

INTRODUCTION: MORPHOLOGICAL PARADIGMS

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The organisation of inflected word forms into paradigms is a salient feature of reference and pedagogical grammars of classical languages. Morphological paradigms figure less prominently in the formal models of morphology developed in the latter half of the twentieth century. Hockett (1954) mentions ‘word-and-paradigm’ (WP) approaches only to apologise for omitting them altogether from his general comparison of grammatical models. Most subsequent work in the post-Bloomfieldian tradition likewise assigns far greater importance to relations between words and their constituent morphemes than to relations between the words that make up a traditional paradigm. As Robins (1959) observes, there is no essential conflict between a WP treatment of morphosyntax and an ‘item-and-arrangement’ (IA) description of morphotactics. The potential for conflict arises when morphotactic units are identified as morphosyntactic primes. Since this identification is what principally defines morpheme-based IA models, word-level relations, including those between members of a paradigm, have been of subsidiary importance within these models. Of course the post-Bloomfieldian morpheme, and the procedures of segmentation and classification on which it ultimately rests, are also the source of familiar descriptive difficulties.

Contemporary WP approaches attempt to overcome these difficulties by shifting the locus of at least some aspects of morphosyntactic description from morphemes onto words or paradigms. As the papers in this issue attest, there is no single ‘WP model’. Instead, there is what might best be described as a family of allied ‘paradigm-based’ approaches, distinguished by the relative importance accorded to morphemes and words. The papers by Andrew Carstairs-McCarthy and Dieter Wunderlich represent one strong position, in which morphemes retain a central role. In these approaches, paradigms serve mainly as the locus for high-level constraints or principles that govern morpheme inventories or

morpheme combinations. Carstairs-McCarthy proposes that his No Blur Principle, which constrains the affixal realisations of paradigm cells, influences the conditioning of inflectional allomorphy. Wunderlich suggests that constraints on pronominal affixes account for the existence of gaps and patterns of substitution in Yimas verbal paradigms.

At the other extreme are models in which words and paradigms are the locus of morphosyntactic generalisations, and sub-word units have a purely morphotactic function. This position, which is often associated with classical grammarians such as Priscian, is articulated in Robins (1959).

The word is a more stable and solid focus of grammatical relations than the component morpheme by itself. Put another way, grammatical statements are abstractions, but they are more profitably abstracted from words as wholes than from individual morphemes. (Robins 1959: 61)

The treatment of periphrastic tenses and aspects in Andrew Spencer's paper extends this traditional word-based perspective by allowing sequences of words to realise morphosyntactic properties. Developing proposals of Ackerman and Webelhuth (1998), Spencer suggests that auxiliary and participle combinations in Slavic realise notions such as Perfect, so that neither the individual words, nor their component morphemes, carry any morphosyntactic meaning in isolation.

Most current paradigm-based approaches fall between these extremes, insofar as they relax the feature-form biuniqueness encapsulated in the morpheme, but at the same time associate specific morphosyntactic properties, explicitly or implicitly, with exponents or root or stem forms. Nearly all realisation-based models, in particular, have this general character. The theories of Anderson (1992), Aronoff (1994) and Stump (2001), for example, are all anchored in a permanent lexicon of roots or stems, from which inflected word forms are defined. Roots or stems thus have an existence independent of the inflected forms that they underlie, rather than being mere abstractions over word forms. It may be possible to recast these approaches as word-based models if one reconstrues realisation rules as a type of 'word admissibility condi-

tion', in much the way that phrase structure rules are interpreted as node admissibility conditions. This is perhaps even the most natural interpretation of the Priscianic 'morphological transformations' in Matthews (1991).

The recognition of morphological paradigms raises a number of issues other than the status of sub-word units. One basic question concerns the scope of paradigmatic descriptions. Since paradigms canonically contain inflected forms, it has sometimes been questioned whether paradigm-based models can be applied to inflectional systems that follow an isolating pattern. However, there is no essential reason why paradigm-based models must be confined to the description of inflectional morphology. Indeed, as Robins (1959) suggests, and my own paper argues at greater length, certain derivational formations may also be usefully organised into paradigms. Accounts that accord a central role to paradigms also raise questions about the psychological reality of paradigms. The paper by Harald Clahsen et al. investigates this issue and concludes that priming and error patterns are sensitive to the structure of verbal paradigms in German.

Thus the papers collected in this issue testify, each in their own way, to the importance and continued relevance of a traditional model, whose fundamental insight 'is not that words can be split into roots and formatives, but that they can be located in paradigms' (Matthews 1991: 204).

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