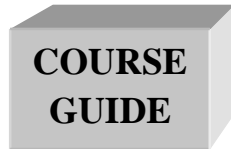




**NATIONAL OPEN UNIVERSITY OF NIGERIA**

**COURSE CODE : ENG226**

**ENGLISH MORPHOLOGY**



**ENG226**  
**ENGLISH MORPHOLOGY**

Course Team  
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Published By:  
National Open University of Nigeria

First Printed 2010

ISBN:

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## **Introduction**

ENG226 is a one-semester-two-credit-units 200 level course. It is designed for students, whose major discipline is English. The course has twelve units which encompass detailed study of word formation processes in English. The material will be of immense benefit to students because examples and illustrations therein are domesticated to cater for Nigerian students.

This course guide tells you briefly what the course is about, what course materials you will be using and how to work your way through these materials. It suggests some general guidelines for the amount of time you are likely to spend on each unit of the course. It also gives you some guidance on your tutor-marked assignments. You are advised to attend the tutorial classes to discuss your difficulties with your tutors.

## **Course Description**

Detailed study of word formation processes; internal structure of English words and morpheme structure; inflectional morphology, identification of lexical categories and grammatical categories; nature and types of morphemes- affixation (derivational and inflectional); phonological and syntactic influences on affixation; word formation processes in English: derivation, compounding, invention, clipping, acronym, blending, back formation, reduplication etc.

## **Course Aims**

The course is designed to introduce you to morphology, which is the study of word formation in English. Its goal is to:

- Allow you to have a general view and understanding of morphology and its relations to other levels of grammar.
- Introduce you to the nature of morpheme, word, and its various formation processes in English.
- Help you to acquire analytical skills for all forms of word formation processes in English and other languages.
- Enable you to achieve, through comprehension and practice, skills and aptitude in analyzing different types of word structures, not only in English, but also in other languages.

## **Course Objectives**

There are objectives to be achieved in each unit of the course. You should read them before studying each unit. It is expected that by the time you have finished studying this course you should be able to:

- understand the peculiar nature of morphology
- expound different types of morphemes in English
- explain the constituent structures of syllables, phonemes, morphemes and words.
- state the various types of word formation processes that exist in English
- the relationship between morphology and other levels of grammar, i.e. phonology, semantics and syntax.
- apply the knowledge acquired in this course to analyze other forms of genres that you meet in the course of this course.

### **Working through this Course**

To complete this course, you are advised to read the study units, read recommended books and other materials provided by NOUN. Each unit contains self assessment exercises, and at points in the course you are required to submit assignments for assessment purposes. At the end of the course, there is a final examination. The course should take you about twenty weeks to complete. You will find all the components of the course listed below. You have to allocate your time to each unit in order to complete the course successfully and on time.

### **Course Materials**

The major components of the course are:

- 1 Study units
- 2 Textbooks
- 3 Assignment File
- 4 Presentation schedule

### **Study Unit**

#### **Module 1 Morphology: Meaning and Nature**

Unit 1 Definition and Nature of Morphology

Unit 2 Characteristics and Types of Morphemes

Unit 3 Morphemes and Other Grammatical Units

Unit 4 Morpheme and Word

Unit 5 Morpheme, Lexis, Vocabulary and Lexeme

## Module 2 Morphology, Phonology, Syntax and Lexis

- Unit 1 Morphology, Its Environment, English Plural Morpheme and Past Tense Morpheme
- Unit 2 Morphology and Syntax
- Unit 3 The Question of Word and Lexical Meaning
- Unit 4 Classifying English Lexis into Types
- Unit 5 Morphological Parsing and the Lexicon

## Module 3 Morphological Processes

- Unit 1 Clipping, Affixation, Borrowing, Blending and Stress shift
- Unit 2 Conversion, Compounding, Back-Formation, Coinage, Acronym Reduplication and Nominalization

Module 1 introduces you to the sub-field of linguistics, called morphology, its meaning, nature and problem. It also examines various definitions of morpheme, characteristics, types, morphemes and its relationship with other grammatical units including word, lexis, vocabulary and lexeme. Module 2 examines the relationship between morphology, phonology and syntax and lexis. Module 3 examines various morphological processes in the language. There are 12 study units in this course. Each study unit consists of one week's work and includes specific objectives, directions for study, reading material and self assessment exercises. Together with tutor-marked assignments, these exercises will assist you in achieving the stated learning objectives of the individual units and of the course.

## Course Marking Scheme

The following table lays out how the actual course marking is broken down.

