BCGL7:
The Morphology-Syntax Interface
Call for Papers

The interface between morphology and syntax is a long-standing issue in linguistics. The main question in this debate is whether there is an independent morphological component of the grammar or, alternatively, whether the phenomenon of word formation is part of the lexicon or the syntactic component. This conference wants to consider the distinction between syntactic and morphological (or lexical) phenomena, as well as the theoretical consequences that such a distinction, if any, gives rise to.

Most theories of grammar assume that syntax projects from the lexicon, i.e. items are drawn from the lexicon for syntactic composition. In traditional/early Lexicalist approaches, the lexicon contains a list of sound/meaning connections as well as the idiosyncratic properties associated with these items. In addition, the lexicon is the locus where morphology applies: morphological processes combine morphemes into internally complex words. These morphological processes are taken to be distinct from syntactic processes (which put together words into sentences). For instance, the Righthand Head Rule (Williams 1981) is specific for the lexicon. Syntactic processes, on the other hand, can manipulate members of lexical categories ('words') but the internal morphological structure of words is invisible to syntax (the *Lexical Integrity Principle*, cf. Lapointe 1980; Di Sciullo & Williams 1987; Scalise and Guevara 2005). Under this traditional view, words are the basic building blocks of syntactic structure. (Derived) words enter the syntax as atoms.

The Lexicalist Hypothesis

The traditional Lexicalist hypothesis comes in two guises, *The Strong Lexicalist Hypothesis* (SLH) and the *Weak Lexicalist Hypothesis* (WLH). Under the SLH (cf. Chomsky 1970; Halle 1973; Lieber 1980; Williams 1981; Kiparsky 1982; Selkirk 1982; Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1986; Di Sciullo & Williams 1987), morphology and syntax are held to be completely distinct. Both derivation and inflection are taken to belong to a module separate from syntax, the lexicon. In contrast, the WLH (Siegel 1974; Aronoff 1976; Wasow 1977; Anderson 1982; Baker 1988; Booij 1996; Dubinsky & Simango 1996; also see Ackema & Neeleman 2004 for a recent modular approach) assumes that inflectional morphology applies in syntax. That is, derivation is part of the lexicon, but inflection belongs to syntax.

Under the Lexicalist Hypothesis (in its various guises), it comes as a surprise that morphological and syntactic processes should share certain characteristics (e.g. headedness, idiomaticity: Marantz 1997). Also, various types of bracketing paradoxes where syntactic units seem to be contained within morphological ones call into question the traditional separation of the morphological and syntactic modules (e.g. Harley 2006).

Distributed Morphology

Contrasting with both the strong and the weak Lexicalist view, Distibuted Morphology (DM; Halle & Marantz 1993) assumes that there is no single lexicon, but that it is distributed: part of the lexicon is presyntactic (in line with the traditional view), and another part is postsyntactic. As far as the presyntactic lexicon is concerned, DM assumes it contains features, and no lexical items. This lexicon contains a list of (bundles of) morphosyntactic features from UG, including inflectional features and all features relevant to derivational word formation. Syntax operates only on (sets of) abstract, functional, morphosyntactic features provided by UG. There is only one structure building module: Merge. Inflection and derivational word formation are part of syntax. In addition, there is a separate, postsyntactic, module of the grammar, called Morphology, in which an ordered set of morphological operations (e.g. fusion, fission, etc.) adjust the syntactic structure (cf. Harley & Noyer 1999; Embick & Noyer 2007). The phonological exponent of a feature (bundle) is also inserted post-syntactically, at Vocabulary Insertion (Late Insertion). Vocabulary Items are stored in a list called *Vocabulary*. As such, in DM, there is no specific module responsible for word formation: Morphology is distributed over syntax and a set of post-syntactic operations.

An issue of debate within the DM-framework concerns the syntactic primitives, i.e. which features are contained in the lexicon. One question is whether the lexicon needs to contain (indices of) roots or if the root terminal node is simply a by-product of the operation Merge (De Belder 2011, De Belder & van Craenenbroeck 2011). If the former, the question is what form these roots take, e.g. a feature [Root] (Halle & Marantz 1993), or an indexed item (Borer 2005a,b, 2009a,b,c, Harley 2009; Pfau 2009). The latter approaches assume that phonological indices of lexical vocabulary items are inserted early, in narrow syntax. These proposals thus differ from Lexicalist points of view in that word formation is not part of the lexicon, but they differ from the standard DM view in having some form of early insertion of roots. Another question concerns the existence of categorial heads such as n° or v° (De Belder 2011).

Nanosyntax

Nanosyntax (cf. Starke 2002, 2005, 2009; Caha 2009) also takes the view that the lexicon is distributed, but it differs from DM on two important counts: (i) the atoms that syntax works with are limited to single features, not prepackaged feature bundles (ii) there is no separate (postsyntactic) morphology module. Given (i), i.e. the fact that the syntactic terminal nodes are much smaller in nanosyntax than in DM, syntactic structures are typically larger. Morphemes consequently may span several syntactic terminals. Like in DM, lexical insertion in nanosyntax is post-syntactic, but the specifics are different. Nanosyntax takes lexical insertion to be a case of 'phrasal Spell-Out' (Starke 2005; Caha 2009), which is an operation that matches a syntactic tree to the (sub-)trees stored inside lexical entries (Starke 2002, 2009).

For the seventh Brussels Conference on Generative Linguistics we welcome papers on any topic related to the issues raised above. In particular, questions that the conference seeks to address include – but are not limited to – the following:

- Is there a distributed lexicon (before and after Syntax), and what is the nature of these lexicons?
- Is Morphology a separate module, or should it be subsumed under Syntax?
- If Morphology is a separate module, where is it situated, and what are its properties?
- What are the properties that set morphological operations apart from syntactic ones, if any?
- Is inflection and/or derivation part of syntax?
- Where/when does insertion take place and which part(s) of the syntactic structure does it target?
- Which empirical phenomena provide insights in the theoretical questions raised above? Which role do idioms play in the discussion?
- What are the atoms that syntax works with?
- Does the presyntactic lexicon contain roots? What is the shape of these roots?
- Is there any prepackaging or bundling of features in the presyntactic lexicon? What are the principles that such bundling (if any) is subject to?
- How do submorphemic nano-trees combine and interact to form full clauses?

Invited speakers

We are pleased to announce that the following invited speakers have agreed to give a talk at BCGL7:

Ad Neeleman (UCL)
Tarald Taraldsen (CASTL)
Matt Tucker (UCSC)

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; 8" ½ by 11" 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 EasyAbs link for BCGL7: http://linguistlist.org/confcustom/bcgl7

Important dates

First call for papers: September 7, 2012
Second call for papers: October 5, 2012
Abstract submission deadline: November 1, 2012
Notification of acceptance: November 15, 2012
Conference: December 17-18, 2012

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