

Notions Underlying the Philosophical Functions of Morpheme: The Formation and Its Analysis

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Abstract

Morphology is the sub-branch of linguistics that is mainly concerned with study of morphemes. A morpheme is the building block of meaning and main constituent of language. It stands as a central part of morphological study. Morphemes are homogeneous in nature and are indivisible unit of language. A single morpheme is enveloped with several grammatical elements. Morphological analysis can help individual to understand the meaning of some words and simultaneously towards learning of new words that becomes easier to understand. The importance of using prefixes and suffixes can also be observed through morphology that further helps to use language. With morphological awareness, students can have a more clear idea about meaning for example: in the word "like" this can be transformed into its various possibilities (unlike, likely, unlikely, likable, unlikable, likeness, unlikeness) through communicating message more correctly and precisely.

Keywords: Morphemes; Free; Bound; Derivational; Inflectional

1. Introduction

In the field of linguistics, morphology mainly concerns with the study of words, how they form new words, and their correlation to other words in language. It analyzes the structures at word level and other parts of words, such as stems, root words, prefixes, and suffixes. Crystal (2008) defines morphology as "The branch of grammar which studies the structure or forms of words, primarily through the use of the morpheme construct". Syal and Jindal (2002:65), explaining morphology as "A systematic study of morphemes or how morphemes join to form words". Donald (2011) has defined that morphology is a way of studying language or linguistics. Sibarani in (2002:1), the term morphology comes from the ancient Greek word morph which means "form" and logos which means "science". Since the term form in linguistics referred to the form of word. Morphology is also sub branch of linguistics, it studies how words are ordered and how they are set together from smaller parts to form compounds. Haspelmath (2002:1), explains that "Morphology is the study of the internal structure of words". Morphological study aims to describe and explain the morphological patterns of human language.

2. Morpheme As Abuilding Block:

After having basic understanding of morphology, it is crucial to discuss morpheme, because morpheme arrangements under the morphology of language include all communication of the words or part of the words. AsSibarani (2002:3) says, "A morpheme is the smallest meaningful elements into which words can be analyzed". Morphologists mainly investigate words, their internal structure, and their formation by the study of morphemes. It is mainly defined as the smallest meaningful unit. A morpheme can be based on a single word like "table" or a meaningful addition like "less" in word "home". Sibarani (2002:p4) says that it may also be defined as the minimal linguistic sign, a grammatical unit in which there is an arbitrary union of a sound and a meaning and that cannot be further analysed. Another additional way, in which it is defined, is as a mixture between sound and meaning. Some of the morphemes have no concrete or continuous form and some do not have meanings in the conventional sense of the term. So far, from different definitions we came to know that,

- A morpheme is minimal meaningful unit.
- Morpheme can't be divided into its further constituents.
- In verbal communication a morpheme bears stable meaning in different situations.

2.1. Content and Functional Morphemes:

Content and functional morphemes are very important parts of a Language. They both together make basis of language. Content word includes Nouns, Verbs, Adjectives, and adverbs. These words give information and also denote concepts such as objects, actions, attributes, ideas and other semantic features of language. Content words are also known as open class words because we keep adding new words, like Facebook (n), blog (n,v), frack (v), online (adj, adv) etc. Functional words do not have clear meaning. It includes conjunctions such as And, Or, and but; prepositions such as in, on, at and of; also includes articles the land A/An, and pronouns like He, she, it, they. These kinds of words are known as functional words because they show grammatical relations and have little role or sometimes no semantic content. For example, the function of articles in language is to indicate whether noun is definite or indefinite the Man or a Man. In prepositions it shows possession or helps to convey a clear sense like “The book is the table”. The sentence is unable to give a clear sense. “The book is on the table” now in this sentence it makes sense.

Functional words are also known as closed class words. This is because it is almost impossible to think of any pronouns, conjunctions or prepositions. There are very least chances of adding new words within the list of functional words.

