Introduction

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The Emergence of Grammars. A closer look at dialects between phonology and morphosyntax,
Michela Russo (ed.)

This book brings together ten original contributions to the linguistic study of grammars. In several works carried out according to different theoretical perspectives, linguists have tried to identify the phonological, morphological, syntactic, and semantic properties of a grammar. What is a grammar? What types of grammar are possible in natural languages? Why and to what extent do grammatical properties vary from one language to another? The answer to these questions is not obvious.

Linguistic analysis can have for object the linguistic knowledge, the grammatical competence (i.e., *I-language*), while an explicit grammar must model this knowledge in its entirety. A mentalist interpretation of grammar implies that it is not enough to propose any axiomatized system compatible with a given corpus.

The book also raises the question of a modular grammar. Some researchers admit in the grammar only one productive component, others postulate a modular grammar composed by several autonomous generative systems interacting with one another.

The book recalls one of the major empirical challenges to which a general theory of language structure must satisfy: to describe in detail both the variation and the absence of variation between languages, and to explain why this variation has the properties that we observe.

This book also raises the question of the status of linearity in grammar, that is to say, first of all, the question of its multiplicity or its uniqueness. The topic of linearity represents what can be called the maximum impact of phonology in grammar.

The ten contributions that make up this book were conducted independently by linguists who, without necessarily sharing the same theoretical framework, share a universalist conception of grammar, and the ambition to go beyond the simple facts in order to propose an explanation.

All languages are human and the properties of Lithuanian, Gothic, Sanskrit, Nakanai, Bosnian, Croatian and Serbian, Finnic languages, Atlantic Languages, Proto-Western Arabic and *Maltese*, Occitan, medieval and modern Italo-Romance grammars are therefore relevant to English or French specialists as well.

Each article of this book aims to describe and understand complex data from empirical materials collected in a language, a group of languages or a type of language.

Daniel Petit studies in his Chapter 1 ("The secondary locative cases in the Lithuanian dialect of Zietela") the Lithuanian dialect of Zietela (Belorussia), where the Common Baltic system of secondary locative cases has been maintenaid. He provides information on this variety in the context of Baltic languages, then he addresses the case system in detail. He presents the reconfiguration – thus the emergence of a new system in Zietela - of case markers in the language. This system is structured in Old Lithuanian according to two parameters [±CONTACT], [±MOTION]. In this chapter he aims to formally describe the new features configuration and distribution in the dialect of Zietela from the historical development. This dialect has original features, some of which are contact-induced innovations.

Nadira Aljović in her Chapter 2 ("First conjunct agreement is not an elliptical illusion: a case of prenominal adjectives") addresses the question of first-conjunct agreement with prenominal adjectives in Bosnian, Croatian, Serbian. She argues against an analysis of this phenomenon based on ellipsis. The claim is that first conjunct agreement can arise within a structure in which the prenominal element scopes semantically and syntactically over a conjunction noun phrase.

Vincent Surrel's Chapter 3 ("Null Subjects and subjects pronouns in diachrony: evidence from textual sources of Northern Occitan Velay") focuses on the little-known pronominal systems present in northern Occitan, intermediate between the Oc and Oïl domains.

One would expect verbs in Occitan, as in other Romance languages such as Italian or Spanish, to have no subject. The forms analysed by Vincent Surrel are therefore surprising and require a linguistic and dialectological interpretation. In the dialects of Oïl, subject pronouns are obligatory for inflected verbs, and this grammatical distinction, known by linguists as the null subject parameter (or pro-drop parameter), groups together two typological areas with or without an expressed subject. Vincent Surrel highlights the behavior of transitional dialects, with partial pro-drop. The idea is therefore to define these partial paradigms which seem to escape the traditional pro-drop parameterization. He proposes to model this pronominal variation.

Michela Russo and Shanti Ulfsbjorninn in their Chapter 4 ("Accounting for the definite articles in Medieval Italian and Modern Dialects. No allomorphy – a commun UR") explore the properties of definite articles in Italo-Romance. It is well known that Italian definite articles are governed by allomorphic rules. They propose that this is not strictly speaking allomorphy because all Italian articles share a common underlying form that varies in shape according to phonological conditions. Their major claim is that the articles underlying form and their morphological exponents have remained virtually unchanged since Medieval Italo-Romance and the only important changes have been to the phonological and morphosyntactic processes that affect their surface realisation.

