
[38] ***The morphosyntax/semantics interface: a ‘case history’ between linguistics and cognitive neuropsychology of language***

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Correspondences between semantic properties and morphosyntactic features have been noted by researchers in linguistics and related fields dating at least as far back as Pāṇini. These correspondences cannot be explained as occurring by chance: there appear to be semantic regularities in the composition of classes of words that share the same morphosyntactic behavior. However, the linking mechanisms between semantics and morphosyntax have been largely debated in language sciences (Perlmutter & Rosen 1984, Burzio 1986, Tenny 1994, Levin & Rappaport Hovav 1995). Dissociations between semantics and morphosyntax have been observed in patients (Schwartz et al. 1979, Breedin & Saffran 1999, Tyler et al. 2004, Benedet et al. 2006), but no distinction has been made between different kinds of either semantic or morphosyntactic knowledge. Prior studies focused on the denoting components of word meaning and the non-semantically determined morphosyntactic features, leaving unresolved the question of how different kinds of semantic information interact with other dimensions of language. The stage is now set to systematically investigate the neurocognitive basis of the morphosyntax/semantics interface. To do so, we propose a new battery of tests that, compared to other batteries (cf. Hutchinson & Mathias 2007), allows to disentangle distinct kinds of semantic and morphosyntactic knowledge and to assess models of language processing, by investigating its functional architecture under specified conditions (Author et al. 2020).

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