

Recursion and paradigms

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OUTLINE

1. Do we still need morphology?

- a. theoretically
- b. empirically ➤ paradigms
- c. generalizing from examples



2. A new job for morphology: **paradigms as recursion stoppers**

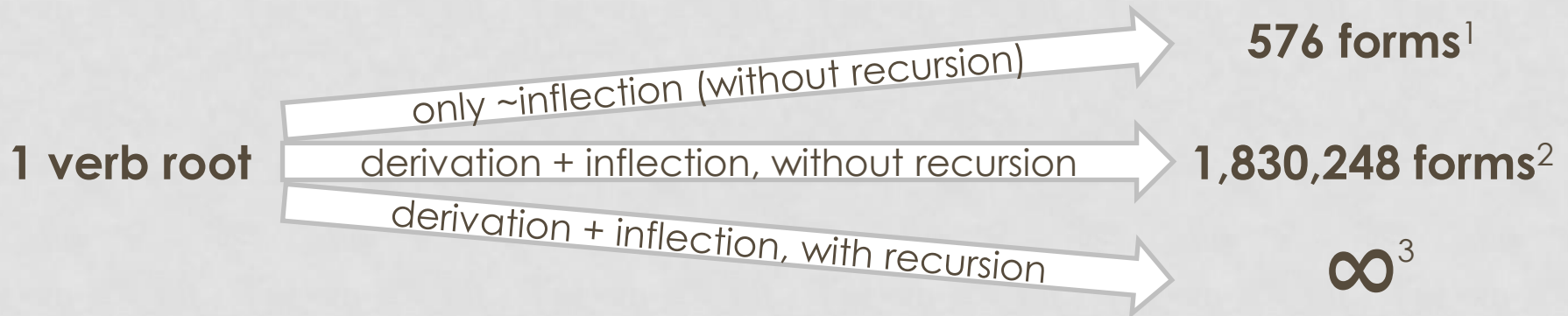
3. Problems and conclusion

1. a. Reasons to suspect that morphology should not be regarded as a level of description in its own right

- cross-linguistic, workable notion of word is elusive
→ border between morphology and syntax is elusive
(Haspelmath 2011)
- Construction Grammar's slogan: "it's constructions all the way down" (Goldberg 2006:18)
- Distributed Morphology's slogan: "Syntactic Hierarchical Structure All the Way Down" (Harley & Noyer 1999:3)

1. b. Reasons to suspect that morphology should not be regarded as a level of description in its own right – examples –

- one of Haspelmath's (2011:59) examples: how to write down complete Turkish paradigms



¹ Kornfilt 1997, my count

² Hankamer 1989:403

³ Hankamer 1989:398

MORPHOLOGY FOR...? | ...STOPPING RECURSION? | PROBLEMS

(1) Turkish (Hankamer 1989:396)

<i>daya</i>	<i>-n</i>	<i>-ış</i>	<i>-tır</i>	<i>-t</i>	<i>-il</i>	<i>-a</i>	<i>-mı</i>	<i>-yabil</i>	<i>-ecek</i>	<i>-ti</i>	<i>-k</i>
prop up	RFL	RCP	CAUS	CAUS	PASS	POT1	NEG	POT2	ASP	TNS	AGR

'we might not have been able to be made to make someone else practice mutual aid'

(2) Turkish (Hankamer 1989:397)

<i>göz</i>	eye
<i>gözlük</i>	glasses
<i>gözlükçü</i>	seller of glasses (oculist)
<i>gözlükçülük</i>	the occupation of oculists
<i>gözlükçülükçü</i>	a lobbyist for the oculist profession
<i>gözlükçülükçülük</i>	the occupation of being a lobbyist for the oculist profession

recursion:
applying an
operation to its
output

MORPHOLOGY FOR...? | ...STOPPING RECURSION? | PROBLEMS

1. b. Reasons to suspect that morphology should not be regarded as a level of description in its own right – examples –

- morphemes as constructions (Goldberg 2006:5)

TABLE 1.1. Examples of constructions, varying in size and complexity		
pre-	Morpheme	-ing
post-	Word	-ed
daredevil	Complex word	shoo-in
chicken-hearted	Complex word (partially filled)	long shot
	Idiom (filled)	
	Idiom (partially filled)	
	Covariational Conditional	
	Ditransitive (double object)	
	Passive	

