

Appreciating Linguistics: A typological approach
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Lecture - 14
Word formation rules and Neologism – Part 2

A while ago I was talking about how words derive new words in case of compound words.

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Suffixing

- Agentive suffix '-er' (writer, killer)
- Verbal suffix '-able' (walkable, breakable) / '-ion' (relation, dictation)
- Phonological change (addition of /abl/)
- Category change (verb to adjective)
- Semantic change (able to be X'd)
- **Can all verbs take 'able'?**
- Diminutive suffix '-y/-ie' (dad-daddy, dog-doggie)



Here we are going to focus on the complex words. When it is a complex word, this derivational-inflectional morpheme or the derivational-inflectional status, it is related to only affixes. We do not consider the free morphemes in the category of derivational or inflectional, because free morphemes are anyway free. This one is primarily related to the affixes. When we are trying to understand whether the form of the word changes, the meaning of the word changes or the sound of the word changes, then it is going to be derivational.

And if there is no change in the category, rather it just becomes a past tense or a plural marker, then it is going to be considered as the inflectional morpheme. I will give you two examples. Let us consider a very easy word like teacher versus teaches. And in these two words we will find out how many morphemes are there, and whether the bound morphemes

or affixes are of the same category or different category, whether they are both or all derivational or all inflectional or some of them derivational, some of them are inflectional.

Now let us find out how many morphemes do we have. We have teach, which is the free morpheme, then we have -er, which is the bound morpheme. Here also, teach which is the free morpheme and -es which is the bound morpheme. So, what are we going to do now? We are going to check these bound morphemes or affixes whether they are derivational by nature or inflectional by nature. What did I just say? If the category changes entirely, then it will be considered as a derivational morpheme. The grammatical category becomes verb to noun, noun to verb, noun to adjective, adjective to verb and so on.

If you see that change is happening; that means, a new word or a new category has been derived, and when it is the derivation then it is obviously going to be considered as a derivational morpheme. But if the grammatical category does not change, rather this morpheme is just an extension of the old thing. But the meaning changes slightly. Maybe the tense changes or the number marking changes. So, in that case, it is going to be considered as an inflectional one. With this definition, can you tell me what it is going to be? When I say teacher, to begin with, teach is a verb, right? If it is a verb, let us try the first word. Teach is a verb and this verb when it becomes teacher, it becomes a noun. So, this is a verb and this is a noun.

When the verb changes to noun, this -er becomes what kind of a morpheme? Derivational morpheme. However, the other example that we have, that is teach as a verb, when it becomes teaches, it still remains a verb. There is no change in the grammatical category. So, what has happened? This has just inflected the form of the verb teach. Because of the inflectional status that this morpheme has, we are going to call it inflectional morpheme. I hope I made it clear.

So, you have teacher versus teaches. The root word is teach in both the cases. In the first word, teach as a verb it becomes noun, so the grammatical category changes. Because of the changed grammatical category, the -er morpheme would be known as a derivational morpheme. And in case of teaches, the verb teach changes to another verb again. It is just that there is an inflectional or inflecting marker added and that is -es. So, with first person

singular, will make it I teach and with a third person singular, it will be he teaches, but it still remains a verb. It is only changing the form. It is only like an additional morpheme. The meaning does not change drastically in that sense.

The word drastically matters a lot. Teach to teacher, -er is a derivational morpheme, teach to teaches, -es is an inflectional morpheme. This is a simple thing, but it is not that clear always. You might encounter certain instances where it is a little tricky to identify whether what is the real nature of the morpheme, whether it is derivational or it is inflectional. I will give you an example, something like give. How would you identify the morpheme first? What is give? And what is the root word of give? The root word is giv. And the root word is give plus -ed together, it results in gave.

This is an irregular form. The identification of a past tense marker or a past tense morpheme, has changed the form of the root word altogether. In this case, give to gave, though it looks very different, this is primarily an inflectional morpheme, because it does not do much to the grammatical category that the word belongs to. So, if it does not change that, then it will surely remain an inflectional one.

Most of the times, the prefixes are derivational. I will give a small example here. Let us think about a word like reappear or retest or impatient or unwell or unsolicited. Let us try with these words. Let us find out what are the morphemes or what are the affixes and what kind of affixes or what kind of morphemes are the prefixes, what kind of morphemes are the suffixes. In the first word reappear, there is a prefix and what is that prefix? The prefix is re-. Remember prefixes are generally or in almost all instances they are derivational ones, because though they do not change the category, they change the meaning.

