

# *Suppletion, Allomorphy, and Syncretism*

## BCGL 12 Call for Papers

The *Center for Research in Syntax, Semantics, and Phonology* (CRISSP) of KU Leuven invites abstracts for the 12<sup>th</sup> edition of the *Brussels Conference on Generative Linguistics* (BCGL 12), to be held on 16-17 December 2019. The theme of the conference is the morphosyntax of suppletion, allomorphy, and syncretism.

**Suppletion** is a form of morphological irregularity whereby a change in a grammatical category triggers a change in word form, with a different (suppletive) root substituting for the normal one (e.g. in the past tense of *go*, the irregular form *went* replaces the regular *goed*). **Allomorphy** is (in a certain sense) the mirror image of suppletion, namely a change in the form of an affix that is triggered by the presence of a particular type of root (e.g. with the root *ox* the irregular plural morpheme *-en* replaces the regular form *-s*). Both suppletion and allomorphy raise the question of how to get the correct distribution of forms: how to pair the correct root with the correct allomorph, and how to correctly restrict the occurrence of the suppletive roots. If all lexical insertion is done at terminal nodes, then suppletion and allomorphy point to some 'action at a distance': a head  $\alpha$  influences the realisation of another head  $\beta$  (e.g. the V and the T node in the case of *go* + PST, the N and the Num node in the case of *ox* + PL). This raises the question of locality: how far apart can  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  be? A range of different views has been proposed in the literature, such as the claim that  $\alpha$  and  $\beta$  are local if no overt node intervenes (Embick, 2010; Calabrese, 2015), if they form a span (Abels & Muriungi, 2008; Svenonius, 2016; Merchant, 2015; Haugen & Siddiqi, 2016), if they belong to the same phase (Moskal, 2013a; Embick, 2010; Moskal, 2015), if  $\alpha$  is accessible to  $\beta$  (Moskal, 2013b; Moskal & Smith, 2016), if no XP or  $X^n$  ( $n > 0$ ) intervenes (respectively Bobaljik 2012 and Bobaljik & Harley 2017), if no  $\gamma$  intervenes (Siegel, 1978; Allen, 1978; Embick, 2003; Bobaljik, 2012; Kilbourn-Ceron et al., 2016), or if they form a constituent (Caha, 2017a; De Clercq & Vanden Wyngaerd, 2017).

**Syncretism** is the identity of forms across different (but related) grammatical categories (e.g. the pronoun *you* is both 2SG and 2PL). Syncretism is widely believed to be informative about the underlying grammatical system, across a variety of approaches, whether typological (Haspelmath, 2003), formal (Caha, 2009; Bobaljik & Sauerland, 2013), or paradigm-based (McCreight & Chvany, 1991; Plank, 1991; Johnston, 1996; Wiese, 2008). Syncretism may accordingly be used to structure paradigms in such a way that syncretic cells are always adjacent, i.e. avoiding ABA patterns. Caha's (2009) study of \*ABA patterns in Case marking paradigms furthermore interprets syncretism in terms of structural containment: if the structure of the more complex Case suffixes properly contains that of the less complex ones, then \*ABA follows. The study of syncretism in

morphology in this approach translates into a study of underlying structural relationships.

We welcome contributions addressing suppletion, allomorphy, and/or syncretism in various formal models (Distributed Morphology, the Exo-Skeletal Model, Minimalist Morphology, Nanosyntax, etc.). Possible topics include, but are not limited to, the following:

- What is the mechanism by which roots and affixes select one other? How are different classes of roots selecting different allomorphs represented in the lexicon? Can root size determine the selection of the allomorph (Caha et al., 2019)?
- What is the boundary (if any) between suppletion and phonological readjustment of a root, e.g. in the pair *give-gave* (Halle & Marantz, 1993; Embick & Marantz, 2008; Borer, 2003, 2013)?
- Is root suppletion restricted to the functional part of the vocabulary, as claimed in Marantz (1997), or does it apply more broadly, as claimed by Haugen & Siddiqi (2013); Harley (2014) (but see Borer 2014)?
- Is there a prefix/suffix asymmetry in allomorphy, and if so, why (Moskal, 2013a)?
- Are there ways to derive \*ABA patterns that do not rely on strict containment, as suggested in Bobaljik & Sauerland (2018); Caha (2017b)?
- Which approach to deriving syncretism yields the best results, the one in terms of underspecification (i.e. the Subset Principle; Halle 1997), or the one in terms of overspecification (the Superset Principle; Starke 2009), or perhaps other types of approaches (e.g. McCreight & Chvany 1991)?
- What are the locality conditions governing suppletion, allomorphy, and syncretism?

### Invited speakers

- Heidi Harley (U of Tucson, Arizona)
- Hagit Borer (QMUL, London)
- Michal Starke (Masaryk U, Brno)

### Abstract guidelines

Abstracts should not exceed two pages, including data, references, and diagrams. Abstracts should be typed in at least 11-point font, with one-inch margins (letter-size; 8½ by 11 inch or A4) and a maximum of 50 lines of text per page. Abstracts must be anonymous and submissions are limited to 2 per author, at least one of which is co-authored. Only electronic submissions will be accepted. Please submit your abstract using the EasyChair link for BCGL 12:

Abstract submission link: <https://easychair.org/conferences/?conf=bcgl12>

### Important dates

- First call for papers: June 1, 2019
- Second call for papers: August 16, 2019
- **Abstract submission deadline: September 15, 2019**
- Notification of acceptance: October 16, 2019
- Conference: December 16-17, 2019

Conference web page: <http://www.crisp.be/bcgl-12-suppletion-allomorphy-and-syncretism/>

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