Phonological schematicity across closely related languages: A case study about sound correspondences in Interscandinavian semicommunication

Anna Hagel
Kiel University

Key words: phonological schematicity, receptive multilingualism, semicommunication, sound correspondences

In connection with his Diasystematic Construction Grammar approach, Höder (2014, 2019b) introduced the notion of *phonological schematicity.* The term makes allowance for the fact that the phonological form of linguistic structures can give rise to abstractions in the same fashion as their morphological or syntactic set-ups. These abstractions can range from submorphemic patterns to inter-sentential prosodic schemas.

Although phonological schematicity is not a multilingual phenomenon per se, it is not surprising that it was first discussed in connection with DCxG. Linguistic systems with a high "diasystematic potential" (Höder, Prentice & Tingsell 2021), like closely related languages, often show great similarities on the phonological level, while at the same time featuring specific differences. This can motivate schematization processes in multilingual speakers and, indeed, observations from multilingual contexts suggest that speakers are aware of partially-schematic cross-linguistic phonological patterns and make use of them both in speech production and perception (Höder 2019a).

This paper is concerned with an exemplary case of phonological schematicity from the domain of perception: The use of so-called "sound correspondence rules" by speakers engaging in semicommunication (Braunmüller 1995, Höder 2019b). Semicommunication is a mode of communication known, amongst others, from regions like Scandinavia and describes a multilingual form of communication where speakers of closely related languages (try to) understand each other based on cross-linguistic similarities (Haugen 1966, Hagel forthc.). Lexical cognates naturally play a major role in this context, but pronunciation differences can easily obscure their common origin and jeopardize their recognizability (Delsing & Lundin Åkesson 2005, Gooskens & van Bezooijen 2013). However, since pronunciation differences between closely related languages are typically systematic, they can be identified as general sound correspondence patterns by speakers, who can consequently make use of this knowledge in decoding new input.

Using Danish-Swedish examples, the paper demonstrates how sound correspondence patterns can be analysed on the basis of assumptions from DCxG and discusses the potential relevance of different levels of schematicity for such patterns. In a second step, it focusses on how the hypotheses arising from the theoretical considerations can be tested empirically.

References

Braunmüller, Kurt. 1995. Semikommunikation und semiotische Strategien. Bausteine zu einem Modell für die Verständigung im Norden zur Zeit der Hanse. In Kurt Braunmüller (ed.), *Niederdeutsch und die skandinavischen Sprachen* 2 (Sprachgeschichte 4), 35–70. Heidelberg: Winter.

Delsing, Lars-Olof & Katarina Lundin Åkesson. 2005. *Håller språket ihop Norden? En forskningsrapport om ungdomars förståelse av danska, svenska och norska.* Kopenhagen:

Nordiska Ministerrådet.

Gooskens, Charlotte & Renée van Bezooijen. 2013. Explaining Danish-Swedish asymmetric word intelligibility. An error analysis. In Charlotte Gooskens & Renée van Bezooijen (eds.), *Phonetics in Europe: Perception and Production*, 59–82. Frankfurt am Main: Peter Lang.

Hagel, Anna. forthc. One man's [ɕoet:] is another man's [kʰøð̩]. Sound correspondence constructions in Interscandinavian decoding. In Evie Coussé, Steffen Höder, Benjamin Lyngfelt & Julia Prentice (eds.), C*onstructionist approaches to Scandinavian languages*.

Haugen, Einar. 1966. *Semicommunication: The language gap in Scandinavia.* Sociological Inquiry, 36, 280–297.

Höder, Steffen. 2014. Phonological elements and Diasystematic Construction Grammar. *Constructions and Frames* 6, 202–231.

Höder, Steffen. 2019a. Mehrsprachige Äußerungen aus dem Blickwinkel der Diasystematischen Konstruktionsgrammatik: Eine Annäherung. *Osnabrücker Beiträge zur Sprachtheorie* 94, 27–50.

Höder, Steffen. 2019b. Phonological schematicity in multilingual constructions: A diasystematic perspective on lexical form. *Word structure* 12.3, 334–352.

Höder, Steffen, Julia Prentice & Sofia Tingsell. 2021. Additional language acquisition as emerging multilingualism. A Construction Grammar approach. In Hans C. Boas & Steffen Höder (eds.), *Constructions in contact 2. Language change, multilingual practices, and additional language acquisition* (Constructional Approaches to Language 30), 310–337. Amsterdam: Benjamins.