

Morphology , Syntax, and Grammar

Morphology is the internal structure of words .It is an area of grammar which concerns with the structure words and with the relationships between words that involve the morphemes that compose them .The unit of morphology is morpheme which is the smallest meaningful unit of language.

Syntax is the study of the rules governing the way words are combined to form sentence in language.It is the study interrelationships between elements of sentence structure and the rules governing the arrangement of sentences in sequences. It studies of the syntactic properties of languages .The smallest unit of syntax is the word.

The word ‘**grammar**’ has various meanings .Grammar refers to the set of rules that allows us to combine words on our language into larger units.It comprises morphology and syntax.

What is Morphology?

The term "morphology" is Greek and is made up of two parts: morph- meaning 'shape or form', and -ology which means 'the study of something'. In linguistics, morphology means the scientific study of the internal structure (forms and parts) of words in a language. It is concerned with how several such morphemes may be joined together to form words. Thus, we can say that morphology studies the formation of words from smaller units (parts) called "**morphemes**".

Morphology is the study of the internal structure of words. It is the oldest discipline since the first linguists were morphologists. It is the study of systematic co-variation in the form and meaning of words. The definition of morphology, as the study of the internal structure of words, needs some qualification, because words have internal structure in two very different senses.

On the one hand, they are made up of sequences of sounds they have internal phonological structure. Thus, the English word nuts consists of the four sounds (or, as we will say, phonological segments) [nʌts]. The smallest meaningful units of words are called "morphemes". For example; nut → morpheme; s → morpheme, so morphology is the study of the combination of morphemes to yield words .

In a morphological analysis, we would say that the final [s] of nuts expresses plural meaning when it occurs at the end of a noun. But the final [s] in lapse does not have any meaning, and lapse does not have morphological structure. Thus, morphological structure exists if there are groups of words that show identical partial resemblances in both form and meaning.

Morphology is the study of systematic co-variation in the form and meaning of words. It is important that this form–meaning co-variation occurs systematically in groups of words. When there are just two words with partial form–meaning resemblances, these may be merely accidental.

Morpheme is a minimal unit of meaning or a grammatical function.

Morpheme is a smallest morphological unit that cannot be divided into smaller parts.

Examples:

re- play -ed 3 morphemes

The features of a morpheme:

- 1 it can be a word or a part of a word that has meaning.
- 2 We cannot divide a morpheme into smaller meaningful parts without violation of its meaning.[
- 3 It has a stable meaning in different verbal environments.

TYPES OF MORPHEME

Free morphemes are morphemes that can stand alone as words with meaning.

They may be lexical morphemes ({press} , {man}) and grammatical (functional) morphemes ({at},{but({

Bound morphemes are those types of morphemes that cannot stand normally alone unless they are typically attached to free morpheme. (e.g., -ed, -s , - ing.(

Bound morphemes can be sub-divided into:

Derivational morphemes are bound morphemes that are used in changing the part of speech of the stem or a different grammatical category of the stem.

E.g. good(adj.) + -ness (derivational morpheme) =goodness

A list of derivational morphemes includes:

Prefixes are affixes that are placed before the stem. E.g. un- , im- , ir- ,etc

Suffixes are attached after the stem. E.g. -ed , -ness , etc .

Infixes are bound morphemes that are inserted within the words. There are no infixes in the English language, but in the languages such as Tagalog and Bontoc

(in the Philippines), Infixes are represented by the morphemes preceded and followed by a hyphen; e.g., -um-.

Inflectional affixes

In English, there are only eight inflections. They are -(e)s³ (third person singular marker of verbs in present tense), as in speaks, teaches ;

-(e)s (regular plural marker) as in books, oranges; 's (possessive marker) as in John's house ;

-(e)d (regular past tense marker) as in helped, repeated- ;

en (past participle marker) as in spoken, eaten;

- ing (present participle marker) as in eating, studying;

- er (comparative marker) as in faster, happier; and

-est (superlative marker) as in fastest, happiest.

Morphology in different languages:

Actually, there isn't morphology existence in all spoken languages, when certain language expresses its words in **combination**, another language may express them in **separate** words. For example, English expresses the plural of nouns by means of morphology (nut/nuts, night/nights, and so on),

but **Yoruba** uses a separate word for expressing the same meaning. Thus, ọkùnrin means '(the) man', and the word àwọn can be used to express the plural: àwọn ọkùnrin 'the men'.

Quite generally, we can say that English makes more use of morphology than **Yoruba**. But there are many languages that make more use of morphology than English.

For instance, **Sumerian** uses morphology to distinguish between ‘he went’ and ‘I went’, and between ‘he went’ and ‘he went to him’, where English must use separate words.

In **Classical Greek**, there is a dual form for referring to two items, e.g., adelphō ‘two brothers’. Linguists sometimes use the terms **analytic** and **synthetic** to describe the degree to which morphology is made use of in a language. Languages like Yoruba, Vietnamese or English, where morphology plays a relatively modest role, are called **analytic**.

When a language has almost no morphology and thus exhibits an extreme degree of analyticity, it is also called **isolating**. Yoruba and Vietnamese, but not English, are usually qualified as isolating. Languages like Sumerian, Swahili or Lezgian, where morphology plays a more important role, would be called **synthetic**.

When a language has an extraordinary amount of morphology and perhaps many compound words, it is called **polysynthetic**. An example is West Greenlandic and Eskimo.

The distinction between analytic and (poly) synthetic languages is not a bipartition or a tripartition, but a continuum, ranging from the most radically isolating to the most highly polysynthetic languages.