How Atypical is Non-Concatenation?

Workshop convenors: Lívia Körtvélyessy, Salvador Valera, Pavol Štekauer

Background

Atypicality refers to a phenomenon that deviates from an established or generally accepted standard. In the field of word-formation, there is a long-standing tradition of dividing word-formation processes into two groups. Marchand (1960/1969), for example, distinguishes between grammatical syntagmas (formed through compounding, prefixation, suffixation, zero derivation, and back-formation) and those that are not formed as grammatical syntagmas (e.g., expressive symbolism, blending, clipping, rime and ablaut gemination, and word-manufacturing).

Four decades later, Lieber (2004) proposed a classification of English word-formation processes based on productivity, distinguishing between major processes (compounding, affixation, conversion) and minor processes (blending, clipping, back-formation), although this criterion can be called into question due to the rapid proliferation of blends and clipped words in recent decades.

A different perspective is offered by Natural Morphology (e.g., Mayerthaler 1981; Dressler 2005), where 'natural' means cognitively simple, easily accessible (especially to children), elementary, and therefore universally preferred. According to Natural Morphology, the most natural morphological constructions are those based on constructional iconicity – i.e., constructions in which more meaning is represented by more form. Dressler (1987: 105, 116; 2005: 269) notes that, based on this criterion, "the amount of naturalness decreases … from affixation over modification, then conversion to subtraction." From this point of view, concatenative morphology is natural and typical, while non-concatenative morphology can be perceived as atypical, deviating from the standard types of word-formation in the languages of the world (see also Štekauer, Valera, and Körtvélyessy 2012).

The types of word-formation processes covered by this 'atypical morphology' are, however, a matter of debate. Views differ. While Szymanek (1988), for example, identifies four types of non-concatenative processes: reduplication, internal modification (vowel, consonant, or mixed), conversion, and back-formation, Lieber & Štekauer's *The Cambridge Handbook of Derivation* includes two chapters devoted to non-concatenative word-formation – one on reduplication, and another on a range of other processes: templatic morphology, subtractive morphology, augmentative morphology, and autosegmental affixation.

The above-mentioned lists of non-concatenative processes raise doubts when evaluated against the naturalness criterion. As shown in Štekauer, Valera, and Körtvélyessy (2012), reduplication (both full and partial) can express a range of word-formation meanings by extending the form of the word-formation base, thereby satisfying the principle of constructional iconicity. Consequently, this source identifies the following non-concatenative processes: conversion, stress shift, tone/pitch change, and internal modification, along with subtractive processes such as back-formation.

Similarly, the inclusion of blending (see Lieber above, as well as Bauer, Lieber, and Plag 2013) is questionable, as it is evidently a concatenation of two (albeit formally reduced) words similar to compounding. We can therefore agree with these authors that including clipped words and blends may pose "a challenge to certain theories."

Focus

This workshop aims to take up that challenge, because the scope of concatenative morphology is a crucial – but not the only – problem faced by non-concatenative morphology. Much more needs to be done in terms of the typology of non-concatenative processes, their roles in various morphological frameworks, their productivity, and their treatment in psycholinguistic and sociolinguistic research. In addition, their documentation across individual languages, language families, and linguistic areas remains uneven and fragmented.

All in all, this area of word-formation is clearly underexplored. This is also evident, among other things, from the absence of any representative handbook – in contrast to concatenative morphology, which is mapped in Lieber & Štekauer's *The Oxford Handbook of Compounding* and *The Oxford Handbook of Derivation*, and in Müller, Ohnheiser, Olsen & Rainer's *Word-Formation: An International Handbook of the Languages of Europe*.

The focus of the proposed workshop is shaped by the above-mentioned areas, all of which require significantly more attention. While we realize that a single workshop cannot fill this gap, we do believe that it can serve as a catalyst for broader discussion on this atypical area of word-formation.

References

Bauer, Laurie, Rochelle Lieber & Ingo Plag. 2013. *The Oxford Reference Guide to English Morphology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Dressler, Wolfgang U. 1987. Word formation as part of natural morphology. In Wolfgang U. Dressler, Willi Mayerthaler, Oswald Panagl & Wolfgang U. Wurzel (eds.), *Leitmotifs in Natural Morphology*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins; 99-126.

Dressler, Wolfgang U. 2005. Word-Formation in Natural Morphology. In: Pavol Štekauer & Rochelle Lieber (eds.), *Handbook of Word-Formation*. Dordrecht: Springer; 267-284.

Lieber, Rochelle. 2004. *Morphology and Lexical Semantics*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Lieber, Rochelle & Pavol Štekauer (eds.). 2012. *The Oxford Handbook of Compounding*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Lieber, Rochelle & Pavol Štekauer (eds.). 2015. *The Oxford Handbook of Derivational Morphology*. Oxford: Oxford University Press.

Marchand, Hans. 1969 [1960]. *The Categories and Types of Present-Day English Word-Formation*. *A Synchronic-Diachronic Approach*, 2nd ed. München: Carl Beck.

Mayerthaler, Willi. 1981. *Morphologische Natürlichkeit*. Wiesbaden: Akademische Verlagsgesellschaft Athenaion.

Müller, Peter O., Ingeborg Ohnheiser, Susan Olsen & Franz Rainer. 2015-16. *Word-Formation: An International Handbook of the Languages of Europe*. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton.

Štekauer, Pavol, Salvador Valera & Lívia Kőrtvélyessy. 2012. *Word-Formation in the World's Languages: A Typological Survey*. Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.

Szymanek, Bogdan. 1988. *Categories and Categorization in Morphology*. Lublin: Redakcja Wydawnictw KUL.