So, appear, and reappear means doing the work again. The meaning changes substantially. So, re- would be considered as a derivational morpheme. There is no category change, yet it is derivational. That is what I am saying. This derivational-inflectional division is a little gray. There are a lot of instances where you would find it a little tricky to figure out whether it is changing the category or not, whether it is changing the meaning or not. But these two are the domains where you have to explore it; category change, meaning change. The

layperson's identification style would be category change, derivational; no category change is going to be inflectional.

Similarly, substantial meaning change, derivational; no substantial meaning change is going to be inflectional. You might find it confusing, but you can always keep this in mind that these are the basic division tactics when you are trying to understand derivational and inflectional morphemes or affixes. So in reappear, appear is the root word and re- is a derivational morpheme. Then you have retest. Test is the verb, retest is also the verb; it does not change the category. Yet re- would be a derivational morpheme, because it changes the meaning of the root word substantially.

Similarly, in impatient, patient is the root word and im- is going to be the prefix. It is a derivational morpheme, because it just changes the meaning to the opposite. Similar is the case with unwell. Well is an adjective, unwell is also an adjective. There is hardly any category change, yet the morpheme un- would be considered as a derivational morpheme, because the meaning changes significantly.

Then there is a word like unsolicited. Can you identify how many morphemes are there? There are actually three morphemes. Un- is a prefix, solicit is the root word and -ed is the suffix. So, solicit would be, we have to find out how to begin with. What is the nature of the root word? Solicit generally is considered to be a verb; I solicited their suggestion. But when you say solicited, it can be used as an adjective also. I assume that we are going to call solicited as an adjective and solicit as a verb and unsolicited as also an adjective. So, to begin with, solicit is a verb. From solicit, it becomes solicited. When it is solicited, the verb becomes an adjective here. Why it is an adjective? Because we are adding an un- to it. Un- as a morpheme cannot be added to a verb, solicited in this instance.

So, what is the first step? The first step is identification of the root word. What is that? Solicit. What is the form of it? What is the grammatical category? It is a verb. Then, from solicit, -ed has been added. So, solicited. What is solicited? Either it can be a verb or it can be an adjective, depending on the situation. In this situation, I consider it as an adjective. So, the change from a verb to an adjective makes -ed a derivational morpheme. Then what is the

third step? The third step is the addition of un-. So, from solicited, it became unsolicited. Here, the category does not change; it still remains an adjective.

So, what is changing? There is a substantial or drastic change of meaning. That is the reason why we are again going to call it a derivational morpheme. But if I will simply have solicited, -ed can also be considered as an inflectional morpheme, if we begin with solicit as a verb and solicited also a verb. So, in that case, -ed would be inflectional and from the verb to adjective case, -ed would be derivational. This is what I was talking about. Just by looking at the word, sometimes it is difficult. Sometimes it is tricky, clumsy or confusing to find out whether the morpheme is considered as a derivational one or an inflectional one.

That is the reason we need to be very careful, and no matter how careful you become, sometimes it creates problem in understanding, to identify derivational and the inflectional morphemes. My suggestion for you would be to try it with your first language. Figure it out how it works in your language; whether you have derivational morphemes or not, whether you have inflectional morphemes or not. Do the derivational and inflectional morphemes behave similarly as they behave in English, or has there been some kind of difference? It is entirely up to you to figure it out for your own language.

With this information, I will give you some examples of suffixing here. There are different kinds of suffixes; one is the agentive suffix and there is also something called verbal suffix. In most cases, when you add an -er, this is considered to be an agentive suffix. And what does it mean? That means, this particular phrase works as the agent. When I say writer, that means, somebody who writes. The writer has the agenthood of writing or the agentive status is there with the writer and similarly killer.

So, the agentive status of killing lies with the killer. That is why -er is an agentive suffix. I hope you remember this and you can apply it to other languages also. Let us say reader; when I say reader, that means, the agentive suffix -er makes the reader an agent. If I put it in that way, a reader reads. So the reader is an agent here. Similar is the case with let us say walker, or you can say a bottle opener. A bottle opener is basically considered as an instrumental. In most of the cases, they are non-human objects. They generally do not have the agentive

reading. I will give you two examples. So think about it. John opened the lock and the key opened the lock.

