

# MORPHOLOGY

## INTRODUCTION:

Morphology is the science and study of the smallest grammatical units of language, and of their formation into words, including inflection (addition in a word), derivation (exclusion from a word) and composition (combination of words, clauses or phrases). It breaks words into morphemes.

## DEFINITION:

According to **Dorfman**:

“Morphology is the study of the ways and methods of grouping sounds into sound-complexes or words, of definite, distinct, conventional meaning.”

According to **Bloomfield**:

“Morphology is the study of the constructions in which bound forms appear among the constituents.”

## SCOPE OR SIGNIFICANCE OF MORPHOLOGY:

Broadly speaking, morphology is the study of the patterns of word-forms. It **studies**:

- How the words are formed,
- Where they originate from,
- What their grammatical forms are,
- What the functions of prefixes and suffixes in the formation of words are
- On what basis, the parts of speech of a particular language are formed
- How the systems of gender, number, plural etc. function
- How and why the word-forms change.

Morphology is not only the synchronic study of word forms, but it also studies the history and development of word-forms. So, it is both a **synchronic (in a given time)** and a **diachronic (across time)** study of the word forms. When it is only synchronic it is called **Morphemic**.

## DIFFERENCE BETWEEN MORPHOLOGY AND SYNTAX:

Morphology	Syntax
1. Morphology is grammar of words.	1. Syntax is grammar of sentences.
2. Morphology accounts for the internal structure or form of words.	2. Syntax describes how those words are put together in sentences.
3. Morphology belongs to the discussion of how plurals are formed.	3. Syntax belongs to the discussion of prepositional phrases.
4. Morphology refers to the form of words themselves in a language system.	4. Syntax refers to the form of arrangement of words in phrases and sentences.

### Morphological analysis:

The morphological analysis is the observation and description of the grammatical elements in a language by studying their form and function, their phonological variants and their distribution and mutual relationships within larger stretches of speech. It may be either synchronic or diachronic or may be both synchronic and diachronic.

### Morpheme

- Morpheme is the study of **Minimal units of grammatical structure**. Morphemes are described as minimal units of grammatical analysis; the units of '**lowest**' rank of which words, the units of next '**highest**' rank are composed. So, morphemes are those distinct minimal syntactical units which form words. They can also be defined as the minimal units of meaning out of which meaning words are composed in various ways.

**Examples:** Such as, the four components of **un faith ful ness** are called morphemes. **Telephone** has three morphemes {**tele**}, **phone**, and {-s,} while **telephone** has **two** morphemes and **phone** has just **one** morpheme.

- A morpheme is a **distinct linguistic** form. It is a minimal unit of speech that is recurrent. It has a grammatical function. It is semantically different from other linguistic forms and is not divisible or analyzable into smaller forms.
- Morphemes may or may not have **meaning**, may or may not have a **phonological representation**.

**Example:** {un-} has a negative meaning in **unfriendly, unhealthy, unable, unemployed** and many other words, but it is meaningless in **under**. {-er} has a constant meaning in **teacher, heater, reader** etc.

- In **plural words**, like **sheep, fish** we have **two morphemes** in each word; the first morpheme in each case has a phonological representation but the second one has no phonological representation and is called **zero morpheme**.
- A morpheme may be **monosyllabic** as {man} and {a/an/the} or **polysyllabic** as {happy} and {nature}.
- A morpheme has been called a ‘**grammatical moneme**’ by “**Martinet**”. Another synonym for the morpheme is ‘**glosseme**’.
- Morphemes are usually put into **braces**, i.e. **curly brackets {}**. For **example: {the} {help} {-less} {boy} {-s}**.

### Morphs

#### Definition:

According to **Hockett**:

“Any phonemic shape or representation of a phoneme is a morph”.

According to **John Lyons**:

“When the word can be segmented into parts, these segments are referred to as morphs.”

In other words, **transcription of morpheme** is called **morphs**. Each morph, like each phone, or each person or each day, happens only once and then it is gone. Each morph represents a particular morpheme, but each morpheme does not have a morph.

**Example:** The plural noun **sheep** has **one morph**, but it has **two morphemes** [sheep] and [], **went** has **one morph**, but **two morphemes** [go] and [ed].

