6-2005

Review of: Yearbook of Morphology 1999

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This Yearbook volume contains eleven articles, five on diachronic aspects of morphology, the rest dealing with miscellaneous topics. The data derives mainly from Romance, Germanic, and Slavic languages.

MARTIN HASPELMATH is guest editor for the section on diachronic morphology. The articles here focus mainly on the motivation behind morphological change, or on the notion of which formal elements in a word (stem vs. affix, phonological stem trait vs. inflection) actually convey semantic content. ANDREW CARSTAIRS-McCARTHY’s ‘Umlaut as signans and signatum: Synchronic and diachronic aspects’ (1–23) explores an instance where a phonological trait has come to express informational content. In ‘What sort of thing is a derivational affix? Diachronic evidence from Romanian and Spanish’ (25–52), MARTIN MAIDEN makes a similar argument for the function of derivational affixes, which, contrary to some claims (cf. Robert Beard, Lexeme morpheme base morphology, New York: SUNY Press, 1995), are shown not to be semantically vacuous. In ‘The development of “junk”: Irregularization strategies of have and say in the Germanic languages’ (53–74), DAMARIS NÜBLING analyzes how these originally weak verbs became irregular across the various Germanic languages. ELISABETTA MAGNI’s ‘Paradigm organization and lexical connections in the development of the Italian passato remoto’ (75–96) explores cognitive motivations for the development of irregular preterite forms. ELKE RONNENBERGER-SIBOLD’s ‘On useful darkness: Loss and destruction of transparency by linguistic change, borrowing, and word creation’ (97–120) likewise deals with speaker awareness of phonological processes—a factor that manifests itself in speaker preference for specific types of word formation.

The volume’s remaining six articles cover a range of topics, most dealing with cognitive processing. MARCO BARONI’s ‘The representation of prefixed forms in the Italian lexicon’ (121–52) uses the distribution of intervocalic [s] and [z] allophones in Northern Italian dialects as evidence for whether speakers have come to regard certain historically prefixed stems as monomorphic. In ‘On inherent inflection feeding derivation in Polish’ (153–83), BOZENA CETNAROWSKA argues that in certain Polish word forms derivation must be able to follow as well as precede inflection. This raises interesting questions about the notion of lexical stem. In ‘The processing of interfixed German compounds’ (184–220), WOLFGANG U. DRESSLER, GARY LIBBIN, JACQUELINE STARK, CHRISTIANE PONS, and GONIA JAREMA explore the cognitive processing of compound words such as leben-s-lang ‘life-long’. ANDREW HIPPISLEY’S ‘Word formation rules in a default inheritance framework: A network morphology account of Russian personal nouns’ (221–61) provides an excellent encapsulation of network morphology, as well as a convincing account of how affix rivalry and exceptionality can be simultaneously accommodated in a theory of word-form creation. STEVEN G. LAPOINTE’S ‘Stem selection and OT’ (263–97) gives an optimality theory account of stem and affix allomorphy, based on data from a variety of languages, including Korean and Cherokee. The book’s final article, IAN MENDL’S ‘Verb classifiers as noun incorporation in Israeli sign language’ (299–319), argues that certain hand gestures bear striking similarities to the properties of certain types of noun incorporation. This excellent study is a welcome inclusion here for the new dimension it adds to understanding the essence of morphological structure shorn of the epiphenomenon of sound.

All of these articles reflect the ‘cutting edge’ of morphological research, making this volume, like its predecessors in the same series, an important acquisition for any linguist or librarian serious about keeping pace with morphological theory. [EDWARD J. VAJDA, Western Washington University.]


The work undergoing review is another in the valuable Yearbook of morphology (YM) series, begun in 1988 and emanating from Vrije Universiteit in Amsterdam. The YM volumes serve as testimony to the renaissance of morphology, which seems to be flourishing, to judge by the proliferation of interesting publications listed in the bibliographies of these works. Some past tomes of YM have dealt with diachronic issues, such as the development of complicated morphological systems and the interfacing of phonology and morphology (YM 1999), and the interrelationships between morphology and syntax as well as the formalisms necessary for inflectional paradigms (YM 2000).

Most of this issue deals with preverbs and is edited by Geert Booij and (guest editor) ANS VAN KEMENAIDE; however, there are two articles and two book reviews on other morphological subjects, edited by Booij and Jaap van Marle. My remarks focus on three of the selections plus the well-written introduction. These have been selected in accordance with my background and interests. I conclude with a listing of the remaining titles and authors.

The editors affirm in their ‘Preverbs: An introduction’ (1–11) that most linguists use the term preverb as ‘a cover term for preverbal words and preverbal prefixes’ (1). One may use German zukommen ‘to approach’ as illustrative, as in Er kam auf dem Auto