

Day 13: Morphology

Ling L303/L503: Introduction to Linguistic Analysis

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 - Definition
 - Morphemes
 - In brains, not dictionaries

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What is Morphology?

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Definition (Morphology)

The study of words and the rules for word formation in a language.

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- What are words?

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The study of words and the rules for word formation in a language.

- What are words?
- Properties of words:
 - A meaningful unit of language that can stand on its own
 - Stored in **mental lexicon** with information about its 'part of speech' (noun, verb, adj., etc.)
 - Composed of one or more **morphemes**

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Definition (Morpheme)

The smallest **meaningful** linguistic unit.

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Example (Morphemes)

Examples of morphemes:

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Example (Morphemes)

Examples of morphemes:

- apple, cat, help, salamander, fling, lens
- -er, -ing, -s
- pre-, un-

What is Morphology?

One word—lots of morphemes

- One word can have lots of morphemes
- E.g., **oversimplifications**

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In brains, not dictionary

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In our brains, but not dictionaries:

- knowledge of the structure of words, and word categories
- undo, unfold, untie, ...
- cutest, funniest, lamest, ...
- happiness, weirdness, ...

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This means: morphological competence includes information about how morphemes work, how they can and can't fit together

Terminology

Affixes

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Definition (affix)

General term for morphemes attached to a **root** or **stem**

Four types of affixes:

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German [**ge-** **-t**]: spiel- 'play' → **gespielt** 'played'

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base for affixes to attach to; cannot be analyzed into smaller parts

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Example (root vs. stem)

root: taste

(verb)

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root:	taste	(verb)
stem:	dis + taste	(prefix + verb)

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Example

simple words: cat, eat, green, pumpkin, the, is

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- Affixes: un-, pre-, dis-, -ly, -ness, -tion

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 - -sist (consist, resist, desist, persist)

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Free vs. Bound

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An intro-? extro-? No, he's just a vert.
Sheveled and couth and kempt, pecunious, ane,
His image trudes upon the ceptive brain.

When life turns sipid and the mind is traught,
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when added to a word, make or derive a new word with a new meaning...

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 - re + produce (v.) → reproduce (v.)

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indicate grammatical roles; do not change basic meaning of words

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Derivational vs. Inflectional

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3rd per. sg.:	-s	He walks.
past tense:	-ed	He walked.
progressive:	-ing	He is walking.
past participle:	-en	He has eaten.
plural:	-s	I have two cats.
possessive:	-'s	cat's eye
comparative:	-er	She is older.
superlative:	-est	She is oldest.

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Content vs. Function

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Provide information about grammatical function by relating words of a sentence

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prepositions:	in, of, on
articles:	a, an, the
pronouns:	I, you, he
auxiliaries:	am, is, are
inflectional affixes:	-s, -ing, -ed

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