## Programme and Abstracts

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<td>09:30 - 10:00</td>
<td>Registration and Refreshments</td>
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<td>10:00 - 10:10</td>
<td><strong>Dr Jacqueline Laws</strong> (Department of English Language &amp; Applied Linguistics, University of Reading) &lt;br&gt; <em>Opening and Introductions</em></td>
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<td>10:10 - 10:45</td>
<td><strong>Dr Jacqueline Laws</strong> (Department of English Language &amp; Applied Linguistics, University of Reading) &lt;br&gt; <em>MorphoQuantics: researching complex words in spoken English and its relevance to educational and clinical applications</em>&lt;br&gt;Complex words, such as un-kind and cheer-ful, are formed from a base and prefix/suffix. The distribution of these derivational affixes varies according to the formality of the context in which they occur, e.g., conversation, political speeches, media broadcasts, newspapers, fiction and academic prose. To date, research has focused on differences in affix frequency between written registers; however, the effect of speech-related register differences on word form choice has not hitherto been explored systematically. This talk addresses this gap by illustrating how register-based affix profiles impact on research relating to word formation processes in first/second language acquisition, and vocabulary/literacy development in children and adults. I will provide an overview of MorphoQuantics, a database developed by Laws &amp; Ryder (2014) containing over 1 million complex word tokens from 850 affixes, based on the spoken element of the British National Corpus. I will then demonstrate how MorphoQuantics has been enhanced to reflect register-based affix usage patterns in spoken language, thanks to recent funding from the British Academy. Finally, I will illustrate how a dataset, such as that contained in MorphoQuantics, can provide a shared base reference for researchers interested in derivational morphology from a variety of theoretical and applied perspectives. Laws, J.V. &amp; C. Ryder (2014). Getting the measure of derivational morphology in adult speech: A corpus analysis using MorphoQuantics. Language Studies Working Papers: University of Reading, Vol. 6, pp. 3-17.</td>
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| 10:45 - 11:15 | **Chris Ryder** (Dept of English Language & Applied Linguistics, University of Reading) <br> *MorphoQuantics: development and applications of a database of complex words in spoken English*<br>MorphoQuantics (Laws & Ryder, 2014) is a database of complex words extracted from the spoken element of the British National Corpus; the dataset is based on 847 word-initial / word-final morphemes including 575 combining forms, 141 prefixes and 131 suffixes. The first aim of this talk is to describe some of the minutiae of the development process and the principles that were followed in the production of MorphoQuantics. Attention will be drawn to issues of validity and generalizability in relation to research on affix characteristics. The second aim of this talk is to illustrate two applications that have been enabled by the compilation of the dataset. The first of these relates to the “profiling” of affixes in terms of their type and token counts, and reports on initial
patterns that emerge from this. The second application compares types across similar corpora of different time periods and identifies the possibilities for diachronic studies that can be conducted following the publication of the Spoken BNC2014 (Love et al. 2017) next year.


11:15 - 11:30  Break
11:30 - 12:15  Dr Tanja Säily (Department of Modern Languages, University of Helsinki) & Dr Jukka Suomela (Department of Computer Science, Aalto University):

**Exploring sociolinguistic variation in the productivity of -er and -or: BNCweb, MorphoQuantics, and types2**

We study the nominal suffix -er, which is typically used to derive agentive or instrumental nouns from verbs (e.g. write : writer), and its Latinate variant, -or. Our research question is whether there is sociolinguistic variation in the productivity of these suffixes in present-day spoken English. Because -er is a default suffix that attaches “indiscriminately” to all sorts of bases (Bauer et al. 2013: 217, 232), we might expect to find no sociolinguistic variation in its use. On the other hand, previous research has discovered some sociolinguistic variation in the use of the similarly highly productive suffix -ness (Säily 2011), so the issue may not be so clear-cut.

To explore, visualise, and assess the significance of variation in productivity, we use the types2 software (Suomela 2014, 2015) along with BNCweb and MorphoQuantics (Laws & Ryder 2014a, b). We find that men use -er more productively than women. With the help of interactive exploration enabled by these online resources, we are able to tentatively connect the male overuse of -er with a focus on tools and occupations as well as with playful name-calling, which may be part of masculine identity-building in late twentieth-century Great Britain.


12:15 - 12:45  Lauren Burton (Department of Education, University of Oxford):

**Children’s awareness of word stems & derivational morphology**

This study investigates whether explicitly directing children’s attention to morphological word stems improves spelling accuracy. To explore this, a sample of 364 children in Years 3 and 4 across five primary schools in England was recruited. Children were randomly assigned to one of three groups: an explicit group that were exposed to words stems and had their attention explicitly drawn to them; an implicit group that were exposed to word stems but did not have their attention drawn to them; and a no stem group that were not given any word stem exposure. A spelling task was administered to all three groups of children to assess their spelling of word stems in derivatives. Following a mixed factorial analysis of variance, the results showed that explicitly directing children’s attention to stems led to significant improvements in spelling over and above that received for implicit or no stem exposure. The findings suggest that educators should devote time to integrating morphological word stems into current educational policy and teaching practice.
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| 13:45 - 14:30 | Dr Lynne Duncan (Department of Psychology, University of Dundee):  
*Children's awareness of derivational morphology – cross-language comparisons*  
A cross-linguistic comparison of French and English children will be presented to examine early ability to manipulate derivational suffixes in oral language. The findings suggest that meta-morphological development is accelerated in French relative to English. The French advantage encompasses knowledge of a broader range of suffixes and a markedly greater facility for generalizing morphological knowledge to novel contexts. This is consistent with the more productive system of derivational morphology in French compared to English in which compounding is more frequent. Nevertheless, as French is a more transparent orthography than English, the French speakers might be expected to rely more on grapheme-phoneme decoding than morpho-lexical strategies in early reading. A second experiment investigated morphological decomposition in the lexical decision task during early schooling in each language. The results indicate that performance in both orthographies shows sensitivity to morphemic structure and this outcome will be discussed in relation to oral morphological awareness and the role of morphemic form and meaning in shaping development in each language. |
| 14:30 - 15:15 | Professor Julia Carroll (Centre for Research into Psychology, Behaviour and Achievement, Coventry University)  
*Could morphological knowledge improve literacy in dyslexic children?*  
We know that most children with dyslexia show particular difficulties with phonology. This project investigates how much children use information about morphology to compensate for these difficulties.  
Knowledge of a word’s morphemes can help us to read and write unusual words such as ‘health’ (which contains ‘heal’) and ‘sign’ (which shares a morpheme with signal and signature). It can also act as a powerful vocabulary-learning tool. Some researchers have argued that children with dyslexia could use morphology to help overcome their weaknesses in phonology, while others have argued that morphological awareness is a further weakness in dyslexia.  
I present a thorough investigation of both morphological awareness and use of morphological strategies in literacy in children with dyslexia, asking to what extent children with dyslexia use these strategies and whether those who do use them show better long-term progress. |
| 15:15 - 15:30 | Break  
15:30 - 16:00 | Discussion session and concluding remarks  
16:00 | Close |