Morphomic properties and the interface of syntacticosemantic content with morphological form

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ABSTRACT

In the simplest cases, the property set that determines a lexeme’s inflectional realization as a word form \(w\) is exactly the set that determines the syntax and semantics of \(w\). Very frequently, however, there is a mismatch between a word’s form and its content; for the morphologist, such mismatches are precious, because they expose the nature of the interface of morphology with syntax and semantics. Mismatches of this kind are manifested as a range of phenomena, including deponency, homomorphy and syncretism. Here, I draw upon evidence from Kashmiri and Hua (Trans-New-Guinea) to examine a specific sort of mismatch, between morphosyntactic properties and the morphomic properties through whose mediation they are inflectionally realized. I show that this evidence implies a grammatical architecture in which a lexeme \(L\)’s content paradigm (which determines the syntactic distribution and semantic composition of \(L\)’s word forms) is distinguished from its stem’s form paradigm (which determines the morphology of these word forms) and that the systematic interface between these two paradigms is sometimes nontrivial.