### Allomorphs

#### Definition:

According to **Nelson Francis:**

“Allomorph is a **“family of morphs”** which is alike in two ways:

1. In the allophones, of which they are composed and,
2. In the meaning, which they have.

In other words, the alternative phonological manifestation or representation of a morpheme is called **allomorphs** or ‘**morpheme alternates**’ or ‘**morpheme variant**’. An allomorph, therefore, is a non-distinctive variant morpheme or it may be called a family or class of morphs which are phonemically and semantically identical.

#### Variations in Allomorphs:

The allomorphs are phonologically conditioned. their forms are dependent on the adjacent phonemes or else, they are morphologically conditioned. Then is when morphemes are affected by their phonological environment ‘**sandhi**’, they become allomorphs.

**Example:** /-z/, /-s/, /-iz/, and /-Φ/ are the various allomorphs of the plural morpheme {-z} in English.

#### Relation between phonology and morphology:

The study of different shapes of allomorphs is half-way between phonology and morphology and are sometimes referred to as **Morphophonology** or **Morphology**.

### Classification of Morphemes

Morphemes are classified into two major types. They are as follows:

1. Lexical Morpheme

## 2. Grammatical Morpheme

### Lexical Morphemes:

Lexical morphemes are forms like **boy, write, paper** and **pen**. Lexical morphemes are **nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs**. They have more or less independent meaning, so that one or a series of lexical forms in isolation can be fairly meaningful. **Pen** suggest something quite different to us, as do **boy, paper** and **write**. Lexical morphemes are very large in language; the number may go up to ten million as in English. Lexical morphemes change frequently: new members are added to the lexicon quite often.

### Grammatical Morphemes:

Grammatical morphemes are forms like some, with, a, an, the, to form. Grammatical morphemes are elements like prepositions, articles, conjunctions, form indicating number, gender or tense, and so on. Grammatical morphemes, by and large, do not change frequently: new members in their family in any language are added rather infrequently.

### Other sub- types of morphemes

Morphemes are also divided into following sub headings:

1. Bound morphemes
2. Free morphemes

### Bound morphemes:

Forms which do not occur alone are called bound morphemes.

**Example:** Affixes to the words such as **–ness, -less, pre, up-, de-, con-, -er**, meant are all bound morphemes.

Bound morphemes are further divided as:

### 1. **Prefix:**

Prefix is the initial position. In the English words such as **receive, remove, deceive, perform, unfaithful, unemployment, re-,de-,per-,un-**, are all

prefixes. The prefixes are affixed before the roots and cannot occur independently.

2. **Infix:**

Infix is the middle position. Infixes are less commonly found in English apart from one mode of analysis of **plurals** like **geese, men**.

3. **Suffix:**

Suffix is the final position. The plural formative **–s, –en**; the verb paradigm affixes **–ing, –d, –ed**, etc. the comparative and superlative ending of the adjectives (**er and –est**) and so many other final position formatives such as **–ness, –less,**

**–ment** are called suffixes. The suffixes are affixed after the roots or after the root-suffix.

Suffixes are further classified as:

1. **Inflectional suffix:** Suffixes, which do not allow further affixation is called inflections or inflectional morphemes. **For example: inagreed and agrees, –d and –s** are suffixes and do not allow further affixation of a suffix.

2. **Derivational suffix:** Suffixes, which may be followed by other suffixes are called derivational suffixes. **For example: –ment , –ble** are derivational suffixes in **agreement** and **agreeable**, because both can be followed by other suffixes.

Derivational suffixes can be sub - classified as:

1. **Class – maintaining:** The class maintaining derivational suffixes are those which produce a derived form of the same class as the underlying form; they do not change the class of a part of speech. **For example: In boyhood, childhood, kinship, principalship, –hood and –ship** is class maintaining derivational suffixes.

2. **Class – changing:** The class changing derivations are those that produce a derived form of another class. **For example: In teacher, boyish, development, national, –er, –ish, –ment, –al** are class changing derivational suffixes.

FREE MORPHEME:

Forms which occur alone are called free morphemes.

**Examples: Rat, cat, go, black, the, yet, but, and** are free morphemes.

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