Prefixes and suffixes in current theories of grammar

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Key words: prefixes vs suffixes, grammar theory, syntax, morphology

The aim of this workshop is to discuss the asymmetries in the behavior of prefixes and suffixes (as well as other 'pre-' and 'post-' elements) in morpho-syntax and their status in modern theories of grammar. Regarding the second, the particular goal is to consider how current theories of the syntax–lexicon interface (e.g. Nanosyntax, Distributed Morphology, Paradigm-Function Morphology, others) derive pre- and post- placement in morphology and what predictions these theories make about other related phenomena like affix order, syncretism, allomorphy, word stress, and others.

Prefixes and suffixes don't always exhibit the same set of properties. In Slavic, for instance, unlike suffixes, many aspectual verbal prefixes show syncretism with prepositions (e.g. Biskup 2019 for Czech, Polish and Russian). Still in Slavic, prefixes and suffixes behave differently at the interface with phonology. Namely, vowel truncation and glide truncation processes eliminate vowel-vowel and glide-consonant sequences at a suffix boundary (e.g. Kayne 1967; Gussmann 1980; Rubach 1984, 1993). These processes, however, don't take place at a prefix boundary, as illustrated by the Polish prefixed forms *na-uka* 'science', *nie-u-iszczenie* 'failure to pay', *naj-lepszy* 'best', *naj-gorszy* 'worst'. Contrasts like these and similar have led to proposals to treat at least certain classes of prefixes more like bound prepositions (e.g. Matushansky 2002 for Russian, Biskup et al. 2011 for German), which raises further questions about the status of P elements in morphosyntax vis-a-vis suffixes.

The derivation of prefixation vs. suffixation is also obtained differently in competing theories of the syntax-lexicon interface, even in theories that assume a version of Kayne's 1994 LCA as a guideline for linearization. Thus, in Nanosyntax, prefixes and suffixes realize syntactically different structures: prefixes spell out complex left branches (specifiers), suffixes spell out constituents formed as a result of phrasal movement (Starke 2018). In DM, in contrast, both prefixes and suffixes can spell out syntactic terminals and their linear placement is determined by the adjunction site of the moving head or a morpheme-specific pre- or post- designation (e.g. Embick and Noyer 2007, Harley 2011). Yet, in an approach like Paradigm Function Morphology, where the interface between morphology and syntax is word-based rather than morpheme-based, the placement of an affix before or after the stem is part of rules of exponence (e.g. Bonami and Stump 2016). The workshop aims to compare and explore the predictions the different theories make about deriving pre- and post- affixation and closely related phenomena.

Notwithstanding the brief presentation of the topical theoretical preferences above, we invite submissions dealing with the relevant prefix/suffix characteristics stemming from other current theoretical orientations in linguistics, as well as presentations including data from less well-explored languages. Novel data will be very helpful and may contribute to tipping the scales in the debate embracing competing accounts.

Specific research questions include (but are by no means limited to) the following:

1. How are prefixes and suffixes derived in grammar? Which theory of spell-out makes correct predictions if a morpheme X will come out before or after the stem?

2. What are grammatical differences, other than separability, between prefixes and prepositions? If certain classes of prefixes are best analyzed as prepositions, then what grammatical or interface factors decide that they end up as bound or free (cf. Caha and Ziková 2016 for Czech)?

3. Do different theories of deriving prefixes and suffixes make predictions about the locality domains for root suppletion and allomorphy. If yes, then how exactly?

4. What is the best way to derive instances where a certain affix appears as a suffix or as a prefix in a paradigm (e.g. Blix for Arabic 2018)?

5. To what extent does pre- vs. post- placement in morphology (affix order, prefix stacking) differ from pre- vs. post- placement in syntax (word and clitic order, specifiers vs. complements, etc.)?

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