2.2. FREE AND BOUND MORPHEME

At broader level Morphemes can be divided into two main categories, free morpheme and bound morpheme. In free morpheme the term “Free” itself explains that a morpheme that could stay alone with specific meaning. For example: wear, eat, table, go, and sleep all these morphemes give sense when used in isolation. They constitutes words by them self. Free morphemes also known as independent morphemes. On the other hand bound morphemes are those which cannot stay alone

2.2.1. AFFIX

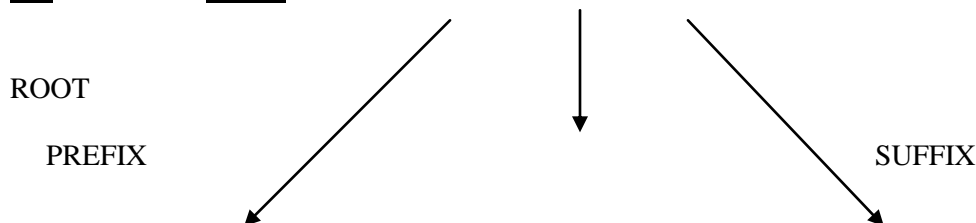
Katamba (1994:61-65), defines it as, a morpheme which only occurs when attached to some other morpheme or morphemes such as a root or stem or base. Affixes are the bound morphemes by definition affixes are bound morphemes. There are two main classes of affix, prefix and suffix. A prefix is placed at the beginning of a root morpheme to regulate or qualify its meaning. A suffix is placed at the end of a root morpheme to form its derivative. It converts the stem into another part of speech. Some root words or stem words may have suffix as well as prefix in order to make a new word and to change the meaning of the root word.

Example:

SUFFIX	SUFFIX+ROOT
Im	Impossible
Un	Undo
In	Incomplete
Non	Nonstop
Re	Reuse
PREFIX	PREFIX+ROOT
Im	Impossible
Un	Undo
In	Incomplete
Non	Nonstop
Re	Reuse

Some words have both affixes at same time

UNCOMFORTABLE



2.3. Derivational and Inflectional Morphemes

After going through morphology, morpheme study and its types, it is very essential to discuss about derivational and inflectional as part of morphemes.

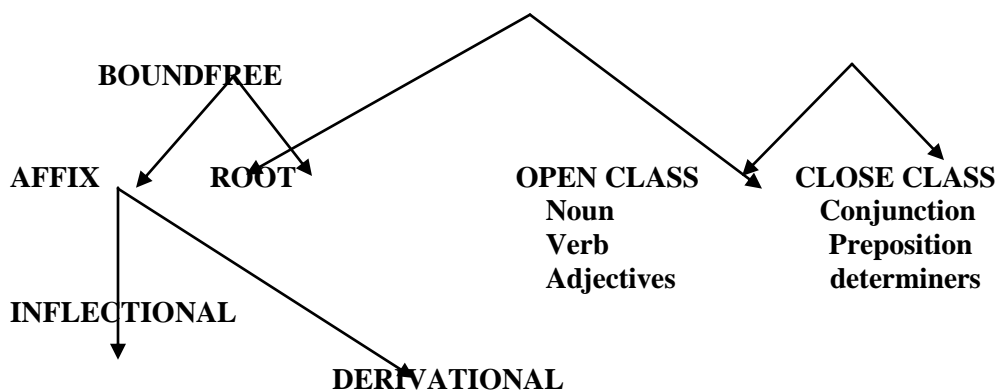
2.3.1. Derivational Morphemes

Morphemes usually consist of base aggregated with affixes to derive a new word. Derivational morphemes are the derived words adding suffix or prefix to give a new meaning. Katamba in (1994) describes that derivational morphemes is a (bound) morpheme creating new words by changing either the meaning (happy vs. unhappy) or the part of speech.

2.3.2. Inflectional Morphemes

Inflectional morpheme is morphemes create a different form of the same word by no any change in word class and meaning, but only gives extra grammatical information about the existing meaning of a word.

Morpheme



3. Word Formation Process:

Word formation is the process of forming words out of sequences of morphemes or words. Word formation has got a great importance in English because this language has been enriched by this phenomenon as well as due to the flexibility; it borrows from various other languages. There are number of processes involved in formation new words, including compounding, clipping, blending, conversion, acronyms, coinages, borrowings back formation.

3.1. Clipping:

In linguistics, clipping is the word formation process which consists in the reduction of a word to one of its parts (Marchand: 1969). It is a word shortening process in which actual word is shortened to some extent. There are four different types of clipping.

