

# Universals of Word Formation

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# Outline of the argument

- Intro: morphological universals?
- Constraints on the interaction between syntax and word formation
- Accessibility of word-internal structure
- Lexical integrity and construction morphology

# Greenberg tradition

- Inflection is peripheral to derivation
- Derivation-inherent inflection-contextual inflection (Booij 1993, 1996)
- Order of tense-mood-aspect (Bybee 1985)
- Asymmetries in morphological marking (form-meaning relations)
- “there are practically no substantive i.e. absolute universals with regard to morphology” (Helmbrecht 2004)

# Constraints on syntax-word formation interaction

- No Phrase constraint
- Lexical Integrity Hypothesis

# No Phrase Constraint

- Cf. Lieber & Scalise 2006
- Phrases can be parts of words
- [oude mannen]<sub>NP</sub> [huis]<sub>N</sub><sub>N</sub>
- Syntactic module and morphological module operate in parallel fashion

# Lexical Integrity Principle

“The syntax neither manipulates nor has access to the internal structure of words”  
(Anderson 1992: 84)

manipulation:

- a. movement, deletion, or addition of word-internal material
- b. access to word-internal structure

# Lexical integrity as test for wordhood

(1) Jan door-dacht het probleem / \*Jan  
dacht het probleem door

‘John thought about the problem thoroughly’

(2) Jan dacht door over het probleem ‘John  
continued thinking about the problem’

# Apparent counterexamples

Number agreement in Spanish copulative compounds

poeta-pintor 'poet-painter'

dos poetas-pintores

# Gapping in complex words

mono- and polysyllabic

inter- and intranational uses

homo- and heterosexual relations

Portuguese

pré- e pós-guerra ‘pre- and post-war’

segura- mas lentamente [= seguramente  
mas lentamente] ‘surely but slowly’

# Inflected forms as part of complex words

Inherent inflection feeds word formation  
(Booij 1993, 1996; Bauer 2001);

Hungarian (Kiefer 1992)

*tévé-t néz* 'television watch' = separable complex verb

# Accessibility of word-internal structure

Georgian (Harris, to appear)

sam	tit-moč'r-il-i	(k'ac)
three.obl	finger-cut.off-ptcp-nom	man.nom
'(a man) with three fingers cut off'		

sam-i	tit-moč'r-il-i
three-nom	finger-cut.off-ptcp-nom
'three (men, people, statues) with fingers cut off'	

# Accessibility (2)

mojeho (gen. sg. masc.) bratrowe (nom.pl.)  
džěći (nom.pl)

My brother's children (Corbett 1987)  
(bratr = brother)

hard worker / hard-e werk-er

transformational grammarian (Spencer  
1988, Beard 1991)

# Context-dependent morphology

Het schip brak in drie-en

The ship broke into three-*en*

‘The ship broke into three pieces’

wij / ons drie-en

we / us three-*en*

‘the three of us (subj. / obj.)’

# pluralized (?) numerals

met ons / jullie / hun drie-en  
with us / you / their three-*en*  
'the three of us /you / them together'

met zijn drie-en  
with his three-*en*  
'the three of us / you / them'

*temporal expressions*

bij zess-en  
at six-*en* 'at about six o'clock'  
na tien-en  
after ten-*en* 'after ten o'clock'

# Collective construction

[[met]<sub>P</sub> [z'n [[x]<sub>Numeral</sub> -en]<sub>N</sub>]<sub>NP</sub>]<sub>PP</sub>

with his x-PL

'the x of us / you / them'

# Against a-morphous morphology

- Phonology needs access to word-internal structure (syllabification, stress)
- Morphological processes need access to word-internal structure (paradigmatic morphology)
- Word families (family size effect)
- Restricted semantic scope

# Restricted semantic scope, compounds

[A [NN]<sub>N</sub>]<sub>NP</sub>

visuele informatie-verwerking

‘visual information processing’

intellectuele eigendoms-rechten

‘intellectual property rights’

taalpolitieke beleids-makers

‘language politics policy makers’

electronische reproductie-rechten

‘electronic reproduction rights’

wetenschappelijke kennis-cyclus

‘scientific knowledge cycle’

# Restricted semantic scope, derived words

[A [N-suffix]<sub>N</sub>]<sub>NP</sub>

wetenschappelijke onderzoek-er

‘scientific research-er’

[A [A-suffix]<sub>N</sub>]<sub>NP</sub>

wetenschappelijke deskundig-heid

‘scientific expert-ise’

digitale vaardig-heid

digital competenc-e

# Word-internal restricted scope

pro-Pakistaan-s-e extremisten 'pro-Pakistan  
extremists'

tussen-gemeent-elijke oplossingen 'inter-  
council solutions'

# Construction morphology

“In Construction Grammar, the grammar represents an inventory of form-meaning-function complexes, in which words are distinguished from grammatical constructions only with regard to their internal complexity. The inventory of constructions is not unstructured; it is more like a map than a shopping list. Elements in this inventory are related through inheritance hierarchies, containing more or less general patterns.” (Michaelis and Lambrecht 1996: 216)

Construction morphology: Booij (2005a,b)

# Grammaticalization

Grammaticalization does not affect words in isolation but words in specific syntactic constructions (Heine, Traugott)

Grammaticalization: syntax > morphology

Complex words exhibit constructional properties

# Words

Both words and phrasal constructions are domains over which certain generalizations can be stated, and hence the domain of 'word' and 'phrase' are both essential for the analysis of natural languages (Blevins 2006)

# Lexical integrity = No manipulation

- universal: all languages distinguish between words and phrases
- the no manipulation constraint on words is nothing else but the substance of the distinction between words and phrases
- Lexical integrity defines the notion 'word cohesiveness'

# Thank you

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