

Morphology Review

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A few question to start with

- What is a word?
- How can one tell one word from another?
- Is it always the same scheme with all the possible languages?
- What is morphology?
- What are its main branches?
- What is linguistic typology?
- Why is it useful?
- What are the key language morphological types?
- How can we identify a morpheme?

LEXEME

Lexeme ['leksɪ:m]

- A basic lexical unit of a language consisting of one word or several words, the elements of which do not separately convey the meaning of the whole

The identity of a word that does not change under inflection but does change under derivation.

Encompasses core meaning and grammatical class, but not grammatical categories such as number, case, etc.

Some Phonological Evidence for the Word

The schemes of words (word-forms) delimitation in the stream of speech are often based on **certain phonological rules** which are sensitive to word boundaries and the word as a unit of structure and organization.

Some Phonological Evidence for the Word

Stress.

In English, each content word will have exactly one primary stress.

Do the following examples all seem like single words?

Where is their primary stress?

Dehumidifier [di:ʔhju:ʔmɪʔdɪʔfaɪə(r)ʔ]

Recapitulation [ˌrɪ:ʔkəʔpɪʔtjəʔleɪʔʃ(?)n]

Some Phonological Evidence for the Word

There are also **phonotactic considerations**: for certain sequences of sounds cannot occur within syllables, but may be permissible over word boundaries (e.g. [dzm], above in 'words must')

Some Phonological Evidence for the Word

Some languages have *vowel harmony* that applies to entire words--- for example, in Turkish all the vowels in most words must be all front vowels or all back vowels.

We never find vowel harmony occurring over entire sentences.

/el-ler-in/ 'hand'-PLR-gen.vs.

/at-lar-un/ 'horse,'-PLR-gen.

Some Morphological Evidence for the Word

□ Positional mobility

→ word form as a whole can be moved.

Eg. I love plums, Plums I love.

□ Uninterruptability

→ extraneous material cannot be introduced into the middle of a word-form.

□ Internal stability

→ fixed order of morphemes within word forms: Dehumidifiers (!)

Morphological typology

Morphological typology is a way of classifying the languages of the world that groups languages according to their common morphological structures.

First developed by brothers Friedrich von Schlegel and August von Schlegel, the field organizes languages on the basis of how those languages form words by combining morphemes.

Morphological typology

Two primary categories exist to distinguish all languages: analytic languages and **synthetic languages**, where each term refers to the opposite end of a continuous scale including all the world's languages.

Analytic languages

Analytic languages show a low ratio of morphemes to words; in fact, the correspondence is nearly one-to-one.

Sentences in analytic languages are composed of independent root morphemes.

Grammatical relations between words are expressed by separate words where they might otherwise be expressed by affixes, which are present to a minimal degree in such languages.

Analytic languages

There is little to no morphological change in words: they tend to be uninflected.

Grammatical categories are indicated by word order (for example, inversion of verb and subject for interrogative sentences) or by bringing in additional words (for example, a word for "some" or "many" instead of a plural inflection like English "-s"). Individual words carry a general meaning (root concept); nuances are expressed by other words. Finally, in analytic languages, context and syntax seem more important than morphology.

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Analytic languages

Analytic languages include some of the major East Asian languages, such as Chinese, and Vietnamese.

Additionally, English is moderately analytic (probably one of the most analytic of Indo-European languages).

Synthetic languages

Synthetic

Of a language, having high morpheme/word ratio.

Rethinking morphological typology

Wilhelm von Humboldt developed a gradational approach to the classification of languages.

This approach assumes that no real language is a certain type of language in its pure form, it can only come close to it to varying degrees, but it always contains elements of other types.

The typological dominant of the Chinese language was regarded by W. Humboldt as the most developed among other isolating languages, and the typological dominant of Sanskrit as the most developed among other inflectional languages.

Rethinking morphological typology

In Sanskrit, according to W. Humboldt, the maximum number of morphological indicators - external inflections, with the help of which the relations between the concepts denoted by the significant parts of speech are expressed, are presented, and in Chinese - the minimum.

Agglutinative languages are closer to inflectional, and between agglutinative and isolating are incorporating.

Analytic and Synthetic Languages

Analytic Languages

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**Grammatical categories are indicated by word;
Morphs are normally haplosemic**

Context and syntax seem more important than morphology.

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Vietnamese

Synthetic Languages

Synthetic languages show a high ratio of morphemes to words

Synthetic languages form words by affixing a given number of dependent morphemes to a root morpheme.

The morphemes may be distinguishable from the root, or they may not. They may be fused with it or among themselves (in that multiple pieces of grammatical information may potentially be packed into one morpheme).

Inflections are really informative and numerous

Sanskrit, Russian, Lithuanian, Ancient Greek, Swahili [swɑ:'hi:lɪ]

Analytic and Synthetic Languages

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Just affixes

- ❑ Affix ['æfɪks] an **addition** to the **base form** or **stem of a word** in order to modify its meaning or create a new word
- ❑ **Affixes are bound morphemes** that attach to the stem of a word to form either a new word or a new form of the same word.
- ❑ **Prefixes and suffixes** are the two types of affixes in the English language.

Morphological types across the world's languages

- ❑ Linguists can categorize languages based on their word-building properties and usage of different **affixation processes**.
- ❑ The broadest distinction among languages is whether or not affixation is allowed at all, or if every word must be a single morpheme.
- ❑ For languages that allow affixation, we can further categorize these according to their morphological characteristics

Analytic and Isolating Languages

Analytic languages have sentences composed entirely of *free* morphemes, where each word consists of *only one morpheme*.

Isolating languages are “purely analytic” and allow no affixation (inflectional or derivational) at all.

PS. Sometimes *analytic* languages *allow* some derivational morphology such as **compounds** (two free roots in a single word)

Analytic and Isolating Languages

A canonically analytic language is Mandarin Chinese.

Note that properties such as “plural” and “past” comprise their own morphemes and their own words.

[wɔ mən tan tʃin lə]

1st PLR play piano PST

‘we played the piano’

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Synthetic Languages

Synthetic languages allow affixation such that words may (though are not required to) include two or more morphemes.

These languages have *bound morphemes*, meaning they must be attached to another word (whereas analytic languages only have free morphemes).

August Wilhelm Schlegel (1772–1829)

The studies by Friedrich and even more by August Wilhelm Schlegel led to a first typological division of languages.



August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767–1845)

In his 'Observations sur la langue et la littérature provençales' (1818), A.W. Schlegel says that all languages can be divided into **three classes**:

- (a) languages without any grammatical structure, like Chinese;
- (b) languages with agglutinated affixes, like Turkish;
- (c) languages with inflections, to be distinguished in their turn as (c') synthetic and (c'') analytic languages.



August Wilhelm Schlegel (1767–1845)

As examples of (c'), Schlegel quotes Latin and Ancient Greek, whereas to (c'') belong languages such as **French** which, contrary to the classical languages, make use of articles, personal pronouns before the verb, auxiliaries, and prepositions. The **Germanic languages** are located between (c') and (c'').

