



MORPHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF ENGLISH WORDS. MORPHEMES. FREE AND BOUND FORMS, MORPHOLOGICAL CLASSIFICATION OF WORDS, WORD-FAMILIES

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ABSTRACT

The present study aims to determine whether semantic relatedness plays a role in the production of speech errors involving derivational morphemes. A word order competition technique was used to induce morpheme and syllable exchange errors. Semantic relatedness was manipulated by contrasting error rates for prefixed words derived from free stems to those derived from bound roots.

In contrast to the genealogical classification of languages, which relies on the proof of the existence between languages of kinship (common origin), morphological classification takes into account only the formal aspect of languages. Initially, the morphological classification of languages was associated with morphology as one of the branches of linguistics. The term "morphology" itself came from a combination of two Greek words: "morphē" and "logos", which are translated into Russian as "form" and "teaching", respectively. That is, morphology in the general sense of the word is a doctrine of form. Thus, the morphological classification meant the external similarity of words in general.

The morphological classification of languages was the original form of the typological classification of languages. This is due to the fact that during the period of compilation of the first typological classifications, the most developed area of linguistics (in comparison with phonetics,

syntax, semantics, etc.) was morphology. Subsequently, using the results of other linguistic studies, the typological classification moved away from the morphological classification, which currently serves as one of the constituent parts of the typological classification

If we describe a word as an autonomous unit of language in which a particular meaning is associated with a particular sound complex and which is capable of a particular grammatical employment and able to form a sentence by itself, we have the possibility to distinguish it from the other fundamental language unit, namely, the morpheme.

A morpheme is also an association of a given meaning with a given sound pattern. But unlike a word it is not autonomous. Morphemes occur in speech only as constituent parts of words, not independently, although a word may consist of a single morpheme. Nor are they divisible into smaller meaningful units. That is why the morpheme may be defined as the minimum



meaningful language unit. The term morpheme is derived from Gr morphē 'form' + -eme.

The Greek suffix -eme has been adopted by linguists to denote the smallest significant or distinctive unit. The morpheme is the smallest meaningful unit of form. A form in these cases is a recurring discrete unit of speech. A form is said to be free if it may stand alone without changing its meaning; if not, it is a bound form, so called because it is always bound to something else. For example, if we compare the words sportive and elegant and their parts, we see that sport, sportive, elegant may occur alone as utterances, whereas eleg-, -ive, -ant are bound forms because they never occur alone. A word is, by L. Bloomfield's definition, a minimum free form. A morpheme is said to be either bound or free. This statement should be taken with caution. It means that some morphemes are capable of forming words without adding other morphemes: that is, they are homonymous to free forms.

According to the role they play in constructing words, morphemes are subdivided into roots and affixes. The latter are further subdivided, according to their position, into prefixes, suffixes and infixes, and according to their function and meaning, into derivational and functional affixes, the latter also called endings or outer formatives. When a derivational or functional affix is stripped from the word, what remains is a stem (or a stem base). The stem expresses the lexical and the part of speech meaning. For the word hearty and for the paradigm heart (sing.) - hearts (pl.) the stem may be represented as heart. This stem is a single morpheme, it contains nothing but the root, so it is a simple stem. It is also a free stem because it is homonymous to the word heart.

A stem may also be defined as the part of the word that remains unchanged throughout its paradigm. The stem of the

paradigm hearty- is homonymous to the word heart of a root morpheme and an affix, it is not simple but derived. Thus stem containing one or more affixes is a derived stem. If deducing the affix the remaining stem is not homonymous to a separate word of the same root, we call it a bound stem. Thus, in the word cordial 'proceeding as if from the heart', the adjective-forming suffix can be separated on the analogy with such words as bronchial, radial Social. The remaining stem, however, cannot form a separate word by itself, it is bound. In cordially and cordiality, on the other hand, the derived stems are free. Bound stems are especially characteristic of loan words.

The point may be illustrated by the following French borrowings: arrogance, charity, courage, coward, distort, involve, notion, legible and tolerable, to give but a few. After the affixes of these words are taken away the remaining elements are: arrog-, char-, cour-, cow-, -tort, -volve, not-, leg-, to ler-, which do not coincide with any semantically related independent words. Roots are main morphemic vehicles of a given idea in a given language at a given stage of its development. A root may be also regarded as the ultimate constituent element which remains after the removal of all functional and derivational affixes and does not admit any further analysis. It is the common element of words within a word family. Thus, heart is the common root of the following series of words: heart, hearten, dishearten, heartily, heartless, hearty, heartiness, sweetheart, heart-broken, kind-hearted, wholeheartedly, etc. In some of these, as, for example, in hearten, there is only one root; in others the root -heart is combined with some other root, thus forming a compound like sweetheart. The root word heart is unsegmentable, it is non-motivated morphologically. The morphemic structure of all the other words in this word-family is obvious



they are segmentable as consisting of at least two distinct morphemes.

They may be further subdivided into: 1) those formed by affixation or affixational derivatives consisting of a root morpheme and one or more affixes: hear ten, dishear ten, heartily, heart less, hearty, hear tiness;

2) compound s, in which two, or very rarely more, stems simple or derived are combined into a lexical unit: sweetheart, heart-shaped, heart-broken or

3) derivational com- pounds where words of a phrase are joined together by composition hear tier - (the) hear tiest is hearty. It is a free stem, but as it consists A paradigm is defined here as the system of grammatical forms characteristic of a word. See also p. 23. * Historical lexicology shows how sometimes the stem becomes bound due to the internal changes in the stem that accompany the addition of affixes; broad, bread, cleanth, cleanly, dear, dearth .

