Morphological Diversity and Linguistic Cognition

Morphological structures interact dynamically with lexical processing and storage, with the parameters of morphological typology being partly dependent on cognitive pathways for processing, storage, and generalization of word structure, and vice versa. Bringing together a team of well-known scholars, this book examines the relationship between linguistic cognition and the morphological diversity found in the world’s languages. It includes research from across linguistic and cognitive science subdisciplines that looks at the nature of typological diversity and its relationship to cognition, touching on concepts such as complexity, interconnectedness within systems, and emergent organization. Chapters employ experimental, computational, corpus-based, and theoretical methods to examine specific morphological phenomena, and an overview chapter provides a synthesis of major research trends, contextualizing work from different methodological and philosophical perspectives. Offering a novel perspective on how cognition contributes to our understanding of word structure, it is essential reading for psycholinguists, theoreticians, typologists, computational modelers, and cognitive scientists.

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Morphological Diversity and Linguistic Cognition

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Preface

The idea for this volume began with a workshop, *Morphological Typology and Linguistic Cognition*, that we organized in July 2017 in conjunction with the Linguistic Society of America’s Linguistic Institute at the University of Kentucky. The workshop featured sixteen oral presentations and eight poster presentations by scholars representing twenty-five universities in nine countries. A select group of presenters was invited to submit chapters for this volume, based on thematic connections among their presentations. In most cases the chapters in the present volume reflect further developments in the authors’ research since their presentations at the workshop, and the chapters engage with more recent developments in the field. The authors also discuss their ideas in more depth than was possible at the workshop. The present volume is thus an outgrowth of the workshop more than a proceedings volume.

Several core questions emerged as themes at the workshop, three of which form the organizational structure for the volume:

1. In what ways is language processing tuned to the morphological structure of a language?
2. What role does cue informativity play in learning and how the lexicon evolves over time?
3. How do system-level principles of morphological organization emerge?

The chapters all engage with one or more of these questions in some manner. In broad terms, the central hypothesis of the volume is that morphological structures interact dynamically with lexical processing, storage, and learning. Nine of the ten chapters present original research exploring the nature of this interaction from different perspectives. The remaining chapter, which serves as an introduction, highlights connections among the chapters and gives an overview of historical trends in the field that are reflected in the chapters. By bringing together research by different types of linguists – experimentalists, computational modelers, and formalists – our goal was to encourage discussion across subdisciplinary boundaries, to highlight the current state of research, and to help shape a research agenda that integrates these different methods and approaches.
We gratefully acknowledge financial support for the workshop from the National Science Foundation (BCS-1623932, PI Andrea Sims and Co-PI Adam Ussishkin), as well as supplemental support from the following units at The Ohio State University: the Department of Slavic and East European Languages and Cultures, the Center for Cognitive and Brain Sciences, and the Center for Slavic and East European Studies. The Center for Slavic and East European Studies’ contribution was funded by the Comprehensive National Resource Center Grant from the International and Foreign Language Education division of the U.S. Department of Education. We also thank the 2017 Linguistic Institute organizers, Rusty Barrett and Andrew Hippisley, and all of the Institute staff – especially Ali Salehi – for in-kind and logistical support. The Brigham Young University Faculty Publishing Service provided copy-editing support for the volume.

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Abbreviations

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List of Abbreviations

POSS  possessive
POT    potential
PROG   progressive
PROX   proximal
PST    past
PTCP   participle
REV    reversible
SG     singular
SUB    subordination
SBJ    subject
TAM    tense, aspect, mood
TR     transitive
VBLZ   verbalizer