

University of Tikrit

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Types of morphemes

Grammar

Second year

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Morphology

Morphology: is the study of the internal structure of words.

In the study of morphology, the first concept that should be known is morpheme.

A morpheme is the smallest meaningful grammatical unit in language. It is a unit that cannot be divided into further smaller units without destroying or altering the meaning.

Types of morphemes

1. Free and bound morphemes:

Morphemes can be classified into free morphemes and bound morphemes according to whether they can constitute words by themselves or not.

- a. Free morphemes: morphemes that can stand on their own and function as single words such as “cat, desk, go, nice, sunflower”
- b. Bound morphemes: morphemes that cannot occur alone and are usually attached to another form(s) such as “un-, dis-, -ment, -ly”

2. Bases and affixes

- a. Bases: A base morpheme is the part of the word that has the principal meaning.
 - b. Affixes: Affixes are bound morphemes that are added before, within, or after a stem.
- A prefix is an affix attached before a root or a stem” . To put it simply, prefixes are the bound morphemes that are added to the initial part of words and precede other morphemes in a word, as “un-” in “unhappy”, “re-” in “rewrite” and “en-” in “enlarge”
 - “A suffix is an affix attached after a root or a stem” Namely, suffixes refer to the bound morphemes that are attached to the final part of words and follow

other morphemes in a word, as “-ly” in “happily”, “-ment” in “appointment” and “-ness” in “sadness”.

- An infix is inserted between a morpheme, instead of being placed before or after a morpheme.

Inflectional Morphemes and Derivational Morphemes

- The inflectional morphemes are:
 1. “-s” (the plural form of countable nouns) as in “boys”
 2. “-'s” noun singular possessive as in the boy’s toy
 3. “-s’ ” (the possessive case of nouns) as: “the boys’ toy”
 4. “-s” (3rd person present singular) as: reads, writes, plays
 5. “-ing” (present participle) as: walking, playing
 6. “-ed” (past tense) as: studied, cleaned
 7. “-en or -ed” (past participle) as: written, spoken
 8. “ing” present participle as: typing, watching
 9. “-er” (comparative form) as: smaller, larger
 10. “-est” (superlative form) as: smallest, largest
- Inflectional morphemes are “bound morphemes which are for the most part purely grammatical markers and signify such concepts as tense, number, case and so on”.
- A derivational morpheme is so called because when it is added to a word, it creates a new word, by changing either the meaning or the grammatical class of the original word”. For example, by adding “ir-” to the adjective “regular”, the meaning of “irregular” becomes opposite, by adding “-ize” to the adjective “modern”, a verb “modernize” is formed and by adding “-ish” to the noun “fool”, an adjective “foolish” is created, to name just a few.

- **Distinction Between Inflectional Morphemes and Derivational Morphemes**

1. Inflectional morphemes “indicate syntactic or semantic relations between different words in a sentence, they occur with all members of some large class of morphemes. While derivational morphemes “indicate semantic relations within the word, they occur with only some members of a class of morphemes
2. Inflectional morphemes do not change the meaning or the word class of a word. They are only able to modify the form of a word so that it can fit into a particular syntactic slot. However, derivational morphemes (affixes) often change the lexical meaning and they might change the word class or not, as in: friend---friendship, friendly, unfriendly, unfriend.
3. “In English, most inflectional affixes are suffixes, which are always word final while derivational affixes can be either prefixes, suffixes, or both at the same time.
4. Whenever there is a derivational suffix and an inflectional suffix attached to the same word, the inflectional morpheme always follows the

3. Lexical and Grammatical or Functional morphemes:

1. Lexical morphemes
 - ordinary nouns, adjectives, and verbs
 - carry the ‘content’ of the messages we convey
 - e.g. girl, man, house, tiger, sad, long, yellow, open, look, break.
 - open class of words; new lexical morphemes can easily be added to the language.
2. Grammatical or Functional morphemes:
 - Functional words (conjunctions, prepositions, articles, pronouns) e.g., and, but, when, because, on, near, above, in, the, it, them.

- closed class of words; we almost never add new functional morphemes.

	lexical morphemes	grammatical morphemes
free morphemes	= content words (e.g. <i>paper, slim, run</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • semantically and distributionally more autonomous • can be inflected • rich conceptual content 	= function words (e.g. <i>to, the, of</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • semantically and distributionally less autonomous • cannot be inflected • mark grammatical relations
bound morphemes	= derivational morphemes (e.g. <i>re-, -ize, -able</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • create new lexemes • closer to the stem • more restricted productivity • more open class 	= inflectional morphemes (e.g. <i>-s, -ed, -est</i>) <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • mark word-forms • more distant from the stem • highly productive • closed class

Suffixal Homophones:

Some suffixes, both inflectional and derivational, have homophonous forms. The inflectional morpheme (-ER cp) has two homophones. The first is the derivational suffix (-ER n), which is attached to verbs to form nouns. This is a highly productive suffix, that is, it is used to produce hundreds of English nouns like *hunter, fisher, camper, golfer, lover*. It is often called the agent -er and conveys a meaning of "that which performs the action of the verb stem," as in *thriller* and *teacher*.

It may also be attached to nonverbal stems, e.g., *probationer, New Yorker, teen-ager, freighter*. The -er on such words could be said to convey a more general meaning of "that which is related to"; and since this meaning is inclusive of the previous one, both these -er suffixes can be considered to belong to {-ER n}.

The second derivational -er morpheme appears at the end of words like *chatter, mutter, flicker, glitter, patter*. This {-ER rp} conveys the meaning of repetition. The acceptance of this (-ER rp), however, is problematic and raises questions about the analysis of the remainders in words of this class.

For example, if the -er in glitter is a morpheme meaning repetition, we are left with the remainder glitt-, whose morphemic status is dubious.

1. Inflectional suffix { -er cp } older , bigger
2. Derivational suffix { - er n } lover , fisher
3. Derivational suffix { - er n } teenager
4. Derivational suffix { - er rp } mutter , patter