Assessment	Marks
Assignments 1-4  (the best three of all the assignments submitted)	Three assignments, marked out of 10%  Totalling 30%
Final examination	70% of overall course marks
Total	100% of course marks

## Course Overview

Unit	Title of Work	Week Activity	Tutor Marked Assignment
	Course Guide	1	
<b>Module 1</b>			
1	Definition and Nature of Morphology	2	
2	Characteristics and Types of Morphemes	3	
3	Morphemes and other grammatical units	4	TMA 1
4	Morpheme and word	5	
5	Morpheme, lexis, vocabulary and lexeme	6	TMA 2
<b>Module 2</b>			
1	Morphology, its Environment, English Plural Morpheme & Past Tense Morpheme	7	
2	Morphology and Syntax	8	
3	The Question of Word and Lexical Meaning	9	
4	Classifying English Lexis into Types	10	
5	Morphological parsing and the lexicon	11	TMA 3
<b>Module 3</b>			
1	Clipping , Affixation, Borrowing, Blending and Stress Shift	12	
2	Conversion, Compounding, Back-Formation, Coinage, Acronym, Reduplication and Nominalization	13	TMA 4
	Revision	14	
	Examination	15	
	<b>Total</b>	<b>15</b>	

## Summary

The aim of ENG226 is to equip you with analytical skills for examining the nature of morphology and the various ways of forming words in the English language. Upon completing the course you should be equipped with various types of morphemes, its variants and the relationship with other levels of grammar. You should be able to explain the relationships between morphology, phonology and syntax. You should also be able to distinguish between morpheme, word, lexis, vocabulary and lexeme. At the end of the course, you should be able to name and explain the various types of word formation processes that we have in the English language. Some of these include clipping, affixation, borrowing, blending and stress shift. Others include conversion, compounding, back-formation, coinage, acronym, reduplication and nominalization.



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Published By:  
National Open University of Nigeria

First Printed 2010

ISBN:

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## **MODULE 1 MORPHOLOGY: MEANING AND NATURE**

Unit 1	Definition and Nature of Morphology
Unit 2	Characteristics and Types of Morphemes
Unit 3	Morphemes and other grammatical units
Unit 4	Morpheme and word
Unit 5	Morpheme, lexis, vocabulary and lexeme

### **UNIT 1 DEFINITION AND NATURE OF MORPHOLOGY**

Different scholars have defined morphology at different levels of linguistic studies. Prominent among these are grammar, phonology and semantics. This section offers a detailed submission of these definitions. It also examines the nature of morphemes. The unit is arranged as follows:

#### **CONTENTS**

1.0	Introduction
2.0	Objectives
3.0	Main Content
3.1	Structural Approach
3.2	Phonological Approach
3.3	Semantic Approach
3.4	The Interface between them
3.5	Morpheme as an Indivisible Unit
3.6	Morpheme as a Relational Unit
3.7	Morpheme as a Phonological Feature
4.0	Conclusion
5.0	Summary
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment
7.0	References/Further Reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Although opinions have varied as to the precise definition of the scope and area of morphology over the years, most scholars agree to the status of the subject as an aspect of language study that concerns itself with the forms of words themselves different from syntax which concerns itself with how words arrange themselves into constructions. The study of morphology must have been prompted by the nineteenth century interest in classifying language families across the world.

This has led to other study of how languages were differently structured both in broader and narrower ways, from the general laws of structure

to the study of significant elements such as prefixes and inflections. This was later built upon to include the study of internal structure of words in the twentieth century.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to define the concept of morphology according to:

- its placement among other units of grammar
- its phonological placement
- its semantic category
- the way it operates.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Structural Approach

Across board, all linguists agree that, within words, meaningful parts can be perceived; any exercise that is aimed at studying those meaningful elements within a word is said to be termed morphology. Morphology therefore is the study of the meaningful parts of words. The word 'teacher' for instance comprises two components namely *teach* (verb) and *-er* (suffix). This is what morphology seeks to explain.

Oloruntoba-Oju (1994:71) defines morpheme in terms of its placement among other units of grammar as "the smallest meaning-bearing unit in a word". Ayodele (2001:75) defines it as "the smallest unit, which exhibits an internal structure and meaning of its own but which cannot be further broken up". An attempt to analyze the structure of this component parts leads to morphology. Morphology thus deals with the internal structure of word-forms. Lyons (1974:81) quoted in Odebunmi (2006:39) views morphemes as "minimal units of grammatical analysis, the units of lowest rank out of which words, the unit of next 'higher' rank are composed". Bello (2001:92) coming from the perspective of the status of morpheme in the units of grammar defines it as "the smallest meaningful unit in the structure of a language". By smallest meaningful unit, she meant the unit which cannot be further broken up without destroying or drastically altering its meaning. For example, though the word *reality* can be further broken down into *real* and *-ity* (making two morphemes), it cannot be further broken down without altering its meaning. This shows the common difference between *reality* and *realities*: an attempt to further break down the former results into producing an entirely different meaning in the plural sense.

One may also not be able to add a morpheme to an utterance without altering the meaning of such utterance. For example, adding *un-* to *known* changes it to *unknown* and so alters the meaning of the former. Bloomfield (1933:24) quoted in Nida (1974:6) corroborates this description by defining it as “a linguistic form which bears no parallel phonetic-semantic resemblance to any form”.