John is also an opener, the key is also an opener, but there is a difference between John and the key. Can you think about it? When you say John opened the lock, that means, John is the agent. If John wants, he may or may not open it. But when you say the key opened the lock, the key generally does not have the agentive status. The key cannot say I do not want to open the lock. No, that is not possible for a key, because it is not a human. The volitionality is not there. Rather it is treated as an instrument. You can say John used the key to open the lock

That means John has the agentive status. But you cannot say the key used John to open the lock. No, key does not have that power or that ability unless you are actually talking about a science fiction or some fictional world. So, -er in most of the cases, it gives a kind of agentive reading and primarily it is related to the human agents. Think about other words on the similar lines. Then there is something called, let us say, a verbal suffix. That is able; able as a suffix is generally associated with verbs,, eventually it makes it an adjective

When you say the school is at a walkable distance. Walk generally starts with a verb; that means you can walk. When you say walkable, the distance is walkable; that means you can walk. The stick is breakable; that means you can break the stick. When you say the handwriting is readable; that means you can read the handwriting. So, read, walk, break, these are the verbs and they take the -able suffix and eventually they become adjectives.

This is also a different instance of what morpheme, derivational or inflectional? What do you think? It should be derivational morpheme. And then the other suffix is -ion. So, -ion also generally gets associated with verbs. When you say relation, relation begins from a word relate, which is a verb to begin with. Then you have dictation. What is the root word of dictation? The root word is dictate. It is a verb to begin with. So, -able suffix and -ion suffix are generally the verbal suffixes. Er suffix generally is an agentive suffix, which primarily takes a human agent; primarily again, not always.

Then when these suffixes are used, what kind of changes do you see? In most of the cases, when we study the structure of language, we study it at three levels; we studied at the phonological level, syntactic level and morphological level. In this case, we are going to

categorize, we are going to put it in three different changes: phonological level, categorical level and semantic level. So, what kind of phonological changes happen when you say able, walk-walkable, read-readable? You are primarily adding three extra phonemes: a, ba and la; breakable, readable, walkable. Whenever you are trying to add -able to to a verb, maybe I do not know, we will think about some other words later. Eatable, when you say this is eatable; that means, the other word is edible, but that edible is different. This is a good instance of a description. Think about two words one is eatable, the other one is edible. How many morphemes does eatable have? Eatable has two morphemes, eat and -able. But when you say edible, you cannot say edi and ble, that does not work. Edible is a simple word with one morpheme, but eatable is a complex word with two morphemes.

This is how from eat to eatable, from work to workable, break to breakable; there is a phonological change, because you are adding extra morphemes. There is also a significant category change and this category change happens in what way? It goes from the verb to the adjective. So, walk was a verb, walkable became an adjective; eat is a verb, eatable became an adjective.

Then there is also semantic change. Semantic change means how the meaning gets changed. In this case what is the meaning of able? Able means to be x'd. To be x'd means to be eaten, to be read, to be walked, to be breathed, breathable. You can say the air is breathable. So, when you are trying to talk, something is able to be x'd then there is a semantic change. First one is x and the second one is something is able to be x'd. The addition of the ability changes the semantic information that it has.

So now, my question for you would be, do you think all verbs can take able form? Think about it and then you might get this question later. Can you say singable? I do not think so. We cannot say this song is singable; it sounds so weird. Can you say jumpable? No, I do not think so. But then do you think in the long run, you can actually use this able suffix if the native speakers communicate in this way, do you think it is going to be possible? So, let us check it later. But this is a valid question to ponder over, to think about.

The next point is very interesting actually. Besides the derivational and inflectional, there is a special category of suffix, we call it the diminutive suffix. The diminutive suffix does not

change the category, it surely does not change the meaning rather the form gets changed. The form, the way it has been used, that gets changed. Generally it is a part of slang, informal use of language. It is like a noun, dad becomes a noun, daddy is also a noun; dog is a noun, doggie is also a noun.

Generally you find it in the child's language or you use it in informal speech. I have already given you the example. This is -y morpheme or -ie morpheme. Neither do they change category nor do they change the meaning significantly; nothing changes. It still remains the same; the meaning is still the same. That is why this is a special category or the special kind of suffix and we call it diminutive suffix. So, dad to daddy and dog to doggie. Similarly mom to mommy and you can think about some other examples.

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Backformation

- Word formations are reversed and it is a process of assuming a simpler word to be complex to begin with.
- E.g Laser- Light amplification (by) simulated emission (of) radiation
- 'Backformation' itself is a backformed word.



Now, to wind it the discussion, a couple of more things to talk about. There is another way by which we create words or the word formation rules, that is called backformation. Generally we first think about a simple word then we move to more complex ones. But in case of backformation, we do not do that. We approach it from the other way round perspective. First we approach the complex ones then we go to the simpler ones.