3.1.1. Back clipping: in which beginning of the word is retained and remaining part of the word is composite. For example: ad from advertisement, gas from gasoline, cable from cablegram.

3.1.2. Fore clipping: In which final part of the word is retained. For example: phone from Telephone, chute from parachute, gator from alligator.

3.1.3. Mid clipping: in which middle of the word is retained. For example: flu from influenza jams from pyjamas.

3.1.4. Complex clipping: in which clipped forms are used in compounds and original part usually remains intact. For example: cablegram from cable telegram, op-art from optical art.

3.2. Compounding:

In compounding, word is formed by joining two or more words. Each word can be used separately as well is known as compounding.

For example: Holy+day= holyday, bed+room= bedroom, break+through= breakthrough. Blackboard, heartfelt, brother-in-law are compound words.

Often, compounds are made up of more than two words; e.g. man-of-war, son-in-law, none-the-less, guard-of-honour, etc. In compounding all parts of speech can be used except articles.

3.3. Conversion/functional shift:

In conversion, word changes its class without change in form. Function of the word is shifted by shifting, changing or converting its original grammatical class to another. For example, when the word walk is used in the following sentence “HE WALKS DAILY”. It is used as a verb, which is probably its present function as verb. But when walk is used in the sentence walk is good for health, here it functions as a noun. There are different cases of functional shift.

Functional shift of noun

3.3.1. From verbs:, divide, doubt, drive-in, fall, find, hand-out, hit, laugh, lay-by, lift, love, raise, release, retreat, rise, search, show-off, shut-down, smell, stand-in, swim, taste, throw, turn, walk, want, wrap, walk-out, wrench, attempt, bet, blow-out, bore, catch, cheat, coach, cover, desire, dismay etc.

3.3.2. From adjectives: natural (a naturally skilled player), roast, red, regular (customer), wet, bitter (type of beer), comic, daily (newspaper), final (race), married (married people) etc.

3.4. Blending

Blending is the process whereby new words are formed by combining parts of two words, usually the beginning of one word and the end of another (cf. Godby et al., 1982). For example: smog (smoke + fog), brunch (breakfast + lunch), heliport (helicopter + airport), motel (motor + hotel), FORTRAN (formula translation), etc. Notice that in blending, enough part from each word is retained. Below is given a partial list of other common blends: motel (motor + hotel) breathalyzer (breath + analyzer), electrocute (electro + execute), Eurovision (European + television) selphy (self + photography) , multiversity (multiple + university), newscast (news + broadcast), paratroops (parachute + troops), telecast (television + broadcast), travelogue (travel + catalogue), telex (teleprinter + exchange). According to Quirk et al. (1985), acronym, clipping and blending are three highly productive ways in which abbreviation (i.e., the shortening of words) is involved in English word-formation.

3.5. Borrowing

In this process one language borrows words from other languages to fill linguistic gap. English language is very flexible language and it has borrowed number of words from other languages. Some of the words like Alligator, Cargo, Tango, Mango, Cockroach, burrito from Spanish etc. Garage from French; pizza and mafia from Italian; and so on. The pronunciation and morphology of the borrowed words are adapted to the phonology and morphology of that language from where it is borrowed. It is essential to argue that, in many cases, words are borrowed due to history behind that language, such as conquests and invasions, or to geographical exchanges. The most common reason for a language to borrow words from other languages is to fill lexical and semantic gaps, for example every language has their own cultural and social occurrence, sometimes it becomes necessary to borrow terms from other language to fill this gap. Here are some other examples given below from different languages

3.6. Eponymy

It is a process in which numbers of new words are derived behind different names of places, inventions, activities, etc. For example, Washington, D. C city has been named for George Washington and District of Columbia named after Christopher Columbus. There are various other examples like Diesel named after invention by Rudolf Diesel. Some examples of Eponym from everyday life

- Sandwich was named after a British politician John Montagu, who was fourth Earl of Sandwich.
- The name of a sweater cardigan is derived from a British military officer, James Thomas Brudenell, who was Seventh Earl of Cardigan.
- Saxophone was given the name of Sax, a surname of family from Belgium, which was skilled at making musical instruments.