### 3.2 Semantic Approach

Crystal (1976:193) defines a morpheme as “the smallest bit of language which has a meaning”. As the smallest meaningful unit of the grammar of a language, it cannot be broken down into any other meaningful unit. It is the minimal unit used in building words in a language which cannot be further split without altering its meaning. For example, “if you add a morpheme to an utterance, or take away, by definition you alter the meaning of the utterance”. For example, adding *-tion* to *locate* changes it to *location* which with *-s* becomes *locations*. In attempting to classify morphemes into types, Odebunmi (ibid) opines that the forms and the formations of *passes* and *disregarded* can only be understood when defined in terms of their meaning relations. In these two examples, *pass* and *regard* will be said to be free morphemes for without them, *-es*, *dis-*, and *-ed*, are not capable of making any sense.

### 3.3 Phonological Approach

Bello (ibid: 93) describes morpheme in terms of its phonological properties. In this sense, a morpheme could be said to make up just a phoneme. For instance, each of the plural markers in English (e.g. *-s* as in *boy – boys*) could be considered as morpheme. Thus, the */z/* in *boys* counts as a morpheme. She stresses that if morphemes are the smallest meaningful unit of any language and are made up of either single phonemes and or more than one phoneme as the case may be, then a combination of phonemes must conform to certain rules or possess given characteristics to qualify as morphemes.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Discuss three different approaches of defining a morpheme.

### 3.4 The Interface between the Approaches

Crystal (1976:193) agglutinates the three criteria for defining morpheme. He believes it can be viewed from three major angles. Firstly, it is a formal or physical unit; it has a phonetic shape. Secondly, it has a meaning, and thirdly, it has a syntactic role to play in the

construction of a larger grammatical unit. We can illustrate this with the following example:

*These bad boys wanted the room*

*These, bad, the, room* are all minimal, meaningful, syntactically relevant units. 'Boys' and 'wanted' have two morphemes each; remove *-s* from *boy* and we get a distinct meaningful unit *boy* – in other words, the *-s* carries the number (singular/plural) difference – and similarly, the *-ed* can be removed from *wanted* to change the past tense into present.

It is noteworthy, however, that not all occurrences or examples of morphemes are as straightforward. For example, how do we characterize the *-s* in *pots, kegs* and *buses*? This morpheme, known as the plural morpheme, though has three distinct pronunciations phonetically, clearly has identical meaning in each case (plurality). The grammatical function of the *-s* is equally constant. It would be inappropriate, therefore, to assign each occurrence of *-s* to different morphemes only on account of the influence of the sound that precedes them. At least, these variants can be described as allomorphs of the same morpheme. Suffice it to say, the process of identifying morphemes ought to ensure that different occurrences of a morpheme should be recognized as an example of the same morpheme.

Also, sequences of roots can also be homophonous with single morphemes in sentences. Consider these:

- (a) He *rows* the boat
- (b) They stood in *rows*
- (c) That flower is a *rose*

All the italicised morphemes though realized the same way /ðʊz/ have different meanings. A morpheme is, therefore, the smallest unit in the expression system that can be correlated directly with any part of the content.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

State the possible interrelationship between the different definitions of the morpheme.

### **3.5 Morpheme as an Indivisible Unit**

The morpheme may be conceived as the smallest unit in the expression system that can be correlated directly with any part of the content system. This feature of the morpheme in some other way expresses the



fact that the morpheme, no matter the number of syllables it contains or the resemblance of parts of its components with some other segments in the language, cannot be broken up without rendering it meaningless. The words *neighbour* and *labour* are whole morphemes in their respective linguistic state though they have the syllable *-bour* being identical in both. If divided into parts we will only have fragments such as *la + bour* all of which are meaningless.

However, *neighbourhood* is not a single morpheme though it does have meaning. We could from the word derive *neighbour* and *hood*. The meaning of the word is related to the meanings of the two parts. Morphemes thus share some relationship with some other elements in the structure.

### 3.6 Morpheme as a Relational Unit

Morphemes may have demonstrable relationships with other morphemes in a text. Indeed, our understanding of the distribution of the morpheme as the sum of all the contexts in which it can occur in contrast to where it cannot occur helps our full understanding of a morpheme as it includes our knowing its meaning and distribution. A comprehensive dictionary, for instance, does not only give the meaning of items but also specify how and where they could be used in meaningful contexts. By this, we mean that morphemes may have demonstrable relationships with other morphemes in discourse. For example, prepositions, in the language, normally, precede nouns or nominal groups while verbs will occur after nouns in complete thoughts/expressions other than the questions (Bello 2001:94). It is in this sense that we talk about the relationship that morphemes have with their components as well as other components around them. Thus we explain morphological process as the structural relationship that exists between different morphemes when in combination. Morphemes enter into relationship on the basis of addition, substitution and subtraction (Ayodele 2001:78). In other words, a morpheme 'free' or 'bound' may be added to another in order to produce a word, e.g. *un + bend* produces *unbend*; *man + hood* results in *adulthood*. This type of addition is called affixation.

