Class 1
What is morphology?
FS 2014
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What is morphology?

Origins of the word ‘morphology’

J.W. von Goethe
1749-1832

morph- -> Greek: form, shape
morphology: The study of form(s)
What is morphology?

The OED definitions

Shape, form, external structure or arrangement, esp. as an object of study or classification. Also: a particular shape, form, or external structure, esp. of (a part of) an organism, landform, etc.

**Biol.** The branch of biology that deals with the form of living organisms and their parts, and the relationships between their structures. Formerly: *spec.* the comparison of the forms of organisms and their parts in order to identify homologous structures.

**Linguistics.** The structure, form, or variation in form (including formation, change, and inflection) of a word or words in a language, the branch of linguistics that deals with this.
What is morphology?

‘The morphology of language X’

What do you refer to by saying ‘the morphology of language X’?

The set of rules, principles, constraints, etc. that determine how words can be formed in a language.
What is morphology?

The functions of morphology

Why have morphology at all?

Two functions of morphological operations

1. Forming words
2. Spell out the appropriate form of a word in a particular syntactic context
What is morphology?

The functions of morphology

Forming words: a limited toolbox with a lot of potential!

• Suppose that *splinch* is a verb that means ‘step on broken glass’; what is its past tense?

• Speakers of English use the suffixes *-ize* (crystallize) and *-ify* (codify) to form verbs from nouns. If you had to form a verb that means ‘do something the way ex-Prime Minister Tony Blair does it’, which suffix would you use? How about a verb meaning ‘do something the way ex-President Bill Clinton does it’?

• It’s possible to rewash or reheat something. Is it possible to relove, reexplode, or rewiggle something?

What is morphology?

The functions of morphology

Creating new German (!) words

The morphological component of a language allows for the creation of new words on the basis of existing ones.

Couchen: auf dem Sofa faulenzen, gepflegt und lange abhängen.

Screenager: Jugendliche, die einen Großteil ihrer Zeit vor dem Bildschirm verbringen

http://www.duden.de/sprachwissen/sprachratgeber/neue-woerter
<table>
<thead>
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<th>Creating new words</th>
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<td>Because speakers of the same language share the morphological component, (most) people can generally understand new words rather quickly</td>
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What is morphology?

Inflection

Spell out the appropriate form of a word in a particular syntactic context

Why is it wrong to say
Ich arbeitest
Ich sehe der Mann
zwei Haus

Note that the forms ‘arbeitest’, ‘der’, and ‘Haus’ are perfectly well-formed German words in themselves.
What is morphology?

Inflection

 Spell out the appropriate form of a word in a particular syntactic context

REQUIRES

\[ \text{Ich arbeite} \]  \[ \text{Ich sehe den Mann} \]  \[ \text{zwei Häuser} \]

This is not so much the formation of words, but rather a choice between two (or more) different «appearances» of a word, depending on its syntactic context.

>> thess types of phenomena are often called morphosyntactic because they have to make reference to both morphology and syntax.
What is morphology?

Inflection, derivation, and compounding

Morphology

Inflection
- work-s

Word formation
- Derivation
- Compounding
  - work-er
  - work-load
What is morphology?
The study of creating new words

Some languages are really flexible when it comes to compounding

Recently deleted from the lawbook of Mecklenburg-Vorpommern

Rindfleischetikettierungsüberwachungsaufgabenerübertragungsgesetz

How many parts can you recognize in this word?
What is morphology?

Lexicon
Set of established words

Phonology
Set of rules, principles and constraints for

Morphology
The set of rules, principles, constraints for forming words

Syntax
Set of rules, principles, constraints for forming phrases, clauses, sentences

Semantics
set of rules, principles and constraints for meaning construction and interpretation
**What is morphology?**

**Morphology in different languages**


Hai dữ.a bo? nhau là ti gia-dinh thằng chồng.

two individual leave each.other be because.of family guy husband

‘They divorced because of his family.’

**West-Greenlandic (Fortescue 1984: 36, cited in Haspelmath & Simms (2010))**

Paasi-nngil-luinnar-para ilaa-juma-sutit.
understand-not-completely-1sg.sbj.3sg.obj.ind come-want-2sg.ptcp

‘I didn’t understand at all that you wanted to come along.’
Shape, form, external structure or arrangement, esp. as an object of study or classification. Also: a particular shape, form, or external structure, esp. of (a part of) an organism, landform, etc.

