

Regina Ruf & Michael Redmond

Conference Report:

Challenging Construction Grammar: New Insights from Morphology (8–12 April 2024; Monte Verità, Switzerland)

As reflected in its title, this workshop, which took place from the eighth to the twelfth of April 2024 at Monte Verità, Ascona, Switzerland, focused on constructional perspectives in their application to morphology (Hoffmann & Trousdale 2013). As Construction Grammar has become an important theoretical framework within linguistics, it has been applied in morphological studies from both synchronic (e.g., Booij 2010; Jackendoff & Audring 2020) and diachronic perspectives (Hartmann 2019; Van Goethem & Norde 2020). Nevertheless, Construction Morphology is a comparatively young branch of Construction Grammar that poses many open questions and challenges. The questions that were asked within this workshop relate to the connection between morphology and Construction Grammar as a framework, the handling of phenomena situated at the interface of morphology and syntax, and how phenomena that are specific for the scope of morphology can be captured from a constructional point of view.

To address this issue, young and early career researchers were invited to present their current work. These contributions were complemented by the contributions of the invited plenary speakers Muriel Norde (Humboldt University of Berlin), Francesca Masini (University of Bologna), Livio Gaeta (University of Turin), Kristel Van Goethem (University of Louvain) and Steffen Höder (University of Kiel).

The workshop was organised by Elena Smirnova (University of Neuchâtel), Martin Hilpert (University of Neuchâtel) and Jenny Audring (University of Leiden), and made possible with the generous support of SCF (Congressi Stefano Franscini, <https://csf.ethz.ch>), the SNF (Swiss

National Science Foundation, Programm Scientific Exchanges, Grant Nr IZSEZ0_221843) and the FLSH (Faculty of Arts and Humanities) of the University of Neuchâtel.

Opening the program, **Kim-Kristin Droste** (University of Osnabrück) challenged Construction Grammar by asking how relations between antonymous constructions with locative prefixoids can be modelled in the constructicon. The corpus-based study using the BNC and Timestamped JSI Web Corpus 2014–2021 English aimed to deal with prefixal *up* and *down* such as in words like *upriver*, *downfall*, *uplifted* generating vertical and horizontal links associated with inheritance and sister relations respectively. The difference in productivity of *up* and *down* – *down* being more productive than *up* – is supported by quantitative measures of productivity. The two patterns show constructional similarity and mutual productivity, which is an indication that the answer of how to model antonymous constructions in the constructicon may be found within analogy forming horizontal links, whereas vertical links could be a result of extensions of the schema and upward strengthening.

Droste was commended for the convincing presentation of her interesting and theoretically relevant study.

Focused on *quasi* ‘almost’ in French from a diachronic perspective, **Quentin Feltgen** (University of Ghent) traced its development from the revival of this form in the nineteenth century. Three different and simultaneous developments can be observed. Firstly, the use of *quasi-* as a morpheme, which preferentially combines with nouns, driven by the rise of a paradigm of such Latin-inspired morphemes involved in the derivation of academic and technical words. Secondly, the rise of *quasiment*, an old regional variant of *quasi*, which takes over most of its former uses, and enters a paradigm with other colloquial adverbs ending with *-ment*. Lastly, the specialisation of *quasi* with adjectives, leading to a neat division of labour across all three forms. This picture exemplifies how morphological and syntactic constructions may arise in parallel within a shared form-based constructional system.

Flavio Pisciotta (University of Salerno) dealt with links across the syntax-lexicon continuum by observing a functional overlap between Light Verb Constructions (LVCs) considered as multiword constructions and synthetic verbs (SVs) derived from psych nouns in Italian. This leads to examples like *simpatizzare* (SV) – *avere/provare simpatia*

(LVC). The data were subdivided into stative, inchoative and causative subsets to allow for formalisation. The study shows that there are semantic factors leading to the preference of a syntactic or a morphological strategy: The stative group is represented by LVCs whereas the SVs form the group of inchoatives. Within the group of causatives both LVCs and SVs can be found. This shows that the causative subgroup consists of competing patterns and forms.

Francesca Masini's (University of Bologna) presentation focused on multiword expressions (MWEs) being defined as units consisting of two or more words situated in the middle of the lexicon-syntax continuum. Despite the clear link between 'morphological' lexemes and 'phrasal' lexemes, these two objects are still mostly investigated separately. From an intralinguistic perspective MWEs are very active, i.e. they are neither marginal nor static. From a crosslinguistic point of view, two issues arise: Firstly, the language bias in constructional research, and secondly, typological considerations, that are dominated by studies of just a few languages. This means, constructional research has been done in few languages with a preference for well-known languages. Consequently, there are challenges faced in the typologically sound study of complex lexemes. A deeper interaction between lexical typology and word formation is highly desirable from both the intralinguistic and crosslinguistic perspective. Although MWEs are part of the picture in Construction Grammar, they are still not as well integrated into the constructionist agenda as they could be. Possible reasons are the persistence of a modular view and the lack of established and shared methodologies.

