

Goals

- 1) discuss the place of traditional 'neoclassical compounds' within the derivational architecture of Romance languages (Italian and French);
- 2) propose a **holistic** view of the formal properties of derivational constructions, parallel to the semantic one; in particular, defend the idea that the formal representation of a morphological construction corresponds to
 - a. a **template**, specifying the formal (phonological) properties derived lexemes should have;
 - b. a **constraint**, stating that the actual form of a derived lexeme is the outcome of the interaction between the template attached to a construction and the formal properties of its base.
- 4) support the theoretical assumptions above through the analysis of data and of a comparison between Italian and French 'neoclassical' compound elements, i.e. speakers names in *-fono* vs. *-phone*.

Theoretical assumptions I – neoclassical compounds

Current views:

- NCs are compounds: their exponents are (stems of) lexemes with lexemic properties [Corbin 2001; Lüdeling et al. 2002; Villongo 2012];
- NCs are affixal constructions: their exponents have affixal properties [Bauer 1979; Amiot & Dal 2008; Namer & Villongo 2014];
- NCs are hybrid constructions: their exponents are neither lexemes or affixes, but a third kind of units (affixoids, combining forms, confixes...) [Warren 1990; Fradin 2000; Iacobini 2004].

Claims:

- etymology alone is not a relevant criterion for classifying morphological operations / their exponents;
- the fact that NC constructions belong to a homogeneous class of phenomena is neither necessary nor probable, as each of them is exemplified by a (highly) variable number of lexemes with different degrees of frequency, generality, transparency, etc.;
- NC constructions may have evolved (grammaticalized) into different kinds of phenomena, including purely affixal constructions.

Theoretical assumptions I – neoclassical compounds

Hypotheses:

- if (some) NCs are compounds, we would expect them to have compound properties:
 - being constituted by at least two lexemes, each having clear lexemic properties (form, category, meaning);
 - form / meaning compositionality;

(1)

Fr. *cançér(-o)-logue* = 'cancer + specialist' ('specialist of cancer')
Fr. *fratr(-i)-cide* = 'brother + kill' ('killer / killing of his/her own brother')

- if NCs are affixal constructions, we would expect them to share properties with (canonical) affixes:
 - constant form (a set of constraints on the phonology of the output);
 - constant categorial instruction;
 - constant semantic instruction on the meaning of the base, or to sum up...
 - forming morphological series.

It may be shown that the semantic contribution of NC elements is not to introduce a concept (like canonical compound elements), but is rather of an instructional type (like in affixal derivation):

(2)

Fr. *choix discologiques < disque(-o)-logique* = 'record + speciality' 'choice of records'
It. *dittature petrolifere < petrolio(-i)-fero* = 'oil + bring' 'oil dictatorships'

The role of *-logique* and *-fero* is simply to relate the base nouns to *choix* and *dittature* respectively [Lasserre & Montermini 2016].

Theoretical assumptions II – Constraint-based morphology

The output form of constructed lexemes is the outcome of the interaction of various, possibly conflicting, constraints. Some constraints are quite general (e.g. Family and Series constraints: all lexemes in a family / series tend to be maximally similar), some other are specific to individual constructions / sets of constructions.

Morphological exponents (affixes) are constraints that, as such, interact with other phonological and lexical constraints in determining the final form of a derived lexeme.

-fono vs. *-phone*

Names of language speakers in *-fono* / *-phone* in Italian and French (237 in Italian / 475 in French from the Wacky corpora [Baroni et al. 2009]).

In Italian: the output systematically ends in [ˈɸono], independently of the form of the base (*bantofono*, *yddishofono*...).

In French: 79.5% of forms end in [ɸɔn]; in the remaining 20.5%, the segment preceding [ɸn] is already present in the base:

(3)
aymara > aymaraphone swahili > swahiliphone
tamoul > tamoulphone banlieue ('suburbs') > banlieuphone

Hierarchical representation of the exponent in French:
[ɸɔn] > [Vɸɔn] > [Rɸɔn] (R = sonorant)

The hierarchy in question is clearly rooted in etymology (*-o* is the linking vowel of Greek compounds) and in frequency. However, each language adapted the lexicon of foreign origin to its morphophonological system in peculiar ways.

Conclusion

Phonologically, the behavior of NCs is comparable to that of canonical affixation.

1. Data show that the selection of a base stem is not performed in a deterministic way. For instance, for a device used to measure conductivity the following forms constructed by means of the NC compound element are attested (with variable frequencies) in Italian: *conduttimetro*, *conduttometro*, *conducimetro*, *conduttivimetro* e *conduttivitometro*. Formally, each of these derivatives is built either on one of the stems of the verb *condurre* ('conduce') or of the adjective *conduttivo*, with no clear semantic distinction between them.
2. The selection of a base stem interacts with the other parameters that determine the form of a derivative. Describing the formal instruction of a construction as the simple concatenation of a base and an affix is reductive. Rather, it should be viewed as a constraint on the form of the output (cf. template-based model, Vihman 2010 and Vihman & Croft 2007). An exponent possesses a default form and a set of secondary forms hierarchically ordered (cf. *-phone* above, or It. *-metro*: [ometro] > [imetro] > [vmetro] > [Xmetro]). The presence of [o] and [i] in the forms dominating the hierarchy clearly depends from their frequency in other NC. For the same reason, the hierarchy is partially inverted for the element of Latin origin *-cida/-cidio* ('kill') (cf. the equally attested *giudeicidio* and *giudeocidio*, < *giudeo* 'Jew').

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