

Appreciating Linguistics: A typological approach
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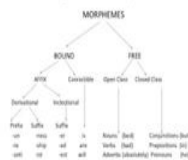
Lecture – 11
Morphology – Prefixes, Suffixes and Infixes

Hi, hello everyone. Welcome to my NPTEL course Appreciating Linguistics: A typological approach. Up until now, we have been discussing what is linguistics, why this academic discipline is important for people who love languages, basically who are language enthusiasts to begin with, then there are language teachers and finally, there are linguists.

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Understanding Morphology

- Morphemes: Free and Bound
- Free morpheme can stand alone whereas a bound morpheme is dependent.
- Classification of English morphemes:



Simple → 1 morpheme (FM)
complex → more than 1 morpheme (FM+BM)
Compound → (FM + FM)
free, construction, and long
Simple Complex Compound



Obviously all three categories of people study languages in some way or the other. They do like to know what linguistics is all about. So then, we were trying to figure out what linguistics as a discipline is, what does a linguist do and after we got to know, these are the things that a linguist is supposed to work on, let us move over to the linguistic typology.

Why typological study is important, that also we have discussed considering the world speaks around 6,700 languages. We must be aware about the fact that all languages do not belong to the same type. Different languages belong to different types and the study of these types on

the basis of the similarities that they have or the differences that they have, leads to a subdiscipline called linguistic typology.

When we are trying to approach linguistic typology, we must understand language. We must understand that we cannot ignore the structure of language, when we try to study linguistic typology and when I said the structure of language, how linguistic typology focuses on the structure of language. When I say structure, I am talking about the study of structure at the sound level which is phonology; word level which is morphology and then, sentence level which is syntax.

We have started the discussion with morphology. So, what is morphology? Morphology is the systematic study of words in a given language, and this language could be any language, it is not just English. Though in my class here in particular, I am talking about English as a language and I am giving you examples from English, but my expectation is that you should be able to understand how your language works.

English is a language which does not allow many morphemes at one go. Then you should be able to understand if English does not allow that, does my language allow it? Do you think your language is different from English as far as the combination of morphemes are concerned? On that basis we did discuss what is a morpheme and then what are the different types of morphemes. These different types of morphemes, when they come together, what do they contribute to? Whether it becomes a simple word or a compound word or a complex word. Then, we did some kind of derivation over here.

When we have a simple word, it has only one morpheme and that is a free morpheme. Because free morphemes are the ones who do not depend on anything else to have the complete meaning; that is the reason why we call it free morpheme. It can actually stand freely without any dependence on anything or anyone. So, that would be a simple word; there is only one morpheme and that is a free morpheme.

How about a complex word? There must be one free morpheme, and multiple bound morphemes, and if you remember it correctly, bound morphemes are the ones which are dependent on other morphemes to get complete meaning.

That is how we try to understand what a complex word is.

Finally, there is something called compound word, and this compound word will have at least two free morphemes. It could be more than that, it depends on which language you speak. Since it can contribute to more than that, but at least the minimum requirement is that you need to have at least two free morphemes. We have given you the examples here. The first example is a simple word because it has one morpheme and that is a free morpheme and the example given here is tree. Then, we have the second example construction. Construction is a complex word. Why it is a complex word? Because it has one free morpheme and one bound morpheme.

Can you figure out what is the free morpheme and what is the bound morpheme? The free morpheme is construct and that the bound morpheme is -ion. Since both are morphemes, they have been combined together and it becomes a complex word. Similar is the case with another type of multiple morphemic word that is compound.

When it is a compound word, it must be one free morpheme, the other one is also bound to be a free morpheme. Two or more free morphemes together. If you are speaking in an Indian language, it could be more than two free morphemes which may come together. But otherwise, to consider something as a compound word, you must see at least two free morphemes coming together. Here the English example that we have is landlord.

Here is the tree, like the diagram is given here. The different morphemes can be either bound or free. So, look at the picture given here and then the bound morphemes could be affixes and contractible forms. Affixes could be derivational and inflectional. We are going to discuss it in a while and free morphemes could be either open class words or closed class words. So, in the open class words, we have nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives and in the closed class words, we have prepositions, conjunctions and pronouns.

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Understanding Morphology

- Bound bases and Contracted forms are also bound morphemes.

(e.g. cranberry)

- Infixes are unique to certain languages like Bontoc Igorot (spoken in the Philippines)

(e.g. 1) 'Kinayu' - Gathering wood

Kayu- wood

(e.g. 2) 'tumengao-ak' - I will have a holiday.

'tengao' - to celebrate a holiday.

