BBI3212 ENGLISH SYNTAX
AND MORPHOLOGY

Topics

- What is morphology
- Difference between morphology and syntax
- Words and morphemes
- Word classes (syntactic categories of words)
- Classes of morphemes
- Constituents of words
- Representing the internal structure of words using tree diagrams and labeled bracketing
- Derivational and inflectional processes
- Word formation processes in English
SYNTAX AND MORPHOLOGY

- Morphology – study of words, its parts and rules that govern their combination
  - Words – what are the component parts of words, and the principles that govern the combination of these parts into whole words. Morphemes – smallest unit of sound and meaning, building blocks of words.

- Syntax – the study of how words, phrases and clauses are put together to form sentences
  - Sentences – analysed into its constituent parts, and the principles that govern the combination of these parts.

MORPHOLOGY (in linguistics)

- STUDY OF WORDS
- CLASSIFICATION OF WORDS
- HOW SEGMENTS OF WORDS ARE PUT TOGETHER
- ANALYSIS OF WORD STRUCTURE
- WORD FORMATION PROCESSES

  - TO UNDERSTAND THE SYSTEM AND RULES INVOLVED IN WORD FORMATION AND INTERPRETATION – it is a linguistic description of words
MORPHOLOGY

- Study of the structure of words:
  1. What are the component parts of words?
     (chop them up into the smallest parts you are able to do so (basic building blocks))
  2. How are these component parts put together to form the whole word?
     (put them together again – what principles or rules determine this?)

The LEXICON consists of words

- SEPARATE ITEMS/WORDS
  - i.e. table, meal, eat, ate, go, happy, unhappy, operation, national, headhunter, etc

- WORDS FORMED FROM BASIC WORDS
  - Through application of certain rules to basic words
  - e.g. time table, meals, jogging, undergo, unhappy, etc
MORPHOLOGY

Which of the following is correct (in English)?

- Oldest
- Bestest
- Cleverest
- Spoonest
- Soonest

How did you know?

MORPHOLOGY

Identify the word categories (syntactic categories) of the words in RED

T’was brillig, and the slithy toves
Did gyre and gimble in the wabe
All mimsy were the borogoves
And the mome raths outgrabe
(Lewis Carrol, “Through the Looking Glass”, 1993, p. 21)

HOW DID YOU KNOW?
MORPHOLOGY

- You know:
  - The syntactic categories of words (nouns, adjectives etc) and word order
  - Which words are content words (lexical category) and which are function words (non-lexical category)
  - Rules of word formation such as affixation
e.g. one book, two books => one tove, two toves
e.g. adjective: funny, sleepy => slithy, mimsy
- Roots and bases of words: hats => raths

WORDS

- What is a word?
  - The smallest free form found in language
    ○ I am over here.
    ○ Here I am.
    ○ She’s as good as I.
  - I, here, as, am, good, she’s, over = words

- Words can occur in isolation and/or in different positions in a sentence
NON-WORDS

- Compare with non-words
  - The work is unfinished.
  - The work is *finished un.

- un-, -ed are not words. They must be attached to another form, in a fixed/regular manner.

- Their positions within a word are fixed.

WORDS – SYNTACTIC CATEGORIES

- Lexical categories / meaning or content words
  - Nouns
  - Verbs
  - Adjectives
  - Adverbs

  Lexical words are open-class words

  Give examples for each of the above categories
Non-lexical (functional) categories /grammatical words
- Auxiliaries – is, may, have, could
- Intensifiers/qualifiers – very, quite, pretty, more, too, rather, ever so, maybe, often, hardly, perhaps, quite
- Prepositions – above, behind, in, for, of, under
- Conjunctions – and, or, so, as, but

Prepositions and modal auxiliaries may be regarded as functional or lexical
Non-lexical words are closed-class words.

Tests/Criteria for determining a word’s category
- The meaning of the word – **Meaning Test/Semantic**
  - Whether the meaning of the word fit the definition of the category
- Sentence-slot test – **Distribution Test/Syntactic**
  - Whether the word can co-occur with certain other words in a sentence, phrase or clause; the position the word can take in a sentence, phrase or clause
- Word suffix test – **Inflection Test/ Morphological**
  - Whether the word can be inflected in the same ways that known classes of words do; whether they can ‘take’ certain inflections characteristic of that class of words
**WORDS – SYNTACTIC CATEGORIES**

