

Correspondence constraints and semantic distance

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Since mid 1990s when the so-called correspondence constraints were introduced into Optimality Theory they have proved to be a useful tool in research on analogy, as well as an alternative solution to a cycle and deep derivation. However, not much has been said about the motivation underlying analogical behaviours as opposed to the purely phonological behaviours, i.e. why do correspondence constraints dominate phonological constraints for some words (categories), while the opposite ranking is found for others? I assume that in most cases the answer lies in language usage and frequency criteria: rare words undergo levelling, while frequent ones tolerate allomorphy, as argued in the vast corpus of literature (e.g. Bybee 1985, 2001, Mańczak 1958, 1978, Kraska-Szlenk 2007). In this paper, I concentrate on another important factor in analogy, namely, a semantic distance between a word and its actual or hypothetical base. I demonstrate that the smaller a semantic distance, the stronger a tendency for stem levelling and *vice versa*, in accordance with the principle known as Humboldt Universal, or the slogan: “one meaning, one form”. The evidence comes from a number of linguistics facts illustrated by the following examples (all from Polish with the analogical form underlined).

Levelling is stronger intraparadigmatically (in inflection) than interparadigmatically (between different categories), cf. *ślad*, śladzie ‘trace-nom., instr.’, *śledzić* ‘to follow’. Within a paradigm, levelling is stronger in nominal declension than in verbal inflection, cf. *miotła*, miotle ‘broom-nom., instr.’, *zamiotłem* ‘I swept’, *zamietliśmy* ‘we swept’. Semantically closer derivatives are analogical, while more autonomous derivatives tolerate allomorphy, cf. *kwiat* ‘flower’, kwiaciarnia ‘flower-shop’, *kwiecień* ‘April’. Likewise in lexical splits: analogical forms have predictable meaning, while allomorphy is preserved in expressions with unpredictable (idiomatic) meaning, e.g. *czoło* ‘forehead’, *na czole* ‘on the forehead’, *na czele* ‘leading (a parade etc.)’.

I interpret the data within an OT-based framework which slightly departs from the standard model in putting stress on the correlation between productivity of morphophonemic rules and language usage criteria, such as frequency and salience of linguistic units.

Bibliography

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