MORPHOLOGICAL COMPLEXITY

Inflectional morphology plays a paradoxical role in language. On the one hand, it tells us useful things, for example that a noun is plural or a verb is in the past tense. On the other hand, many languages get along perfectly well without it, so the baroquely ornamented forms we sometimes find come across as a gratuitous over-elaboration. This is especially apparent where the morphological structures operate at cross-purposes to the general systems of meaning and function that govern a language, yielding inflection classes and arbitrarily configured paradigms. This is what we call *morphological complexity*. Manipulating the forms of words requires learning a whole new system of structures and relationships. This book confronts the typological challenge of characterizing the wildly diverse sorts of morphological complexity we find in the languages of the world, offering both a unified descriptive framework and quantitative measures that can be applied to such heterogeneous systems.

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Morphological Complexity

MORPHOLOGICAL COMPLEXITY

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CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

CAMBRIDGE
UNIVERSITY PRESS

University Printing House, Cambridge CB2 8BS, United Kingdom

Cambridge University Press is part of the University of Cambridge.

It furthers the University's mission by disseminating knowledge in the pursuit of education, learning, and research at the highest international levels of excellence.

www.cambridge.org
Information on this title: www.cambridge.org/9781107120648
DOI: 10.1017/9781316343074

First published 2017

Printed in the United Kingdom by Clays, St Ives plc

A catalogue record for this publication is available from the British Library.

ISBN 978-1-107-12064-8 Hardback

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Acknowledgements

For helpful comments at different stages of the development of this book we are grateful to: Olivier Bonami, Oliver Bond, Gilles Boyé, Wayles Browne, Patrica Cabredo Hofherr, Marina Chumakina, Scott Collier, Roger Evans, Sebastian Fedden, Tim Feist, Jürg Fleischer, Alexander Krasovitsky, Michele Loporcaro, Steve Marlett, Irina Monich, Enrique Palancar, Ingo Plag, Ljubomir Popović, Bert Remijsen, David Robinson, Serge Sagna, Benoît Sagot, Andrew Spencer, and Anna Thornton. Versons of parts of this research have been presented by each of us at different conferences and seminars: we greatly appreciate all the suggestions offered there. The Nuer examples in Chapter 4 were kindly provided by John Gai, Yak Wichok, and Lam Muang. We would also like to thank Penny Everson for assistance in the preparation of the manuscript.

This work has been funded by various research councils, whose support is gratefully acknowledged: the European Research Council (ERC-2008-AdG-230268: MORPHOLOGY "Morphological Complexity"), Arts and Humanities Research Council (AH/I027193/1: "From Competing Theories to Fieldwork: The Challenge of an Extreme Agreement System"), Economic and Social Research Council & Arts and Humanities Research Council (ES/I029621/1: "Endangered Complexity: Inflectional Classes in Oto-Manguean Languages"), and the Arts and Humanities Research Council (AH/L011824/1: "Morphological Complexity in Nuer" and AH/N006887/1: "Lexical splits: a novel perspective on the structure of words").

Abbreviations

1	first person
2	second person
3	third person
ABL	ablative
ABS	absolutive
ACC	accusative
ADV	adverbial
ALL	allative
AOR	aorist
COM	comitative
COND	conditional
CONT	continuous
COREF	coreferential
CPL	completive
CSN	comparison
DAT	dative
DEP	dependent
DO	direct object
DPP	dynamic principal parts ratio
DU	dual
DUB	dubitative
ERG	ergative
EXCL	exclusive
F	feminine
FUT	future
GEN	genitive
GER	gerund
HAB	habitual
HORT	hortative
IMP	imperative

IMPRF	imperfect
INCL	inclusive
INCPL	incompletive
IND	indicative
INF	infinitive
INS	instrumental
IPFV	imperfective
IRR	irrealis
JUSS	jussive
La	Latin
LAT	lative
LOC	locative
M	masculine
N	neuter
NEG	negative
NOM	nominative
NPST	non-past
PART	partitive
PFV	perfective
PL	plural
POT	potential
PPRF	pluperfect
PRF	perfect
PROG	progressive
PROSP	prospective
PRS	present
PST	past
REAL	realis
RECIP	recipient
RPRO	resumptive pronoun
SBJ	subject
SBJV	subjunctive
SG	singular
SIMUL	simultaneous
Skr	Sanskrit
TAM	tense-aspect-mood
TR	transitive
VOC	vocative