THE SYNTAX–MORPHOLOGY INTERFACE

Syncretism – where a single form serves two or more morphosyntactic functions – is a persistent problem at the syntax–morphology interface. It results from a ‘mismatch’ whereby the syntax of a language makes a particular distinction, but the morphology does not. This pioneering book provides the first full-length study of inflectional syncretism, presenting a typology of its occurrence across a wide range of languages. The implications of syncretism for the syntax–morphology interface have long been recognized: it argues either for an enriched model of feature structure (thereby preserving a direct link between function and form), or for the independence of morphological structure from syntactic structure. This book presents a compelling argument for the autonomy of morphology, and the resulting analysis is illustrated in a series of formal case studies within Network Morphology. It will be welcomed by all linguists interested in the relation between words and the larger units of which they are a part.

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<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Page</th>
<th>Title</th>
<th>Authors</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>66</td>
<td>English auxiliaries: structure and history</td>
<td>Anthony R. Warner</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>67</td>
<td>Grammatical theory in the United States from Bloomfield to Chomsky</td>
<td>P. H. Matthews</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>68</td>
<td>Negative and positive polarity: a binding approach</td>
<td>Liljana Progovac</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>69</td>
<td>Ergativity</td>
<td>R. M. W. Dixon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>70</td>
<td>The syntax and pragmatics of anaphora</td>
<td>Yan Huang</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>71</td>
<td>Information structure and sentence form: topic, focus, and the mental representation of discourse referents</td>
<td>Knud Lambrecht</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>72</td>
<td>Principles of English stress</td>
<td>Luigi Burzio</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>73</td>
<td>A performance theory of order and constituency</td>
<td>John A. Hawkins</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>74</td>
<td>Historical syntax in cross-linguistic perspective</td>
<td>Alice C. Harris and Lyle Campbell</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>75</td>
<td>The syntax of negation</td>
<td>Liliane Hazegman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>76</td>
<td>Syntax and parsing</td>
<td>Paul Gorrel</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>77</td>
<td>Italian syntax and universal grammar</td>
<td>Guglielmo Cinque</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>78</td>
<td>Restrictiveness in case theory</td>
<td>Henry Smith</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>79</td>
<td>International morphology</td>
<td>D. Robert Laad</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>80</td>
<td>The raising of predicates: predicative noun phrases and the theory of clause structure</td>
<td>Andrea Moro</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>81</td>
<td>Historical linguistics and language change</td>
<td>Roger Lass</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>82</td>
<td>A notional theory of syntactic categories</td>
<td>John M. Anderson</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>83</td>
<td>Possession: cognitive sources, forces and grammaticalization</td>
<td>Bernd Heine</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>84</td>
<td>The dynamics of focus structure</td>
<td>Nomt Erteschik-Shir</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>85</td>
<td>Phonological representations: their names, forms and powers</td>
<td>John Coleman</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>86</td>
<td>Slavic prosody: language change and phonological theory</td>
<td>Christina V. Bethin</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>87</td>
<td>Creole genesis and the acquisition of grammar: the case of Haitian Creole</td>
<td>Claire Lefebvre</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>88</td>
<td>Lexical strata in English: morphological causes, phonological effects</td>
<td>Heinz Giegerich</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>89</td>
<td>Morpheme order and semantic scope: word formation and the Athapaskan verb</td>
<td>Keren Rice</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>90</td>
<td>Morphology and language use</td>
<td>April McMahon</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>91</td>
<td>Lexical phonology and the history of English</td>
<td>Matthew Y. Chen</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>92</td>
<td>Tone Sandhi: patterns across Chinese dialects</td>
<td>Gregory T. Stump</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>93</td>
<td>Inflectional morphology: a theory of paradigm structure</td>
<td>Joanna Bybee</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>94</td>
<td>Phonology and language use</td>
<td>Laurie Bauer</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>95</td>
<td>Morphological productivity</td>
<td>Thomas Ernst</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>96</td>
<td>The syntax of adjuncts</td>
<td>Elizabeth Cross Traugott and Richard B. Dasher</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>97</td>
<td>Regularity in semantic change</td>
<td>Maya Hickmann</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>98</td>
<td>Children’s discourse: Person, space and time across languages</td>
<td>Diane Blakemore</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>99</td>
<td>Relevance and linguistic meaning: The semantics and pragmatics of discourse markers</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
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The Syntax–Morphology Interface

