

Context: Morphology and syntax

Essentially:

- **Morphology** is the structure of words and their parts
 - **Morphemes** as minimal sound-meaning correspondences, stored in the mental lexicon
 - Rules for inflection, derivation, and other kinds of **word-formation**
 - Morphology has a lot of **irregular behavior**, since individual morphemes can be stored with individual characteristics (such as exception rules)
- **Syntax** is the structure of phrases and sentences — above the word level
 - Words combine together into **phrases**, which combine into **sentences** (is a sentence a type of phrase? what is a phrase?)
 - Syntax is highly **systematic** and regular, because people need to be able to create (and understand) new sentences based on their parts
- The “border” between morphology and syntax is **not sharply defined**
 - It is not always easy to tell when we have a complex word, vs. when we have a combination of words
 - Sometimes, a bound form (not a word) occupies its own position in the syntactic structure...

Syntax — For learners of Japanese

- Why is Japanese sentence structure ‘backward’ from that of English?
- Why can the words in a Japanese sentence occur in so many different orders? Why can subjects and objects and other phrases be omitted?
- How does looking at the *structure of sentences* help us understand when we can use certain kinds of honorific forms?

Syntax — Japanese language and linguistic theory

- We’ve already raised the question of whether the inventory of word classes is universal
- Now we can also consider: What aspects of the syntactic structure of languages are universal? What aspects are language-particular?
 - Japanese syntax has played a large role in this debate