Introduction to Linguistics
Morphology

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1 Terminology

Morphology – 1) The study of the internal structure of words, and of the rules by which words are formed; 2) our internal grammatical knowledge concerning (word) forms.

Word – A complete linguistic unit that is meaningful on its own and can be freely reordered into new phrases and sentences.

Syntax: minimal input to syntactic operations; *semantics*: 'complete' semantic unit, a non-compositional sign; *phonology*: phonotactic constraints, stress.

Exercise: Compare the following items. Are they words? Are they all phonologically, syntactically and semantically independent? *cat, dog, in, up, not, not dead, wake up, get out, yourself, your dumb self, black death.*

Continuum: cf. compound words, clitics, bound forms, particles, etc.

Morpheme vs. **Morph** – The smallest meaningful linguistic unit.

Exercise: Find morphemes and morphs corresponding to each morpheme.
English: *dog dogs cat cats house houses*
Russian:

- *ruka* = 'arm.subject', *ruku* = 'arm.object', *ruki* = 'arms'
- *noga* = 'leg.subject', *nogu* = 'leg.object', *nogi* = 'legs'
- *ručnoj* = 'arm.adjective.masc', *nožnoj* = 'leg.adjective.masc',
  ručnaja = 'arm.adjective.fem', *nožnaja* = 'leg.adjective.fem'

Free morpheme: roots (but not all roots).

Bound morpheme:

- affix (*write – writ-er*),
- prefix (*un-healthy*),
- suffix (*go-ing*),
- infix (inside a root),
- circumfix (*raz-sja* in Russian),
- interfix (Russian *-o-* in *parovoz*),
- suprafix (*Import – impOrt*, tone + stress),
- transfix (Arabic)

Infix: Nouns/Adjectives Verbs in Bontoc (Philippines):

fikas 'strong' – ***fum****ikas* 'to be strong'; *kilad* 'red' – *k****um****ilad* 'to be red'; *fusul* 'enemy' – ***fum****usul* 'to be an enemy'

Transfix: transfixes in Arabic:

ktb = 'write': *kataba* 'he wrote', *yaktubu* 'he is writing', *kātib* 'writer', *maktūb* 'written'

! Do not forget (phonologically) zero morphs: if you can assign a certain fixed meaning to the 'silence' (i.e. the absence of an overt marker) – that is a silent morpheme.

For example, number in English: *cat-s* – *cat-*∅, *dog-s* – *dog-*∅ ← the absence of "s" indicates singular, we are dealing with a silent (∅) singular morpheme.

2 Allomorphy

Allomorphy, **allomorphs**

Morphemes can have several forms that are in complementary distribution (i.e. they do not appear in the same context). Such variants of a morpheme are called **morphs**. **Allomorphs** = variants/morphs of the same morpheme.

Example: *-s* (plural) in English, pronounced differently depending on the preceding sound:

cat /t/ *cats* /s/

dog /g/ *dogs* /z/

house /s/ *houses* /i:z/

← phonologically conditioned allomorphy, depends on the phonological context.

Variation between allomorphs – usually conditioned: phonologically, lexically/morphologically.

Free variation – independent.

Suppletion: *I – me, go – went.*

Exercise: Below you can see some words from a Mayan language (spoken in Guatemala) and their translations.

c?on — gun	si? — forest
?insi? — my forest	kab — juice
mak — person	lak — cup
k?ab — hand	?iŋk?ab — my hand
?inc?on — my gun	pal — son
?inlak — my cup	?imbat — my axe

Translate to this Mayan language: *my son, my person, my juice, axe.* Explain your decision.
Note: ŋ is a consonant similar to the English 'ng'; ? is a consonant.

3 Inflection vs. Derivation

Inflectional morphemes

- Create new forms of the same word
- Inflectional morpheme – grammatical feature from a grammatical category
- Obligatory to use a word in syntax. For example, if you want to use a noun in English you have to decide whether it's singular (zero inflection) or plural (-s inflection), you cannot leave it ambiguous.
- Example: plural inflection, case inflection, Tense

Derivational morphemes

- Create new words (often of another category)
- Change the lexical meaning of a word
- In a sense, optional (depend on the lexical meaning that we want to convey).
- Example: *un-* (*unhappy*), *-er* (*writer*).

