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Development of Morphology & Goals of Morphology

Development of Morphology:

Firstly, we must start with the definition of morphology, so what is meant by morphology.

Morphology: Is a level of structure between the phonological and syntactic, also we must put in mind, that morphology is a commentary to syntax, that is, morphology is account for the internal structure or form of words(typically as sequences of morphemes)and syntax .

what Matthews discusses had no doubt be handled by the majority of generative grammarians in the phonological component of the grammar. But so far there has been no comprehensive treatment of morphology within a generative framework, other than by Matthews himself in a number of recent publications.

- The theory of synchronic morphology may be considered from three angles:

(1) What are the basic units of morphological structure, and what are the relations which obtain between them?

(2) How are these units signaled or realized in the phonological structure of the sentence ?

(3) What are the criteria for determining the morphological analysis of any particular language?

An important article by Hockett (1954) forms the best starting-point. In this article, Hockett surveyed what was then the state of grammatical theory, and distinguished three very general concepts of linguistic structure. The first, to which he gave the label Item and Arrangement (abbreviated I A), is the one which had been dominant since the mid-1940s; it was on the merits and possible defects of this viewpoint that his argument accordingly turned. The second and third, to which he gave the labels Item and Process (IP) and Word and Paradigm (WP), were alternative approaches which had, in the immediately preceding period, been given rather less attention. Hockett argued that there were enough criticisms of LA to suggest that IP, in particular, deserved more serious consideration; however IP, when he attempted a closer formulation, revealed its own defects in turn.

So, what the characteristics of the dominant I A concept? If we take an English word such farmers, it is possible to split the form as a whole into three independent segments: a segment farm, which also appears in farm-ing or farm-s; a second segment er, which refer to the do-er or performer of the action. The central observation of lA, in other words, is that certain word forms can show a 'partial phonetic-semantic resemblance' to other word forms (Bloomfield, 1935: 160). Thus, the form farm-er- bears a partial resemblance to farm-ing with respect to one segment, and to sing-er, logs, etc. with respect to others. The word thanked can obviously be divided into two segments: thank (which reappears in thanks or thank-ing) and ed, which one may regard as the signal for the 'Past Tense' itself.

Sank, however, cannot be segmented according to a similar pattern: although it differs from the Present form sink in a way, which can be paralleled for further verbs such as, sing-sang, etc.

, it does so by an internal contrast between vowels and not by means of an external morph, such as ed, which could be assigned to 'Past Tense' as a morpheme. Various writers, notably Harris (1951: 167) and Nida (1948), attempted to speak of a change of vowel - /changing to a, as a morph of a special 'replacive' kind.

Bloch(1947), suggested that the best I A solution was to treat the entire word, sank, as the signal for the lexical element, sink, alone; 'Past Tense' would then be realized by zero or by a zero morph at the end of the word. However, this solution was also effectively criticized, immediately by Nida (1948) and subsequently in a thorough study by Haas (1957) of the misuses of 'zero' in linguistic literature. It was through this type

of example, in particular, that Hockett and others were decided to investigate the possibility of alternative frameworks.

Now if we want to examine the word forms in detail we could find, that the same morpheme can be realized sometimes by one morph and sometimes by another: for example 'Past Participle' in English is signaled by n in a form such as [I've] show-n, but by ed in [I've] play-ed. In addition, we find that the circumstances, which dictate one morph or the other, can be of two major kinds. The first type is that exemplified by play-ed as against show-n; certain verbs simply happen to have the n form, whereas the majority have ed

So If the morph ends with a consonant t or d, it will be similar to the id in hid: thus wait-ed or crowd-ed. If it ends in a consonant such as ss, ck, and several others then it is phonetically a t: like, hiss-ed and hack-ed end in the same way as list or act. Finally, if it ends with a vowel or a consonant such as n, b, etc., it is phonetically a d: thus boo-ed or wean-ed end like food or fiend. the alternation between the n and all the ec/'s being grammatically, and those between the individual ed's being phonologically conditioned (e.g. Gleason, 1961 : 62). Nevertheless, Lamb's stratificational theory has gone further than its predecessors in two major respects:

1. in the past, there had been some sporadic use of an intermediate unit called the morphophoneme (Swadesh & Voegelin, 1939;

   one might, for example, establish a morphophoneme D (to written ed) as the regular form of 'Past Participle', and say that D alternates between the phonetic endings of waited, hissed or turned in the same way that the morpheme, as a whole, would alternate between D and the irregular n of shown.