Michael Redmond's (University of Neuchâtel) presentation approached the diachrony of the German concessive subordinating conjunction *obschon* 'although' from a diachronic perspective. Whereas corpus data from the fifteenth to nineteenth centuries confirm the previously described tendency that a historically distanced *ob* and *schon* move into adjacency, it was observed that diachronic accounts from purely morphological perspectives are insufficient to explain their univerbation, as syntactic regularities restrict the required adjacency of the two. This means that constructional approaches must posit other factors, which may motivate the observed development. Most notably, analogy with syntactic and intonatory patterns found elsewhere in the language suggest the integration of *obschon* into well entrenched schematic categories, offering an explanation as to why

this pattern overcame said syntactic restrictions. Thus, the presentation argued for more integrative approaches in morphology, which take issues on different structural levels into account.

Eva Zehentner (University of Zurich) challenged Construction Grammar by investigating ditransitive clauses in English with regards to the diachronic shifts from morphological to syntactic means of disambiguating agents from recipients. As English developed from a more synthetic language to a more analytic system, it lost most of its case marking and other nominal and verbal inflectional patterns. Instead, it developed a stricter constituent order and increased preposition use to distinguish arguments in Present-Day English (PDE). At this point, Zehentner raised the question if it is really that simple. By investigating corpus data, it was shown that a double strategy usage is most common, even in PDE, and that there is a correlation with the length of sentences. In summary, in light of Zehentner's work, the situation appears to be more complex than initially assumed.

Carlotta J. Hübener's (Humboldt University of Berlin, University of Duisburg-Essen) presentation dealt with morphologisation, the process by which linguistic structures abandon phrase-typical features and take on word-typical features. Based on an exhaustive study of Old High German glosses, Hübener showed that synthetic compounds such as *brothecko* ‘bread baker’ undergo morphologisation. In the data, verb phrases lose importance as sources of analogy for the form of first constituents of synthetic compounds. Morphologisation could also be attested at other linguistic levels such as spelling. In order to describe this phenomenon, morphology and syntax must be seen as the poles of a continuum, with words being multi-level bundles of features. Hübener criticised the unclear concept of ‘word’ in Construction Grammar, which cannot easily be reconciled with the morphologisation process found in the data.

A different perspective was shown by **Steffen Höder** (Kiel University) by combining Construction Grammar with a phonological perspective with a focus on German, Danish and Swedish. As constructions are defined as consisting of form and function, phonology is assigned to the form side. Descriptions are often based on conventional orthography rather than phonetic reality. This is where Höder argues for the inclusion of phonology in constructional considerations based on the ‘double articulation’ (Martinet 1949) of language consisting of a finite set of distinctive units such as sounds and phonemes on the

one side, and the infinite combination into meaningful units such as words or morphemes on the other side. Meaningful units do not necessarily have to be made up of distinctive ones, but they can incorporate meaningful units which leads to submorphemic constructions and phonological schematicity. With regards to phonological schematicity, comparison of German and Danish show that recurring sound correspondences in pairs of (related) languages can be found, which are derived from schematic lexical diaconstructions (cf. i.e. Höder 2012; 2014a). These can also be considered as phonological language markers in multilingual communities. Therefore, Höder argues for the inclusion of phonology into constructional considerations.

Opening the Wednesday session, **Muriel Norde** (Humboldt University of Berlin) picked up one of the major topics of the workshop: productivity and creativity. Within the framework of Diachronic Construction Morphology (Norde & Trousdale 2023), Norde considers Sampson's (2016) discussion of F-Creativity, sanctioned by the known system, and E-Creativity, creativity outside of the known system, which has the consequence of expanding the previously available system. With reference to examples of creativity which do not appear to adhere to Sampson's typology, Norde suggests a tripartite typology in which F1-creativity and F2-creativity represent fully and partially sanctioned types of creativity respectively and are complemented by E-creativity. Drawing on two groups of Dutch pseudo-participles with *be-* and *ont-* prefixes showing bahuvrihi and privative semantics respectively, Norde proposes a diachronic development, in which, however, the two types diverge: Distributional features indicate that both types constitute different types of creative language usage. Norde's presentation thus presents a finer analysis of what speakers are doing when they are using novel language.