1. b. Reasons to suspect that morphology should not be regarded as a level of description in its own right

– examples –

- syntax in the word (Trommer 2001:18): Swahili verbs

(3) **ni** **-wa** *-penda*
 1SG 3PL like
 'I like them'

(4) **wa** **-ni** *-penda*
 3PL 1SG -like
 'they like me'



subject		object	
ni	tu	ni	tu
u	m	ku	wa
a	wa	m(w)	wa

Almasi et al. 2014:15, 102;
 only M-/WA- class

1. c. Reasons to suspect that morphology should not be regarded as a level of description in its own right – generalizing –

- But these phenomena can be treated morphologically anyway (Stump 1993, Hyman 2003)!

This does not mean it is the best way to treat them.

- But these items are still organized by way of opposition!

So is the lexicon.

lexicon (incl. phonemes) + syntax (incl. phonotactics) = language

- But portmanteau morphemes are not like syntax!

They are like Idioms.

**Radical conclusion:
Morphology (including paradigms) unemployed in language
modelling**

Morphology has lost one of its jobs to the (structured) lexicon,
i.e. capturing oppositions

and it has lost its other job to (constructional) syntax,
i.e. capturing the idiosyncratic

(or both jobs to one lexicon-syntax continuum).

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2. A new job for morphology and paradigms

If we accept this conclusion...

...there might be a new job for morphology, especially for paradigms:

motivating restrictions on recursion.

Why?

From a CxG perspective, restrictions are epiphenomenal, so they – and their systematicity – might be missed.

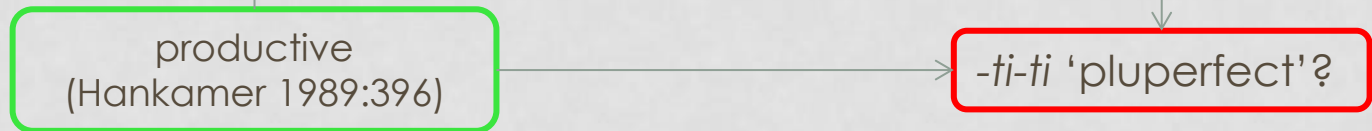


MORPHOLOGY FOR...? | ...STOPPING RECURSION? | PROBLEMS

(5) = (1) Turkish (Hankamer 1989:396)

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prop up	RFL	RCP	CAUS	CAUS	PASS	POT1	NEG	POT2	ASP	TNS	AGR

'we might not have been able to be made to make someone else practice mutual aid'



(6) Turkish (p.c.)

**yap*

do

<i>-ti</i>	<i>-ti</i>	<i>-m</i>
PST	PST	1SG

intended: 'I had done'

MORPHOLOGY FOR...? | ...STOPPING RECURSION? | PROBLEMS

	1SG	2SG	3SG	1PL	2PL	3PL
FUTURE	-(y)AcAK -Im	-(y)AcAK -sIn	-(y)AcAK -ø	-(y)AcAK -Iz	-(y)AcAK -sInIz	-(y)AcAK -IAr
REP. PAST	-mIs-Im	-mIs-sIn	-mIs-ø	-mIs-Iz	-mIs-sInIz	-mIs-IAr
PAST	-DI-m	-DI-n	-DI-ø	-DI-k	-DI-nIz	-DI-IAr

Kornfilt 1997:2.1.3.

semantic
grid delimits
recursion

3. Problems and conclusion – one example of a problem –

Does this account wrongly predict that there are double passives?

Depends on one's notion of passive... one possibility:

argument structure + linking information:

$$X_{\text{unmarked}} > Y > Z$$

passive:

do not realize the argument tagged “unmarked”
but do realize the next lower one unmarked

$$Y_{\text{unmarked}} > Z$$

double passive?

- operation *could* be repeated with its output
- but output = different verb (Bresnan 1982:16)
- so verb form would have to be realization of two verbs at once 🌟

3. Problems and conclusion – instead of a real conclusion –

message to take home (and to discuss now):

☞ We need paradigms to model the limits of recursion ☞

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