Workshop on Locality and Directionality at the Morphosyntax-Phonology Interface
Call for papers
October 12 – 14, 2012, Stanford University

Workshop description

Central to the study of the syntax-morphology-phonology interface is the question of their interconnectedness: how much access does each component of grammar have to the other? A historically dominant view is that syntax is "phonology-free," in that syntactic operations are not sensitive to phonological structure. As for phonological operations, many theories take as a starting point the idea that the output of morphosyntactic structure-building determines, with varying degrees of strictness, the locality domains for phonological operations in complex words. Put together, these views lead to a characterization of the syntax-phonology relationship as unidirectional, with (morpho-)syntactic domains determining (morpho-)phonological ones, and phonology playing at most a secondary role in morphosyntactic operations.

Recent theoretical developments (e.g., Distributed Morphology, Optimality Theory) and empirical insights from contemporary methodologies (e.g., experimental and corpus-based quantitative work) call for, and make possible, more fine-grained examination of this widely-held view of syntax-phonology interactions. This workshop aims to address the interconnectedness of phonology and syntax by pursuing two lines of inquiry: (1) locality and cyclicity in morphophonology, and (2) the impact of phonology on syntactic operations.

We invite paper and poster submissions addressing one or both of these topics, for which the main questions are outlined below. We especially encourage submissions based on cross-linguistic, experimental, or corpus-based evidence, or evidence from under-investigated languages.

I. Locality and Cyclicity in Morphophonology

The first theme involves two main questions:

- What is the relevant notion of locality and how should it be built into a theoretical framework?
- What are the mechanisms—rules, constraints, or a principled combination of both—that are responsible for morphophonological operations, and what is the role of optimization, if any, in motivating morphophonological patterns?

This component of the workshop takes as its starting point the recent work on allomorphy by Embick (2010) and welcomes submissions that either (1) bring new evidence to bear on questions of locality and rules vs. constraints in the domain of allomorphy or (2) engage in systematic comparisons between competing derivational rule-based (e.g., DM) or derivational constraint-based systems (e.g., Stratal OT, Harmonic Serialism, OT-CC, Cophonologies).

II. Impact of Phonology on Syntactic Operations

The second theme of the workshop involves the questions:

- To what extent can phonological information, including word-internal phonology and phonetics, influence morphosyntactic processes?
- If so, what is the depth of the access of syntax to phonological information? How is this access regulated, if at all, either through the prosodic hierarchy or via other mechanisms, such as phonetic, phonological, or psycholinguistic constraints?

Recent work in this area has suggested effects of phonologically-driven syntactic choice and prosodically-motivated syntactic movement. We welcome submissions that add to the existing body of work in this domain by drawing on new sources of evidence.

Submission logistics

We invite abstract submissions for papers and posters addressing the main topics of this workshop. Paper presentations will be 45-minutes each, with 15 minutes for discussion, and there are a very limited number of paper slots available. The poster session will be a crucial element for this workshop in order to encourage one-on-one discussion between researchers; therefore, submissions for posters are especially encouraged.

Please submit abstracts to MSPIworkshop@gmail.com by 5 PM PST on Friday, June 1, 2012. Include your name, email, affiliation, title of your submission, and preference for paper and/or poster in the body of the email and an ANONYMOUS PDF as an attachment to the email. The abstract guidelines are as follows:

- 2 US letter-sized pages, including examples, figures, and references
- One-inch margins
- No smaller than Times New Roman 11-pt. font
- PDF, with all special fonts and characters embedded
- (Make sure your PDF is anonymous.)

Notifications of acceptance will be sent in mid-July. Partial travel stipends will be available for all poster and paper presenters, pending final NSF approval.

Please direct questions to MSPIworkshop@gmail.com.