

## Introduction

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The semantics of derivational processes has long been a neglected field in word-formation studies. Especially since the publication of the seminal *Morphology and lexical semantics* by Rochelle Lieber (2004) this topic has attracted more attention, very recently as a special theme of conferences (e.g. International Morphology Meeting, Vienna 2012, Mediterranean Morphology Meeting, Dubrovnik 2013), and in major studies and collections (e.g. Trips 2009; Uth 2011; Melloni 2011; Bauer et al. 2013; Rainer et al. 2014). This special issue of *Morphology* grew out of a workshop held at Heinrich-Heine-Universität Düsseldorf in July 2014.

We present a selection of papers from this conference that all address some of the central challenges in the study of derivational semantics, such as the notorious flexibility or polysemy of affixal meaning, the interaction of the semantics of base and affix, and the role of world knowledge and context in the interpretation of new derivatives. All papers try to apply or to develop theoretical models that can address the wealth of empirical evidence that morphologists now have at their fingertips due to the exploitation of corpora and other lexical resources.

The articles in this special issue reflect the wide range of phenomena and theoretical issues that are discussed in the field, presenting novel and original analyses couched in various frameworks. The first two articles are devoted to general theoretical and empirical issues of word-formation semantics, i.e. the nature of transposition and methodological considerations concerning the investigation and representation of polysemy.

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Rochelle Lieber's article on transposition discusses the problem of whether derivational processes can be purely transpositional, in the sense that they change exclusively the word-class of the base, but do not add or alter anything about the semantics of the base. The problem is discussed from the perspective of different theoretical frameworks, and it turns out that, even given a shared definition of the term, the analysis of transposition can lead to quite different results in different frameworks in terms of which phenomena would fall under this category. Thus, without an explicit theory of word-formation semantics the idea of derivation without semantic change appears to be quite elusive.

Marion Schulte presents a corpus-based study of the polysemy of the two English rival suffixes *-age* and *-ery*. A novel variety of semantic maps is introduced as a methodological tool to compare the productivity profiles of *-age* and *-ery* readings. Crucially, such maps include information about type and token frequencies of attested readings, gleaned from the *British National Corpus*. It is shown that, even though they are very similar in terms of the general range of attested readings, the two suffixes still exhibit two distinct semantic profiles, measured in terms of the quantitative distribution of their readings.

The papers by Marios Andreou and Angeliki Efthymiou et al., respectively, adopt Lieber's (2004) lexical semantic approach to model prefixal meanings and their relation to the semantics of the base. Marios Andreou starts from the observation that there are different readings of negation with English words that feature the prefixes *dis-* or *in-*, such as standard negative, reversative, pejorative, contrary, and contradictory negation. The patterning of the different kinds of bases with different kinds of readings turns out to be non-arbitrary, and the author formalizes the interplay of base semantics and affix semantics using Lieber's Lexical Semantic Framework.

The paper by Angeliki Efthymiou, Georgia Fragaki, and Angelos Markos is concerned with the polysemy of the Greek prefix *iper-*. Two aspects are in the focus: a comparison of the productivity of the different meanings, and the formalisation of the polysemous semantics of the prefix in terms of Lieber's (2004 et seq.) lexical semantic framework. On the basis of corpus-based productivity measures the authors show that non-spatial and evaluative meanings are more productive than spatial and non-evaluative meanings. The formalisation of the semantics of *iper-* builds on Lieber's (2004) analysis of *over-*, but unlike *over-*, the body of *iper-* does not involve a spatial meaning 'higher than', but a more general specification of 'going above and beyond the limit of a focal point', whose particular instantiation is further determined by the semantics of the base.

The article by Elisabeth Gibert Sotelo and Isabel Pujol Payet also deals with issues of polysemy. The authors study denominal parasynthetic verbs in Spanish, which can have a wide range of interpretations. It is shown that these interpretations are dependent on the type of base noun, the directionality encoded by the prefix, and the kind of internal argument selected. The analysis is especially innovative in its combination of Jackendoff's (1990 et seq.) Conceptual Semantics with Pustejovsky's (1995 et seq.) Generative Lexicon to arrive at an account that can also do justice to the role of context in semantic interpretation.

Karen Ferret and Florence Villoing propose an account of instrumental readings of the French nominalising suffix *-age*. Based on a sample of 725 deverbal nominalisations from a dictionary, the authors show that instrumental readings coincide with

a specific base verb semantics. The verb must denote an externally caused event that involves an instrumental participant. Instrumental readings of *-age* nominalisations are proposed to be the effect of a morphological rule that selects verbs with pertinent predicate semantics (formalised in terms of Levin and Rappaport 1995 et seq.) as derivational bases. The authors argue that such rule is best conceptualised as an independent pattern, countering the widespread view that instrumental readings constitute extensions of event readings.

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