

LING 001: Morphology I

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- 1 Introducing morphemes
 - The role of meaning
 - Morphemes and words
- 2 Overview of morpheme types

What you've been told so far:

Morphology

The study of the structure of words.

A (potentially different) definition:

Morphology

The study of *morphemes* and how they combine.

Morphemes

A classic definition:

Morpheme

The smallest linguistic unit connecting sound and meaning.

Some morphemes:

- *dog*
- *-s* as in *dog-s*
- *'s* as in *The big unfriendly-looking dog's leash*

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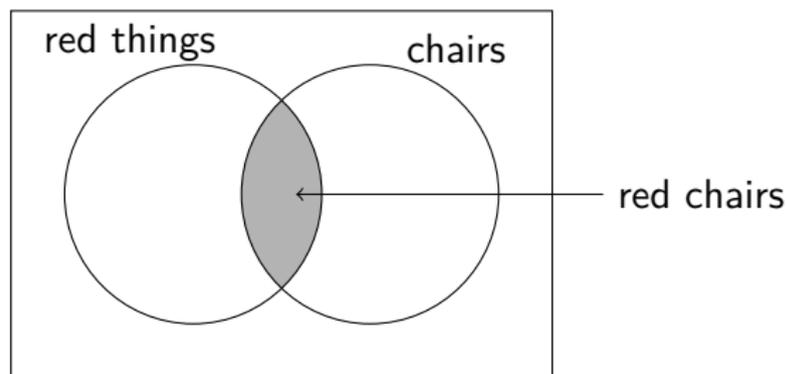
- 2 Overview of morpheme types

Why meaning?

Principle of compositionality

The meaning of a complex expression is a function of the meanings of its parts (and the way they are put together).

(attributed to Gottlob Frege)



Why meaning?

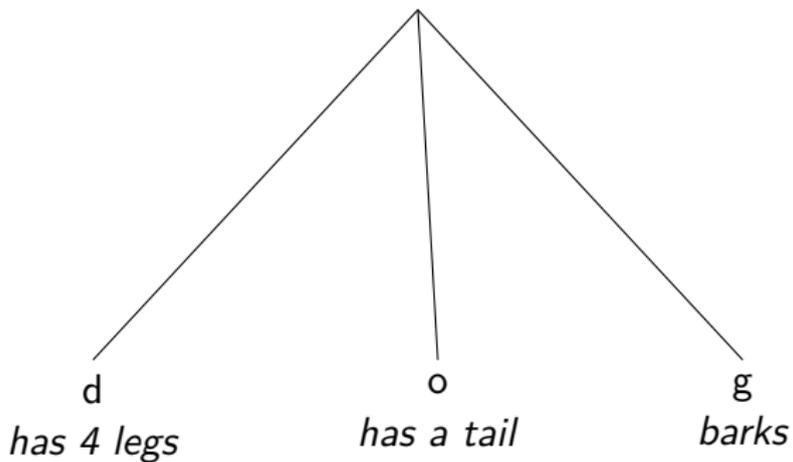
Phonemes aren't meaningful individually.

- There's nothing puppy-like about each of the sounds making up the word *dog*.

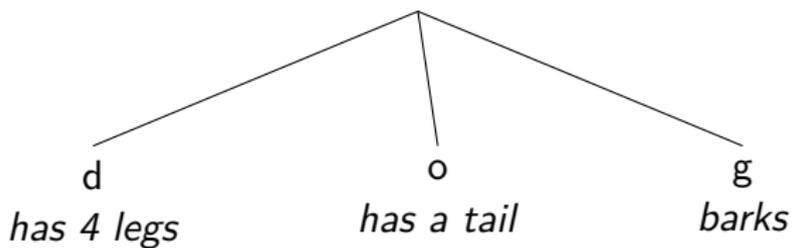
But *morphemes* may be.

- I.e. individually meaningless units combine to yield larger meaningful ones.
 - 'duality of patterning'

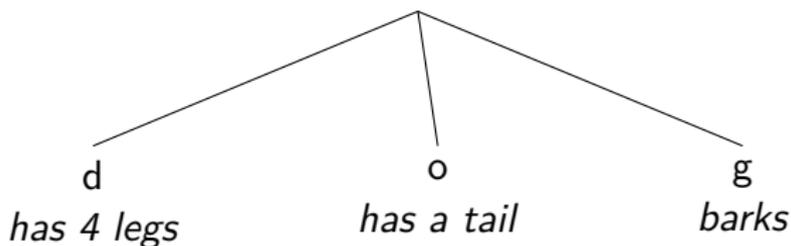
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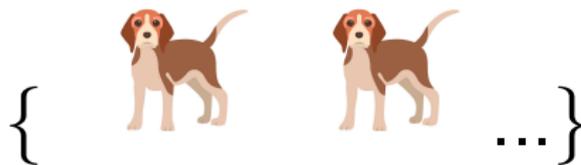
Natural language phonology doesn't work this way!

