

## LING 22900/52900: Seminar: Morphology (Syncretism)

**Time:** Mo 1.30–4.20 (Part I: 1.30–2.50, Part II: 3.00–4.20)

**Location:** Classics Building 313

**Instructor:** Andrew Murphy (andrew.murphy@uchicago.edu)

**Office hours:** by appointment (Zoom)

### Course description

This seminar will focus on syncretism in morphological paradigms. Syncretism represents a mismatch between form and function whereby the same morphological form is associated with multiple distinct morphosyntactic specifications. Departing from classic analyses of syncretism in terms of underspecification, we will use syncretism as a lens through which to survey and compare different theoretical approaches to inflectional morphology, including Distributed Morphology, Paradigm Function Morphology, and others. We will try to determine which theoretical concepts and tools are necessary to model syncretism (e.g. impoverishment, enrichment rules, rules of referral) by looking at particularly tricky cases such as (bi-)directional syncretism, meta-syncretism and polarity effects. Finally, our discussion will also touch on the issue of whether paradigms must be treated as primitives in an adequate theory of morphology.

### Prerequisites

For LING 22900: LING 20001 (Introduction to Linguistics) or permission of the instructor.

### Readings

Readings will be made available in electronic form (PDF) on Canvas. To facilitate discussion, please complete all scheduled reading assignments before class. We will not be able to discuss every aspect of the assigned readings, but take a broader perspective on the issues involved.

### Requirements

The final grade will be based on a final squib (8 or more pages) related to the topic of the seminar. This could be, for example:

- An original research paper.
- A critical evaluation or comparison of one or more of the readings, or some other relevant publication on syncretism.
- An outline of a research project, complete with bibliography, research questions, and expected possible answers.

You can talk to me about your planned topic at any time, and you should do so by the end of week 7 at the latest.

## Tentative schedule

**Week 1** Overview: What is syncretism?

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09/27/21

*Reading:* Baerman et al. (2005: §2)

**Week 2** Metasyncretism I

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10/04/21

*Reading:* Bobaljik (2002)

**Week 3** Metasyncretism II

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10/11/21

*Reading:* Harley (2008)

**Week 4** No Class

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10/18/21

**Week 5** Bidirectional syncretism

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10/25/21 Baerman (2004)

Müller (2013)

*Reading:*

**Week 6** Feature-changing rules

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11/01/21

*Reading:* Noyer (1998)

Keine (2013)

**Week 7** Parasitic features

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11/08/21

*Reading:* Trommer (2016)

**Week 8** Paradigm Function Morphology I: Background

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11/15/21

*Reading:* Stump (2001: §2)

Thanksgiving Week

**Week 9** Paradigm Function Morphology II: Syncretism

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11/29/21

*Reading:* Stump (2001: §7)

## Reading list

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- Baerman, Matthew (2004). Directionality and (Un)Natural Classes in Syncretism. *Language* 80(4). 807–827.
- Baerman, Matthew, Dunstan Brown & Greville G. Corbett (2005). *The Syntax-Morphology Interface: A Study of Syncretism*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Bobaljik, Jonathan David (2002). Syncretism Without Paradigms: Remarks on Williams 1981, 1994. In G. Booij & J. van Marle (eds). *Yearbook of Morphology 2001*. Kluwer: Dordrecht. 53–85.
- Harley, Heidi (2008). When is a Syncretism more than a Syncretism? Impoverishment, Metasyncretism, and Underspecification. In D. Harbour, D. Adger & S. Béjar (eds). *Phi Theory: Phi-Features across Modules and Interfaces*. Oxford University Press: Oxford. 251–294.
- Keine, Stefan (2013). Syntagmatic Constraints on Insertion. *Morphology* 23(2). 201–226.
- Müller, Gereon (2013). A Radically Non-Morphemic Approach to Bidirectional Syncretism. *Morphology* 23(2). 245–268.
- Noyer, Rolf (1998). Impoverishment Theory and Morphosyntactic Markedness. In S. Lapointe, D. Brentari & P. Farrell (eds). *Morphology and Its Relation to Phonology and Syntax*. CSLI: Palo Alto. 264–285.
- Stump, Gregory T. (2001). *Inflectional Morphology: A Theory of Paradigm Structure*. Cambridge University Press: Cambridge.
- Trommer, Jochen (2016). A Postsyntactic Morpheme Cookbook. In D. Siddiqi & H. Harley (eds). *Morphological Metatheory*. John Benjamins: Amsterdam. 59–93.