Chapter 6: Morphology

LANE 321:
Introduction to Linguistics

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Content adapted from Yule (2010)
What is Morphology?

• What is a ‘word’?
• Items marked in black separated by spaces!
• In Swahili ::::: nitakupenda
• In Arabic :::::::: يجبرها
• I will love you (ni= I/ ta= will/ ku= you/ penda= love)
• He forces her/ he is forcing her
• The concept ‘word’ turns out to be a complex fuzzy category.
• consider ‘elements’ rather than ‘words’

Morphology is the field of linguistics that studies the internal structure of words
Morphemes

- Talk, talks, talker, talked, talking
- consist of (one element ‘talk’ + other elements ‘-s, -er, -ed, -ing’)
- All these elements are described as morphemes

A morpheme: A minimal unit of meaning or grammatical function

Can’t be broken down any further
The police *reopened* the investigation.
The tourists were so happy.
Free & bound morphemes

Morphemes that can stand by themselves as single words
- e.g. open, tour

Morphemes that cannot normally stand alone and are typically attached to another form
- e.g. re-, -ed, -ist, -s
Free & bound morphemes

- All affixes (prefixes & suffixes) in English are **bound morphemes**.
- **Free morphemes** = separate English word forms (basic nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc.)
- When free morphemes are used with bound morphemes, the basic word forms are known as **stems**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>undressed</th>
<th></th>
<th>carelessness</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>un-</td>
<td>dress</td>
<td>-ed</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>prefix</td>
<td>stem</td>
<td>suffix</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>(bound)</td>
<td>(free)</td>
<td>(bound)</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>
Free morphemes: Lexical & Functional

**Lexical morphemes:**

- ordinary nouns, adjectives and verbs
- carry the ‘content’ of the messages we convey
- e.g. *girl, man, house, tiger, sad, long, yellow, open, look, break*
- New lexical morphemes can easily be added to the language, so they are treated as an open class of words

**Functional morphemes:**

- Functional words (conjunctions, prepositions, articles, pronouns)
- e.g. *and, but, when, because, on, near, above, in, the, it, them*
- Because we almost never add new functional morphemes to the language, they are described as a closed class of words.
Bound morphemes: Derivational & Inflectional

Derivational morphemes:

- We use them to make new words or words of a different grammatical category from the stem.
- They include suffixes & prefixes

  - e.g.  good (adj.) >> goodness (n.)
  - care (n.) >> careful or careless (adj.)
  - write (v.) >> rewrite (v.)
  - judge (v.) >> prejudge (v.)

More examples:

- -ic  Noun >> Adj    alcohol >> alcoholic
- -ly  Adj >> Adv    quick >> quickly
- -ate Noun >> Verb  vaccine >> vaccinate
- -ity Adj >> Noun   active >> activity
- -ship Noun >> Noun  friend >> friendship
- -ish Adj >> Noun   fool >> foolish
- -ment Verb >> Noun  pay >> payment
Bound morphemes: Derivational & Inflectional

Inflectional morphemes:

- Not used to produce new words in the language.
- Used to indicate aspects of the grammatical function of a word. (plural, singular, past tense, comparative, possessive)
- In English, all the inflectional morphemes are suffixes.
- English has only 8 inflectional morphemes
  - Noun
    - -s plural e.g. books
    - '-s possessive e.g. The girl's book
  - Verb
    - -s 3rd person singular simple present e.g. walks
    - -ing present progressive e.g. walking
    - -ed past tense e.g. walked
    - -en past participle e.g. written
  - Adjective
    - -er comparative e.g. taller
    - -est superlative e.g. the tallest
Morphological description

• An inflectional morpheme never changes the grammatical category of a word.
  e.g. old, older, oldest are all adjectives

• A derivational morpheme can change the grammatical category of a word.
  e.g. teach (v.) >> teacher (n.)

• Bound morphemes always appear in order, first derivational then inflectional. (e.g. teachers)
- The child’s wildness shocked the teachers
- There are 11 morphemes

**Morphological description**

- **Free morphemes**
  - **Lexical**
    - child, wild, shock, teach
  - **Functional**
    - The, the
  - **Derivational**
    - -ness, -er
  - **Inflectional**
    - -’s, -ed, -s
Morphs and allomorphs

cars (car + -s) = (lexical + inflectional ‘plural’)
buses (bus + -es) = (lexical + inflectional ‘plural’)

• 2 morphs (-s & -es) used to realize the inflectional morpheme ‘plural’.
• -s & -es are allomorphs of the morpheme ‘plural’

• Cat + plural = cats = (cat + -s)
• Bus + plural = buses = (bus + -es)
• Sheep + plural = sheep = (sheep + ∅)
• Man + plural = men = (æ → ε)
Morphs and allomorphs

- Morphs are the actual forms used to realize morphemes.
- When we find a group of different morphs, all versions of one morpheme, we can use the prefix ‘allo-” and describe them as allomorphs of that morpheme.
Analyse the following words into morphemes

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>Word</th>
<th>Morpheme Analysis</th>
</tr>
</thead>
</table>
| impossible | im- is a derivational bound morpheme  
|           | possible is a lexical free morpheme |
| terrorized | terror is a lexical free morpheme  
|           | -ize is a derivational bound morpheme  
|           | -ed is an inflectional bound morpheme |
| him      | to is a functional free morpheme |
| desks    | desk is a lexical free morpheme  
|          | -s is an inflectional bound morpheme |
| dislike  | dis- is a derivational bound morpheme  
|          | like is a lexical free morpheme |
| humanity | human is a lexical free morpheme  
|          | -ity is a derivational bound morpheme |
| to       | to is a functional free morpheme |
### Analyse the following words into morphemes

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<tr>
<td>fastest</td>
<td>fast is a lexical free morpheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-est is an inflectional bound morpheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>premature</td>
<td>pre- is a derivational bound morpheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>mature is a lexical free morpheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>and</td>
<td>and is a functional free morpheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>untie</td>
<td>un- is a derivational bound morpheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>tie is a lexical free morpheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>darken</td>
<td>dark is a lexical free morpheme</td>
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<td></td>
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<td>fall is a lexical free morpheme</td>
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<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>faster</td>
<td>fast is a lexical free morpheme</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>Word</td>
<td>Analysis</td>
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<td>-------------------------------------------------------</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>growing</td>
<td>grow is a lexical free morpheme</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-ing is an inflectional bound morpheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>because</td>
<td>because is a functional free morpheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>followers</td>
<td>follow is a lexical free morpheme</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td></td>
<td>-er is a derivational bound morpheme</td>
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<tr>
<td></td>
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<td>she</td>
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</table>
Identify the different types of morphemes

- The young boy played with his friends.

  - The: A functional free morpheme
  - Young: A lexical free morpheme
  - Boy: A lexical free morpheme
  - Play: A lexical free morpheme
  - -ed: An inflectional bound morpheme
  - With: A functional free morpheme
  - His: A functional free morpheme
  - Friend: A lexical free morpheme
  - -s: An inflectional bound morpheme
Remember

- less
  - e.g. less than
  - functional free

- -less
  - e.g. careless
  - derivational bound
Remember or -or

- e.g. red or blue
- functional free

- e.g. editor
- derivational bound
Remember

Doer
One who does the action

-er
e.g. teacher
derivational bound

-er
e.g. longer
inflectional bound

Superlative adjective
Remember

Pas participle
write - wrote - written

short (Adj) / shorten (V)
shorten - shortened - shortened

e.g. written
inflectional bound

-e-n

-e-n
e.g. shorten
derivational bound
References

Homework: Questions: 1, 2, 3, & 4

Thank you