Prefix
Suffix
Infix → Bontoc Igorot
Kinayu vs ki-nyu
(wood) (gathering/wood)
tengao vs tumengao-ak
(to celebrate holiday) (I will have holiday)

Bound bases
cranberry
BIB



Now let us move to the interesting segments of morphology, which are not very common in the language that we discuss here, that is English. So, what are we going to see? We will see there is a certain kind of morpheme which would neither be a prefix nor it is going to be called as a suffix. If we are not going to call it prefix which occurs at the beginning of the word or we are not going to call it a suffix which occurs at the end of the word, then what is it?

So, prefixes at the beginning and suffixes at the end, it is neither of them. If it is neither of them, then what kind of a morpheme is this? And which language in the world speaks it? We had prefix, then we had suffix, now the third term I am going to introduce is infix. An infix is not a very common phenomenon in the world's languages. There is a language spoken in the Philippines and its name is Bontoc Igorot.

Bontoc Igorot is a language which allows infixes. Look at the data that has been given here. Here the example that we have is Kinayu. In Bontoc Igorot, the word Kinayu means gathering wood in English,. So, Kinayu means gathering wood and then, there is another word called Kayu. What does Kayu mean in Bontoc Igorot? That is wood.

So now, let us see how we are going to figure out what is the infix here. This is Kayu versus Kinayu. Let me revise this. Kayu means wood; Kinayu means gathering wood. The two

examples that have been given here are tengao versus tumengao ak. This means to celebrate a holiday and this means I will have a holiday. So, we are going to analyse the data set given over here.

Let us say Kayu versus Kinayu. What is that you think has been inserted here? When you say infix, the term infix means something has been inserted inside something. When it is prefix, that means something has to begin with that. When it is suffix, so obviously, something has to end with that. Suffix means something after, prefix means something before. But in case of infix, the word is going to be broken into two parts and you are inserting another morpheme into it. When you say Kayu versus Kinayu, it has been broken from ka sound. So, ka is on one side, ayu is on the other side and then, what has been inserted here? Here is neither a prefix, nor a suffix, rather this is an infix.

So now, with this information, Kayu versus Kinayu; Kayu means simply wood and Kinayu means to gather wood. You see that there has been an extra morpheme which has been inserted into it. That is the reason why we got a new word. So, 'in' here is not really a prefix, it is also not a suffix, rather it is an infix. So, wood becomes gathering wood.

Now, may I ask you the second question? Look at the data carefully, given in the example number 2. In the example number 2, you have tumengao ak; tumengao ak versus tengao. So, tumengao ak means I will have a holiday and tengao means celebrating a holiday. When you compare tengao with tumengao, what is the difference that you encounter here? Do you think there has been an infix, if you follow the Kayu-Kinayu pattern? That is why by following the Kayu-Kinayu pattern, you see that in the word tengao, you can actually separate ta from the rest of the part of the word. So, ta is on one side and engao is on the other side. And what are you inserting into it? You are inserting 'um'.

The change of tengao to tumengao, primarily has an infix insertion. And what is that infix here? That is 'um'. Now, with this information, do you think your language has anything similar? Do you think in your first language or for that matter in English, the language which you have been studying so far, do you think it has any infix as such? I am sure you can give me a lot of examples of prefixes, you can give me examples of suffixes. You can actually talk about words with many suffixes. I am not sure if I can get words with many prefixes, but with

prefixes you can get a lot of words. However, when the matter comes to infixes, it is going to be a problem because Indian languages for that matter, most of the world's languages, do not allow infixation system.

So, this would be considered as a type. When, after this lecture, I move to morphological type, you should be able to help me to understand or you should be able to help yourself to understand that there are certain languages which allow infixation. So, the languages that allow infixation, they are going to belong to a separate category altogether, where as prefixation and suffixation, these are the most common phenomena if you compare the three of them.

That is why Kayu versus Kinayu, the infix is 'in', and tengao versus tumengao, primarily the 'um' infix has been inserted into it and because of the insertion of the 'um' morpheme, the word changes its form as well as the meaning changes. Became tumengao and tengao means to celebrate a holiday and tumengao means I will have a holiday, the meaning has completely changed and for this particular change, something which has a lot of credit to be given, is infixation.

Because of the infixation, the meaning of the word has changed completely. That is one interesting thing about morphology. In this case I am talking about English. The examples are from English, but morphology, in general, can also be understood like these are the new concepts to understand in a generic discipline like linguistics and morphology.

In morphology section, you will also find examples like the combination of the bound bases, where there is a particular word which does not have any meaning; if it stands alone and it will only have some meaning when it is associated with the particular word like a particular phrase. You have to understand what is a bound base. To make you understand what is bound base, I am going to write it very briefly.

We are trying to understand bound bases, which are not very common in most of the world's languages, but let us see what happens in English at least; because English seems to allow a few bound bases. One such example is cranberry. Why we would call it a bound base?

