

MICROMORPHOLOGY OF INFLECTION

22nd International Morphology Meeting, Budapest, May 28–31, 2026

1 WORKSHOP DESCRIPTION

One special case of atypical morphology is the creation of affixal complexes: the situation where more than one affix is used to create a derivative. One possible structure for such cases is a complex affix, and the term “micromorphology” was coined by Stump 2017b to describe the hypothesis that an affix can itself be morphologically complex. Variations of this hypothesis and its uses have been investigated by Bochner 1993, Soukka 2000, Luís and Spencer 2005, and Stump 2017a, b, 2023, among others. The relevant phenomenon is illustrated for derivational suffixes in (1), see Stump 2017b for the demonstration that (1) involves a complex suffix rather than iterative addition.

- (1) a. whimsy → *whimsic, whimsical English
b. type → *typic, typical
c. character → *characterist
characteristic

Cases of this type have not so far attracted sufficient attention where it comes to inflection, and our workshop aims to fill this gap. Pretheoretically, at least the following cases of augmentation in inflection can be described.

Obligatory multiple exponence (cf. Harris 2017; some instances of affix pleonasm (Gardani 2015) can also be analyzed so) is illustrated in (2) from Lak (Northeast Caucasian; Dagestan, Russia), where the majority of nouns have a plural form composed of two plural suffixes. Thus (2d) has a plural form with a repetition of the same plural marker (*du* is the allomorph of *ru* used after [r]; the final [u] is epenthetic), while in (2e) the plural form is composed of two distinct plural markers with no additional plural semantics; moreover, some lexemes do not allow single-marked plurals.

- (2) a. č'i 'lamb', č'i-ru 'lamb-PL' Murkelinskij 1971, p. 78
b. ma'r 'nail', ma'r-du 'nail-PL' p. 78
c. č'ula 'log (wooden)', č'ul-tti 'log-PL' p. 79
d. č'aw 'cheek', č'aw-ru, č'aw-r-du 'cheek-PL' p. 80
e. c'u-ku 'star; female goat-SG', c'u-r-tti 'star; female goat-PL' p. 81

Augmentation of inflectional morphology: in cases like (3), the nominal stems can be argued to be inflected with a complex plural suffix, consisting of the morph *-ĭj-* and the usual plural suffix. This case differs from (2d–e) in that the additional suffix is not itself a plural suffix.

- (3) a. *brat* 'brother.SG': *brat-ĭj-a-mi*, *brother-ĭj-PL-INS* Russian
b. *kn'az'* 'prince.SG': *kn'az-ĭj-a-x*, *prince-ĭj-PL-LOC*
c. *koleno* 'elbow, joint.SG': *kolen-ĭj-a*, *joint-ĭj-PL.NOM*

Agreement on non-stem morphs is illustrated in (4): as discussed by Soukka 2000, definite NPs in Noon (Atlantic; Niger-Congo, Senegal) inflect for location (location 1 being close to the speaker, location 2, close to the addressee, and location 3, distant from both), and Noon adjectives agree with the noun in both noun-class and location. More specifically, when the noun is definite, the definite suffix on the adjective agrees with the noun in location features, and both the adjective and its definite suffix agree in noun class. As (4b–c) show, the attributive adjective *yak* 'big' is preceded by a noun class prefix (*wi-* for noun class 1, also marked on the noun itself, *ci-* for the plural of noun classes 1–3), and the same consonantal noun-class marker appears on the locative agreement marker (*-um* for location 1, *-aa* for location 3) following the adjective in (4b–c) and the numeral in (4c). Furthermore, the agreement prefix itself can also be decomposed, since the vowel is different for ordinal numerals (4d).

- (4) a. waas wi-yak adapted from Soukka 2000:89
road.CL1 CL.SG-big
big road
- b. waas-um wi-yak-wum
road.CL1-LOC2 CL1.SG-big-LOC2.CL1
the big road [near you]
- c. waas-caa ci-yak-caa kanak-caa p.129
road.CL123.PL-LOC3 CL123.PL-big-LOC3.CL123.PL two-LOC3.CL123.PL
those two big roads
- d. wu-kanak-wii p.92
CL1.ORD-second-LOC1.CL1
the second (road) [near me]

As such cases can be argued to involve two independent affixes within the inflectional morph (one for noun class agreement, one for location/definiteness agreement), we would welcome evidence that would permit to settle the internal constituency issues in these and similar cases.

