Note to the PDF Edition

This PDF version of my dissertation is as close as I have been able to make it to the copies deposited with the Faculty of Arts and the Department of Linguistics at the University of Sydney. However this version is not in any sense an image capture of those copies, which throughout), or proper IPA retroflex glyphs have been substituted where appropriate (in all other cases).

Additionally, the substitute IPA font has slightly different metrics from the one used originally, which has caused some enlargement of tables containing IPA characters or (more commonly) diacritics, and therefore occasionally some repagination. In all cases this is compensated for within a few pages at most. There are other small differences in the appearance of some tables, diagrams, and accented characters.

In addition, endnote references and bibliographic citations, though not specifically so marked, are hyperlinked to their corresponding text or entry, as the case may be. The Internet URL on this page is also hyperlinked so as to launch the browser of your choice and make the appropriate connections.

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Sydney, 19 April 1997

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Systematic Homonymy
and the Structure of
Morphological Categories
Some Lessons from
Paradigm Geometry
by
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A thesis submitted in fulfilment
of the requirements for the degree of
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Abstract
This thesis takes as its starting point proposals to model inflectional paradigms as geometrical structures, wherein systematic homonymies are constrained to occupy contiguous regions. It defines a precise criterion for assessing systematicity and shows, for a range of largely Indo-European and Afro-Asiatic data, that such models are observationally adequate in modelling systematic homonymies within a single inflectional dimension, and to a lesser extent, between different inflectional dimensions. This is taken to indicate that widely assumed characterizations of inflectional categories in terms of cross-classifying binary features are incorrect, inasmuch as such characterizations fail to predict the linearizability of natural classes of properties belonging to those categories. The same inadequacy besets attempts to account for systematic homonymies by means classes beyond those defined by the sub-classification itself. The specific sub-classifications indicated by observed patterns of homonymy are language-specific. In addition, the properties so sub-classified under a single node may in certain cases be drawn from separate morpho-syntactic categories. This is taken to indicate that the terminal nodes of a morphological sub-classification are not morpho-syntactic feature complexes but purely morphological functions performing a discontinuous mapping between morpho-syntactic and morpho-phonological representations. The systematicity
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