Morphemes have meaning

But morphology does:



dog



dog

a domesticated canid

-s

plural

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Preliminary facts about morphology

- Often irregular
 - English past tenses: *played, walked* but also *sang, brought, saw...*

Preliminary facts about morphology

- Cross-linguistically variable
 - English nouns have 2 forms: a singular and a plural (*dog, dogs*).
 - Estonian nouns, on the other hand...

	singular	plural
nominative	aprill	aprillid
genitive	aprilli	aprillide
partitive	aprilli	aprille / aprillisid
illative	aprilli / aprillisse	aprillidesse
inessive	aprillis	aprillides
elative	aprillist	aprillidest
allative	aprillile	aprillidele
adessive	aprillil	aprillidel
ablativ	aprillilt	aprillidelt
translative	aprilliks	aprillideks
terminative	aprillini	aprillideni
essive	aprillina	aprillidena
abessive	aprillita	aprillideta
comitative	aprilliga	aprillidega

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- Sometimes hard to distinguish from syntax
 - 'Agglutinative' languages like Turkish:
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 - ‘Agglutinative’ languages like Turkish:

- (1) Uygar -laş -tır -a -ma -dık -lar -ımız -dan -mış
 civilized VBLZ CAUS able NEG NMLZ PL 1PL.POSS ABL PST
 -sınız -casına
 2PL as.if
 ‘as if you are among those who we were not able to civilize’

What about words?

We've been discussing *morphemes*, and have assumed that they combine to form *words*.

- We've defined morphemes. How about words?

The concept of a 'word' is elusive. (At least) two phenomena make this clear:

- 'Extreme agglutination' (the Turkish example above)
- Clitics

Clitics vs affixes

Clitic (first pass at a definition)

A morpheme that is phonologically dependent on another morpheme.

(from Greek *klinō* 'to lean on')

English possessive (clitic) vs plural (affix).

(2) *Attachment*

- a. The dogs walked in the park.
- b. The dog with the sharp teeth's leash was pink in color.

(3) *Selectivity*

- a. *The reds chairs.
- b. The woman who I ran into's purse.

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(7) *'ll you go to class tomorrow?

But *will* and *'ll* are clearly related somehow; we don't want to say they're completely separate entities.

- Perhaps they're the same syntactically, and the word vs clitic distinction is phonological...

Can we always identify morphemes?

It's not always easy:

- Multiple mappings
 - e.g. One-to-many: Ancient Greek *lu-ō* ('dismantle', 1SG active indicative) vs *lu-ē* ('dismantle', 3SG active indicative) vs *lue-tai* ('dismantle', 3SG middle indicative)
- Non-concatenative morphology, e.g. Semitic root-and-pattern morphology.

katab	perfective active
kutib	perfective passive
aktub	imperfective active
uktab	imperfective passive

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An overview of morpheme types

- A discussion of parts of speech
- Get into the diversity of morpheme positions/functions/properties
- Talk a little about allomorphy and word structure

Parts of speech

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–But also on the basis of **morphology!**

- smart-ER_{ADJ}, smart-EST_{ADJ}
- strange-LY_{ADV}
- EN-robe_V

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'Twas brillig, and the **slithy toves**

Did gyre and gimble in the wabe:

All **mimsy** were the borogoves,

And the mome raths outgrabe.

“Beware the Jabberwock, my son!

The jaws that bite, the claws that catch!

Beware the Jubjub bird, and shun

The **frumious** Bandersnatch!”

He took his **vorpal** sword in hand;

Long time the manxome foe he sought—

So rested he by the Tumtum tree

And stood awhile in thought.

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- Free Morphemes
 - single morphemes that can stand on their own as independent words, like *family*, *quick*, *ostrich*, *google*...
- Bound Morphemes
 - can't appear on their own as independent words, like *-s*, *un-*, *cran-*, *-ing*, etc.

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..Note that bases aren't always free! *re-ceive*, *con-ceive*, *de-ceive*...

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- Function
 - grammatical, obligatory
 - *to, -s, -ed, the...*
 - **closed-class**

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In general, derivational morphemes appear closer to bases than

Morpheme Types

Summary:

- Free/Bound = independently a word or not
- Affixes/Bases = position in a word
- Content/Function = referential or grammatical
- Derivational/Inflectional = Defining the content meaning or the category of the word vs. grammatically required by that type of word

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Consider the formation of the plural in English. You generally get (at least) a base and a plural suffix.

- But note the differences in pronunciation for adding -s to form the plural:
 - bee-s or dog-s (like the z in zeal)
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- This allomorphy is predictable based on phonology (more on that in another lecture)! But there’s also irregular allomorphy for the plural:

● child ~ children	tooth ~ teeth
● foot ~ feet	fish ~ fish...
● mouse ~ mice	

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- [chocolate cake] icing = ‘icing on a chocolate cake’
- chocolate [cake icing] = ‘cake icing made of chocolate’

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 - False!
- True/False: There is no upper bound to how many morphemes a word can have.
 - True! We have (without trying to think too hard about what it would mean): *sens-ation, sensation-al, sensational-ize, sensationaliz-ation, sensationalization-al, sensationalizational-ize, sensationalizationalize-ation...*