

Morphology

Morphology is the area of linguistics which studies the structure of words.

Almost all natural language applications require some processing of words: lexicon lookup, morphological analysis and generation, part-of-speech determination etc.

In order to implement such functions, it is necessary to understand which morphological processes take place in a variety of languages.

Why look at many languages?

Example

These simple observations shed light on a variety of issues:

- What information is encoded by morphology?

In the example, morphology encodes details such as person, number and tense.

- How does morphology encode information?

In the example, the final form is obtained by concatenating an affix (which is not a word) to the end of a base (which might be a word).

- Interaction of morphology and phonology

In the example, the vowel [e] is shortened to a schwa.

Example

hem dibbru koll ha-layla

Observations:

- dibbru is third person, plural, past form of the verb *dibber*
- this form is obtained by concatenating the suffix [u] to the base [dibber]
- in the inflected form *dibbru*, the vowel [e] of the base [dibber] is reduced to a schwa. This reduction is mandatory, as [dibberu] is ungrammatical.

Structure of this part of the course

- Typology of languages
- Inflection and derivation
- What information is encoded by morphology
- How morphology encodes information
 - concatenation, infixation, circumfixation, root and pattern, reduplication
- Interaction of morphology and phonology

Typology of languages

Isolating : no bound forms. Example: Mandarin Chinese

Agglutinative : bound forms occur and are arranged in the word like beads on a string. Example: Turkish

Polysynthetic : elements that often occur as separate words in other languages (such as arguments of the verb) are expressed morphologically. Example: Yupik (central Alaska)

Inflectional : distinct features are merged into a single bound form. Example: Latin

Agglutinative languages

Beads on a string. Example: Turkish

çöplüklerimizdekiledenmiydi

çöp lük ler imiz de ki ler den mi y di
garbage Aff Pl 1p/Pl Loc Rel Pl Abl Int Aux Past
 “was it from those that were in our garbage cans?”

“h-mi-~~Ş~~e-b-paxeinu?”

Isolating languages

No bound forms. Example: Mandarin Chinese

gǒu bú ài chī qīngcài
dog not like eat vegetable

Can mean any of the following (inter alia):

- the dog doesn't like to eat vegetables
- the dog didn't like to eat vegetables
- the dogs don't like to eat vegetables
- the dogs didn't like to eat vegetables
- dogs don't like to eat vegetables

Polysynthetic languages

Morphology encodes units that are usually considered syntactic (as in noun incorporation). Example: Yupik

qayá:liy'u:l'u:n'i

qayá: li y'u: l'u: n'i
kayaks make excellent he Past
 “he was excellent at making kayaks”

“The grammar is in the morphology”

Inflectional languages

Portmanteau morphemes: a single morpheme can encode various bits of information. Example: Latin

amō

amō
love 1p/Sg/Pres/Indicative/Active

Inflections and derivations

Derivational morphology takes as input a word and outputs a different word that is derived from the input. This is also called *word formation*.

Example: establish+ment+ary+an+ism

Example: hexlit → haxlata → hexleti → hexletiyut

Inflections and derivations

Inflectional morphology takes as input a word and outputs a form of the same word appropriate to a particular context.

Example: [dibber] ⇒ [dibbru]

The output is appropriate to a context in which the subject is third person plural and the tense is past.

Hence: words have *paradigms*, defining all possible inflected forms of a word. Words which belong to the same paradigm are all *inflected forms* of a single *lexeme*.

Inflections and derivations - distinctive criteria

- Inflection does not change the part-of-speech, derivation might.
- Inflection is sometimes required by the syntax, derivation never is.
- If a language marks an inflectional category, it marks it on all appropriate words. In other words, the relation denoted by inflectional morphology is *productive*.

haxlata	–	haxlatot	haxlata	–	hexleti
hapgana	–	hapganot	hapgana	–	*hepgeni

Verbal morphology

Verbs specify the number (and type) of arguments they may take. In many languages, morphological devices modify these lexically specified markings.

Example: passivization (Latin)

puer Cicerōnem laudat
boy Cicero praise/3/Sg/Pres/Ind/Act
 "the boy praises Cicero"

Cicerōnem laudātur
Cicero praise/3/Sg/Pres/Ind/Pass
 "Cicero is praised"

Example: causativization

napal → hippil; nasa& → hissi&

Verbal morphology

In many languages the verb must *agree* on person, number, gender or other features with one or more of its arguments.