**Biol.** The branch of biology that deals with the form of living organisms and their parts, and the relationships between their structures. Formerly: spec. the comparison of the forms of organisms and their parts in order to identify homologous structures

**Linguistics.** The structure, form, or variation in form (including formation, change, and inflection) of a word or words in a language, the branch of linguistics that deals with this.
What is morphology?

Some linguistic definitions

The study of the internal structure of words
Booij (2007: 24)

The study of words and their structure
Bauer (2005: 3)

The study of systematic covariation in the form and meaning of words
Haspelmath (2002: 2)

The study of word formation (...) and the way forms of words are varied depending on how they’re used in sentences.
Lieber (2009: 2)
What is morphology?
The study of words
What is morphology?

Some history

Sumerian tablet

Translation of the grammar of Dionisios Thrax

Translation of the Grammatica Speculativa (Thomas of Erfurt)

1600 BC 100 BC 1400 AD
What is morphology?

Some more history

interest in morphology

Von Schlegel bros.
Edward Sapir
Noam Chomsky

1800 1920 1960
What is morphology?

Some more history

Three types of languages:
1. No-structure languages (Chinese)
2. Agglutinating lgs (Turkish)
3. Inflecting languages (Latin)

Von Schlegel bros.
What is morphology?

Some more history

Parameters

1. Synthesis (degree of concepts that can be ‘packed’ into a single word)
   Analytic – Synthetic – Polysynthetic

2. Technique (degree of coalescence between morphemes)
   Isolating – Agglutinating – Fusional – Symbolic

Edward Sapir

1920 1960
After a start as a separate component in generative approaches, morphology became subsumed under the syntactic component, which could also handle morpheme order, leaving the remaining bits for the phonological component.

Noam Chomsky
What is morphology?

Centrality of words in linguistics

WORD

- has meaning / combines meanings
- has phonological properties
- forms phrases and sentences with other words
What is morphology?

Centrality of words in linguistics

WORD

Semantics

- has meaning / combines meanings

Phonology

- has phonological properties

Syntax

- forms phrases and sentences with other words
What is morphology?

«The Poland of linguistics»
What is morphology?

Morphology by itself

interest in morphology

syntax

phonology

Morphology

semantics
What is morphology?

The goals of morphology

• Provide tools for description of new languages
• Contribute to the understanding of human cognition
• Explain (cross-)linguistic patterns in morphology
• Provide models of the morphological component
What is a word?

- The letters in between two spaces?
- The entries in a dictionary?
- Whatever the speakers of a language say is a word?
- ...
What is morphology?

Some questions that concern morphology

How are words stored in the mind?

• Like a dictionary?
• Like a web of connections?
• With all kinds of attributes (sound, first letter, lexical class...
What is morphology?

Some questions that concern morphology

What are the rules of word formation in languages?

- Can everything combine with everything?
- What kind of morphemes do languages have?
- What kind of limits are there to combination?
What is morphology?

Some questions that concern morphology

How does morphology relate to other domains of language?

- E.g. to phonology?
- E.g. to syntax?
- E.g. to semantics?
What is morphology?

Some questions that concern morphology

How does morphology evolve?
What is morphology?

Focus on the building blocks of morphology, and their possible properties in the languages of the world.

- What kinds of units or processes can be found in the morphologies of different languages?
- What are their properties?
- How can they combine into larger structures?

Morphology by itself
Class 1 (18-02): What is morphology?
Class 2 (25-02): Words
Part I: morphemes and their properties
Class 3 (04-03): Position of morphemes
Class 4 (11-03): Fusion of morphemes 1
Class 5: (18-03): Semantic density: synthesis and exponence
Class 6: (25-03): Flexivity
Class 7: (01-04): Clitics
Part II: morphemes and larger structures
Class 8: (08-04): Templates
Class 9 (15-04): Compounding
Class 10 (29-04): Derivation
Class 11 (06-05): Inflection
Class 12 (13-05): Paradigms
Class 13 (20-05): Overview

Class 14 (27-05): Exam
What is morphology?

Course program, see:

http://cms.uzh.ch/lenya/comparativelinguistics/authoring/vangijn/teaching/morphology/courseprogram.html

Practicalities

I will upload the slides of every week, a glossary for each week, and assignments if relevant.
What is morphology?

Practicalities

Literature
See OLAT

There is background literature which is not obligatory, but which may help you get a better understanding of morphology nevertheless:

L. Bauer (2003) Introducing linguistic morphology. Edinburgh University Press. [second edition], Ch. 1-6, 8
### Course overview

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**Basics**

**Morphemes and their properties**

**Morphemes and larger structures**

**Overview**