Following this, **Chiara Paolini** (Catholic University of Leuven) presented work prepared with colleagues **Alessandro Lenci** (University of Pisa) and **Denis Paperno** (Utrecht University) concerning use of the denominal uses of Italian *-ata*, which is observed to show a great semantic variety differing from that seen in its deverbal usage. This talk tackled the difficulties observed in previous functional descriptions by departing from categorical paraphrases insufficient to capture the complexity of the phenomenon at hand and studying semantically motivated groupings with a distributional analysis. The study, which employed vector offsets (Bonami & Paperno 2018) to test the goodness of

clusters, shows exemplars to be grouped in semantically motivated clusters and argues for the consideration of analogy as a driving force in usage-based analyses, as the results suggest how speakers produce and interpret novel *-ata* derivations based on such comparisons with semantically similar exemplars.

Paolini was commended for her work which showed an interesting methodological approach and fascinating results.

Jakub Sláma (Charles University in Prague) addressed the interwovenness of argument structure constructions and derivational morphology in Czech – an issue which has been neglected in studies of Slavic languages. In his presentation, Sláma presented arguments as to why it is possible to postulate constructions in Czech, in which the modulation of the argument structure of lexical verbs can be seen in connection with the presence of prefix derivation and reflexive morphemes. This issue is further complicated by the issue of aspect in derivational morphology in Czech verbs, which is affected by such prefix derivation. The study identified 13 schematic constructions in neologisms and corpus data, which by means of aspect-modifying derivational prefixes also bring about a change in argument structure, and, which play an important role in the formation of neologisms. In this way, the study presents a step away from traditional views on morphology and adapts a constructionist view in order to account for the semantic and structural peculiarities represented in such neologisms.

Regina Ruf's (University of Neuchâtel) presentation gave insight into the development of German complex prepositions forming multi-word units with a focus on the types *mit Hilfe* ‘with the help of’ and *mit Ausnahme* ‘with the exception of’ following the general pattern [P N_{dev} P/GEN]. These two constructions show similar behaviour in that they represent fixed lexical items, have high token frequency and reduced compositionality. They do, however, vary with regards to their meaning, with one showing instrumental meaning and the other one exceptive meaning. Moreover, not only can *mit Hilfe* but also *mithilfe* be found in corpus data. Ruf argues with reference to corpus data that this development is a product of univerbation, which can be attributed to the frequency of *mit Hilfe*. Such a development cannot be found for *mit Ausnahme*. One reason may be the lower frequency of *mit Ausnahme*, another, the appearance of numerous alternatives acting as competitors such as *ausgenommen* ‘excluded’, *ohne* ‘without’ or *bis auf* ‘except for’.

Hendrik Kligge's (University of Erlangen-Nuremberg) work took on assumptions and generalisations made regarding the homogeneity of morphological knowledge within inflectional paradigms among speakers. In his study of the dative inflection of German adjectives, Kligge showed that there is variation among speakers and pursued the hypothesis that this may be considered in relation to plurilingualism and familiarity with the written standard as reflected in familiarity with literature. The results suggested a correlation between mono- and plurilingualism and the acceptability of forms produced in a fill-the-gap-test, which Kligge attributed to the complexity of the phenomenon and its poor mental representation stemming from its low frequency and phonological similarity to other patterns. In testing the familiarity of respondents with German literature, Kligge's data demonstrated a correlation between accepted adjective declination and literary knowledge among monolingual German speakers. This research reflects that differences in paradigm-acquisition are related to varying factors, and that experience with the written language importantly appears to help users disambiguate and strengthen their mental representations of paradigms.

Kligge received the award for best presentation by a doctoral or post-doctoral contribution for his interesting, convincing and entertaining work.

Kristel van Goethem (University of Louvain) opened the Thursday program with a presentation of work undertaken in collaboration with **Isa Hendrikx** (University of Liège). The work presented focused on the production of compounds in Dutch as produced by francophone learners in school contexts, as these languages differ in terms of the structure, frequency and productivity of compounds and functionally similar syntactic solutions. The study pursued a second goal of investigating effects of *Content and Language Integrated Learning* (CLIL) programs on learner competencies, adopting a Diasystematic Construction Grammar framework (cf. Höder 2012; 2014a; 2014b; 2018). It was hypothesised that learners would tend to adopt strategies found in French, rather than forming correct Dutch compound structures and that those participating in a CLIL program would adopt more Dutch structures. While the study showed a range of more-or-less successful strategies, it confirms that francophone Dutch learners produced phrasal structures overproportionately, but also that there was an overgeneralisation of Dutch compound structures for cases, where native speakers reach to more idiomatic phrasal

constructions. Whereas those learners not in CLIL programs relied more on their native constructions, CLIL-learners’ results indicated more native-like production, showing a positive effect of the CLIL program. The presentation thus shone light upon the difficult task of navigating linguistic similarities and differences in acquiring constructions in another language.