Example:

The princess kisses the frog
 **The princess kiss the frog*

hem dibbru koll ha-layla
 **hem dibbra koll ha-layla*

In some languages (e.g., Georgian and Chicheŵa) verbs agree not only with their subjects but also with their objects.

Verbal morphology

Verbs are commonly marked with indications of the time at which the situations denoted by them occurred, or the state of completion of the situation. Such markers encode *tense* and *aspect*, respectively.

Example: Latin

vir Cicerōnem laudābō
man Cicero praise/3/Sg/Future/Ind
 "the man will praise Cicero"

vir Cicerōnem laudāvit
man Cicero praise/3/Sg/Perf/Ind
 "the man has praised Cicero"

Nominal morphology

Inflectional categories for nouns (and adjectives) include

- number (singular, plural, dual)
- case (marking various kinds of semantic function)
- gender (feminine, masculine, neuter)

Latin has five cases: nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, ablative.

Finnish has fourteen different cases!

Example: the inflection paradigm of the noun *magnus* (big) in Latin.

The inflection paradigm of Latin magnus

		masculine	feminine	neuter
sing.	nom	magn+ us	magn+ a	magn+ um
	gen	magn+ ī	magn+ ae	magn+ ī
	dat	magn+ ō	magn+ ae	magn+ ō
	acc	magn+ um	magn+ am	magn+ um
	abl	magn+ ō	magn+ ā	magn+ ō
plur.	nom	magn+ ī	magn+ ae	magn+ a
	gen	magn+ ōrum	magn+ ārum	magn+ ōrum
	dat	magn+ īs	magn+ īs	magn+ īs
	acc	magn+ ōs	magn+ ās	magn+ a
	abl	magn+ īs	magn+ īs	magn+ īs

Nominal morphology

Many languages distinguish between two or three grammatical genders: feminine, masculine and neuter.

In some languages, such as the Bantu languages, more detailed gender classes exist.

Example: Swahili has inflection affixes for humans, thin objects, paired things, instruments and extended body parts, inter alia.

Adjectival morphology

Many languages express comparison of adjectives morphologically.

Example: Welsh

gwyn	gwynn+ ed	gwynn+ ach	gwynn+ af
white	as white	whiter	whitest
teg	tec+ ed	tec+ ach	tec+ af
fair	as fair	fairer	fairest

Derivational morphology

In general, derivational morphology is not as productive as inflectional morphology.

Nominalization: destroy → destruction; **\$amar** → **\$mira**; **pittex** → **pittux**; **hiskim** → **heskem**

Deverbal adjectives: drink → drinkable; **nazal** → **nazil**

Denominalized adjectives: **\$ulxan** → **\$ulxani**

Adjective nominalization: grammatical → grammaticality; **nadir** → **ndirut**

Negation: able → unable; **xuti** → **'alxuti**

Compounding

In contrast to derivations and inflections, where affixes are attached to a stem, in compounding two or more lexemes' stems are joint together, forming another lexeme.

Example: policeman; newspaper; **beit seper**; **ypat &einaym**

Both lexemes might undergo modification in the process.

In German, the concatenation is expressed in the orthography:

lebensversicherungsgesellschaftsangestellter

leben s versicherung s gesellschaft s angestellter
life insurance company employee

What are morphemes?

Linear concatenation is not the only way in which languages put morphemes together. Affixes may also attach as *infixes* inside words.

Example: Bontoc (Philippines)

fikas → f-**um**+ikas
strong be strong

kilad → k-**um**+ilad
red be red

fusul → f-**um**+usul
enemy be an enemy

What are morphemes?

In order to know what morphemes are, it is useful to check in what ways they are expressed.

The simplest model of morphology is the situation where a morphologically complex word can be analyzed as a series of morphemes concatenated together.

An example: Turkish. Not only is Turkish morphology exclusively concatenative; in addition, all affixes are suffixes. Turkish words are of the form *stem suffix**.

çöplüklerimizdekiledenmiydi

çöp lük ler imiz de ki ler den mi y di
garbage Aff Pl 1p/Pl Loc Rel Pl Abl Int Aux Past

What are morphemes?

In the Bontoc case the infix must be placed after the first consonant of the word to which it attaches.

In general, the placement of infixes is governed by prosodic principles.