2. Lamb has given particular attention to the nature of the conversion or transduction process from one level to another. Given a sequence of grammatical units (e.g. wait followed by 'Past Participle') Lamb has two successive systems rules :

The first is concerned, with the transduction from morphemes to morphophonemes, and the second with the transduction from morphophonemes, into the phonology. For example:

in the morpheme w^ait is always converted into the morphophonemes w e it , ed, and another that ' Past Participle ' is converted to n if the preceding morpheme one of a number such as SHOW, mow etc.

It is possible to distinguish three successive types of rule, which would enter into an IP description:

I. First, the vast majority of morphemes with some kind of intrinsic or basic phonological make-up.
The words (sink followed by Past Tense; and mensa followed by Accusative Plural), ([sink] followed by Past Tense will be sank; while mensa followed by :, mensas) .

2-A small minority of morphemes, of which ' Past Tense' in English for example , would have the capacity to alter their neighbours (or certain of their neighbours) in various specified ways.

In the case of sank ,the change will be in itself, so the morphological process is changing [i] to [a])

the same will happen with the plural of man(men) and foot (feet) . Language must involve at least two irreducibly primitive units, one of which is the basis of syntax and semantics and the other of phonology. But the morphophoneme may be no more than a pseudo-unit which is invented to ease the transition from one 'real unit' to the other.

Item and Process

Both these approaches may be seen, in the most general items, as a denial of the principle of discrete or separate 'signals' which was the original basis for I A. in the words shown or waited ,both belong to show and wait, and «n and ed to 'Past Participle'.

This essentially dynamic approach to morphology corresponds to the rules of sandhi or 'joining' employed by the Ancient Indian grammarians (Allen, 1962)

Sandhi’s techniques employed by Bloomfield in a well-known treatment of Menomini (1939), and to notions which have in general coexisted with throughout the development of modern linguistics. However, the real flowering of IP is due to the work of the ' generative ' school in the past decade.

Chomsky's first published discussion (1957: 32), sketchy though it contains a departure from the then dominant LA framework; IP concepts has come to be known as 'generative phonology'.

in greater generality; whereas lA can only handle the cases where segments are distinct {show-n, wait-ed, etc.), IP can handle both the discrete patterns and the non-discrete {sank or mensas) with the same form of statement.

There are requirements for linguistic theory, it should be :

(1) As specific as possible.

(2)It should be universal, in the sense that any human language is covered. Hockett (1954: §7.5

Goals of Morphological Reaserch

Morphological research aims to describe and explain the morphological patterns of human languages. It is useful to distinguish four more specific sub-goals of this endeavour: elegant description, cognitively realistic description, system-external explanation and a restrictive architecture for description

• Elegant description

Morphological patterns should be describe in an elegant and intuitively satisfactory way .

The morphological descriptions should contain a rule saying that English nouns form their plural by adding-s such as ability—abilities The main idea for elegance is generality.

Description should reflect generalizations in the data instead of listing individual facts.

• Cognitively realistic description

Should express the same generalization about grammatical system that the speaker of the language has unconsciously arrived at.

A speaker does not only know a list of singular/plural words,but can form a plural by applying a general rule of the type adding-s to get a plural noun.

It is much More ambitious goal than finding just an “elegant description"

touches the research area of psychology.

•System external explanation

Given a description of morphological patterns has been obtained.Many linguists may ask questions;why are the patterns the way they are?

As we know the fact that English plural is formed by adding-s.Many patterns evolved historically – English plural: -s

– Swedish plural: -r, Hungarian plural: -k.We must find out Which morphological patterns are universal?

Adding -s/r/k is not universal

The expression of plural by morphological means is not universal,but if a language has morphological plural forms of nouns at all,

it will have plurals of nouns denoting people.”

This seems to be true for all languages; reflects a general property of human language.

system-external consideration: when referring to people, number plays a more important role than when referring to things.

•A restrictive architecture for description

Many linguists see an important goal of morphological research in Formulating some general design principles of grammatical systems that are valid for all languages.

Linguists try to construct a grammatical theory that all language-particular descriptions conform to

For example:fronting of syntactic constituents (words/phrases) as opposed to morphologic constituents (morphemes that are parts of longer words)

We can buy cheese. We can buy a cheeseboard. What can we buy ___ ?
*What can we buy a ___board?

This restriction on fronting follows if fronting rules and morpheme-combination rules are treated separately.

Many linguist assume that the architecture of grammar is innate (Universal Grammar): innate part of speakers' grammatical knowledge.

References

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