

**Morphology: Introduction**

- (1) **morpheme** — Minimal unit of *sound-meaning correspondence*; cannot be broken down into smaller parts that contribute consistent meaning

(a) Examples:

<i>hon</i>	‘book’	<i>taka-</i>	‘high’	<i>tabe-</i>	‘eat’
<i>-zi-</i>	‘self’	<i>-ten-</i>	‘turn’	<i>-sya-</i>	‘vehicle’
<i>-sa</i>	‘...-ness’	<i>-i</i>	‘A(djective)-NONPAST’		

- (b) Morphological segmentation — the process of analyzing words into their component morphemes
- Analysis procedure: Compare minimally different forms and look for how sound shape matches up with meaning
  - Morphemes may be affected by phonological rules! → In carrying out morphological segmentation, we should allow for minor variation in sound shape

### I. Classifying morphemes

- (2) One dimension for classifying morphemes:

- (a) **free** morpheme — Can be used alone as a word, with no further morphemes added
- Example: *hon* ‘book’
  - Words are also free *forms* (by definition), but they may contain more than just one morpheme; example: *zi-ten-sya* ‘self-turn-vehicle’ (=‘bicycle’)
- (b) **bound** morpheme — Must be combined with (an)other morpheme(s) to form a word; cannot stand alone
- Examples: *taka-* ‘high’, *tabe-* ‘eat’, *zi-* ‘self’, *-sa* ‘...-ness’, *-i* ‘A-NONPAST’

- (3) Another dimension for classifying morphemes:

- (a) **root** — A lexical content morpheme (~open-class morpheme) that cannot be decomposed into smaller parts
- Examples: *hon* ‘book’, *taka-* ‘high’, *tabe-* ‘eat’
- (b) **affix** — A prefix or suffix; a bound form that does not contain a root
- (i) **derivational** affix
- Example: *-sa* ‘A-ness’ — more precisely, *-sa* is an affix that forms N(oun) from A(djective), A(djectival)N(oun)
- (ii) **inflectional** affix — adds grammatical meaning (tense, gender, number, ...)
- Example: *-i* ‘A-NONPAST’

- (4) How does the **root/affix** distinction line up with the **free/bound** distinction?

## II. Some further considerations about morphology in Japanese

### (5) What kinds of meaning actually get marked with morphemes in Japanese?

For the Japanese speakers in the audience:

- Give a natural, plausible translation for the following English sentences.

- |                   |                         |                             |
|-------------------|-------------------------|-----------------------------|
| (a) I ate sushi.  | (c) Ayako ate sushi.    | (e) The student ate sushi.  |
| (b) We ate sushi. | (d) Masahiko ate sushi. | (f) The students ate sushi. |

- How are **person** and **number** marked on verbs in Japanese?
- Languages vary as to what kinds of **grammatical meaning** are obligatorily expressed

### (6) Side note: Some other interesting facts observed in (5)

- (a) **Pronouns** are socially loaded and sometimes avoided
- (b) The gender of given (“first”) names can be predicted comparatively easily
- (c) The agent of a transitive verb can be marked with *-ga* (SUBJECT marker) or with *-wa* (TOPIC marker) — more about this distinction in a few weeks

## III. Morphology versus orthography (spelling)

### (7) Important distinction: Is there a difference between a kanji character and a **morpheme**?

- (a) What is the pronunciation of the Japanese word written like this? 湖

- (b) How about this one? 今日

- How many morphemes are in the words in (a) and (b)?

- (c) In some cases, kanji can give us clues about morphological structure

自転車	‘bicycle’	電車	‘electric train’	車庫	‘garage, carport’
<i>zi-ten-<u>sya</u></i>		<i>den-<u>sya</u></i>		<i><u>sya</u>-ko</i>	

- But: Are the Japanese forms *higasi* 東 and *too* 東 the same morpheme? (What would we say about *life* and *bio* in English?)

## IV. Context: Big-picture issues in the study of Japanese morphology

### (8) How many different **word classes** (also called lexical categories, “parts of speech”) are there in Japanese?

- Is the inventory of word classes universal?

### (9) One widely accepted proposal in morphology is that **derivational** affixes may change the word class of a form, but **inflectional** affixes never do

- Does data from Japanese bear on this claim?

### (10) How do **morphology and phonology** interact in Japanese? Does evidence from morphology give us any further insight into the phonological categories and phonological rules of Japanese?