

Psycholinguistic illusions in and on morphology

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Fruitful interdisciplinary contact between specialists in theoretical morphology and in various branches of psycholinguistics (my examples will come from acquisition, processing, aphasia) is hampered by reciprocal illusions, some of them rarely criticised explicitly. Often ecological validity is dubious.

The bridge of iconicity: from a world of experience to experience of language

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Arbitrariness between linguistic form and meaning is taken as foundational in language studies and the question of how linguistic form links to meaning is central to language development, processing and evolution. But, languages also display iconicity in addition to arbitrariness. This is especially evident in sign languages. This, what if the study of language started from signed rather than spoken languages? In the talk I will explore this question.

Needles in a haystack and how to find them. Can neuroscientists, psychologists and computational linguist help us (to build a tool) to overcome the “tip of the tongue” problem?

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Whenever we speak, read or write we always use words, the exchange money of concepts they are standing for. No doubt, words ARE important. Yet having stored “words” does not guarantee that we can access them under all circumstances. Some forms may refuse to come to our mind when we need them most, the moment of speaking or writing. This is when we tend to reach for a dictionary, hoping to find the token we are looking for.

The problem is that most dictionaries, be they in paper or electronic form, are not well suited to support the language producer. Hence the questions, why is this so and what does it take to enhance existing resources? Can we draw on what is known about the human brain or its externalized form (texts)? Put differently, what kind of help can we expect by looking at the work done by neuroscientists, psycholinguists or computational linguistics? These are some of the questions I will briefly touch upon, by ending with a concrete proposal (roadmap), outlining the majors steps to be performed in order to enhance an existing electronic resource.