

Morphology and the Web of Grammar

Stanford Studies in Morphology and the Lexicon

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Morphology and the Web of Grammar

Essays in Memory of
Steven G. Lapointe

edited by

C. Orhan Orgun

Peter Sells

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Preface*

LENORA TIMM

The present volume is an in important sense both a continuation of and a memorial to the work of Steven G. Lapointe, a theoretical linguist who called UC-Davis his academic home from 1992 until his death, far too young, in 1999. During those years Steven provided strong leadership to our diverse troupe of linguists in its pre-departmental stage of development, in his role as Program Director and Chair of the Graduate Group in Linguistics, launching several intellectual initiatives that would soon bear fruit. One of these was his proposal for a three-day workshop on that area of core linguistics near and dear to his heart—morphology and its articulation with syntax and other areas of linguistic structure and function.

With funding from UC-Davis's College of Letters and Science, the workshop was convened on the Davis campus in May 1995, bringing together a large number of both established and up-and-coming linguists with interests in morphology from a variety of perspectives. The result, three years later, was the CSLI publication co-edited by Steven and Davis colleagues Diane Brentari and Patrick Farrell: *Morphology and its Relation to Phonology and Syntax*. This work, which included a long introductory chapter by the three co-editors and an additional commentary by Steven, was among the last works he published, just several months before his death in February 1999.

The success of the workshop is evident in the resultant publication of somewhat unusual format in that it includes not only the papers that were read over the three-day event, but also the transcripts of the discussions among participants that followed each paper. As the editors explain in their introduction, their intention in so doing was “to create an opportunity for the participants

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to engage in a stimulating and thoughtful dialogue on the topics we were examining” (1998:1). The quality of these exchanges and the general bonhomie that prevailed throughout the meetings of these linguists come through clearly in reading that special volume.

It is thus fitting that there should be a sequel to this signal project conceived by Steven and that it should be dedicated to his memory. The volume in hand is in part the outcome of a second workshop on morphology hosted at UC-Davis in April, 2000, with several papers added by close colleagues of Steven. Taking up the editors’ role this time are Orhan Orgun, now an Associate Professor at Davis, and Peter Sells, Professor at Stanford University and a long-time colleague and close friend of Steven. Readers familiar with the first volume will notice that many of the authors in this volume also contributed to the 1998 work, though the topics addressed are new.

I believe that Steven would have been very pleased to see this second round of brainstorming about morphology to be taking place on the Davis campus, and would have had plenty to say about it! In any event, both the workshop and the second volume issuing from it bear witness to his intellectual influence on Davis colleagues, and others around the world. Steven was taken from us just as he was reaching his scholarly ascendancy and confirming his stature as a well-known and respected theoretical linguist. It is our hope that this volume will further extend his intellectual legacy within the community of theoretical linguists both in the U.S. and abroad.

Acknowledgments

The editors would like to thank all the Linguistics faculty at UC-Davis for their help in editing and preparing this book, as well as colleagues at Davis and Stanford for reviewing individual chapters. We are grateful to Cindy Goldberg-Lapointe for her help with the list of Steven's publications. Jeremy Goard helped in preparing materials for the introduction. In the later stages of production, Vineeta Chand provided invaluable assistance in creating references and indices.

Introduction

C. ORHAN ORGUN AND PETER SELLS

Steven G. Lapointe was an active linguist for over two decades, from the late 1970s to the late 1990s; his publications span the 25 years from 1976 to 2001. In this time span, the status of morphology in grammar and its importance to formal linguists might seem to many to have had a rather shaky position. There were few linguists who considered morphology an independent module worthy of study on its own, and there have been – and continue to be – attempts to reduce it to syntax, or to divide it up somehow between syntax and phonology. Steven maintained his interest in morphology as its own entity throughout this period, at the same time paying a great deal of attention to the interaction of morphology with other components of grammar, possibly more than anyone else. His early work included studies of morphology as it interacts with aspects of word form: he published work on topics ranging from the realization of clitics to intricate analysis of clitic/affix realization at edges of phrases. He always had a strong interest in psycholinguistics, lexical semantics, and language learning. The most pervasive thread in his work, however, was probably the interaction of morphology with syntax. In his studies of this topic, he was particularly attracted to nontransformational models, in particular those with a lexicalist foundation, and this remains as a salient part of his legacy. His work in this area includes phenomena involving agreement, clitics, gerunds, auxiliaries. His later work on dual lexical categories combines his interests and has given rise to several follow-up papers. In his last few years, Steven also developed an interest in Optimality Theoretic approaches to morphology as a way of approaching the interface between morphology and syntax, and morphology and phonology.