Hikaru Hotta (University of Neuchâtel) presented a holistic analysis of the Japanese self-quotative construction *kana to omou*, composed of *kana*, a (negative) epistemic clause-final particle common in soliloquy, with *to omou* ‘I think’, associated with epistemic meaning but also quoting one’s own thoughts aloud and carrying intersubjective load. Hotta suggests an interpretation of *kana to omou* as a unified epistemic marker: The interpretation of *kana* is obligatorily that of reduced certainty when occurring with *to omou*, although more variation can be observed outside of this syntagma. Collocations of *kana to omou* with markers of judgement and intensifiers furthermore demonstrated a rather high degree of certainty in the speaker’s judgement, conflicting with the compositional meaning of *kana to omou*. Hotta therefore presents arguments as to why *kana to omou* might thus be seen as a single unit spanning a clause boundary.

Rafael Soto Setzke (Radboud University) argued in his talk for the dynamicity of paradigms within the framework of Construction Grammar, as a means of approaching the boundary between morphological and grammatical paradigms. The introduction of paradigms into usage-based frameworks to account for certain phenomena in language that would otherwise be difficult to explain has recently been demanded again and again. Based on the assumption that grammatical paradigms are hyper-constructions, Soto Setzke asked how it is possible to conduct empirical testing. So far, there is no consensus about the mental representation of paradigms. Soto Setzke proposes that the process of paradigmatisation is based on the cross-domain human ability to categorise. He argues that this approach would be more accessible for experimental methods and could provide empirical grounding. Following this presentation, it can be said that the concept of paradigms is necessary to explain many linguistic phenomena, especially in morphology, but that its integration into constructional approaches thus far leaves much unsaid.

Livio Gaeta (University of Turin) gave insight into paradigmatic and syntagmatic aspects of Construction Morphology with a focus on zero morphemes, productivity, and

creativity. From a theoretical perspective, zero morphemes are necessary to explain new signs. They are conceptual aids provided by Construction Morphology, in which relationships are generally represented hierarchically. On a usage-based approach, productivity can be considered as a function of the number of connections within a network and the size of the network. Productivity is accompanied by creativity, although constructional approaches still struggle to clearly delineate the two, as exemplified by Ungerer & Hartmann's (2023) discussion of snowclones, which are defined as cliché patterns or frames and give rise to many slightly different variations. In light of this, if we compare the productivity values of typical alternatives like the Italian suffix *-issimo* to the values of certain types of prefixes such as *mega-* 'mega-', *iper-* 'hyper-', etc., we can assign the former to the set of typical productive word-formation patterns, whereas the latter quite closely resemble the creativity attributed to snowclones. In Gaeta's approach to Construction Morphology, cases like the formation of Italian colour adjectives like *grigiolino* 'greyish' can be considered in terms of syntagmatic and paradigmatic telescoping. The pattern, which derives from *grigio lino* 'linen grey' is motivated by homophony with diminutive suffix *-lino*, and spreads to other colour adjectives resulting in *verdolino*, *beigiolino*, *biancolino*, for example. This can be seen as interaction between different levels of analysis. Nevertheless, one problem remains: the definition of productivity and creativity. This issue can be better understood if we adopt a usage-based approach that distinguishes between productive patterns and creative snowclones.

In addition to the program described, **Stefan Hartmann** (University of Düsseldorf) held two practical workshops. The first was dedicated to data visualisation in GGLOT2 in R with a focus on best practices in the preparation of bar, scatter, and box plots. The second workshop was focused on the application of statistical methods to count-data in R. Many thanks, Stefan, for sharing your expertise.

The final discussion lead by Elena Smirnova, Martin Hilpert and Jenny Audring took up different topics addressed during the workshop as discussed by the participants. The workshop presented proposed solutions and approaches to morphology within the framework of Construction Grammar that encourage further work in this area. There is agreement that there are still many points that remain unresolved and could not be solved

within the workshop. This concerns, among other things, wordhood, cognitive representation of paradigms and (types of) creativity and productivity which are difficult to define.

All in all, the workshop helped to emphasise morphology within Construction Grammar and at the same time to address difficulties and challenges arising from its study and application.

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Regina Ruf

Université de Neuchâtel

Institut de langue et littérature allemandes

Espace Tilo Frey 1

CH-2000 Neuchâtel

regina.ruf@unine.ch

Michael Redmond

Université de Neuchâtel

Institut de langue et littérature allemandes

Espace Tilo Frey 1

CH-2000 Neuchâtel

michael.redmond@unine.ch



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