In their Chapter they bring together diachrony, many modern dialects and Standard Italian under a shared, phonologically, and morphologically unified decompositional analysis.

In all the medieval and modern dialects investigated, the same phonological objects expone the same syntactic features, and the variation in surface forms are merely the effect of the micro-parametric differences in the phonological and morphosyntactic processes that interpret the same UR (underlying representation) according to its phonological and syntactic context. Their analysis includes dialectal forms with 'unexpected' gemination before vowel-initial stems (never previously analysed) and indefinite/mass articles in Southern Italo-Romance.

In the framework called a Word Syntax (i.e., morphological linearity is derived from hierarchical organization), they show that in these dialects' indefiniteness is marked by an indefinite bare marker 'de', in SpecDP within a layered DP structure (spelled out as P, such as 'de', only in the Medieval period). This bare marker acts as a licensor for a realized initial geminate of the masculine singular MASS and the indefinite feminine plural articles V-initial in the indefinite morphosyntactic environments. In C-initial position the φ-features of the indefinite articles geminate the onset of the following indefinite nouns via the *Raddoppiamento Sintattico* triggered by these two indefinite markers.

Gilbert Puech in his Chapter 5 ("Emergence of Maltese morpho-phonological profile") explores the Arabic introduced on the islands of Malta and Gozo, close to Sicily, in the High Middle Ages, and he endorses the view that Maltese is an offspring of Proto-Western Arabic, although Maltese has prosodic and syllabification-related features in common with pre-Hillalian Levantine dialects, and on the grounds that it shares with continental Maghrebi dialects morphological innovations which identify this group.

In his Chapter he focused on two aspects of Maltese morpho-phonology: syllabic structure and stress, and loss of 'back' consonants. The theoretical framework is structured by UG principles. He shows how emphatic consonants of Arabic Maltese were lost in the late Middle Ages and guttural consonants in modern times. This triggered substantial changes in Maltese phonology, and explains why *Maltese*, which is an Arabic dialect, now sounds very differently from the other dialect of the Arabic space. Once cut off from its Arabic and Islamic roots, new vocabulary was borrowed from European languages. The bilingualism with Italian, then with English impacted the morphophonological and morpho-lexical profile of modern Maltese.

Guillaume Enguehard analyzes in his Chapter 6 ("Sonority and Reduplication: an attempt to reduce the Sonority Condition to a Templatic Condition"), within Government Phonology

theory, the reduplicative mechanisms in Gothic, Sanskrit, and Nakanai which implement the melodic complexity regarding the sonority condition. According to him the size of the template (i.e., the quantity of skeletal positions) conditions the sonority of the reduplicated segments. Complex less sonorous templates are associated to larger templates. In this way he provides in this chapter a theoretical approach that relates the principle of sonority and the template. This has implications on the theory of sonority and allows for questioning the sonority driven syllabification principle, since it is generally assumed that the distinction between the complex segments and cluster types is generated by the *Sonority Sequencing Principle*. The proposal of Guillaume Enguehard, based on diagnostics of syllable structure, is inverse to this traditional assumption: for him sonority derives from structure, not the other way around. The constraints on the reduplicated segments derive from the representations.

Timothée Premat, Sophie Chouvion and Axelle Verner (a singer, *mezzo-soprano*) in their Chapter 7 ("Repetitions, Rests Insertion and Schwa in 16th century French Polyphony: An Emergent Sub-Grammar in Fresneau's Songs?") focus on the relationship between text and music in the 16th century song, and on hierarchical constituent structure matching grammar in textsetting. Each song combines two objects, the text, the linguistic object, and the song, the musical object (tune). The authors describe how these two objects interact in Henry Fresneau's songs. The textsetting refers to the correspondence between text and tune, making use of formal similarities between language and music. One main similarity consists in the hierarchical constituent structure. Like syllables, lexical items can be grouped into phonological or syntactic constituents, the notes in a tune can be bounded in groups, also nested in hierarchical larger groups.

