

Class discussion: Basic questions in morphology — what have we learned?

W Apr 25

- (1) Can we define *morpheme*? How?
 - consistent correspondence between *sound* and *meaning/function*
 - may also have “rules for application” = special phonological considerations such as phonologically determined location for the morpheme, copying phonological material from the base, null phonological content
- (2) Can we define *word*? To what extent does this need to be broken down into separate concepts?
 - Break down: *PhWd* ≠ *GrWd*; but each can still be hard to define
 - PhWd: Domain of phonological operations (infixation, reduplication, truncation)
 - GrWd: Domain of word-level cyclicity effects?
 - Divides morphology (word and below) from syntax (structure above word)?
 - Another distinction to make pertaining to ‘word’: *lexeme* ≠ *word-form*
- (3) Can we distinguish morphology from syntax in the mental grammar?
 - Interaction with syntax
 - There is some morphology that seems to be separate from syntactic processes
 - Templates: Affix ordering is sometimes determined by factors that are not syntactic, semantic, phonological—thus, there are specifically morphological effects in affix ordering

Can we distinguish morphology from phonology in the mental grammar?

- Effects that cannot be explained with phonology alone, if we were to make no reference to morphemes or morphological structure
 - Cyclicity: phonological environments alone can't account for the way that phonological processes apply (misapplication)
 - There are morpheme-specific (“exceptional”) phonological rules
- (4) Can, or should, we distinguish between inflectional and derivational morphology?
 - “Endpoint” categories exist, even though there is a continuum
 - Various criteria can distinguish classes of morphemes by their different behavior
 - To what extent the labels ‘inflectional’ and ‘derivational’ are definitive is less clear
- Should we subdivide inflectional morphology into inherent and contextual inflection?
- To the extent that inherent inflectional processes precede derivation, and contextual processes follow derivation, this distinction has possible implications for:
 - interaction with the syntax (i.e., Mirror Principle effects)
 - the structure of the lexicon (new lexeme vs. word-form of same lexeme)
- (5) What does the mental lexicon look like? What is its structure? What are some ways in which it may interact with other modules of the mental grammar?