

Day 13: Morphology

Ling L303/L503: Introduction to Linguistic Analysis

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What is Morphology?

- What is Morphology?

Definition (Morphology)

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

What is Morphology?

What are Morphemes?

- What are morphemes?

Definition (Morpheme)

The smallest **meaningful** linguistic unit.

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

simple

simple + ify

simple + ify + cation

over + simple + ify + cation

over + simple + ify + cation + s

What is Morphology?

In brains, not dictionary

In our brains, but not dictionaries:

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

Why not?

What is Morphology?

In brains, not dictionary

Dictionaries do not list all possible words of a language

- new words:
 - Google, meth, bedhead
- new usages of words:
 - to google something, crystal
- words derived by productive rules:
 - goes, going
 - unfold, foldable, refold, unfoldable

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

Terminology

Affixes

Affix

Definition (affix)

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

Four types of affixes:

- **prefix**: beginning of word (e.g., pre-)
- **suffix**: end of word (-ness, -ly, -tion)
- **infix**: inside a word
Tagalog [-um-]: [bili] 'buy' → [bumili] 'to buy'
- **circumfix**: 'around' a word (at both ends)
German [ge- -t]: spiel- 'play' → gespielt 'played'

Terminology

Root vs. Stem

Definition (root)

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

Definition (stem)

formed when a root is combined with an affix (that other affixes can continue to be attached to)

Example (root vs. stem)

root:	taste	(verb)
stem:	dis + taste	(prefix + verb)
stem:	dis + taste + ful	(prefix + verb + suffix)
stem:	dis + taste + ful + ly	(prefix + verb + suffix + suffix)

Terminology

Free vs. Bound

Free morphemes:

Definition (free morphemes)

can occur as independent words all by themselves

Example

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

Terminology

Free vs. Bound

Bound morphemes:

Definition (free morphemes)

cannot stand alone, but must be attached to other morphemes

Example

- Affixes: un-, pre-, dis-, -ly, -ness, -tion
- Bound roots:
 - -ceive (conceive, receive, deceive, perceive)
 - -sist (consist, resist, desist, persist)

Terminology

Free vs. Bound

I know a little man both ept and ert.
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,
The spirit soars as I would sist it ought.
Chalantly then, like any gainly goof,
My digent self is sertive, choate, loof.

—attributed to David McCord (b. 1897)

Terminology

Derivational vs. Inflectional

Derivational affixes:

Definition (derivational affixes)

when added to a word, make or derive a new word with a new meaning...

- ...sometimes changing the part of speech of words
 - use (v.) + able → usable (adj.)
 - happy (adj.) + ness → happiness (n.)
- ...sometimes not
 - un + happy (adj.) → unhappy (adj.)
 - re + produce (v.) → reproduce (v.)

Terminology

Derivational vs. Inflectional

Inflectional affixes:

Definition (inflectional affixes)

indicate grammatical roles; do not change basic meaning of words

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.

Terminology

Content vs. Function

Function morphemes:

Definition

Provide information about grammatical function by relating words of a sentence

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

Summary

'sadness'

'sadness'

- How many morphemes?
 - 2 (sad + ness)
- Free or bound?
 - 'sad' is free, '-ness' is bound
- Derivational or inflectional affix?
 - '-ness' is a derivational suffix
- Content or function morphemes?
 - both are content morphemes