When you say cran and berry, this is surely some kind of berry, but the word cran cannot stand with any other morpheme in the word. So, it is bound to occur with berry. That is why there is a concept of bound bases in morphology. These are also bound morphemes. Berry is a free morpheme and cran is a bound morpheme. Cran is not only a bound morpheme, it is also a bound base. So, I am writing BM, BB. When you look at cranberry, you realize that this is a different kind of a word because of its bound base nature. Since it is a bound base, it is also a bound morpheme.

Then, the other one I have already discussed. The contracted forms are very common in our day-to-day speech. Instead of saying he is going to school, we might say he's going to school; instead of saying my brother will come here, I can say my brother'll come here. So, will becomes ill; he is become he's. These are the concerns that we have as far as bound morpheme category is concerned.

In case of the bound morphemes, obviously, the bound bases, would be considered as bound morphemes. But that does not mean that the bound bases will always be associated with bound morphemes, not really, they would need a free morpheme to make the sentence more meaningful.

That is about the two new concepts: one is bound base; the other one is contracted form, which you might be aware about it, I am pretty sure, but just to refresh your memory, I try to help you to understand the new concepts in verbal morphology. For sure, bound bases and contracted forms are one of them. Both the bound bases and the contracted forms are bound morphemes. Remember, they are not free morphemes. Why they will not be free morphemes? Because they cannot stand alone without any intervention of a third party. So, that is primarily the reason why we do not see much of it over here.

The bound bases and then the other forms, the contracted forms are quite common. You will encounter a lot of contracted forms in most of the day-to-day speech and then we have infixes which are a rare phenomenon or which are not really most widely available in the world's languages. At least this language called Bontoc Igorot, which is spoken primarily in the Philippines, seems to retain its infix-marking ability. However, because this infix-marking is considered to be a little rare, most of the languages they seem not to have had it. But that

does not mean that it should skip from our attention. We have to look at it more carefully and we will try to figure out how does an infix look like, what kind of function does an infix play or what kind of work does it do, when you were talking about morphology? So, that is about special instances of morphology.

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Understanding Morphology

- Open class/content vs. Closed-class/function words
- Noun, verb, adjective, adverb vs. articles, prepositions, demonstratives, quantifiers and conjunctions
- Telegraphic speech- open class or closed class?
- Aphasic brain syndromes- open class or closed class?



These are the ones I have already discussed, but I have two questions for you. Think about it, when you read more about it later. Before I ask you the questions, I would just reiterate what I have discussed. I have discussed also what is an open class word and what is a closed class word. So, can you tell me what should be the open class word and what should be a closed class word? Some examples. The nouns, verbs, adverbs and adjectives; these are the open class words and what are the closed class words? The closed class words would be prepositions, conjunctions and pronouns. This I have already discussed.

So, noun, adjective, verb, adverb; closed class articles prepositions, demonstratives quantifiers and conjunctions; so one is the closed class the other one is going to be the open class. Then, my question for you would be what do you think in case of telegraphic speech? Telegraph is an old story. People do not write telegraph anymore. But there was a time when telegraph was considered to be one of the most reliable means of communication.

Now come back to my question. My question is what do you think 20 years back or 40 years for that matter maybe because telegraph has stopped long back. So, 20 years before or let us say 40 years before, when there was no connectivity, no internet, no mobile phone; how would people communicate in a fast manner? The only way which was authentic and which was fast was the telegraph. The kind of language that we use in the telegraph, do you think these are open class or closed class? So, that is a question for you. You have got to tell me later.

Then, there is something called aphasic brain syndromes and we will find out whether they are open class or the or the closed class words. You need to think about these two questions the telegraphic speech, what kind of language was used and aphasic brain syndromes, what kind of language is used? On the basis of that how can you decide which one is right and which one is wrong?

So, that is how it is a little tricky as far as this particular discipline is concerned. When you are trying to map each word with its corresponding sounds, it is going to be a problem. Because our sound systems and our writing systems are a little different; so, this difference has to accommodate all kinds of variations or all kinds of distributions that you have for our own language.

That is why the question for you would be figure out what is the nature of telegraphic speech, which actually caters brevity and intelligibility and what will be the aphasic brain syndrome person's speech and then, the sort of words that people who are affected by aphasic brain systems syndromes, what sort of words do they do they use? These are a couple of other things to know about morphology. So, open class, closed class; then, prefix suffix; then we have affixes.

What do you think telegraphic speech will allow the open class words or the closed class words? And finally, If a person is suffering from aphasic brain syndromes, what sort of classes would that be? That particular data would actually sort of help us to understand how the morphological system works in the right way.

Keywords: linguistic typology, prefix, suffix, infix, infixation, bound base, telegraphic speech, aphasic brain syndromes