Henry Fresneau's 16th century polyphonic songs show a specific interaction in textsetting. The authors establish the matchings generated by this grammar and model the emergence of Fresneau's song sub-grammar. This chapter has benefited from the collaboration of a singer, Axelle Verner (*mezzo-soprano*) specialized in restoring a 16th century French pronunciation, as well as on the analysis of textsetting in ancient music, and their transmission to singers and performers.

Maximilien Guérin examines in his Chapter 8 ("Locative, Presentative and Progressive Construction in Atlantic Languages") the verbal morphology of Atlantic Languages. He particularly focuses on a prototypical locative construction also used as a presentative and/or progressive construction and the marker associated to it. His hypothesis is that this construction, characteristic of this family, is inherited from Proto-Atlantic, and that its marker derives from a demonstrative determiner through a process of grammaticalization. His theoretical framework moves from grammatical constructions (usage-based Grammar), a functionalist approach to Grammars. His model of grammar diverges from the one adopted in the previous chapters since it is not based on the principles of universal grammar, rather in this model grammar is not independent of use and meaning, thus changes result from the creation of new grammars and the loss of the previous grammatical stages, processes called grammaticalizations from which the evolution of grammars would arise.

Jean Léo Léonard in his Chapter 9 ("Paradigm Function Morphology applied to the Southern Finnic Dialect Network") describes Finnic inflectional systems within a diasystemic analysis. He combines in his morpho-phonological analysis two different approaches, *Paradigm Function Morphology* (PFM), templatic phonology and particle phonology. He points out two main issues, relevant to Finno-Ugrian linguistics, general typology, and morpho-phonology: the relationship between Finnic inflectional taxonomies and typological inflection systems, and the challenge for theoretical linguistics to model morphological complexity and dialectal variation. He gives an account of Finnic inflectional taxonomies within PFM through a set of morphophonological rules and graphs of stem variation in order to turn 'complexity' into a 'simplexity' model.

It is important to recall the core assumption of the *Paradigm Function Morphology* used in Chapter 9, in this framework Morphology is an autonomous component of the grammar. It

means that in the internal architecture of Grammar, Morphology has an independent component with its own architecture, based on lexemes, paradigms, and realizations; thus, a language's inflectional morphology is the result of its paradigm function.

John te Velde and Nora Vosburg in Chapter 10 ("Plautdietsch: A remarkable story of Language and change") examine an endangered diasporic language of limited diffusion, Plautdietsch (also called Mennonite Low German), which has undergone changes dues to different linguistic factors. It is a religious minority originally from the Netherlands and Belgium, spoken as a primary language, and as heritage language. In the early formative years in the Vistula Delta, several phonological changes occurred that significantly changed the character of the original language, Dutch. It is composed by a cluster of dialects spoken among Mennonites in Europe, South America, and North America (USA, Canada, Mexico). Despite the actual distances, these varieties are still mutually intelligible. In this chapter they present interesting data from two Mennonite groups, one in Oklahoma, the other in Kansas. Despite the geographical distance for over a century their Plautdietsch varieties show a strikingly resemblance. Turning to formal aspects of syntax and phonology, they present evidence of the striking resilience of Plautdietsch dialect since earliest documentation. In particular, they found that the syntax of Plautdietsch varieties has remained intact as found in the other West Germanic languages with only very limited evidence of any shifts.

These ten contributions could be grouped in thematic sub-headings 'Syntax', 'Morphology', 'Morphosyntax', 'Phonology', 'Typology', but from some of them a common point of view emerges: morphological properties are dependent on syntax, and syntax, phonology and morphology are together responsible for interpretative properties providing classification criteria to typology. In some of these contributions also emerges the hypothesis that morphology derives basically from the application of phonology to syntactic structures. However, some contributions have stated that Morphology is an independent component.

Thus, an important question is left open: what place should be respectively given to Syntax and Morphology in the grammatical derivations?

For some researchers, some operations are part of the syntax, while others see them as independent and post-syntactic mechanisms, and for some researchers, phonology creates linearity independently of syntax, within morphemes.

The problem of the Syntax/Morphology and Phonology/Morphology interface is one of the major current issues in grammatical research. The themes proposed in this book particularly invite us to reflect.

Paris, the 14th of Mai 2021,   Michela Russo