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## **Morphology**

Morphology is the study of forms. It has been used to describe that type of investigation that analyses all those basic elements which are used in a language. What we have been describing as elements in the form of a linguistic message is known as morphemes.

A morpheme is the minimal unit of meaning or grammatical function.

- ◆ One Morpheme: boy
- ◆ Two Morphemes: boyish =boy+ish
- ◆ Three Morphemes: boyish ness=boy+ish+ness
- ◆ Four Morphemes:undesirability =un+desire+able+ly
- ◆ More than Four: antidisestablishmentarianism anti+dis+establish+ment+ari+an+ism

### **Kinds of Morphemes**

There are two types of morphemes, namely, free and bound morphemes.

- ◆ Free Morphemes can stand by themselves as single words. Ex Tour, open, stay ...
- ◆ Bound Morphemes cannot normally stand alone but they are typically belong to another form. Affixes are bound morphemes. Ex. re- , -ist , -ed , -s ...
- ◆ When free morphemes are used with bound morphemes, the basic word – form involved is technically known as the ‘stem’.
- ◆ Ex. un dress ◆ un=> Prefix (bound), dress => stem (free), ed=> suffix (bound)

### **Lexical and Functional Morphemes**

Free morphemes fall into two categories:

- ◆ Lexical morphemes are the ordinary nouns adjectives and verbs that we think of the words which carry the content of messages we convey. They are called open class of words, since we can add new lexical morphemes to the language easily.

- ◆ Sad, long, look => lexical morphemes
- ◆ Functional morphemes are the functional words in the language such as conjunctions, prepositions, articles and pronouns. They are called close class of words, since we almost never add new functional morphemes to the language.
- ◆ Ex. and, but, on, near, above => functional morphemes

## **Derivational and Inflectional Morphemes**

Bound Morphemes can also be divided into two types.

- ◆ Derivational morphemes are used to make new words in the language and are often used to make words of a different grammatical category from the stem .

- ◆ Ex. good => adjective good + ness => noun

- ◆ Care => noun care + less => adjective

- ◆ Inflectional morphemes are not used to produce new words in the English language, but rather to indicate aspects of the grammatical function of a word. Plural markers, possessive markers, tense markers, comparative and superlative markers are inflectional morphemes.

- ◆ Ex. Tim's two sisters: Tim's 's => inflectional , sisters s => inflectional

- ◆ An inflectional morpheme never changes the grammatical category of a word.

- ◆ Ex. old => adj. , Older => adj.

- ◆ A derivational morpheme can change the grammatical category of a word.

- ◆ Ex. teach => verb , teacher => noun

- ◆ Some morphemes look the same but this does not mean that they do the same kind of word.

- ◆ Ex. teacher => suffix + inflectional

- ◆ Younger => suffix + derivational

Whenever there is a derivational suffix and inflectional suffix attached to the same word , they always appear in that order.

- ◆ Ex. teach + er + s => stem + derivational + inflectional

## **Morphs and Allomorphs**

Morphs: The actual forms used to realize morphemes.

◆ Ex. cats => consists of two morphemes

◆ An inflectional morpheme (-s)

◆ A lexical morpheme (cat)

◆ Allomorphs: The actual forms of the morphs which result from the

Single morpheme 'plural' turn out to be different. They are all allomorphs of the one morpheme.

◆ Ex. sheep ( s ) => sheep ( p )

◆ Sheep ( zero morpheme )

◆ zero morpheme is one allomorph of plural.