Exercise: Derivation or inflection? *un-healthy, pig-s, go-ing, writ-er, friend-ly, mother's*

Word – (1) lexeme ('neutral' form), (2) syntactic word (a form).

Paradigm – the set of morphologically related forms (syntactic words) corresponding to one lexeme.

Example: paradigms in Hungarian (nouns, verbs)

4 Word formation and word formation rules

Word formation rules ← lexicon oriented rules vs. fully productive rules

Types of word formation:

- Derivation (= affixation)
- Incorporation (syntax or morphology?) *fishing* in many languages as *fish-catching*
- Reduplication: *so-so, bad-bad*
- Conversion (= zero affixation): *advise*, etc.
- Compounding: *baby-sitting, cat-sitting, dog-sitting*
- Clipping (*photograph* → *photo*)
- Blending (*breakfast* + *lunch* → *brunch*)
- Acronym formation (*ELTE, CEU, vuz in Russian*)
- Tone and stress change: *rEcord – recOrd*

5 Rules and exceptions

- Always think about your language data
- Order the rules
- Ensure that they are productive

Scenario 1: multiple inflectional morphemes

→ usually, strict order; language-specific rules.

Example: Hungarian plural/accusative: *macskákat*, but not **macskátak*.

Scenario 2: multiple derivational morphemes

→ different semantics

Example 1: *unlikeable* (*unlikable*)

a. [[un + like] + able] → quite unlikeable, it is possible not to like this person

b. [un + [like+ able]] → completely unlikeable, it is impossible to like this person

Example 2: *unhappier* ← a paradox

Based on the meaning of this adjective (more 'not happy'), we expect it to be [[un + happy] + er].

However, we know independently that *-er* usually combines with adjectives of 1-2 syllables: *kinder, cleverer*, but not **beautifuler*. → we expect *-er* to be unable to combine with the adjective *unhappy* (3 syllables). → paradox → Usually, morphological restrictions win over semantics. → in this case, we assume the derivation [un + [happy + er]].

In fact, this derivation is not that problematic from the semantic point of view. Negation is often interpreted not as expected based on its surface position. Cf. for example *I cannot go there.* – this sentence means 'It is not possible to go there.' and not 'It is possible not to go there.' even though the negation follows *can* on the surface.

Scenario 3: derivational and inflectional morphemes

Derivation happens first; derivation **feeds** inflection (before using the word in syntax we should create it via derivation).

Example: *writers* [[write + er] + s]: first, we derive a noun from a verb; after that, we add the plural morpheme.

The plural morpheme cannot combine with verbs in principle; the order [write + s] → [writes + er] is impossible and makes no sense.

6 Productivity

Constraints on productivity: sometimes a rule does not apply

- Blocking: **stealer* is blocked because of *thief*; *-ness* is more productive than *-ity* (no *spaciosity, furiosity*)
- Phonology: *black-en, quiet-en*, but not *green-en, dry-en* (the root must end with a stop/fricative/affricate)
- Morphonological constraint: *-hood* is prohibited with 'foreign' roots (*man-hood but no colonel-hood, judge-hood*)
- Semantics: *blue-eyed, red-haired* but no *small-dog(g)ed* – this pattern works only with inalienable properties.

Exercise: Divide into morphemes + rules + order.
airsicknesses, bestranged (obsolete), deverbal, unimaginable, grandmother's, unrecoverable, prioritizing, rewriter, denumeration, budgetarily, fancifulness, tastier, softened, decommercialize, transmittable, unicorns, illegally.

Exercise: Below you can see some Turkish words and their translations.
yazmişim — Probably, I wrote
yazmişsiniz — Probably, you (plural) wrote
yazmişsin — Probably, you (singular) wrote
yazar — (he) writes
yazmiş — Probably, he wrote
yazarlar — (they) write
Translate to Turkish: *Probably, they wrote*