A Study of Syncretism
THE SYNTAX–MORPHOLOGY INTERFACE

A STUDY OF SYNCRETISM

MATTHEW BAERMAN
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DUNSTAN BROWN
University of Surrey

GREVILLE G. CORBETT
University of Surrey
To our families
Contents

Preface ... xv
List of abbreviations and symbols ... xvii

1 Introduction
1.1 History of the notion ... 1
1.2 Delimiting the notion of syncretism ... 3
1.3 Scope of the investigation ... 4
1.3.1 Typological methodology ... 7
1.3.2 Selection of forms ... 8
1.4 Accidental versus systematic homophony ... 9
1.5 Using this book ... 10
1.5.1 Supporting materials ... 10
1.5.2 Glossing conventions ... 11
1.5.3 Structure of the book ... 12

2 Characteristics of syncretism
2.1 Syncretic paradigms ... 13
2.1.1 Types ... 13
2.1.2 Implications ... 17
2.2 Domains of comparison ... 17
2.2.1 Morphological classes ... 17
2.2.2 Feature values ... 19
2.3 Morphological characteristics ... 23
2.4 A typology of interpretations ... 27
2.4.1 Syncretism as neutralization ... 28
2.4.2 Syncretism as uninflectedness ... 30
2.4.3 Canonical syncretism ... 33
2.5 Conclusion ... 35

3 Cross-linguistic typology of features
3.1 Case ... 38
3.1.1 Introduction ... 38
3.1.2 Types of case syncretism ... 40
Contents

3.1 Conclusion 56

3.2 Person 57
3.2.1 Introduction 57
3.2.2 Patterns of syncretism 59
3.2.3 Directional effects 63
3.2.4 Diachrony 70
3.2.5 Summary 75

3.3 Person syncretism in two-place verbs 75
3.3.1 Introduction 75
3.3.2 Syncretism of subject person 76
3.3.3 Syncretism of object person 79
3.3.4 Other patterns 80
3.3.5 Summary 81

3.4 Gender 81
3.4.1 Introduction 81
3.4.2 Gender and number 82
3.4.2.1 Smaller systems 83
3.4.2.2 Larger systems 86
3.4.3 Syncretism restricted by target 90
3.4.4 Summary 91

3.5 Number 92
3.5.1 Introduction 92
3.5.2 Values 93
3.5.3 Directionality 94
3.5.4 Summary 95

3.6 Tense-aspect-mood 95
3.6.1 Introduction 95
3.6.2 Affix suppression 96
3.6.3 Syncretic affixes 100
3.6.4 Compound systems 101
3.6.5 Summary 103

3.7 Polarity effects 103
3.7.1 Introduction 103
3.7.2 Morphological systematicity 105
3.7.3 Semantic systematicity 108
3.7.4 Summary 111

3.8 The interaction of features 111
3.8.1 Introduction 111
3.8.2 Syncretisms and their contexts 112
3.8.3 Nominal feature interactions 113
3.8.3.1 Typologies of interaction 113
3.8.3.2 Exploring interaction 114
3.8.3.3 Constraints on nominal features 118
3.8.4 Verbal feature interactions 119
3.8.4.1 Verbal paradigms 120
3.8.4.2 Exploring the verb data 121
3.8.5 Interpreting the generalisations 123
3.8.5.1 Number, case and gender on nominals 123
3.8.5.2 TAM and agreement on verbs 123
3.8.6 Summary 124
3.9 Conclusion 124

4 Formal representation 126
4.1 Introduction 126
4.2 Defining sets of values 126
4.2.1 Natural classes 126
4.2.2 Unnatural classes 131
4.2.3 A note on polarity effects 132
4.3 Symmetrical versus directional rules 133
4.3.1 Convergent bidirectional syncretism 136
4.3.2 Divergent bidirectional syncretism 139
4.3.3 Symmetrical versus directional rules: a summary 144
4.3.4 Ranked constraints as an alternative to directional syncretism 145
4.4 Possible constraints on syncretism 150
4.4.1 Variants on hierarchical structures 150
4.4.2 Carstairs (1987), Carstairs-McCarthy (1998a, b) 151
4.4.3 Impoverishment 160
4.4.4 Stump (2001) and Zwicky (2000) 163
4.5 Summary 166
4.5.1 Predictions and counter-examples 166
4.5.2 Towards a model of syncretism 169

