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Intro 2 Lx
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MORPHOLOGY: BASIC TERMINOLOGY

Morphology is the study of form or forms. In biology *morphology refers to the study of the form and structure of organisms*, and in geology it refers to the study of the configuration and evolution of land forms.

In **linguistics morphology** refers to:

- the mental system involved in word formation;
- the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed.

Morpheme is the morphological building blocks of words, are defined as the **minimal linguistic units with a lexical or a grammatical meaning**. For instance, the noun *buyer* consists of two morphemes, *buy* and *-er*.

Words are composed of morphemes (one or more). However, there are some complications with this simple definition because *the order of morphemes matters*:
talk-ed *ed-talk, re-write *write-re

Morph. The term morph is used to refer to the concrete entity while the term morpheme is reserved for the abstract entity only. The morph is the physical realization of the morpheme.

Allomorphs are morphemes having the same function but different forms. Unlike the synonyms they usually cannot be replaced one by the other.

- a. indefinite article: an orange - a building
- b. plural morpheme: cat-s [s] dog-s [z] judg-es [ʤz]

Problems with the standard definition of morphemes

- **Zero morpheme** – function without form cf. also *a cook / to cook*
- **Empty morpheme** – structure/form with no meaning: *cran-berry, mal-ina, par-o-wóz, dw-u piętrowy*

Some morphemes are not meaningful in isolation but acquire meaning only in combination with other

specific morphemes: **-ceive, -mit, -berry, etc.**

- ✓ re|ceive, per|ceive, con|ceive, de|ceive
- ✓ re|mit, per|mit, com|mit, sub|mit, trans|mit, ad|mit
- ✓ in|ept (*ept), in|ane (*ane), in|cest (*cest), in|ert (*ert), dis|gusted (*gusted)

- ✓ up|holster (*down|holster), down|hearted (*up|hearted), out|landish (*in|landish), out|skirts (*in|skirts)
- ✓ straw|berry, goose|berry, cran|berry

CLASSIFICATION OF MORPHEMES

Bound vs Free

A **bound** morpheme cannot appear as a word by itself.

-s (dog-s), -ly (quick-ly), -ed (walk-ed);

The **free** morpheme can appear as word by itself; it often can combine with other morphemes too.

house (house-s), walk (walk-ed), of, the, or

Past tense morpheme is a bound morpheme in English (-ed) but a free morpheme in Mandarin Chinese (le)

Ta chi le fan

he eat past meal

'he ate the meal'

Stem/Root vs Affix

A stem is a base morpheme to which another morphological piece is attached.

The stem can be simplex (simple), made up of only one part, or complex, itself made up of more than one piece.

Root: nucleus of the word that affixes attach too. If the stem is simplex it is called **root**. In English, most of the roots are free.

A **root, like a stem, constitutes the core of the word to which** other pieces attach, but **the term refers only to morphologically simple units**.

- For example, disagree is the stem of disagreement; it is the base to which -ment attaches, but agree is the root.

Compounds contain more than one root: home-work.

Affix: a morpheme that is not a root; it is always bound

- **Suffix:** talk-ing, quick-ly
- **Prefix:** un(happy, pre-existing
- **Infix:** Tagalog: basa 'read' b-um-asa 'readpast'
- **Circumfix:** morpheme having two parts that are placed around a stem. Example from Dutch: berg 'mountain' ge-berg-te 'mountains'
- **Transfix:** a discontinuous affix cuts across the morpheme, like two interlocking combs, e.g. in Arabic: *k-t-b* 'write', inflection and derivation is done by vowels, *katab* 'write', *kita:b* 'book', *kutub* 'books', etc.

Suffixes more common than prefixes which are more common than infixes/circumfixes