Also, morphemes can be generally classified into certain classes each with a characteristic distribution. The structure of utterances in the language can then be stated in terms of these classes of morphemes – lexis such as *admire, abuse, allow, permit*, form an extensive class of morphemes in the English language. In like vein, *(s), (-ed)* and *(-ing)* form a smaller class. The later can occur only immediately following one of the former (or some equivalent construction).

### 3.7 Morpheme as a Phonological Feature

Inflectional morphemes carry grammatical properties which prepare them for the syntactic roles they play. In performing these roles, some morphemes come under the strict influence of sounds which surround them in particular environment in which they operate thereby resulting in their being realized in different phonetic shapes. For example, the plural morpheme *-s* has three different realizations depending on the phoneme(s) that precede it. When preceded by a voiceless sound, it manifest phonemically as /s/ e.g. *bats*, *parks*, *raps*. In the environment of a voiced sound, the *-s* morphemes become /z/ e.g. *cools*, *pads*, *rags*. It is realized as /iz/ when it follows the morphemes /s/ e.g. *bus + -es* (buses). It is this type of phonologically determined alternant that is referred to as an allomorph.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Give three prominent features of a morpheme.

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

The above approaches can always be integrated - a grammatical definition for example leads to meaning deduction. Levin and Hovav (2001:248) for example, have posited that since morphology is the study of structure and derivation of complex signs, attention could be focused on the semantic side and the structural and the relation between them. In addition, I have considered the roles of morphemes in the unit of grammar. As the smallest indivisible unit of grammar, it cannot be further broken down without encountering changes of its meaning. As a relational unit, it shares boundary with other components of grammar vis-à-vis lexis and word to project meaningful utterance. It can also share boundary with variants of its forms. Lastly, we learnt that the environment where a morpheme appears can affect the way it is pronounced.

### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt the following:

- various approaches to the definition of morphemes namely, structural, grammatical and semantic; and
- you have also learnt the relationship between them and their intertwining nature.
- its placement in the units of grammar;
- its structural role; and
- its phonological realizations.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is morphology?
2. Explain various approaches to the definition of morpheme.
3. Briefly define morpheme in terms of its placement among the units of grammar.
4. Briefly describe the structural relationship that exists between various forms of morpheme as well as the relationship that exists between morpheme and the word.
5. Briefly define morpheme in terms of its phonological realizations.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 2    TYPES AND CHARACTERISTICS OF MORPHEMES**

Morphemes, as elements which constitute a word, are usually defined as the smallest grammatical unit. They are also said to be so small that their constituents are referred to as elements, better put, linguistic elements. In this unit, we shall attempt to consider some types and characteristics of morphemes, and I shall give examples as well.

The unit is thus arranged as follows:-

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Free Morpheme
  - 3.2 Bound Morpheme
    - 3.2.1 Inflectional Bound Morpheme
    - 3.2.2 Derivational Bound Morpheme
    - 3.2.3 Affixation
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

The study of morphemes is an interesting endeavour in the sense that it is an attempt to study how humans come about word usage which is the foundation of any human language. It is also very interesting to note that morphemes form the foundation of words even though they themselves do not tell us meaning, but they have a way of contributing to meaning when they are used in specific contexts. This is because they are made up of phonemes which in turn combine to give words. Words have, for example, been said to be the bricks upon which languages are founded. And not to have the basic knowledge of such a foundation amounts to lack of interest in an important tool used by humans for communication.

In this unit, I shall attempt to examine the types and characteristics of morphemes and give copious examples. Since this course is English Morphology, most of our examples will be drawn from the English Language. However, we will draw examples from relevant languages. First, we must understand that the role of the language in the country cannot be quantified. It is, for example, the second language of the

country as well as the official language. Hence, knowing it well is a plus for most Nigerians.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- state what free morphemes are, and how they can be identified
- state what bound morphemes are, and how they can be identified
- identify inflectional and derivational bound morphemes and their roles in morphology
- explain the difference between inflectional and derivational bound morphemes.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Free Morphemes

Words are made up of morphemes either free or bound. The free morpheme is the core part which usually sit anywhere within a word. On its own, it can function as an independent word, that is, a word that can stand on its own because it carries meaning. The following words are free morphemes: school, church, boy, girl, teach, courage, examine, e.t.c. Another name for the free morpheme is the base or stem or root. As the base or core, it can accept other elements either before it or after it. But whether the free morpheme or base or core is attached to another element or not, it can stand on its own. It is a meaning carrying unit. Some linguists also refer to the free morpheme as a full morpheme. Most free morphemes are content or lexical words.

