Research Networking Programmes

Short Visit Grant ☒ or Exchange Visit Grant ☐

(please tick the relevant box)

Scientific Report

The scientific report (WORD or PDF file – maximum of eight A4 pages) should be submitted online within one month of the event. It will be published on the ESF website.

***Proposal Title**:* The analysis of the derivational suffix combinations in Polish

Application Reference N°: 7006

1) Purpose of the visit

As indicated by the title of my project, the major purpose of my visit to the University of Vienna was the analysis of the derivational suffix combinations in Polish. In order to achieve this goal, I had the following sub-goals: to review the set of data of Polish suffix combinations that have been collected in Vienna by Dr Manova and her team from the perspective of a native speaker of Polish and a linguist and to observe if Polish suffix combinations are like those of the other languages analysed by Dr Manova (see e.g. Bagasheva & Manova 2013, Manova 2011, 2014; Manova & Talamo 2014), i.e. whether the combinations of the derivational suffixes in Polish are also either fixed or predicable.

Fixed combinations are those in which a suffix is always followed by only one suffix of a major lexical category. In a predictable combination, a suffix is followed by more than one suffix of a major lexical category but one of the suffixes dominates over the others, that is, that suffix derives a great number of words, whereas all other suffixes derive only a very limited number of words; or the different suffixes derive different semantics, e.g. an object or an abstract noun.

Another aim was for me to get acquainted with the research practices in the area of affix ordering research. This could be achieved by a series of activities undertaken in Vienna, which are all described in the second point.

Finally, my visit was also meant to extend the scope of Dr Manova's prior investigations on suffix combinability by including a psycholinguistic experiment on the processing of the combinations of the Polish derivational suffixes. To achieve this goal

we designed a psycholinguistic study on the processing of existing and non-existing suffix combinations in Polish.

2) Description of the work carried out during the visit

I was in Vienna between 01.12.2014 and 15.12.2014, working there under the supervision of my host, Dr Stela Manova. During my stay, we met on a daily basis, spending at least a few hours per day working together. I thoroughly analysed all the combinations of a selection of Polish suffixes (out of 140 suffixes) deriving nouns, adjectives and verbs: I critically reviewed the suffix combinations, adding more attested combinations and controlling for combinations that were in the data but were incorrect, due to various reasons, e.g. some of the combinations found were attested only in archaic vocabulary that got out of use. It turned out that determining all combinations of a derivational suffix is not only a time-consuming but also a tricky task. In my searches, I used mainly Saloni's (2007) grammatical dictionary of Polish, which has a function of a reverse dictionary, particularly useful in investigating suffix combinability. I also used the National Corpus of the Polish Language (Pęzik 2012) and some additional Internet-based resources.

During our meetings, Dr Manova and I also discussed various theoretical matters regarding affix ordering. We paid special attention to approaches to affix order relevant to our research such as Parsability Hypothesis (Hay 2001, 2002, 2003) and its elaboration, the Complexity-Based Ordering (Hay & Plag 2004, Plag & Baayen 2009, among others); as well as to different aspects of stratal approach, especially in the context of Slavic languages (e.g. Szpyra-Kozłowska 1989, Rubach 1984).

Having reviewed all the suffix combinations, together with Dr Manova we discussed the revised list and designed the first of a set of psycholinguistic experiments with Polish suffix combinations, to be conducted in Poland, with a view to shedding light on the role of fixed and predictable combinations to native speakers of a language. The experiment consists in identification and discriminating existing and non-existing suffix combinations. Non-existing suffix combinations have been generated by manipulating letters or changing the order of the suffixes from legal suffix combinations. In this task, participants' accuracy and reaction times to presented stimuli are measured and analysed. This empirical investigation of the processing of attested and non-attested combinations will allow to verify the hypothesis of non-compositionality (constructionality) of fixed and predictable combinations in the mind. We ran a small-scale pilot study with nine native speakers of Polish.

While in Vienna, apart from my work with Dr Manova, I engaged in various scientific ventures. I paid a visit to prof. Dressler's research group, thereby having familiarised myself with the research practices in the comparative psycholinguistics laboratory of which he is in charge. We also discussed implications from a selection of studies in relation to the acquisition of affix order (Dressler et al. 2014).

Stimulating discussions, hands-on work experience and the guidance received from Dr Manova, one of the leading specialists in the field of affix ordering studies resulted in the acquisition of knowledge which will enhance my academic work at my home university and will enable me to investigate the processing and storage of word structure in the mental lexicon.

To amass as much knowledge as possible during my stay in Vienna I also attended weekly lectures in various topics in cognitive sciences (The MEi:CogSci

Cognitive Science Lecture Series) which were delivered by top-notch Viennese cognitive researchers (e.g. Paolo Petta or Hans Bernhard Schmid to name just a few). I also had a chance to meet various scholars and students in cognitive science, including those working within cognitive approaches to language and linguistics.

3) Description of the main results obtained

Our work in Vienna allowed to confirm Dr Manova's hypothesis that with respect to affix order Polish is like the other European languages (Bulgarian, Russian, English, and Italian) investigated in Vienna (Bagasheva & Manova 2013, Manova 2011, 2014; Manova & Talamo 2014), i.e., that the combinations of the derivational suffixes in Polish are also either fixed or predicable.

This finding facilitates the generalising of the results of the previous research on affix ordering done in Vienna and aids in arriving at the broader understanding of human strategies involved in processing word structure.

On the basis of the pilot psycholinguistic experiment, we can state that combinations of two suffixes seem to be treated like constructional wholes in the mental lexicon. At the moment, the task is to conduct the designed experiment with a larger group of the native speakers of Polish. We want to investigate the research questions regarding the storage and processing of suffix combinations from a cognitive psycholinguistic perspective, measuring accuracy rates and reaction times to the presented existing and non-existing stimuli in identification and lexical decision tasks.

The next step for future will be to conduct the same experiments on non-native learners of Polish/English and to compare the processing of both groups of participants. It will allow to state whether the non-native processing differs from the native one and may provide practical didactic implications.

4) Future collaboration with host institution (if applicable)

My stay in Vienna was the first one in the collaboration between Adam Mickiewicz University in Poznań, Poland and the University of Vienna with respect to studying suffix combinations and the cognitive aspects of their processing. Another member of the Adam Mickiewicz University's Faculty of English will be visiting Dr Stela Manova soon and it is hoped that the collaboration will continue well beyond these two visits.

5) Projected publications / articles resulting or to result from the grant *(ESF must be acknowledged in publications resulting from the grantee's work in relation with the grant)*

Based on the work in Vienna, we plan to publish two articles in thematic journals and we will acknowledge the receiving of the grant from ESF accordingly. We will also present our findings at conferences. We plan to submit an abstract to e.g. Poznań Linguistic Meeting 2015.

6) Other comments (if any)

I would like to thank for the grant. It enabled me to pursue an interesting line of investigation with a leading specialist in the field. It also made it possible for me to go to

the University of Vienna to learn about research practices there. I learned a lot during my stay in Vienna and it was an inspiring, scientifically productive venture for me.

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