5 Formal framework and case studies 171
5.1 Network Morphology and syncretism 172
5.1.1 Inferential-realizational theories and morphology 175
5.1.2 Default inheritance 177
5.1.3 Underspecification and semantic naturalness 180
5.1.4 Systematicity in Network Morphology 182
5.2 Case study 1: Dhaasanac 183
5.3 Case study 2: The Dalabon verbal system 186
5.3.1 The structure of the Dalabon intransitive paradigm 187
5.3.2 The Dalabon transitive paradigm and the inadequacy of underspecification 188
5.3.3 The Dalabon transitive paradigm: a generalized referral analysis 194
5.3.4 The verbal hierarchy 199
5.3.5 The shape of the verbal paradigm 200
5.3.6 Referral of 1 > 2sg to 3 > 2sg  
5.3.7 Referral of 2 > 1 to 3 > 1  
5.3.8 Dalabon: summing up  
5.4 Case study 3: The Russian nominal system  
5.4.1 Domains of syncretism  
  5.4.1.1 Phonologically determined ‘syncretism’  
  5.4.1.2 Lexically determined syncretism  
  5.4.1.3 Morphologically determined syncretism  
  5.4.1.4 Candidates for syntactically determined syncretism  
5.4.2 Orthogonal specification of syncretism  
5.5 Conclusion  
6 Conclusion  
6.1 Taking stock  
6.2 Results  
6.3 Consequences  

Appendix 1: Case syncretism in the World Atlas of Language Structures sample  
Appendix 2: Person syncretism in the World Atlas of Language Structures sample  
Appendix 4: DATR fragment for Dhasaanaac case study  
Appendix 5: DATR fragment for Dalabon case study  
Appendix 6: DATR fragment for Russian case study  

References  
Author index  
Language index  
Subject index
Preface

This book has an interesting history of collaboration. It began life in research done by Greville Corbett and Norman Fraser on the morphology of Russian, starting in 1990, research which was inspired by the work of Roger Evans and Gerald Gazdar on DATR. The ESRC and Leverhulme Trust provided funding, which brought Dunstan Brown and Andrew Hippisley to Surrey, and the work developed into a more general theoretical framework, Network Morphology. We found syncretism of increasing importance in the development of the framework and gave presentations at the following places: Krems (Austria), University of Sussex, Linguistics Association of Great Britain (at the University of Surrey), University of California (Berkeley), Gregynog (Wales), Heinrich-Heine-Universität (Düsseldorf), University of Edinburgh, University of Cologne, University of Helsinki, La Trobe University, Norsk Forening for Språkvitenskap (Oslo), Institut für Österr.-Europ.-und Orientsprachw. Studien (University of Oslo), Moscow University, University of Oxford, Cornell University, Twelfth International Conference on Historical Linguistics (University of Manchester), Conference on Lexical Structures (Wuppertal), British Association for Slavonic and East European Studies (Cambridge), University of Sheffield, University of Essex, University of Pennsylvania, Leipzig University, Association for Linguistic Typology (University of Amsterdam), Second Mediterranean Meeting on Morphology (University of Malta), Max Planck Institute for Psycholinguistics (Nijmegen), Second Winter Typological School (Istra, Moscow district), Ninth International Morphology Meeting (Vienna), University of California (Santa Barbara), University College London, Second Northwest Conference on Slavic Linguistics (Berkeley), Stockholm University, 37th Meeting of the Chicago Linguistic Society, Fakultetets Forsknings Fredage (University of Copenhagen), University of Melbourne, Scandinavian Slavists’ Summer School (Kungälv, Sweden), University of Leeds, School of Oriental and African Studies (London), University of Manchester Institute of Science
and Technology, Lancaster University, University of Catania, Second International Seminar ‘Computer Treatment of Slavonic Languages’ (Bratislava), and University of York. We are very grateful for all the comments we have received on these occasions. We applied for funding to work specifically on syncretism within this framework, which allowed Matthew Baerman to join the Surrey Morphology Group. He undertook the careful typological work which led to the Surrey Syncretisms Database, and which is a basis for the book. Collaboration with Nicholas Evans on Dalabon added an important impetus to the work. As it became clear that the research on syncretism had more substance than could fit into a journal article, Baerman’s role became increasingly important. He is the book’s first author. Brown and Corbett are together the second author, with Brown’s role being particularly significant in the development of the formal side of Network Morphology, while Corbett’s role was most important at the start of the project. Portions of this book have been adapted from previously published material, specifically Evans, Brown and Corbett (2001) (Chapter 5: §5.3); Baerman, Brown and Corbett (2002b) (Chapter 3: §3.1); Corbett, Baerman and Brown (2002) (Chapter 5: §5.4.1); Baerman (2005) (Chapter 3: §3.2, Chapter 4: §4.4.2 and §4.5); and Baerman (2004) (Chapter 1: §1.5 and Chapter 4: §4.3). The material here supercedes the earlier works.

