

# 30 Years Distributing Morphology from North to South: the view from Romance. Introduction

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## 1. Special Issue presentation

The project underlying the *Isogloss* Special Issue – 30 YEARS DISTRIBUTING MORPHOLOGY FROM NORTH TO SOUTH: THE VIEW FROM ROMANCE – was to collect the selected papers, presented as conferences or oral communications, at the symposium *30 Years Distributing Morphology from North to South* (DM30), held at the University of São Paulo (São Paulo – Brazil) in 2023, from October 3<sup>rd</sup> to 6<sup>th</sup>. The leading idea of this event was to gather Distributed Morphologists from several countries discussing different phenomena from different languages and, mostly, to discuss and evaluate the impact of Distributed Morphology (DM) theory in both Generative Linguistics and the morphological field in general, 30 years after the publication of *Distributed Morphology and the pieces of inflection* by Morris Halle and Alec Marantz, in 1993.

The symposium – organized by Ana Paula Scher, Indaiá de Santana Bassani, Janayna da Rocha Carvalho, Maurício Resende and Paula Roberta Gabbai Armelin – hosted conferences by Alessandro Boechat de Medeiros, Aniela Impróta França, Indaiá de Santana Bassani, Maria Filomena Spatti Sandalo, and Vitor Nóbrega from Brazil, as well as by Alec Marantz, André Saab, and David Embick from abroad, in addi-

tion to oral and poster presentations. In short, DM30 had presentations about Portuguese, Spanish, English, Russian, Mayan, Kadiwéu, Mocovi, and LIBRAS (Brazilian Sign Language).

Apart from the anniversary of Halle & Marantz (1993) publication, there were other reasons to celebrate. In the 1990's, the study of morphology lost its status among obligatory disciplines offered in the undergraduate courses in Letters in the Brazilian universities. That did not mean, of course, that all morphologists were fired then, but for a while, no new ones were hired in those courses. There was then a severe reduction in the number researchers dealing with morphology specifically among Brazilian linguists.

Halle & Marantz (1993) and the research in the field which came after it served as motivation for the creation of the study and research group in DM at the University of São Paulo in 2004 and stimulated the development of research based on that framework at both Federal University of Rio de Janeiro and Santa Catarina. From then on, many students and researchers got their degree in Letters/Linguistics, working with morphology and, particularly, with Distributed Morphology. They have all applied for positions at different universities in Brazil and slowly Morphology and new morphologists were back to the scene. A significant number of those researchers took part in DM30. That means we definitely had good reasons to celebrate the beginning of all that.

All of presentations and conferences approached and discussed numerous theoretical aspects of DM theory, and some of those discussions are well developed in the following papers. Particularly, we have reached the conclusion that four main issues have been currently guiding the discussion within DM theory, namely, (i) the nature of roots, (ii) phasehood in word formation, (iii) the interplay between sound and meaning, and (iv) mixed categories.

The matter underlying the nature of roots has to do with how roots are to be individuated in List 1, that is, do roots possess phonological and/or semantic content prior syntax or they are just place holders carrying an index with instructions for both PF and LF interpretation? In turn, regarding phasehood in word formation, the question targets the structural domains for "special sound" and "special meaning" inside word structure, specifically what the structural boundary between regular and irregular morphology is, i.e., is it the first categorizer or some functional head above it (such as Voice)? Yet, are the phases for PF and LF computation the same?

As for the sound/meaning interplay, the question is how phonological and semantic information interact within grammar architecture, that is, can List 3 (Encyclopedia) have access to phonological form or the only means for interaction are indices associated to different sets of instruction? Furthermore, what kind of semantic information – if any – is relevant to syntactic computation, i.e., prior LF branching? Finally, as regards mixed categories, the discussion revolves around (descriptively) mixed categories, such as infinitives and participles; can the usual functional heads express their linguistic properties or it is necessary to call upon a mixed projection (such as SWITCH)?

These topics, among others, are discussed in the papers as follows. In *Switching categories in syntax: parallels between infinitival nominalizations and analytical passives in Brazilian Portuguese*, Paula Roberta Gabbai Armelin, Dalila Maria de Souza, and Lydsson Agostinho Gonçalves investigate the relationship between infinitival nominalizations and analytical passives in Brazilian Portuguese under the theoretical

framework of DM (Halle & Marantz, 1993; Marantz, 1997) and suggest that the similarities between nominalizations and passives justify the proposal of a parallel structure for them in terms of a SWITCH head (Panagiotidis, 2015) which changes the verbal structure into a nominal one. The two formations will be distinct due to the [N] feature in the SWITCH of the former structure contra the [A] feature in the latter.

In *Compositionality in verbs and nominalizations: a (radically) formal approach*, Alessandro Boechat de Medeiros analyses Brazilian Portuguese data, particularly nominal forms derived from various kinds of verbs, based on the DM framework, and explores the proposal of a constructionist argument structure theory previously presented in Medeiros (2018). The author shows that derived nominal forms preserve part of the syntactic-semantic decompositions of their corresponding verb phrases, keeping their complex structural meaning. One of the by-products of the analysis is the fact that it can, compositionally, deal with the entity interpretation of result nominals – such as ‘*construção*’ (‘construction’) –, which still hold some event reading.

In *The roots and structures of possessive noun classes*, Grant Armstrong re-examines nouns that are inalienably possessed (nouns denoting body parts and kinship terms) and those that are alienably possessed (nouns denoting owned materials) in Spanish and Mayan languages. The author analyses these data in terms of roots and structures associated with inalienable and alienable possession and observes that external possession in Spanish can support the claim that inalienable possession differs from alienable possession in structural complexity: the former being more complex than the latter.

In *Emphatic affirmative verb reduplication in Spanish: implications for the theory of multiple copy realization*, María Florencia Silva introduces data concerning innovative verb reduplication in Rioplatense Spanish, which she names “emphatic affirmative verb reduplication”. These data may have correspondence in European Portuguese, but since there are some peculiarities in the Rioplatense Spanish, a new analysis is in order. Therefore, the author provides the reader with a description of the facts followed by an attempt to identify the morphosyntactic conditions which trigger reduplication. The analysis makes use of processes that take place in syntax and PF illustrating the interaction between morphosyntactic and phonological factors in word formation processes.

In *What lexical acquisition has to say about a non-lexicalist architecture of grammar – and vice-versa*, Rafael Luis Beraldo and Paulo Ângelo Araújo-Adriano explore the implications, for the research in language acquisition, of DM’s prediction that syntax manipulates units smaller than the word. The paper discusses the descriptive and theoretical adequacy of the model by introducing independent evidence supporting sub-word units in language acquisition (such as the fact that input data with a higher degree of morphological complexity decreases the performance of the lexical acquisition computational model), and connects DM and earlier proposals for the identification of words and formal features with a strategy for acquiring morphemes. Their findings support the non-lexicalist view of word formation and confirm the inadequacy of proposals that assume the acquisition of words.

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