### 3.2 Bound Morphemes

A bound morpheme is that morpheme that cannot stand or occur as an independent word. It has to be attached to a free morpheme or word to have a clear meaning. Examples of bound morphemes are *-ment*, *-en*, *-ing*, *-ed*, *-ness*, *-ful*, *mis-*, *-anti*, *-less*, etc in the following free morphemes or words. ‘government’, ‘encouragement’, ‘dancing’, ‘accepted’, ‘happiness’, ‘hopeless etc. Another name for the bound morpheme is empty morphemes. They can also be called grammatical indicators because they have the tendency to affect grammar. For example, this sentence.

- The lecturer glad praised God. The omission of *-ly* in *glad* renders the sentence ungrammatical. Grammatically, the sentence should read, “the lecturer gladly praised God”. Most

bound morphemes are grammatical or functional elements in language.

Bound morphemes are of two types. Some bound morphemes have the ability of changing word class or forming or generating new words while others only inflect the word they are added to. This takes us to another segment in this discussion.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Discuss what you think free and bound morphemes are.

#### 3.2.1 Inflectional Bound Morphemes

A major division in morpheme is free and bound. A free morpheme has been referred to as an independent word. The bound morpheme is of two types: inflectional and derivational. An inflectional morpheme, which is a type of a bound morpheme, is defined by linguists as a mere grammatical indicator or marker. An inflectional morpheme cannot generate or create new words nor can it affect the grammatical class of a word.

#### **An inflectional morpheme plays three grammatical roles in English:**

- 1. It indicates tense** – Tense relates to a verb. It then means that to indicate tense, it affects verb. A verb is affected in the following ways.

come	come + s, come + ing,
walk	walk + s, walking, walk + ed
write	walk + s, write + ing, (writing), write + en (written) ‘s’ is the third person singular marker, ‘ed’ is the past tense marker while ‘ing’ is the continuous tense marker.

- 2. It indicates number** – plurality. Plurality deals with nouns. Nouns are affected by number. Nouns are subdivided into singular and plural. Plural nouns are indicated with ‘s’. Thus,

boy + s	boys
school + s	schools
table + s	tables

The ‘s’ above is a plural marker and it is an additive morpheme. It indicates that the morpheme carrying it is ‘more than one’.

- 3. It indicates comparison.** Adjectives are used to compare. Thus, this third part affects adjectives. Adjectives have comparative (for two people) and superlative (more than two people) forms.

fat + 'er'	fatter	+ 'est' to fattest
fast + 'er',	est	faster, fastest

The 'er' and 'est' morphemes are used to indicate comparative superlative forms of the adjectives fat and fast above.

### 3.2.2 Derivational Bound Morphemes

A derivational morpheme which is also called a derived morpheme is a type of bound morpheme which generates or creates new words by either changing the class of word or forming new words.

This change in word class, caused by the addition of a derivational bound morpheme, is not restricted to a particular class of words. It affects all classes of words. This transformation does not, however, affect the lexical meaning of the base forms of the free morpheme. That is, the lexical meanings of the core or base or free morpheme remain unchanged.

These examples are common in the English language:

a. Nouns from verbs	word class	
Derivational suffix	verb	Noun
-age	break	breakage
-al	revive	revival
-ation	explore	exploration
-ment	govern	government
-ee	pay	payee
-ant	inform	informant

#### b. Adjectives from nouns

Suffix	Noun	Adjective
-ful	care	careful
-less	fruit	fruitless
-n	Nigeria	Nigerian
-able	love	lovable
-ly	friend	friendly
-ous	desire	desirous
-y	library	librarian

**c. Nouns from Adjectives**

Suffix	Adjective	Noun
- ity	rapid	rapidity
- ness	kind	kindness
- ce	fragrant	fragrance
- ity	humble	humility

**d. Verbs from Adjective**

Suffix	Adjective	Verb
- en	weak	weaken
- ize	liquid	liquidize
- fy	solid	solidify

**e. Adjectives from verbs**

Suffix	Verb	Adjective
- able	wash	washable
- ive	digest	digestive
- tory	satisfy	satisfactory

