# 04 - Words and morphemes

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Newcastle University

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04 - Words and morphemes

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Relevance of words and morphemes

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# The hierarchy

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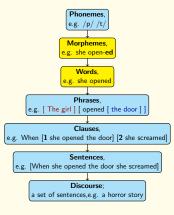
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# Language structure can be thought of as hierarchy;



### **Definitions**

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# Words versus morphemes

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Words versus morphemes

Morphological abiliites

WORD = Minimal Standalone Symbolic Unit (MiSS) (or smallest standalone unit of meaning)

MORPHEME = Minimal Symbolic Unit (MiS) (or smallest unit of meaning)

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### Categorising morphemes

Categorising morphs

### Categorising morphs

### Free versus bound

1. Jack is (really) try-ing to run fast-er

### **Bound** morphemes

- 1. Affixes = Prefixes, suffixes
- 2. infix

### Categorising morphs

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### Free versus bound

1. Jack is (really) try-ing to run fast-er

### **Bound** morphemes

- 1. Affixes = Prefixes, suffixes
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Fan-bloody-tastic / abso-blooming-lutely

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### Categorising morphs

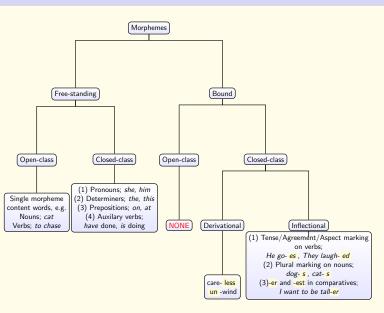
Morphological abiliites

Inflectional morphemes - minor modifications to a word's meaning

derivational - to derive a new word, either by substantially changing meaning or altering word class.

Morphologically **simple** versus **complex**.

# A typology



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# Syntactic context EX.

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Syntactic context EX.

2. Can you correct the following sentences? What is wrong with them?

- 1. He see the cat eats the food.
- 2. My house is big than yours.

# Syntactic context EX.

- (1) He sees the cat eat the food NP1 Inflected Verb NP2 Uninflected Verb NP3
- (2) My house is bigger than yours NP1 Verb to be Adj-er than NP2

# Phonological variability EX.

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How does the pronunciation of the past tense vary across the following sentences?

- 1. He dropped the book
- 2. He turned the corner
- 3. She skidded on the mat

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4. What's the problem with the following sentences?

- 1. He is uneducated and untolerant
- 2. While Jack is a sporty person, Anna is more booky
- 3. While Mary embraced motherhood, she wasn't so keen on wifehood
- 4. Jane quickly realised the falseness of the information.

### Productivity EX.

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1. While INFLECTIONAL morphemes are involved in syntactic processes, DERIVATIONAL morphemes are

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# 1. While INFLECTIONAL morphemes are involved in syntactic processes, DERIVATIONAL morphemes are

INFLECTIONAL morphemes participate in phonological processes to a greater extent than DERIVATIONAL morphemes Relevance of words and morphemes

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 While INFLECTIONAL morphemes are involved in syntactic processes, DERIVATIONAL morphemes are not.

- INFLECTIONAL morphemes participate in phonological processes to a greater extent than DERIVATIONAL morphemes
- While INFLECTIONAL morphemes are very productive (we can add them to many words), DERIVATIONAL morphemes are less productive.

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- INFLECTIONAL morphemes participate in phonological processes to a greater extent than DERIVATIONAL morphemes
- While INFLECTIONAL morphemes are very productive (we can add them to many words), DERIVATIONAL morphemes are less productive.
- While DERIVATIONAL morphemes can come at the beginning and ends of words (prefixes and suffixes), INFLECTIONAL morphemes can only come at the end (suffix)

### Productivity EX.

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1. Derivational morphemes are longer

- 2. Derivational morphemes have more specific meanings
- 3. Derivational morphemes are more language-specific

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Inflection vs word-building

- 1. Inflection (adding inflectional morphemes), e.g. laugh-ed
- 2. Derivation (adding derivational morphemes), e.g. un-do
- 3. Compounding (taking two words and "squishing" them together), e.g. fire man, book seller

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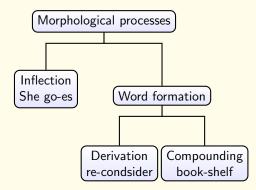
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Figure: Morphological processes



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### word-building processes

e.g. skypeable (derivation)

red jacket man/woman (a mysterious handsome stranger you see on the Metro every morning) (compounding)

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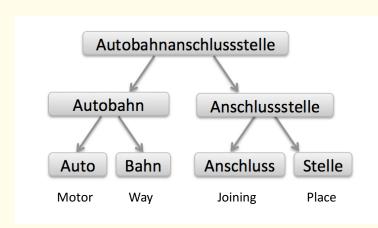
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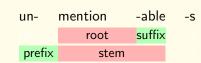
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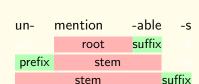
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### Morphological abiliites

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Morphological abiliites

Morphological abilities severely affected

Tense-marking difficulties in language-impaired children

Derivational morphology may be useful for building vocabulary

### Counting morphemes

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### Mean length of utterance (MLU)

Determines an individual's approximate language level

Number of morphemes

Number of utterances

Designed to measure an individual's linguistic productivity

"old macdonald had a farm"

"I've got this one and this one and this one"

### Counting morphemes

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Counting morphemes

We normally only count the morphemes which an individual is using productively.

Inflectional versus derivational morphemes?

### **EXERCISE**

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EXERCISE

1. CHI: Let me play with it

2. CHI: The dinosaur swimmed across the lake

3. CHI: Then he tooked off hat.

4. CHI: And then he put it in the Jam Jar

### **EXERCISE**

#### 04 - Words and morphemes

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EXERCISE

1. CHI: Let me play with it = 5

2. CHI: The dinosaur swimm -ed across the lake = 7

3. CHI: Then he took -ed off hat = 6

4. CHI: And then he put it in the Jam Jar = 8

(5 + 7 + 6 + 8) / 4 = MLU (in morphemes) of 6.5

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Productivity

Word-bu Inflection vs

Morph in

Morphologica

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5 minute exercise

#### Nick Riches

Relevance of words and morphemes

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Words versus mornhem

HW Exercise

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Word-building
Inflection vs word-buildin

Morph in LIs

Counting morp

5 minute exercise

Look at these examples. What does the suffix 'mouth' mean? How do you pronounce it in each word?

- 1. Portsmouth
- 2. Plymouth
- 3. Tynemouth
- 4. Grangemouth
- 5. Cockermouth