In 2000, we organized a posthumous workshop in Steven's honor, to which we invited participants whose works spanned the range of Steven's linguistic interest. This gave rise to a delightfully diverse and lively set of presentations, during and after which we also found that all our participants had been good friends with Steven. Bringing together these close friends and colleagues to discuss issues that he found stimulating was a great way to remember him and promote a continued interest in the place of morphology in the grammar.

We now present this volume in his memory. The collection includes some papers that were presented in preliminary form at the workshop, as well as additional contributions solicited in the intervening years. One can loosely divide Steven's outlook on morphology (and thus, on the contributions in this volume) into three categories: works focusing on form, function, or meaning.

Contributions to this volume on word form include Hyman and Orgun's study of cyclic effects, Sadock's study of pronoun form in English conjoined phrases, and Stump's thorough study of paradigms and their theoretical significance. The first two of these papers use Optimality Theory, as Steven did in his later studies of Korean morphology.

Other contributions address the function of morphology in its interaction with syntax, perhaps Steven's primary interest. These contributions by Farrell and by Yoon focus on the theoretical value of dual lexical categories, which can fairly be considered a field of research defined by Steven Lapointe. Both propose rather parallel extensions of the theory proposed by Steven, to account for a broader range of data types than had previously been considered. Blevins addresses similar issues of mixed categories, from a different perspective, in the analysis of English gerunds, through an underspecification analysis. Spencer's paper presents a cross-linguistically motivated wide-ranging approach to the notion of 'mixed category', arguing for a much larger typology than has been previously supposed, within which the most familiar types of mixed category are points on a landscape. Sells' paper addresses the morphosyntactic expression of syntactic features, and how grammatical information can be recovered in cases of limited morphological resources.

We are pleased to include papers on semantics, another of Steven's interests. The chapters by Ojeda and Grivičić, and Carlson, are concerned with the lexical semantics of collective-denoting forms, and the morpho-syntactic construction of meaning. Finally, Wasow, Perfors and Beaver address the issue of ambiguity – why do languages tolerate ambiguous forms?

We briefly summarize each paper below.

Larry Hyman and Orhan Orgun argue that, contrary to common assumption, cyclicity need not be motivated by the tendency for morphologically complex forms to reflect phonological properties of the corresponding base forms. As evidence, they cite cases from Bantu in which the effect of the cycle is to obscure the similarity among root allomorphs of related

words. The Bantu case involves a pervasive conflict arising between the applicative *-il-* and causative *-j-* suffixes: both a causativized applicative [[[ROOT] APPL] CAUS] and an applicativized causative [[[ROOT] CAUS] APPL] can only be realized in the order *-il-j-*. Since the CAUS-APPL structure is more frequent, it is constantly contradicted by the surface linear order APPL-CAUS of the morphs. In Hyman (1994), semantic, morphological and phonological arguments were presented that the sequence should be derived cyclically via interfixation. Here, the authors develop an analysis in the framework of Sign Based Morphology (Orgun 1996) and extend it to additional cases.

Jim Blevins presents an analysis of English gerunds and Welsh verbal nouns which underspecifies these forms underlyingly for verbal or nominal properties, that underspecification being resolved in a given syntactic context, as a verb or a noun, or even as an adjective in the case of English gerund forms (the *-ing* form) used as a prenominal modifier. He presents his account against the backdrop of other recent approaches to mixed categories, which all ‘overspecify’ the form in the analysis of a mixed category, arguing that the underspecification approach provides a simple and natural account of a very common type of mixed category.

Gregory Stump argues that there is considerable evidence that paradigms have a fundamental role in grammar, beyond any pre-theoretical heuristic value. His morphological theory incorporates the notion of paradigm function, which allows direct reference to the cells in a given paradigm, and he argues that a theory of this sort is able to express a range of significant generalizations inexpressible by theories allowing no direct reference to the cells of a paradigm. He goes on further to show that the definition of a language’s morphological system may involve rules of inference which directly enforce similarities among the word forms occupying particular cells within the same paradigm or in distinct paradigms. Drawing upon evidence from Breton, Latin, Luganda, and Sanskrit, he proposes a unified formal account of the rule types making essential reference to the paradigm.

Jerry Sadock investigates the problem of English case in conjoined NPs, including the “spurious nominative” (*between you and I*) often associated with hypercorrection. Using data gathered from various sources, he argues that the choice of pronoun form is conditioned by such factors as adjacency to the case-assigning element, and whether the pronoun constitutes a semantic subject (in the sense of Dowty 1982). He considers how an analysis couched in terms of Optimality Theory could treat the interaction between the relevant factors, noting the need for capturing complex interactions between grammatical, sociolinguistic and style factors.

Under the heading of “mixed categories”, Andrew Spencer brings together a large and diverse set of phenomena, with the central aim of better understanding the nature of lexical representations and their relationship to syntax.

