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Networds 2015 short visit report
Stony Brook University (USA) February 10-18, 2015

1. Purpose of the visit

The main goal of the visit, as stated in the project submitted, was to explore the possibilities of integrating the approaches to word formation developed in Stony Brook and in Toulouse, both from the theoretical and methodological point of view, including the observation and the comparison of different languages. In particular, among the topics to be addressed, there were the role of competition in the organisation of morphological and lexical systems of languages and the role of productivity in word-formation processes. Since several years, the morphology group I belong to within the CLLE-ERSS research centre in Toulouse, on the one side, and Mark Aronoff and his collaborators at Stony Brook on the other, are developing an extensive approach to morphology, in particular to lexical creation and word-formation phenomena. Methodologically, it includes the collection, analysis and comparison of large-scale sets of data in corpora and / or in other linguistic resources like the World Wide Web. From the theoretical point of view, the collection and treatment of large datasets proved its usefulness in integrating, modifying and in some cases deeply influencing previous analyses of morphological complexity. These data have been exploited in several different directions, which include formal and semantic aspects, both in synchrony and in diachrony. The activities planned for the period of my staying in Stony Brookes were: (a) the identification of phenomena or groups of phenomena deserving a large-scale observation and a cross-linguistic comparison between (at least) English and French; (b) a discussion on the potential sources of data for these analyses, on the protocol for collection and on their exploitation in linguistic analyses; (c) exchanges on the state-of-the-art and on our respective points of view on the problems to be addressed; (d) programming of medium-term work on the topics to be addressed, including the identification of potential supports for the diffusion of the results.

2. Description of the work carried out during the visit

Eventually, the polysemy displayed by a particular kind of derived words was selected as a problematic phenomenon deserving a large-scale analysis in English and in some Romance languages, namely the alternation between an event and a property reading of deverbal nouns constructed by affixes of Latin origin (e.g. *alteration* vs. *consideration*). On the one side, this topic allows exactly the cross-linguistic comparisons we aimed at in elaborating the project; on the other side it is complementary to the approaches to morphology currently developed both in Stony Brook and in Toulouse. The Stony Brook group is particularly interested in the self-organisation of linguistic (and in particular morphological) systems in diachrony, in which concurrence between different patterns plays a major role. However, their analyses focused, so far, on the formal (phonological) side of the processed involved. Thus, one of their main concerns, were different morphological processes (e.g. different affixes) involved in the construction of lexemes having the same meaning, and the observation of how each of these processes, in diachrony, occupies a specific area, according to phonological or sometimes semantic properties of derived words. The study we started to carry out, on the contrary, takes the problem of concurrence in an opposite, though complementary, way: here the same exponent (e.g. the suffix *-ation*) can be used in the construction of words having different, unconnected, meanings. We consider, however, that the two phenomena can be studied using similar methods. The approach developed in Toulouse sees complex words as the outputs of a series of various types of constraints. It can be seen as a global approach, in which no particular domain (e.g. phonology or semantics) can be taken as responsible for the attested form or meaning(s) of attested words, which depend, on the contrary, on an interaction of different constraints linked with phonology, semantics, but also with frequency or, more generally, with the mutual pressure of lexical units. The phenomenon in question is also compatible with this kind of approach, in that it is typically linked with variation, a property which can only be elucidated through a fine-grained analysis of large-scale data.

My visit at Stony Brook included a talk at the Department of Linguistics (February 11), in which I presented the present state of my research on the main topic of the project (event/property polysemy of deverbal nouns), as well as joint work with some of the colleagues of the Department, mainly Mark Aronoff and his collaborators, and others. In

particular, I had three meetings with prof. Aronoff, in which the above mentioned methodological questions and topics were addressed. I also discussed with some of prof. Aronoff's students, namely Mark Lindsay, who is a specialist of data collection from large sources, and with whom collaboration already started during a short stay in Toulouse he realised thanks to a Networds grant. This joint work had several theoretical and methodological outputs. From the theoretical point of view, they were useful in precisely delimiting and characterising the terms of the problem.

During the visit, I also met other staff in the Department. In particular, prof. Aronoff involved me in discussion with one of his students (Varvara Magomedova) on some Russian data which present an interesting morphological behaviour, i.e. adjectival comparatives, which can be either analytic or synthetic. Although marginal with respect to the main goal of the visit, this work was interesting and useful, since the data in question also involve a case of linguistic concurrence, thus being potentially useful for future work on the subject on a larger scale (and on a larger set of languages). I also had the chance of meeting, and discussing with, Lori Repetti, who is a specialist of the phonology and morphology of Italian and of Italian dialects. Although the topics we addressed were but marginally connected with the main object of the visit (and included, in particular, some phonological facts of Italian), they were particularly interesting and could give birth to future, more strict, collaborations.

3. Description of the main results obtained

Eventually, it was decided to limit the analysis to English and to some Romance languages (primarily Italian and French), as the polysemy in question seems to be limited to cognate affixes derived from Latin (e.g. in English *-ation*, *-ment*, *-ance*). It is excluded, for instance, for deverbal action suffixes of Germanic origin (e.g. *-al*). It was also decided to look first at two instances which, apart from their semantic characteristics, display similar behaviours in several respects (for instance concerning the formal interaction between the base and the affix and the emergence of allomorphy), i.e. the suffixes *-ation* and *-ance* (and their cognates in other languages). Methodologically, we decided, first of all, to establish lists of deverbal nouns containing both suffixes from dictionaries and corpora in the three languages. This stage should be useful to give hints on the relative distribution of the two meanings involved (and of

other possible meanings). These lists should be compared with the behaviour of the two elements in question in the construction of new words, by collecting, for instance, low-frequency words in corpora or by searching unattested words in large corpora or on the Web. This stage should make possible, among others, to compare the actual behaviour of these affixes in constructing new words from the properties they display in the attested lexicon, and thus to elucidate the diachronic evolution of different processes (which can differ from one language to the other).

The activity of data collection, cleaning and analysis should be carried out in parallel in Stony Brook and in Toulouse during the next months, and some results should be available, possibly for presentation or publication, at the end of this year.

4. Future collaboration with host institution (if applicable)

Most of the future activities to be carried on in connection with the project have been detailed in point 3. However, further visits to Stony Brook (or visits to Toulouse by prof. Aronoff and other staff of the department) would certainly be extremely helpful for the advancing and the conclusion of the project. These could take the form of short visits (2 to 3 weeks), that could be financed by my research unit, or of a longer staying (up to 3 months). For this purpose, I plan to apply for a Fulbright grant or for a mobility grant attributed by my institution (CNRS).

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)

The first results of the joint work carried on in Stony Brook will be presented during a talk at the NetWordS final conference, to be held in Pisa on March 30 – April 1, 2015, whose title is "Using distributional data to explore derivational under-markedness: A study of the event / property polysemy in nominalization".