Let us read it word formations are reversed and it is a process of assuming a simpler word to be complex to begin with. Here the movement is not from simple to complex, rather the

movement is from complex to simple. That is why we call it backformation. So, when you say backformation, so laser is a word, it is light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation. It is believed that the simple word laser must have begun with a complex word, then we made it small. Instead of saying light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation, we are using it as laser.

Similar is the case with the word backformation. The word itself is a back formed word, because backformation ideally could have been just like. It could have started with a complex one and eventually we reach to to a word like the word itself backformation. So, the journey here is not from simple to complex rather it has become from complex to simple.

Now what we see or now what we use that is the simpler form of a complex form to begin with. So, that is going to be considered backformation. So, this was all about the formation of new words and changing of meanings in the day-to-day context or we can say in the spoken form.

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Examples of Neologism from Literature

1. sponge-taneous: sponge + spontaneous. The choice of sponge was possibly in order to describe the small spider and the fly.
2. slithy: Slithering + lithe (thin and long). Should convey the idea of a snake.
3. farbjous: fabulous + joyous. Describing a celebration.
4. galumphing: gallop + triumphant + ing. The knight is galloping back on his horse in triumph.
5. tulgey: a dark, dense forests. Possibly coined from the Anglo-Cornish word 'Tulgu' (dark) and the Cornish word 'Tewolgow' (dense, thick).
6. Taggiye dewa- to tag someone on Facebook. The suffix '-iye' in Bangla means 'to do'
7. Hutum hashi: owlsh smile. The word 'hutum' is used to describe a kind of owl, and hashi means to smile.



There are also instances of neologism in literature. I am not going to talk about neologism in literature in much detail, but I will just share some examples, in case you also love literature and you read a lot, then probably after you understand what is neologism, you might find it more interesting when you read.

These are a few words from Alice in Wonderland and Jabberwocky. When you think about the new words, literature actually plays a vital role, and it has a big contribution for the enrichment or for nourishing a language. Here are a few instances where you can actually create very interesting words and you can use it in the literature, eventually which may part be a part of the spoken discourse.

So, let us see these are from Jabberwocky, which is famous for all these nonsense words. They call it nonsense literature. So, the words like spongetaneous and we are going to talk about what sort of neologism has been used here. Which process of neologism? When it is spongetaneous, it is mainly sponge plus spontaneous. The choice of sponge was possibly in order to describe the small spider or the fly. So, sponge plus spontaneous becomes spongetaneous. Can you tell me which process would include such kind of things? It is mainly blending.

So, you are taking two different words and you are putting them together and you are creating a new word. Then there is a word like slithy. Slithy is slithering plus lithe. Lithe means which is thin and long. Slithy generally conveys the idea of a snake. So, slithering and lithe and then you are creating a new word that could also be a blend. Most of them are basically the blends.

Then there is frabjous. Frabjous is fabulous plus joyous; that describes a celebration. And the new word that you create is frabjous. But then you can see there is a new sound which has been inserted, the ja sound. When you say frabjous, it is a combination of fabulous and joyous, together you are going to call it frabjous. The /r/ sound has been inserted, which was not there in either of the words, neither in fabulous nor in joyous.

Then you have galumphing. Galumphing is gallop plus triumphant plus i n g. So, i n g is an inflection, inflectional morpheme here. Then gallop and triumphant together that becomes gallumph. So, galumphing. And the meaning is given here, like the usage is given here, the knight is galumphing back on his horse and that is why you can say the knight is galloping back on his horse in triumph. So, the combination of gallop and triumph could actually result in galumphing.

Tulgey; Tulgey is a dark dense forest; possibly it has been coined from the Anglo-Cornish word Tulger, that is dark. This is a borrowing. And the Cornish word Tewolgow means dense

and thick. These are literary terms which have been very frequently used in the nonsense literature.

Then there is taggiye dewa; taggiye dewa is another Indian perspective word. Taggiye dewa is mainly used by the Bengali netizens. Taggiye is related to tag, dewa is a light verb. Light verb which means to give. But here dewa is used in the perfective aspect. So, taggiye dewa means I tagged somebody and here you see there is code-mixing and code-switching. So, when you say taggiye; the first part of the word is English and then the rest of the word after taggiye is going to be Bangla, then dewa is definitely Bangla word. So, a lot of code-mixing and code-switching words here and then the new generation Bangla speakers have created this word.

So, these are some very interesting instances, where you can actually think about it from your own mother language perspective, how you are going to use it in your own language. Neologism is not restricted just to English, rather it can extend its scope to other languages also. So, when you are trying to understand the process of neologism, you should also include your first language and try to find out if there are any such words which are also found in your language, which was not used before.