In the proposed analysis, a mixed category occurs when any of the prototypical morphological, syntactic, or semantic features of word classes are mismatched. He details six logically possible types of mismatch, and suggests that phenomena not previously considered as mixed categories should be brought under this general theory. For example, systematic semantic polysemy (e.g., the container and content meanings of *cup*) reflects identical morphology and syntax, but differing semantics. Most significantly, many examples of inflection can be viewed as asyntactic derivation, constituting a mixed category differing in semantic and morphological features. With the proposed typology in mind, Spencer suggests that mixed categories are in fact very common, and that a sophisticated account of the lexicon will not focus on the issue of a word's lexical category, but instead consider the many ways that different aspects of a word interact with other parts of the grammar.

Patrick Farrell argues for analyzing the prepositional small clause (PrepSC) in English as a Dual Lexical Category (DLC; Lapointe 1993). He shows first that the relevant construction is a constituent, and then that it displays the internal syntax of a PP but the external syntax of a DP. He addresses other potential descriptions of a PrepSC, for example, as a subject-containing PP (Stowell 1983) or a type of ACC-*ing* construction, and shows that neither of these accounts correctly predicts the distribution or internal syntax. Finally, he argues on the basis of his DLC analysis of PrepSCs that two principles proposed by Lapointe be revised: removing the restriction on DLCs to major lexical categories, and lifting the requirement that they only involve overt morphology. (See also Yoon's paper in this regard.)

James Yoon also examines morphosyntactic mismatches under Lapointe's DLC theory, in which a head can project two categories, with respect to its internal and its external syntactic properties. Yoon argues that there is no difference in kind between derivationally-mixed categories and inflectionally-mixed ones. For inflection, he proposes that verbal inflection is the phrasal head with respect to external syntax, while the root lexeme the head is with respect to internal syntax. He presents evidence from Korean inflectional suffixes to challenge the assumption that external syntax always makes reference to the category of the root, and then supports this argument by examining languages whose roots have been analyzed as category-neutral. He proposes revising the DLC theory so that inflectional features can be part of such asymmetric categories.

Peter Sells' paper addresses the question of the morphological expression of clausal information in Swedish, focussing on cases where an intuitively finite clause appears with no finite verb. He presents an approach to the syntax-morphology interface building an analysis in the framework of Lexical-Functional Grammar, further developed using Optimality Theory, into a bidirectional theory which allows theoretical construction of notions

like ‘expression’ and ‘recoverability’, as part of a correspondence theory of the relation between clausal grammatical information and its morphosyntactic expression. He argues that certain aspects of clausal information must be directly expressed, while other aspects need only be recoverable from the overt expression. For example, a nominative subject signals a finite clause, but nominative *is* (typically) not considered an expression of finiteness itself.

Almerindo Ojeda and Tamara Grivičić discuss the semantics of collective terms in Serbo-Croatian. Specific forms of nouns name individuals, while collective forms name collections of individuals. These semantics interact with the meaning of singular (*x* taken one at a time) and of plural (*x* taken in groups of two or more). The authors go on to provide a precise mereological account of the compositional semantics of the various forms that the morphology of the language provides, and they also discuss the relationship between collective and mass interpretations.

Greg Carlson addresses the question of how morphologically unmarked forms can have particular meanings, such as the familiar situation in which an unmarked noun phrase is interpreted as an indefinite. He develops an account of this as part of a more general study of the way that meanings are built up first from the meanings of verbs, to the meanings of verb phrases (*V*'s), to the meanings of sentences. He proposes that verb meanings are essentially classifications of event-types, and that noun meanings are properties. Combining a verbal and a nominal meaning at the *V'* level also produces an event-type meaning, more specific than the event-type of the verb's meaning; this is only possible with a weak indefinite noun phrase (which may be morphologically unmarked), or with noun-incorporation, where a noun and verb combine directly without any phrasal structure. All other noun phrases must be combined at the sentence level, where the more familiar kinds of propositional-type meanings are assigned.

Tom Wasow, Amy Perfors and David Beaver discuss the issue of ambiguity – why do all languages seem to show ambiguous forms and structures, if ambiguity would be an impediment to efficient communication? They offer various considerations that would favor ambiguity, of which we just mention two. One is that in a heterogeneous speech community, not all speakers may have exactly the same form-meaning mappings, but it might be advantageous for any given community member to be able to interact with all others. Hence a given form might have more than one meaning. The authors also propose that an important factor in language use is a constraint on morpheme length which favors shorter morphemes, even at the expense of ambiguity; they note that often in cases of ambiguous forms, one sense is much more frequent or salient than the other, allowing preservation of the ambiguity.

The volume ends with a complete list of Steven's publications from 1976 to 2001. This list provides one view of the legacy Steven left to the field. We hope that this volume provides another, expressing the sincere gratitude of the friends and colleagues who were touched by his work, and by Steven himself.

C. Orhan Orgun
Peter Sells
April 2005

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