**f. Verbs from nouns**

Suffix	Nouns	Verbs
-ize	special	specialize

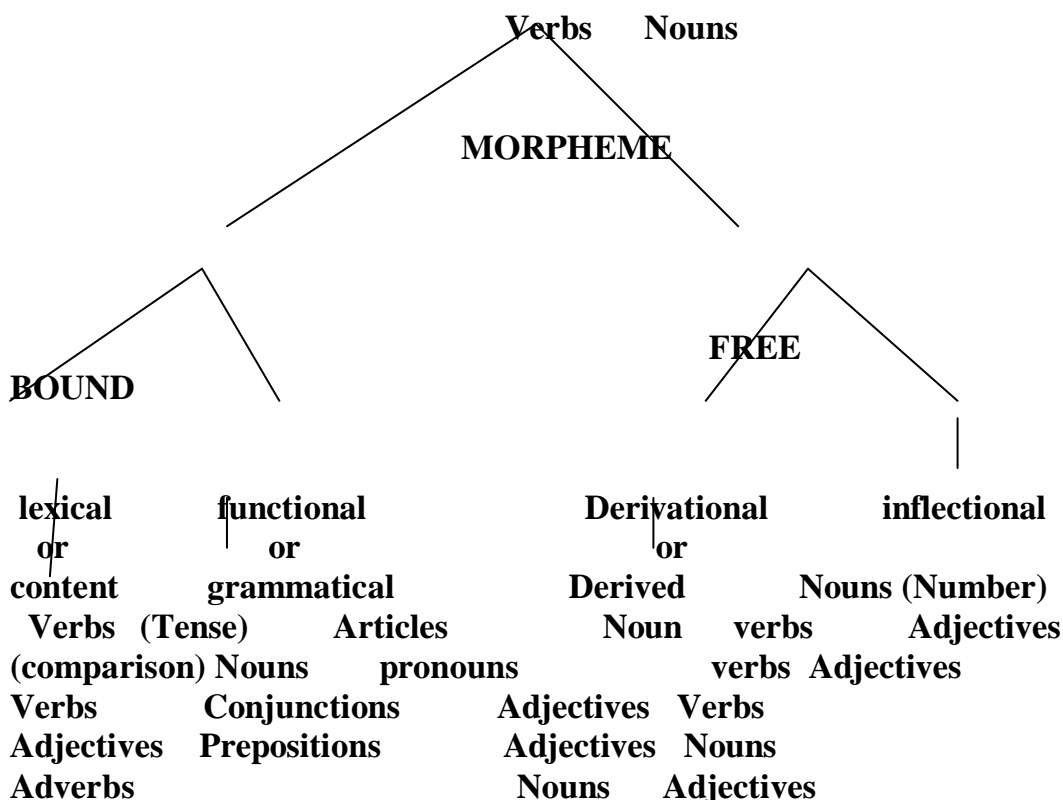
**Derivational bound morphemes, thus, have the following features:-**

1. They change the meaning or word class e.g govern + ment *government*.
2. They indicate semantic relations in words e.g the morpheme – *ful* in *hopeful* does not relate to any other word in the language except the free morpheme *hopeful*.
3. It operates a close circuit kind of relationship. For example, some bound morphemes like ‘hood’ carefully choose their root; they do not collocate with every other word in the language.
4. It occurs before the inflectional bound morphemes they should co-occur. For example, teach + er teacher + s teachers (verb) (bound morpheme) (a new word) inflectional Thus, ‘er’ comes before ‘s’.



In the examples given above, the derivational morphemes resulted in a change from one word class to the other. This is what derivational morphology is all about.

**DIAGRAM**



The above is a diagrammatical illustration of the types of morphemes and their subdivisions.

**3.2.3 Affixation**

The term affixation can be defined as a morphological process of attaching an element usually called an affix to the root or base of a word. For example ‘courage’ is a root of a word; when *-en* is added to it, it becomes encourage, and when *-ment* is added to it, it becomes encouragement. Both *-en* and *-ment* are affixes. But while *-en* is a prefix (an element added to the beginning of a word), *-ment* is a suffix (an element added to the end of a word). Thus, the structural formula of a word is (P) B(S) where P and S and prefix and suffix respectively and they are both optional, B is base and it is mandatory.

Hence, B is the free morpheme that can stand on its own. Other examples include:-

Un + comfort + able  
(P) B (S)

un + educate + d  
(P) B (S)

dis + establish + ment  
  
(P) B (S)

We shall have an elaborate discussion on affixation in morphological or word formation processes in subsequently.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE**

Identify and explain the roles of inflectional and derivative morpheme in English.

## **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, we have discussed types of morphemes, thereby looking at free and bound morphemes. We also looked at the sub types of the bound morpheme – inflectional and derivational morphemes with the characteristic features displayed by each of them. We also looked in an affixation as an aspect of bound morpheme, though with more of it to come under morphological processes or word formation processes. We gave a diagrammatic illustration of the break down of morphemes and its types. We ended the unit with a structural formula for word which we put as (P) B (S) where (P) is Prefix and it is optional, B is the base and it is mandatory, (S) is suffix, and it is also optional.

## **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt:

- Free and bound morphemes
- Inflectional and derivational types of bound morphemes
- Affixation at the elementary stage.

## **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Explain with examples free and bound morphemes.
2. Explain with examples inflectional and derivational morphemes.
3. With examples, explain what is meant by structural formula for word.
4. Briefly describe what affixation is in relation to this section.

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## **UNIT 3 MORPHEMES AND OTHER GRAMMATICAL UNITS**

In this unit, we shall discuss the morpheme in relation to other grammatical units of words, groups, clauses and sentence. We shall, however, emphasize more on the relationships that exist among each of these units with special reference to the morpheme, that is, the interplay among the various grammatical units of English.

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Word
  - 3.2 Group
  - 3.3 Clause
  - 3.4 Sentence
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In the previous unit, we discussed types of morphemes and we gave a diagrammatic illustration to further drive home our point. In this unit, we shall discuss the relationships that exist between the morphemes and other grammatical units in the English language. The morpheme, as we are aware, is the smallest grammatical unit in English, and as the smallest, it is only composed of elements which, when further broken, results in meaning destruction.

