

Overview of topics

1. Morphology
2. Classification of morphemes
3. Structure of words
4. Word formation
5. Morphological types of languages

1 Morphology

Morphology – the study of the internal structure of words.

Morpheme – the smallest linguistic unit which has a meaning or grammatical function. Words are composed of morphemes (one or more).

sing-er-s, home-work, moon-light, un-kind-ly, talk-s, ten-th, flipp-ed, de-nation-al-iz-ation

The order of morphemes matters:

talk-ed \neq **ed-talk*, *re-write* \neq **write-re*, *un-kind-ly* \neq **kind-un-ly*

2 Classification Of Morphemes

2.1 Bound \times Free

- **Bound** – cannot appear as a word by itself.
-s (dog-s), -ly (quick-ly), -ed (walk-ed)
- **Free** – can appear as a word by itself; often can combine with other morphemes too.
house (house-s), walk (walk-ed), of, the, or

The past tense morpheme is a bound morpheme in English (*-ed*) but a free morpheme in Mandarin Chinese (*le*)

- (1) a. *Ta chi le fan.*
He eat past meal.
'He ate the meal.'
- b. *Ta chi fan le.*
He eat meal past.
'He ate the meal.'

2.2 Root × Affix

- **root** – the nucleus of the word that affixes attach too.
In English, most roots are free. In some languages that is less common (Lithuanian: *Billas Clintonas*).
Some words (compounds) contain more than one root: *home-work*
- **affix** – a morpheme that is not a root; it is always bound
 - **prefix**: *un-happy, pre-existing, re-view*
 - **suffix**: *talk-ing, quick-ly, neighbor-hood*
 - **infix**: very rare English *abso-bloody-lutely*, very common in Arabic

2.3 Content × Functional

- **Content** morphemes – carry some semantic content
car, -able, un-
- **Functional** morphemes – provide grammatical information
the, and, -s (plural), *-s* (3rd sg)

2.4 Allomorphs

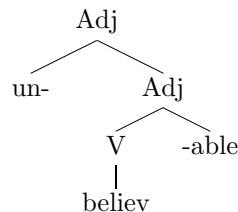
Allomorphs – morphemes having the same function but different form. Unlike synonyms, they usually cannot be replaced by one another.

- (2) a. indefinite article: *an orange – a building*
b. plural morpheme: *cat-s* [s] – *dog-s* [z] – *judg-es* [əz]

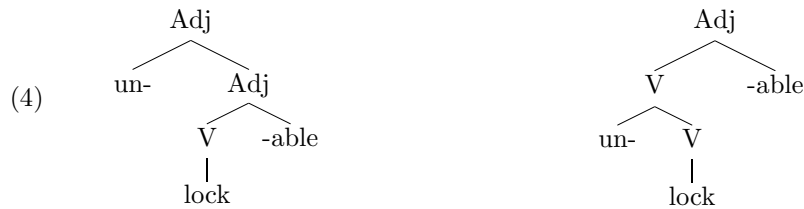
3 Structure of words

Structure of words can be captured in a similar way as structure of sentences.

- (3) unbelievable = un + (believ + able),
not *(un + believe) + able.



Some words can be ambiguous:



4 Word formation

- **Affixation** – words are formed by adding affixes.
 - V + *-able* → Adj: *predict-able*
 - V + *-er* → N: *sing-er*
 - *un* + V → A: *un-productive*
 - V + *-en* → V: *deep-en, thick-en*
- **Compounding** – words are formed by combining two or more words.
 - Adj + Adj → Adj: *bitter-sweet*
 - N + N → N: *rain-bow*
 - V + N → V: *pick-pocket*
 - P + V → V: *over-do*
- **Reduplication** – part of the word or the entire word is doubled:
 - English: *humpty-dumpty*
 - Creole: *blak* (black), *blakblak* (very black)
- **Morpheme internal changes** – the word changes internally

sing – *sang* – *sung*, *man* – *men*, *goose* – *geese*
- **Suppletion** – ‘irregular’ relation between the words. Hopefully quite rare.

am – *is*, *go* – *went*, *good* – *better*; *bad* – *worse*
- **Acronyms** – like abbreviations, but act as normal words

laser – light amplification by simulated emission of radiation
radar – radio detecting and ranging
- **Blending** – parts of two different words are combined
 - *breakfast* + *lunch* → *brunch*
 - *smoke* + *fog* → *smog*
 - *motor* + *hotel* → *motel*
- **Clipping** – longer words are shortened
 - *doctor*, *professional*, *laboratory*, *advertisement*, *dormitory*, *examination*
 - *bicycle* (bike)
 - *refrigerator*

5 Morphological Types Of Languages

Two basic morphological types of language structure:

- **Analytic** languages – have only free morphemes, sentences are sequences of single-morpheme words.
- **Synthetic** – both free and bound morphemes. Affixes are added to roots.

Has further subtypes:

- **Agglutinating** – each morpheme has a single function; it is easy to separate them.
E.g., Hungarian, in LF
- **Fusional** – like agglutinating, but affixes tend to “fuse together”; one affix has more than one function.
E.g., Spanish – in LF
- **Polysynthetic**: extremely complex, many roots and affixes combine together, often one word corresponds to a whole sentence in other languages.
angyaghllangyugtug – ‘he wants to acquire a big boat’ (Eskimo)
palyamunurringkutjamunurtu – ‘s/he definitely did not become bad’ (W Aus.)
Sora – in LF

English has many analytic properties (future morpheme *will*, perfective morpheme *have*, etc. are separate words) and many synthetic properties (plural (-s), etc. are bound morphemes)