender. The study, according to which change was brought about by the interaction of several phonological and semantic factors, shed light on how various linguistic factors contribute to the loss of grammatical gender. Some other diachronically oriented papers had Romance languages in their focus. Based on a quantitative corpus analysis, with evidence for the ongoing process in Classical Latin, Petr Hrach showed that the Latin “iterative” suffix *-t-* had been very frequent and productive in Early Latin, but its atelic meaning gradually became blurred in Late Latin, eventually losing its function in Romance languages. Divergent allomorphic patterns displayed by three prefixes in Classical Latin were traced back to an underdetermined phonological change and to an overlapping sound change operating in roughly the same period by András Cser. Francesca Masini and Silvia Micheli explored the ongoing emergence of a *simil-* construction in Italian and analysed it within the framework of Construction Morphology, arguing that the new approximation construction is at the present stage in between compounding and derivation. Another paper that employs Construction Morphology was presented by Jan Radimský. He discussed the appearance of NN compounding in French, the productivity of which increased exponentially during the 20th century. The growing productivity of attributive and appositive compounding schemas facilitated the construction $[N_i N_j]_{Nk} \leftrightarrow [N_{i-head} N_{j-non-head}]_{Nk}$, which, in turn, made it possible to progressively extend the range of possible semantic relations between the head N_1 and the non-head N_2 . Romance historical morphology was in the focus of the talk given by Louise Esher, who, based on a detailed review of data from northern Occitan (Lemosin) varieties, showed that the diachronic behaviour of Lemosin syncretism patterns is most readily accounted for by treating the patterns as metamorphemes.

Microvariation and change were at the centre of Dimitra Melissaropoulou’s talk on the reorganisation of nominal inflection in Propontis Tsakonian. The data at hand seemed to support that the locus of change for the reorganisation of nominal inflection and analogical levelling processes in particular is the plural number, which she claimed to be the unmarked form, arguing against

the established thesis that singulars are said to be unmarked. Other diachronically oriented topics included Tamás Halm's paper on the reinterpretation of a possessive suffix as a negative affective demonstrative suffix in Hungarian and Florence Villoing's talk on the emergence of morphological schemas from inherited word formation paradigms in Guadeloupean Creole.

Some papers looked into various phonetic and phonological aspects of morphology. Fabian Tomaschek, Benjamin V. Tucker and R. Harald Baayen investigated the articulatory processes behind the fine phonetic details in stems undergoing morphological processes in English suffixed and unsuffixed verbs, based on the assumption that phonologically homophonous units may differ in their fine phonetic detail with respect to their morphological structures. They found that suffixes have strongly affected articulatory patterns in homophonous stems, contradicting traditional models of speech production, which posit that no lexical information is conveyed from lexical to post-lexical production processes. Thus, their findings may have important implications for models of speech production and speech synthesis. Quentin Dabouis and Sabine Arndt-Lappe revisited the morphological aspects of secondary stress assignment in English. There is convincing evidence that variation in secondary stress assignment is linked to how morphological structure is processed by speakers. In light of this, they presented a systematic multivariate analysis of how secondary stress reflects morphological structure. Their analysis was based on two datasets, which yielded evidence that secondary stress indeed reveals morphological structure; however, the effect is not limited to base-derivative relations, but also pertains to the internal structure of bases and the gradient nature of that structure, as well as to different options to segment multiply affixed words. The results are twofold. On the one hand, the role of transparent prefixes and segmentation options in stress assignment suggests that stress may not be computed with reference to one single morphological base for each word. On the other hand, the evidence for the role of opaque morphology suggests, contrary to traditional assumptions, that this morphological structure is indeed visible and relevant to phonology. The paper presented by Ingo Plag, Mirjam Ernestus, R. Harald Baayen and Fabian Tomaschek built on the assumption that higher-level lexical properties influence the fine phonetic details of speech. Using a Naive Discriminative Learning Model, they investigated the acoustic duration of word-final [s] in American English and its relationship with its various morphological functions and demonstrated that the differences in duration result from linguistic experience in relation to its morphological function. Durations decreased under uncertainty and increased under certainty, which shows that fine phonetic detail is affected by the extent to which the phonetic signal is associated with a certain morphological function. Frédéric Isel and Florence Villoing took a look at the role

of phonological size properties in French word formation. They investigated the nominal Verb-Noun (VN) compounding rule in French, which is considered by the language processing system as a morphological rather than a syntactic process, and therefore it is part of lexemic morphology. Linguistic studies have shown that VN compounding is constrained by phonological size restrictions that have some consequences on the selection of compound constituents, the verbal and nominal bases. They carried out a psycholinguistic experiment relying on MisMatch Negativity, which is considered as a marker of detection of change, in order to study the psychological reality of the linguistic hypothesis that French VN compounds have an optimal size of syllabic format (i.e., two or three syllables). They measured how sensitive native listeners of French are to the conditions of syllabic format optimality and they found that changes in the syllabic format gave rise to increased MMN as the format moved away from the optimal one.

Statistical modelling, information theory, Optimality Theory, event-related potentials, conditional entropy, Natural Morphology, Lexical Morphology, Paradigm Function Morphology, the Pattern and Restriction Theory, the Autonomous Morphology Hypothesis, Word and Pattern Morphology were some of the other tools and frameworks employed, while further topics included, among others, affix bundling, the typology of article inflection, predictability prefixation and morphological number.

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