

04 - Words and morphemes

Nick Riches

Newcastle University

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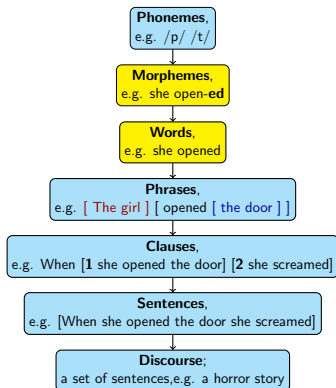
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Language structure can be thought of as hierarchy;



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

MORPHEME = Smallest unit of meaning

1. Dogs
2. Laughed
3. Working
4. Believe
5. Unbelievable
6. Sang

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1. Dogs Dog-s
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Free versus bound

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

Bound morphemes

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

Free versus bound

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

Bound morphemes

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

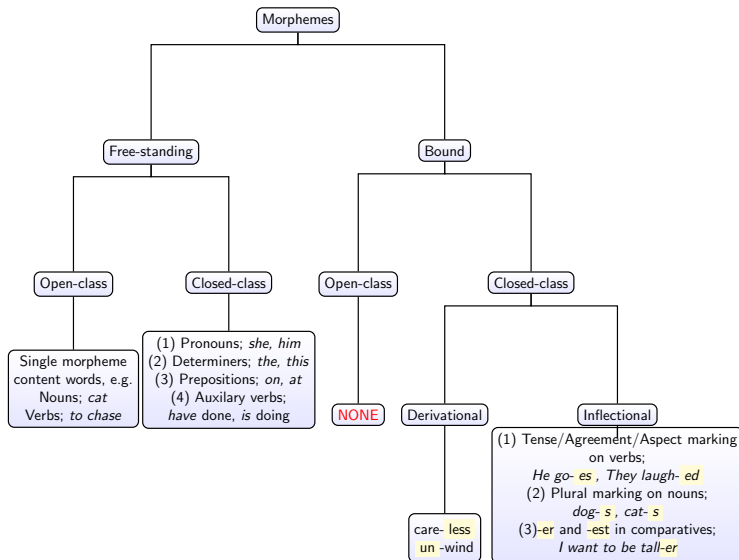
Fan-bloody-tastic / abso-blooming-lutely

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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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.

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

4. What's the problem with the following sentences?
 1. He is uneducated and intolerant
 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.

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

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1. While INFLECTIONAL morphemes are involved in syntactic processes, DERIVATIONAL morphemes are not.
2. INFLECTIONAL morphemes participate in phonological processes to a greater extent than DERIVATIONAL morphemes

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3. While INFLECTIONAL morphemes are very productive (we can add them to many words), DERIVATIONAL morphemes are less productive.

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3. While INFLECTIONAL morphemes are very productive (we can add them to many words), DERIVATIONAL morphemes are less productive.
4. While DERIVATIONAL morphemes can come at the beginning and ends of words (prefixes and suffixes), INFLECTIONAL morphemes can only come at the end (suffix)

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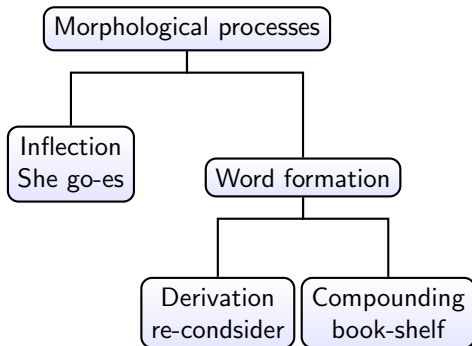
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1. Inflection (adding inflectional morphemes), e.g. laugh-ed
2. Derivation (adding derivational morphemes), e.g. un-do
3. Compounding (taking two words and “squishing” them together), e.g. fire man, book seller

Figure: Morphological processes

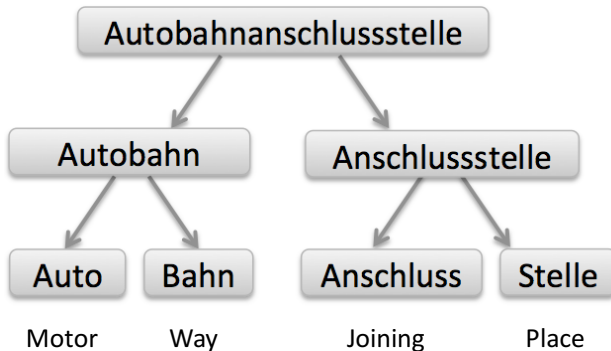


word-building processes

e.g. skypeable (derivation)

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

Inflection vs word-building



Inflection vs word-building

un- mention -able -s

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un- mention -able -s

 root suffix

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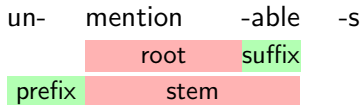
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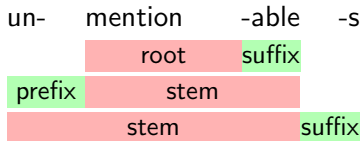
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Morphological abilities severely affected

Tense-marking difficulties in language-impaired children

Derivational morphology may be useful for building vocabulary

Mean length of utterance (MLU)

Determines an individual's approximate language level

$$\frac{\text{Number of morphemes}}{\text{Number of utterances}}$$

Designed to measure an individual's **linguistic productivity**

"old macdonald had a farm"

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

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

Inflectional versus derivational morphemes?

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1. CHI: Let me play with it
2. CHI: The dinosaur swam across the lake
3. CHI: Then he took off hat
4. CHI: And then he put it in the Jam Jar

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

$(5 + 7 + 6 + 8) / 4 = \text{MLU (in morphemes) of } 6.5$

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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