

# **Investigating morphologically and syntactically complex noun phrases with comparative bilingual data: Why representations are integrated.**

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This paper investigates the diverse ways and the resulting patterns in which nouns referring to selected concepts can be composed morphologically and modified syntactically while conveying the same semantic content. The goal is to show that flexible and systematic alternation in such structures cannot simply be attributed to spontaneous language production but must be captured by appropriate linguistic representations in a given theory.

Current research frameworks can be located on a continuum between a separation of syntax and the lexicon and/or morphology into distinct (systematic or idiosyncratic) modules with the assumption of a one-directional flow as in generative approaches (for overviews, see Alexiadou 2015, Pustejovski & Batiukova 2019), to ones with blurred boundaries allowing non-directional influence as in constructional approaches (see Goldberg 2005, Booij 2015, Jackendoff & Audring 2019), to the dissolution of the lexicon as a distinct unit and its integration into a unified system in frameworks like Distributed Morphology (see Halle & Marantz 1993, Lopez et al. 2023).

To appropriately explore structural alternations in nominal realizations of concepts, i.e. in various types of noun phrases, contextually controlled narrative data from a multilingual corpus are used. More specifically, repeated German and English retellings by 36 early bilinguals are analyzed regarding select concepts within the narrative frame. The task repetition, contextual restriction, as well as the comparison of both of the speakers' native languages enable an exhaustive comparative analysis of firstly, the speakers' resources, and secondly, systematic noun phrase patterns in terms of morphological and syntactic structure. In a final step, the patterns identified are analyzed with respect to the key discrepancies between the theoretical frameworks mentioned above.

I propose that the observed highly flexible and systematic structural alternation in noun phrases referring to a given semantic concept indicates that the lexical, morphological, and syntactic resources are all readily available at an early stage during language production, which supports theoretical frameworks with integrated as opposed to separationist representations.

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