We are very grateful to our friends and colleagues who read the book in draft and gave us helpful comments from their different perspectives: Jim Blevins, Jonathan Bobaljik, Andrew Carstairs-McCarthy, Martin Haspelmath, Andrew Spencer, Greg Stump. The following gave helpful feedback on specific sections: Helma van den Berg, Michael Cysouw, Nicholas Evans, Roger Evans, while Lisa Mack substantially improved the presentation of the draft. For help with the maps we are indebted to Hans-Jörg Bibiko, and we thank Tom Khabaza and the Clementine software for help with the data analysis in §3.8, and Marina Chumakina for assistance with Russian data. We are very grateful to the ESRC for funding, under grant R000237939 and partially under grants R000271235 and RES000230082. The University of Surrey Research Committee also provided timely support.
Abbreviations and symbols

1 first person
2 second person
3 third person
A transitive subject (where forms may differ from those of the intransitive subject)
ABESS abessive
ABL ablative
ABS absolutive
ACC accusative
ADIT aditive
ADJ adjective
ALL allative
AN animate
CAR caritative
CAUS causative
CMP comparative
COM comitative
CONT contactive
COORD coordinative
DAT dative
DEF definite
DES designative
DIS disharmonic
DU dual
EL elative
ERG ergative
ESS essive
EXCL exclusive
F feminine
GEN genitive
<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Abbreviation</th>
<th>Description</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>HARM</td>
<td>harmonic</td>
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<td>HON</td>
<td>honorific</td>
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<td>HUM</td>
<td>human</td>
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<td>ILL</td>
<td>illative</td>
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<td>IMPRF</td>
<td>imperfect</td>
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<td>INAN</td>
<td>inanimate</td>
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<td>INCL</td>
<td>inclusive</td>
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<td>INDF</td>
<td>indefinite</td>
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<td>INESS</td>
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<td>INS</td>
<td>instrumental</td>
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<tr>
<td>INTR</td>
<td>intransitive</td>
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<tr>
<td>LOC</td>
<td>locative</td>
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<tr>
<td>M</td>
<td>masculine</td>
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<tr>
<td>N</td>
<td>neuter</td>
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<tr>
<td>N-</td>
<td>non- (e.g. NSG for non-singular)</td>
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<td>NARR</td>
<td>narrative</td>
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<td>NOM</td>
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<td>OBJ</td>
<td>object</td>
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<td>PER</td>
<td>perlative</td>
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<td>PFV</td>
<td>perfective</td>
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<td>PL</td>
<td>plural</td>
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<td>PRF</td>
<td>perfect</td>
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<td>PROL</td>
<td>prolate</td>
</tr>
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<td>PRS</td>
<td>present</td>
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<td>REL</td>
<td>relative</td>
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<td>intransitive subject (where the forms may differ from those of the transitive subject)</td>
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<td>SBJ</td>
<td>subject</td>
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<td>SBJV</td>
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<td>SG</td>
<td>singular</td>
</tr>
<tr>
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<td>subordinate</td>
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<tr>
<td>SUPERESS</td>
<td>superessive</td>
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<td>TAM</td>
<td>tense-aspect-mood</td>
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<td>TR</td>
<td>transitive</td>
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<td>TRI</td>
<td>trial</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
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</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
used to form compound names for morphosyntactic values, e.g. NOM-ABS = 'nominative-absolutive case' (a single morphosyntactic case in the language in question)

\[ x \sim y \]
form 'x' alternates with form 'y'

\[ x/y \]
feature value 'x' is syncretic with feature value 'y'

\[ x > y \]
in a transitive verb, 'x' is the subject and 'y' is the object

\[ [x] \]
the feature value 'x' has no overt morphological expression (e.g. English dog would be glossed as 'dog[sg]')

\[ (x) \]
the feature value 'x' is inherent to the lexeme, and has no overt expression (e.g. French plage would be glossed as 'beach(v)')