3.7. Word Coinage

Coinage, the words refers to the coining new words either deliberately or accidentally, due to certain purposes. Normally, words are coined to express ideas, feelings, processes, products, etc. For example, name of brands such as Xerox, Kodak, Exxon, Kleenex, Nylon, Dacron, etc.; pouch, snob, nerd, blurb, googol, etc. It also includes many acronyms such as COBOL, laser, etc. are based on the phrases for which they stand. However, words are more often created on the basis of pre-existing word.

3.8. Acronym

It is an abbreviated form of several words in a way that the abbreviation itself forms a pronounceable word. Usually word may already exist or it can be a new word. Types of acronym

3.8.1. Acronyms which are pronounced as word having initial letters

Example:

- NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organisation)
- PEMRA (Pakistan Electronic Media Regulatory Authority)
- APWA (All Pakistan Women's Association)
- NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration)
- UNESCO (United Nations Educational Scientific and Cultural Organization).

3.8.2. Acronyms pronounced as letters

Example:

- BBC (British broad Casting Corporation)
- DNA (Deoxyribonucleic Acid)
- RADAR (Radio Detecting and Ranging)
- SCUBA (Self Contained Under Water Breathing Apparatus).

3.9. Back Formation

It is a reduction process in which the original word is reduced to some extent, the process known as backformation. Mostly a word (noun) is reduced to derive another word (verb). A most common example of backformation is the process in which the term television was first reduced to a verb televise.

Example:

- Edit to Editor
- Donate to Donation
- Opt to Option
- Emote to Emotion
- Enthuse to enthusiasm

4. Morphological Analysis

Morphological analysis is the process of breaking down the compound words into their constituent morphemes. For example the word "Cooking" is composed of two morphemes "Cook" and "ing", which gives the sense of continuity or something, going on. Oftentimes, these multi-syllabic words will be of the Graeco-Latin origin, which collectively, comprise approximately two thirds of the English lexicon (Carr, Owen, & Schaeffer, 1942). Pedagogical process of doing morphological analyses of words into their stems is very crucial in academic learning. Every language in the world has different ways and techniques in the formation of a word. It is essential to know how a word is constructed and through what processes a word can perform as a new word. The process of morphology mainly deals with different combinations of one morpheme with other. The relationship between a word and its meaning, or the vocabulary item and its synonym, can be easily overstated by the adult's schemata. Also, to facilitate this, both the morphemes and selected vocabulary items tend to be singular in meaning, thus eliminating the confounding effects of polysemy usually encountered with one syllable, high frequency vocabulary (Just & Carpenter, 1987; Howards, 1964). For many students, their aim is to acquire

language and to do well in an institution of higher education because all the course contents will be delivered in through English medium. They clearly see the correlation between an enhanced vocabulary and their academic success (Zimmerman, 1997).

5. Conclusion

To know a language means knowing morphemes and morphological structure of that language. Morphology is very essential part of linguistic knowledge. Behind understanding and conceptualization of any schema, morphemes play key role. Morphemes are the building blocks of language and without them it is impossible to convey our message to others. Different word sequences have direct impact on its meaning rather a morpheme is a minimal semantic unite that draws different meanings of same utterances. Since years, morphemes have gone through number of processes like borrowing, conversion, clipping, back formation, derivation, acronym etc. It is characteristic of a civilized language that it(English language) adapts itself where it needs to be. Words are divided into two main categories content and functional or grammatical. A content word tells the knowledge about the word and functional words are concerned with their usage. English language is equipped with complex lexical as well as morphological processes. The study of morphology is not only an choice but a “obligatory” for any language, it is necessary to fulfil adequate abilities to comprehend the target language, and to be able to communicate effectively. Another benefit of morphology is that it helps us to have enhanced writing skills. There are certain morphological irregularities in English language. it is important to speak the language appropriately, and it may even have a beneficial impact on auditory skills. The phonological aspect is also related with morphology in spoken language. Broadly speaking, morphological competency is also one of the vital elements that determine advanced level of proficiency in international standards like ESL or EFL. Word-formation exercises and other exercises are very useful in higher levels and frequently incorporated in English international examinations like TOEFL, FCE, CAE and Cambridge ESOL.

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