Then try to find out which process might have been involved. All these blending, clipping, then acronymization that we were talking about. Just check if you have something similar to go about as far as your first language is concerned. Then you can also test if there was any word which had changed its meaning drastically; whether it has narrowed down, it has been broadened, there has been a semantic drift that is happening. So, now, once you understand what is neologism and what are the processes of neologism, it will be easier for you to understand the morphological typology.

How a particular language belongs to a particular type on the basis of the morphemes that it uses. When we are talking about typology, we will surely find out what are the types of morphemes and how they are used, and how to decide which morpheme belongs to which category.

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Suppletion in Morphology

- Suppletion is the replacement of one stem with another, resulting in an allomorph of a morpheme which has no phonological similarity to the other allomorphs.
- Stem Suppletion: Walk-Walked vs. Go-Went
Big-Bigger-Biggest / Go-Better-Best
- Affix Suppletion: Cat-Cats vs. Ox-Oxen
dog-dogs vs. alum-alumnii

finalizing
FM BM BM
stem 1 - final-ize
stem 2 - finalize-ing



I will just talk about a bit related to stem and affix, because this is where I am going to take up morphological typology. Let us try to understand what is suppletion. This is also a new term in morphology. Those who have had some basic linguistics course, you must be familiar with the term and those of you who are new to this discipline and you are not aware about the the discipline-specific jargon, suppletion is the replacement of one stem with another, resulting in an allomorph or a morpheme which has no phonological similarity to the other allomorph.

The definition sounds to be a little heavy, but now let us see how it works. Before we understand what is suppletion, I think I need to briefly discuss how would you identify a stem. A stem is a morpheme which has the ability to have another bound morpheme associated to it. Let us say I am thinking about a word like finalizing. So, let us consider a word like finalizing. Here we will find out what is the stem.

Now let us try to find out how many morphemes are there. Obviously, final is one morpheme, iz is another morpheme and i n g is another morpheme. So, this is a free morpheme, iz is a bound morpheme and i n g is also bound morpheme. So, here, final is the stem for finalize and finalize is the stem for finalizing. So, stem one is final. Final is the stem for the morpheme i z e. Now what is the stem two? Stem two is finalize. Finalize is the stem and i n g is the morpheme associated with it. So, when we are trying to understand how suppletion

works, you need to understand what is the stem first. And remember the stem one is the root word, but stem two is not the root word.

That means if we draw a logical relation, the free morphemes like some stems might be root words too, not all the stems though. It is not necessary that if something is considered to be a stem, it can also be a root word, not really. There are some instances in which stems can be considered as root words also. So, in final, finalize, and finalizing. stem one is final and it holds the affix ize, stem two is finalize it holds the affix i n g. So, now, let us see how the stem suppletion works. When you say walk and walked, go and went. In walk and walked, what is the stem? The stem is walk, but it has a phonological similarity.

However, in case of go-went, there is absolutely no phonological similarity. Go has a /g/ phoneme and then /au/ phoneme. In case of went, there is neither any /g/ sound nor any /au/ sound. Phonologically they are very different, that is why we can consider it as a stem suppletion. The stem has gone through a suppletion stage. Similar is the case with good, better and best. Here, when good becomes better, the meaning remains same as big becomes bigger. So, this is mainly the comparative inflection, but there is absolutely no phonological similarity.

So, good as the stem in better has gone through a suppletion, and good as a stem in best has also gone through the stem suppletion like the suppletion phase. This results in an allomorph. So, -ed is the allomorph here: work-worked, go-went. The -ed morpheme is the allomorph, but here you do not really see any kind of phonological similarity.

And in case of affix suppletion also something similar happens. When you say cat and cats and ox and oxen, so -en and -s, these are the allomorphs. But in the first one, there is a similarity in pronunciation, but in the second one, there is no similarity. So, its /s/ sound and /n/ sound has become very different.

Generally in case of plural marking, either it becomes -s or -es or -iz, but in case of oxen, so there has not been any a phonological similarity. Similar is the case with alum and alumni. When the alumni the -i maker which is working at the plural marker, it has gone through a suppletion process. So, there are two different kinds of suppletion, either we have stem suppletion or we have affix suppletion. Just remember they are allomorphs to each other or

the similar the morphemes where the forms are different, but they indicate the same thing, but you do not see any kind of phonological similarity. Then you can claim that this has gone through a suppletion process.

I will stop it here and what I have explained is all about the basics of morphology. And I am sure when I move to the morphological typology in the next session, you should be able to understand the concepts in a better manner.

Thank you.