However, even though it is the smallest grammatical unit, one or more of it gives us a word. Thus, in essence, there is hierarchy among the grammatical units to the extent that one or more of a unit below produces a unit higher.

In this unit, we shall look at these relationships and see what role(s) the morpheme plays in all of this.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain what words and word classes are

- define group and discuss the various groups and their functions in English
- define clauses and the different clauses in English and their functions
- define sentence and the different types according to structure and functions.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Word

The word and morpheme are important concepts in morphology. This is because one or more morphemes make a word. The dictionary defines a word as a single unit of language which has meaning and can either be spoken or written. It is also a lexical item that becomes meaningful when used in a context or in discourse where it now has some grammatical properties.

The word is a most fundamental unit of grammar of a language. It is an independent linguistic unit that has identifiable meaning and grammatical function with some emphasis on phonological shape. For example, the forms sing, sings, singing, sang and sung are all forms of a single word sing. Each of these forms has a unique environment it can occur in, as well as the verbs (auxiliary) that they can occur with.

Word, especially in the English language has the following characteristics or features.

1. **Syntactic information** – Every word has its word- class, that is, it has information as to whether the word is a noun, an adjective, an adverb or a verb. This helps us to know the appropriate environment for the word.
2. **Semantic information** – Every word has a meaning whether integral or contextual. This semantic meaning helps us to know, for example, whether we have been abused or commended.
3. **Phonological information** – Every word has its unique way of being pronounced by the native speakers. Whether borrowed into the English language or not, whether anglicized or not, the phonological information aids pronunciation.
4. **Pragmatic information** – Every word has a particular context of usage. This is also referred to as situational usage of words.

- 5. Morphological information** – Every word has its own peculiar internal structure or shape. This has to do with the way phonemes and morphemes in the language are arranged. It assists us in knowing what combinations of items are permissible and which ones are not.

Functionally, words are classified into classes according to their features and the roles they play in building up other units of grammar. In all, there are eight word – classes of nouns, verbs, pronouns, adverbs, adjectives, prepositions, conjunctions and interjections. Thus, a noun names e.g. Lagos, Nigeria, Joy etc.

A pronoun is used in place of a noun e.g. He, She, they

A verb asserts e.g. go, dance, run, etc.

An adjective describes a noun e.g. happy, beautiful, etc

An adverb modifies a verb e.g. well, beautifully, etc.

A preposition shows relation e.g. on, over, above, etc.

A conjunction joins e.g. and, but or etc.

An interjection expresses emotion e.g. oh! etc.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Explain what you understand by words and their classes

### **3.2 Group**

The group is the unit next in rank above the word. It is made up of one or more words. This is called phrase by transformational generative grammarians as well as traditional grammarians. It is defined as a group of words that usually lacks a verb and which does not make complete sense. Hence, to make sense, it has to be attached to another element that makes sense of or has the potentials of making full sense. Every group has an optional modifier, a mandatory headword and an optional qualifier. Hence, the structural formula for the group is (M) H (Q).

The English language identifies five groups and these are:-

- 1. Nominal word group (also called nominal group (NWG) or (NG).** Since this is a nominal group, a noun must be the headword. A non-noun like a verb or an adjective can play this role provided it has been nominalised – that is, made to become a noun to fit into this new role, and it has become a gerundial or verbal noun. For example,

The man is a thief can be analysed as:-

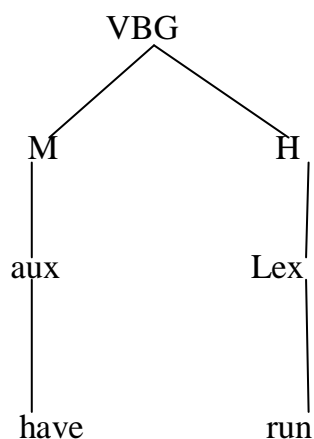
The man (NMG) ‘The and a’ are modifiers while  
 Is (VBG) man and thief are headword respectively.  
 A thief (NMG) Thus, there are two groups in the sentence above,  
 five words, and five morphemes.

The nominal group plays these roles:

1. Subject of a sentence or verb e.g. The man
  2. Object of a sentence or verb e.g. a thief
  3. Subject complement or complement of the subject e.g., I myself, did the assignment. ‘Myself’ refers back to ‘T’ which is the subject of the sentence.
  4. Object complement or complement of the object e.g.; they give him a bottle of coke. ‘Him’ is the object of the sentence, and ‘a bottle of coke’ is received by ‘him’. Thus, ‘a bottle of coke’ is the complement of the object ‘him’.
- 2. Verbal group:** This is a group that is headed by a verb. The auxiliary verbs, in most case, serve as the modifier while the functional lexical, whether lexical or auxiliary plays the role of a headword. For example, the thieves have run away.

