

ISSN: 0976-8165

The Criterion

An International Journal in English

Bi-monthly Refereed and Indexed Open Access eJournal

5th Year of Open Access

Vol. 5, Issue-6 December 2014

Editor-In-Chief- Dr. Vishwanath Bite

Managing Editor- Mrs. Madhuri Bite



About Us: <http://www.the-criterion.com/about/>

Archive: <http://www.the-criterion.com/archive/>

Contact Us: <http://www.the-criterion.com/contact/>

Editorial Board: <http://www.the-criterion.com/editorial-board/>

Submission: <http://www.the-criterion.com/submission/>

FAQ: <http://www.the-criterion.com/fa/>

Morphology: A Tool to Enhance Vocabulary of English Language

Rajani Devi

Lecturer in English,
M.A.C.W, Jhajjar, Haryana

Many a times, we have seen many words which are used in various ways, for example, child, children, childhood, live, lively, livelihood, female, feminine, feminist, feminism, and so on. Have we ever observed, why does so happen? How do we change number? For example: a cat becomes cats when we say I have 2 cats as my pets. How does goose changes into geese, when we are said to change its number? How we make nouns from verbs such as, smoking from the verb smoke? This all happens because of not a magic but due to morphology, a branch of linguistics. In every language in the world, whether it is written, spoken, or signed, morphology is fundamentally involved in both the production of the language, as well as its understanding. Morphology is what makes a pointer someone who points someone who points, what makes impossible something that is not possible, what makes dogs more than a single dog. Morphology is also what makes a teacher for someone who teaches at school, and what makes inedible something that cannot be eaten. It is because of only morphology that we write and speak, he is going to market and they are going to market. In my present paper, I want to throw light on the importance of morphology and how it can be an important tool to enhance our vocabulary in a very interesting and practical way.

Morphology plays, according to Wiczenowski, two central roles in language. In its first role, derivational morphology allows existing words to be used as the base for forming new words with different meanings and different functionality. From the above example the noun teacher is formed from teach, and impossible has a different semantic meaning with its related verb possible. In its second role, inflectional morphology deals with syntactic features of the languages such as persons(I am, you are, he/she is), number (one child, two children), gender (actor, actress), tense (eat, eats, ate, has/have/had eaten), case (he, his, him), and degree (cold, colder, coldest). These syntactic features required to varying degrees by different languages, do not change the part of the speech of the word(as the verb eat becomes adjective inedible) and do not change the underlying meaning of the word (as cellist from cello).

Speaker, writer, and signer of language from these syntactic agreements, called inflections, from base words, called roots. In doing so, these producers of language start with a root word (for example the verb go), and governed by a set of syntactic features (for example third person, singular, present), form the appropriate inflection (goes). This process is called morphological generation. In order to make this process more effective, the listeners and observers of language must be able to take the inflected word (actresses) and find the underlying root (actor) as well as the set of conveyed syntactic features (feminine, plural). This decoding process is called morphological analysis.

The presented paper here exclusively throws light on orthography, the way in which words are written, not phonology, and the way in which words are spoken. In many languages, this distinction is largely meaningless. In Italian for example, words are spoken in very systematic relation to how they are written, and vice versa. On the other hand, the association between the way words in English are spoken and the way they are written is often haphazard.

In linguistics morphology is the study of the internal structure and transformational process of words in this way. It is analogous to biological morphology which studies the internal structures of animals. The internal structures of animals are its individual organs. The internal structures of words are its morphemes. Just as every animal is a structural combination of organs, every word in every language of the world is a structured combination of morphemes. Each morpheme is an individual unit of meaning. Words are formed from a combination of one or more free morphemes and zero or more bound morphemes. Free morphemes are unit of meaning which can stand on their own as words. Bound morphemes are also units of meaning. However, it cannot occur as words on their own: they can only occur in combination with free morphemes from this definition: it follows that a word is either a single free morphemes, with other free and bound morphemes.

Many English words are comprised of two or three morphemes; word jumped for example, is comprised of two morphemes, jump+ ed. Since jump is an individual unit of meaning which cannot be broken down further into smallest units of meaning, it is a morpheme. And since jump can occur on its own as a word in the language, it is a free morpheme. The unit + ed can be added to a large number of English verbs to form the past tense. Since + ed has a meaning, and it cannot be further divided into smaller units, it is also a morpheme. However, +ed can occur only as a part of another verb, not as a word on its own; therefore it is a bound morpheme. The process by which bound morphemes are added to free morphemes can often be described as a word formation rule. For example, “work + ed to the end of English verb, work, to form the past tense of the verb” is an orthographic word formation rule. This process, since it is true for a large number of English verbs, is said to be regular. When a rule can only be used to explain only a small number of words in a language the word formation rule is said to be irregular, for example the rule says, “change the final letter of the root from ‘o’ into string ‘id’ to form the past tense.” Which is applicable only to the root- inflection pair do - did, that is irregular. There are other processes that deviate from the regular pattern in partially or fully systematic ways for certain subjects of the vocabulary. Such processes include the doubling of consonants which occur for some verbs (for example: thin – thinned) but not others (for example: train – trained), such processes are often referred to as being semi-regular.

According to Alissa, the average speaker of English knows between 10,000 and 40,000 words, possibly. Speakers know when two words are related to one another or constructed from similar parts, for example, teacher and teaching are two related words very closely as they sound and mean the same thing. So, when the readers have this type knowledge, it means they have morphological knowledge. Thus it is proved that in order to enhance our vocabulary,

morphology consciously and unconsciously is very helpful. It can be a very important tool for this purpose.

Works Cited:

- Farci, Badriya Al. "Morphological and Its Relationship to Vocabulary Knowledge and Morphological Complexity among Omani EFL University Students." M Thesis. University of Queensland. June 2008. Web.
- Melinger, Alissa. "Morphological Complexity in English Prefixed Words: An Experimental Investigation. Diss. Faculty of the Graduate School of State Uni- Of New York at Buffalo. N. D. Web.
- Sihombing, Kartika. "The Morphological Process of English Adjectives." A Thesis. Faculty of Letters: English Dept. An Undergraduate Degree. Gundarma University, Depok: Aug. 2008. Web.
- Wicentowski, Richard. "Modeling and Learning Multilingual Inflectional Morphology in a Minimally Supervised framework." Oct, 2002. Thesis. Baltimore, 2002 Web.