And affixation: kind-hearted. This last process is also called phrasal derivation ((kind hear t) + -ed)). There exist word-families with several unsegmentable members, the derived elements being formed by conversion or clipping.

The word family with the noun father as its centre contains alongside affixational derivatives fatherhood, father less, fatherly a verb father 'to adopt' or Ho originate' formed by conversion. We shall now present the different types of morphemes starting with the root. It will at once be noticed that the root in English is very often hom- onymous with the word. This fact is of fundamental importance as it is one of the most specific features of the English language arising from its general grammatical system on the one hand, and from its phonemic system on the other. The influence of the analytical structure of the language is obvious. The second point, however, calls for some explanation. Actually the usual

phonemic shape most favoured in English is one sin- gle stressed syllable: bear, find, jump, land, man, sing, etc. This does not give much space for a second morpheme to add classifying lexico- grammatical meaning to the lexical meaning already present in the root- stem, so the lexico-grammatical meaning must be signalled by distri- bution. In the phrases a morning's drive, a morning's ride, a morning's walk the words drive, ride and walk receive the lexico-grammatical meaning of a noun not due to the structure of their stems, but because they are preceded by a genitive.

An English word does not necessarily contain formatives indicating to what part of speech it belongs. This holds true even with respect to inflectable parts of speech, i.e. nouns, verbs, adjectives. Not all roots are free forms, but productive roots, i.e. roots capable of producing new words, usually are. The semantic realization of an English word is therefore very specific. Its dependence on context is further enhanced by the widespread occurrence of homonymy both among root morphemes and affixes. Note how many words in the following state- ment might be ambiguous if taken in isolation: A change of work is as good as a rest. The above treatment of the root is purely synchronic, as we have taken into consideration only the facts of present-day English. But the same problem of the morpheme serving as the main signal of a given lex- ical meaning is studied in e tymology.

Thus, when approached historically or diachronically the word heart will be classified as Common Germanic. One will look for cognate s, i.e. words descended from a common ancestor. The cognates of heart are the Latin cor, whence cor- dial 'hearty', 'sincere', and so cordially and cordiality; also the Greek kardia, whence English cardiac condition. The cognates outside the English vocabulary are the Russian cepdye, the



German Herz, the Spanish corazon and other words. To emphasize the difference between the synchronic and the diachronic treatment, we shall call the common element of cognate words in different languages not their root but their radical element.

If we describe a word as an autonomous unit of language in which a particular meaning is associated with a particular sound complex and which is capable of a particular grammatical employment and able to form a sentence by itself, we have the possibility to distinguish it from the other fundamental language unit, namely, the morpheme.

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Morphemes may be classified: from the semantic point of view, from the structural point of view.

a) Semantically morphemes fall into two classes: root-morphemes and non-root or affixational morphemes. Roots and affixes make two distinct classes of morphemes due to the different roles they play in word-structure. Roots and affixational morphemes are generally easily distinguished and the difference between them is clearly felt as, e.g., in the words helpless, handy, blackness, Londoner, refill, etc.: the root-morphemes help-, hand-, black-, London-, -fill are understood as the lexical centres of the words, as the basic constituent part of a word without which the word is inconceivable. The root-morpheme is the lexical nucleus of a word, it has an individual lexical meaning shared by no other morpheme of the language. Besides it

may also possess all other types of meaning proper to morphemes except the part-of-speech meaning which is not found in roots. The root-morpheme is isolated as the morpheme common to a set of words making up a word-cluster, for example the morpheme teach- in to teach, teacher, teaching, theor- in theory, theorist, theoretical, etc.

Non-root morphemes include inflectional morphemes or inflections and affixational morphemes or affixes. Inflections carry only grammatical meaning and are thus relevant only for the formation of word-forms, whereas affixes are relevant for building various types of stems — the part of a word that remains unchanged throughout its paradigm. Lexicology is concerned only with affixational morphemes. Affixes are classified into prefixes and suffixes: a prefix precedes the root-morpheme, a suffix follows it. Affixes besides the meaning proper to root-morphemes possess the part-of-speech meaning and a generalised lexical meaning.

b) Structurally morphemes fall into three types: free morphemes, bound morphemes, semi-free (semi-bound) morphemes.

A free morpheme is defined as one that coincides with the stem or a word-form. A great many root-morphemes are free morphemes, for example, the root-morpheme friend — of the noun friendship is naturally qualified as a free morpheme because it coincides with one of the forms of the noun friend. A bound morpheme occurs only as a constituent part of a word. Affixes are, naturally, bound morphemes, for they always make part of a word, e.g. the suffixes -ness, -ship, -ise (-ize), etc., the prefixes un-, dis-, de-, etc. (e.g. readiness, comradeship, to activise; unnatural, to displease, to decipher).

Many root-morphemes also belong to the class of bound morphemes which always occur in morphemic sequences, i.e. in



combinations with ‘ roots or affixes. All unique roots and pseudo-roots are-bound morphemes. Such are the root-morphemes theor- in theory, theoretical, etc., barbar-in barbarism, barbarian, etc., -ceive in conceive, perceive, etc.

Semi-bound (semi-free) morphemes are morphemes that can function in a

morphemic sequence both as an affix and as a free morpheme. For example, the morpheme well and half on the one hand occur as free morphemes that coincide with the stem and the word-form in utterances like sleep well, half an hour,” on the other hand they occur as bound morphemes in words like well-known, half-eaten, half-done.

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