

Sławomir Zdziebko
Lublin University

Morpho-phonology in modern linguistics

The aim of the course is to familiarize the participants with the role of morphological information in modelling phonological alternations.

The course will largely be a historical overview of the place of morpho-phonology in modern linguistic thought. We will start with the late 19th-century classifications of alternations proposed by the representatives of the Kazan school, through the achievements of the Prague school and American linguistics up to the birth of Generative Phonology, which brought the tradition of distinguishing between morpho-phonological and phonological processes to a standstill.

The need to take the distinction seriously has since been recognised by the proponents of the Natural Generative Phonology (see Hooper 1976) and Natural Phonology (see Dressler 1985). On the other hand, the mainstream Generative Phonology limited the influence of morphological information on phonology to representational and procedural chunk-definition (SPE-like boundary symbols, the Prosodic Hierarchy of the 1980's vs. cyclicity, level ordering). The distinct mechanism responsible for morpho-phonological alternations has been proposed for Polish by Gussmann (2007).

An important question that we will try to answer is whether there is a need to distinguish between morphology-driven alternations and purely phonological alternations. What are the theoretical and empirical advantages/disadvantages of this kind of distinction? Finally, is the direct influence of morphological structure and features on phonology reconcilable with the strictly modular architecture of the grammar?

Readings:

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