Inflectional circumfixes, like the plural circumfix (5a) in Upper Bal Svan (South Caucasian, Georgia), from Tuite 1997:18, or the apparent feminine circumfix in Berber (5b), from Faust and Lahrouchi 2022, are also amenable to micromorphological treatment.

- (5) a. dačwir ‘sister (for a brother)’ vs. la-dčur-a (PL-sister-PL) ‘sisters (for a brother)’
b. afrux ‘boy’ / t-afrux-t ‘girl’

We welcome abstracts dealing with the following issues:

- Case studies of micromorphology in inflection
- Functional and diachronic motivations of micromorphology
- Evidence for/against micromorphological analyses of specific phenomena
- Resolution of conceptual issues arising from non-simplex inflectional morphology

The workshop is not restricted to any specific theoretical framework.

2 SELECTED REFERENCES

- Gardani, Francesco. 2015. Affix pleonasm. In *An International Handbook of the Languages of Europe*, vol. 1, ed. by Peter O. Müller, Ingeborg Ohnheiser, Susan Olsen and Franz Rainer, 537–550. Berlin: De Gruyter Mouton. <https://doi.org/10.1515/9783110246254-032>.
- Harris, Alice C. 2017. *Multiple Exponence*. Oxford: Oxford University Press. <https://doi.org/10.1093/acprof:oso/9780190464356.001.0001>.
- Luís, Ana, and Andrew Spencer. 2005. A paradigm function account of ‘mesoclisism’ in European Portuguese. In *Yearbook of Morphology 2004*, ed. by Geert Booij and Jaap van Marle, 177–228. Dordrecht: Kluwer.
- Soukka, Maria. 2000. *A descriptive grammar of Noon: A Cangin language of Senegal*. Munich: LINCOM Europa.
- Stump, Gregory. 2017a. Polyfunctionality and the variety of inflectional exponence relations. In *Perspectives on Morphological Organization: Data and Analyses*, ed. by Ferenc Kiefer, James Blevins and Huba Bartos, 9–30. Leiden: Brill. https://doi.org/10.1163/9789004342934_003.
- Stump, Gregory. 2017b. Rule conflation in an inferential-realizational theory of morphotactics. *Acta Linguistica Academica* 64(1), 79–124, <http://akademai.com/loi/2062>.
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3 TECHNICAL

Desired workshop length: half a day to a day

Organization: no introduction, a final discussion, 10–12 workshop presenters anticipated (7 solicited + 3–5 more recruited if the proposal is accepted)

Organizers:

- David Erschler, Ben-Gurion U. of the Negev, erschler@bgu.ac.il
A field linguist and typologist with focus on the languages of the Caucasus, in particular, Ossetic, Georgian, and Svan. His theoretical interests include morphology, syntax, and their interaction with phonology.
- Ora Matushansky, SFL (CNRS/Université Paris-8), ora.matushansky@cnrs.fr
Currently mostly a generative morphologist (distributed), working on the interfaces of the Russian derivation and inflection with semantics and phonology; formerly a generative syntactician and semanticist

Tentative workshop presenters

1. Marina Chumakina, U. of Surrey, m.chumakina@surrey.ac.uk,
“Imperfective circumfix in Archi and its interaction with agreement markers”
2. Greville Corbett & Sacha Beniamine, U. of Surrey, g.corbett@surrey.ac.uk,
“Augments: a canonical typology”
3. David Erschler, Ben-Gurion U. of the Negev, erschler@bgu.ac.il,
“Circumfixal plural marking in Svan”
4. Daniel Harbour, SFL (CNRS/Université Paris-8), daniel.harbour@cnrs.fr,
“Exponential paradox: Fewer features, more morphemes”
5. Mohamed Lahrouchi, SFL (CNRS/Université Paris-8), mohamed.lahrouchi@cnrs.fr,
“Morphophonology of the Tashlhiyt imperfective”
6. Lior Laks, Bar-Ilan University, Lior.Laks@biu.ac.il
“Are there redundant suffixes in Hebrew? A view from inflection and derivation”
7. Ora Matushansky, SFL (CNRS/Université Paris-8), ora.matushansky@cnrs.fr,
“Nominal stress retraction and complex plurals in Russian”

No special technical needs are anticipated