- **TESTS/CRITERIA FOR DETERMINING A WORD’S CATEGORY**
  - The meaning of the word – **MEANING TEST/SEMANTIC**
    - Table – names a particular item of furniture = NOUN
  - Sentence-slot test – **DISTRIBUTION TEST/SYNTACTIC**
    - *the table, a table* = can co-occur with a determiner = NOUN
    - *will table, should table* = can co-occur with modals before it = VERB
  - Word suffix test – **INFLECTION TEST/ MORPHOLOGICAL**
    - *Table → tabled, tabling* – takes the past tense suffix (-ed) and the progressive suffix (-ing) = VERB
    - *Table – tables* – takes the plural suffix (-s) = NOUN

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**WORDS – SYNTACTIC CATEGORIES**

The meaning of the word – **MEANING TEST/SEMANTIC**

- **Nouns** – name things, persons, animals, places or concepts
  - table, Ali, dream, happiness, Kuala Lumpur, monkey
- **Verbs** – refer to actions/ processes and states
  - kick, jump, be, like, feel, have
- **Adjectives** - describes the property of nouns
  - beautiful girl, bad wolf
**Adverbs** – modifies the meaning of a verb, adjective or another adverb

- read **loudly** (modifies verb)
- read **really** loudly (modifies adverb, also called intensifier)
- extremely sad (modifies adjective)

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**Inflection test (suffix test)**

**TESTS FOR NOUN**

- Add **-s** to a word --- get a plural (meaning more than one) 
cakes --- more than one cake: therefore ‘cake’ is probably a noun.

- Add **‘s** to a word --- get the meaning ‘belonging to’ 
Henry’s --- belonging to Henry as in ‘Henry’s bag’: therefore Henry is probably a noun.
WORDS – SYNTACTIC CATEGORIES

Distribution Test
TESTS FOR NOUN

Attach a determiner (e.g. article, adjective, possessive pronoun)
the boy, silly girl ---- sounds OK: ‘boy’, ‘girl’ are probably nouns

his girl – ‘girl’ is a noun

silly little girl – ‘little’ is not a noun. But then you can’t say ‘silly little’. It has to be ‘silly little girl’.

WORDS – SYNTACTIC CATEGORIES

Inflection test (suffix test)
TESTS FOR VERBS

Add suffix –ed to get past tense form
Walked --- past tense of ‘walk’: ‘walk’ is probably a verb

Growed --- no such word. Try another test.
Add suffix –ing to get present participle form.
Growing – ‘grow’ probably a verb.
Distribution test

TESTS FOR VERBS

Add a modal in front of the word: can grow, will grow: ‘grow’ is a verb.

‘terror’ --- will terror (nope). ‘terror’ is not a verb.

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Read Miller Chapter 4 on Word Classes for more information about syntactic categories of words.
MORPHEMES

REMEMBER THIS?

- Study of the structure of words:
  1. What are the component parts of words?
     (chop them up into the smallest parts you are able to do so (basic building blocks))
  2. How are these component parts put together to form the whole word?
     (put them together again – what principles or rules determine this?)

MORPHEMES

- A MORPHEME -- THE SMALLEST UNIT OF LANGUAGE THAT CARRIES INFORMATION ABOUT MEANING OR GRAMMATICAL FUNCTION

  postman -> post + man (2 morphemes) (√)
  think -> th + ink (X) (not 2 morphemes)

- TWO CATEGORIES OF MORPHEMES
  - FREE
  - BOUND
MORPHEMES

- **Free Morphemes**
  - A morpheme that can be a word by itself
  - E.g. Good, fox, joy
  - Good, fox, joy => **simple words** (single morpheme/simplex)
    [Foxes, joyous => **complex words** (two or more morphemes)]
  
  Free morphemes can be open-class or closed-class depending on whether they are lexical or non-lexical words.

- **Bound Morphemes**
  - A morpheme that must be attached to another element
  - E.g. Foxes (-es), joyous (-ous)
  
  Bound morphemes are closed-class.

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MORPHEMES

**4 POINTS ABOUT MORPHEMES**

1. Morphemes are not syllables.
   - e.g. ‘forest’ has 2 syllables, but 1 morpheme
   - ‘birds’ has one syllable, but 2 morphemes

2. Identical spellings/sounds do not indicate identical morphemes
   - e.g. The morpheme –er in seller vs taller
     
     one who ‘sells’ to a greater degree
4. There are exceptions to the general rule that a morpheme carries a more or less constant meaning realised by a more or less constant form.
   e.g. [boy] + [PLU] = boys
   but [man] + [PLU] = men, not *mans
   and [ox] + [PLU] = oxen, not *oxes

4. Morpheme boundaries in words may shift and meanings of morphemes may change over time.
   e.g. historically, ‘hamburger’ originated from Hamburg + er
   Nowadays, it is analysed as Ham + burger as evidenced by the existence of similar words ‘cheeseburger’, ‘fishburger’ etc.
MORPHEMES

- How many morphemes do these words have?
  - Water
  - Hunt
  - Ladylike
  - Operate
  - Crocodile
  - Inoperative
  - Prank
  - Singer

Which are simple words/ complex words?