Example: Ulwa (Nicaragua)

suu+ ki -lu	my dog
suu+ ma -lu	your (Sg) dog
suu+ ka -lu	his/her/its dog
suu+ ni -lu	our (inclusive) dog
suu+ ki+na -lu	our (exclusive) dog
suu+ ma+na -lu	your (Pl) dog
suu+ ka+na -lu	their dog

What are morphemes?

Some languages exhibit *circumfixes*, affixes which attach discontinuously around a stem.

Example: German participles

säuseln **ge**+säusel+**t**
 brüsten **ge**+brüst+**et**
 täuschen **ge**+täusch+**t**

What are morphemes?

Another nonsegmental process is *reduplication*.

Example: Indonesian

orang → orang+orang
man *men*

Sometimes only part of the word is duplicated, as in Yidin (Australia) plural:

mulari → mula+mulari
man *men*

gindalba → gindal+gindalba
lizard *lizards*

What are morphemes?

In contrast to processes of attaching an affix to a stem, there exist also nonsegmental morphological processes. A typical example is the Semitic *root and pattern* morphology.

Example: Hebrew *binyanim*

_a_a_, ni__a_, _i__el, _u__a_, hi__i_, hu__a_, hit_a__e_.

So, what are morphemes?

In its most general definition, a morpheme is an ordered pair $\langle \text{cat}, \text{phon} \rangle$, where *cat* is the morphological category expressed by the morpheme (for example, its syntactic and semantic features), and *phon* represents its phonological form, including the ways in which it is attached to its stem.

Example:

$\langle (\text{Adj} \rightarrow \text{N}, \text{"state of"}), ([\text{ut}], \text{suffix}) \rangle$ nadir → ndirut

$\langle (\text{root} \rightarrow \text{V}, \text{causative}), (_i_e_) \rangle$ g.d.l → giddel

What are words, then?

A morpheme is a pairing of syntactic/semantic information with phonological information. In the same way, it is useful to assume that words have dual structures: phonological and morphological. The two structures are not always isomorphic.

It is a fairly traditional observation in morphology that there are really two kinds of words from a structural point of view: phonological words and syntactic words. These two notions specify overlapping but not identical sets of entities. Furthermore, the orthographic word might not correspond to any of these.

Morphotactics

Morphotactics investigates the constraints imposed on the order in which morphemes are combined.

Various kinds of such constraints are known.

Example:

teva& → tiv&i → tiv&iyut → &al-tiv&iyut but
*tiv&iyut-&al; *&al-tiv&uti

What information should a morphological analyzer produce?

The answer depends on the application:

Sometimes it is sufficient to know that **dibbru** is an inflected form of **dibber**; sometimes morphological information is needed, either as a list of features (**dibbru** is third person, plural, past form of the verb **dibber**) or as a structure tree; sometimes it is better to produce a list of phonemes without determining word boundaries. For some applications, the root **d.b.r** might be needed.

Morphotactics

Types of constraints:

- Constraints on the type of the affix: **&al** is a prefix, **ut** is a suffix
 - Syntactic constraints: [i] converts a noun to an adjective; [ut] converts an adjective to a noun
 - Other constraints: in English, “Latin” affixes are attached before “native” ones:

non+im+partial	non+il+legible
*in+non+partial	*in+non+legible
-

Phonology

Ideally, the task of a morphological analysis system would be to break the word down to its component morphemes and determine the meaning of the resulting decomposition.

Things are not that simple because of the often quite drastic effects of phonological rules. A great deal of the effort in constructing computational models of morphology is spent on developing techniques for dealing with phonological rules.

Since most computational analyses of morphology assume *written* input, phonological rules are often confused with orthographic ones.

Phonology

A phonological rule (changing [aʲ] to [i]) is not reflected in the orthography:

divine+ity → divinity

A phonological rule (stress shift) is not reflected in the orthography:

grammátical → grammaticálicity

Phonology

Orthographic rules often do not correspond to phonological rules.

An orthographic rule that does not correspond to any phonological rule:

city+s → cities (and not *citys)

bake+ing → baking (and not *bakeing)

Phonology

Examples of phonological rules

English: [n] changes to [m] before a labial consonant:

impossible; **im**pose; **im**mortal

Finnish: vowel harmony

NOM	PART	gloss
taivas	taivas+ ta	sky
puhelin	puheli+ ta	telephone
lakeus	lakeus+ ta	plain
syy	syy+ tä	reason
lyhyt	lyhyt+ tä	short
ystävällinen	ystävällinen+ tä	friendly