SUMMARY – CLASSES OF WORDS

- WORDS
  - LEXICAL/CONTENT WORDS
    - NOUNS
    - VERBS
    - ADJECTIVES
    - ADVERBS
    - Open-class
  - NON-LEXICAL/FUNCTION WORDS
    - PREPOSITIONS
    - CONJUNCTIONS
    - AUXILIARIES
    - INTENSIFIERS/QUALIFIERS
    - Closed-class
SUMMARY – CLASSES OF WORDS

- WORDS
  - SINGLE/MONO MORPHEMIC (SIMPLE WORDS)
  - POLY-MORPHEMIC (COMPLEX WORDS)

Words are made up of morphemes.

SUMMARY – CLASSES OF MORPHEME

- MORPHEME
  - FREE
  - BOUND
    - WORDS
    - PREFIX
    - SUFFIX
EXERCISE

- Give two examples of morphemes for each of the categories and subcategories shown in the previous slide.

- Explain the difference between classes of morphemes on the same level as shown in the diagram.
REPRESENTING WORD STRUCTURE

MORPHEMES / CONSTITUENTS OF WORDS

- ROOTS
  - Root morpheme - carries the major meaning of the word
  - They are mostly morphemes of the Lexical category
  - E.g. *Darken* → *Dark* = root

- AFFIXES
  - Non lexical category
  - Bound morphemes
  - E.g. *Darken* → *-en* = affix

- BASES
  - A form to which an affix is added
  - E.g. *Darken* → base for the affix *-en* is *Dark*
  - E.g. *Darkened* → base for the affix *-ed* is *Darken*
Constituent Structure

How are words structured? How are morphemes put together to form words?

REPRESENTING WORD STRUCTURE

MORPHEMES / CONSTITUENTS OF WORDS

Words are not structured merely by adding on blocks of morphemes in a linear fashion from left to right; there is also hierarchical structure.

Which diagram more closely represents what speakers know about word structure?
REPRESENTATION – TREE DIAGRAM

Representing the internal structure of WORDS

- TEACHER

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Root and base for} \\
\text{-er}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{N} \\
\text{[teach]_v \text{ er}_N}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{V} \\
\text{Af}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
teach \\
er
\end{array}
\]

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INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF WORDS

- UNHAPPY

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{root and base} \\
\text{for un-}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{A} \\
\text{[un[happy]_A}_A
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
\text{Af} \\
\text{A}
\end{array}
\]

\[
\begin{array}{c}
un \\
happy
\end{array}
\]
INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF WORDS

- **OPERATIONAL**
  - $[[operate]_{\text{V}}_{\text{ion}}_{\text{al}}]_A$
  - Root and base for -ion
  - Base for -al

- **UNUSEABLE**
  - This?

- **This?**
  - $A$
  - $V$
  - $A$
  - $Af$
  - $Af$
  - $un$
  - $use$
  - $able$
INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF WORDS

- UNUSEABLE
- Or this?

[un [[use]_{V} able]_{A}]_{A}

Af       V       Af
un      use      able

INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF WORDS

- UNLOCKABLE
- This?

[[un[lock]_{V}, V able]_{A}}
INTERNAL STRUCTURE OF WORDS

- **UNLOCKABLE**
- **Or this?**
  
  $[\text{un} \left[ \text{lock} \right]_{\text{able}}]_{\text{A}}$

Questions

- Indicate whether the underlined words are roots or bases to the affixes.
  - Unhappy
  - Taller
  - Pretest
  - Activation
  - Straightener
Questions

Add as many affixes as are appropriate to the following roots/bases. State the syntactic categories of the root/base and the new word after affixation.

- Care
- Disinfect
- List
- Corrupt
- Terror

Care – V → careful A
Disinfect – V → disinfection - N
List – V → listed –V, listing(s) - N
Corrupt – A → corruption - N
Terror – N → terrorise – V, terrorist- N
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