The thieves	Nominal group (NMG)	
have run	Verbal Group (VBG)	
away	adverbial group (AdvG)	Three groups

Thus,

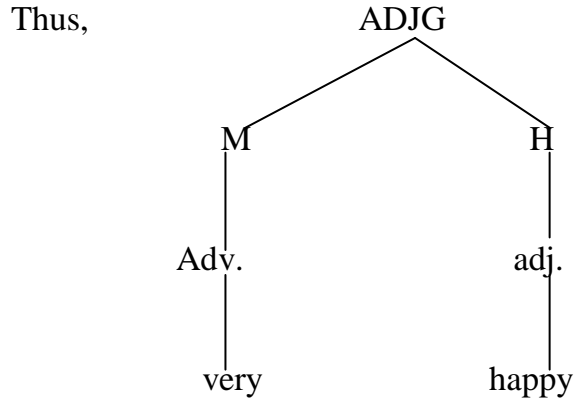


- 3. Adjectival group:** This is a group that is headed by an adjective.

For example,

The woman is very happy

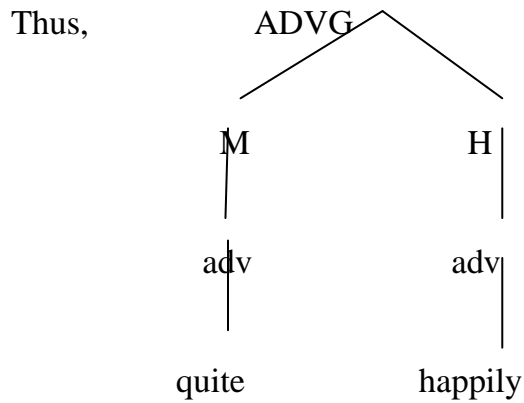
The woman	M	H	(NMG)		
	H	(VBG)			
Very happy		M	H (ADJG)	=	three groups



**4. Adverbial group:** This is a group that is headed by an adverb.  
 For example:

He did the job quite happily.

He	-	H	(NMG)		
did	-	H	(VBG)		
the job	M	H	(NMG)		
quite happily		M	H (AdvG)	=	three groups



**5. Prepositional group:** This is a group headed by a preposition.

For example:

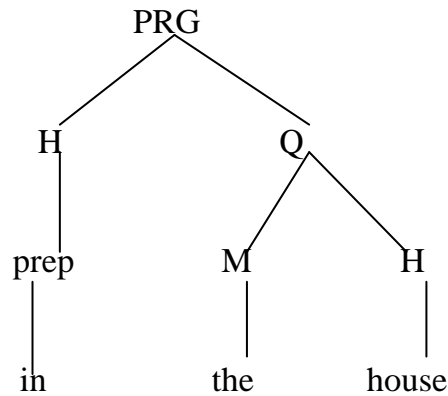
I met my father in the house



I            H    (NMG)  
met         H    (VBG)

My father    M    H    (NMG)  
In the house H    Q (PRG)

Thus,



Thus, a group represents an important level of syntactic analysis and it possesses four significant features. These are:

- It has an internal syntactic and semantic cohesion
- It is an identifiable single unit.
- It expresses a thought (though not complete)
- It is named after its headword.

Groups have the characteristics of being widely distributed in clauses / sentences. For instance:

The old man / in this compound / was killed / late last year,  
 The old man            M    M    H    (NMG)  
 In this compound        H    Q            (PRG)  
 was killed              M    H            (VBG)  
 late last year.         M    M    H    (NMG).

Thus, in the sentence above, there are three groups with the Nominal group appearing two times.

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

State and discuss four important features of a group.

### 3.3 Clause

This is the unit next in rank above the group. It is made up of one or more groups. It is defined as a group of words that has a verb and may or may not make sense. It has the following characteristics.

1. It has a subject
2. It has a verb
3. It is a single thought unit
4. It can occur in different parts of the sentence
5. It is named after its headword except for a relative clause.

The English language identifies basically two types of clauses; independent and dependent. The independent clause, or in subordinate or alpha as the name goes can stand on its own while the dependent or subordinate or beta clause cannot. For example: if it rains tomorrow, I will not come to school – dependent + independent.

The followings are the subtypes of the dependent clause.

1. Nominal clause: it is usually headed by a noun.
2. Adjectival clause: it is usually headed by an adjective
3. Adverbial clause: it is introduced by a relative pronoun like who, whose, which, that, how, e.t.c.

General examples of clauses are

1. //When / the girls / gets / home // they / usually / visit / their friends / in the hostel ///

In the above sentence, there are two clauses – dependent and independent with three groups and some groups have double or triple appearances.

// When	H		(AdvG)1	
the girls	M	H	(NMG)2	
get	H		(VBG) 3	dependent
home //	H		(AdvG)	subordinate
they	H		(NMG)	
usually	N		(AdvG)	independent
visit	H		(VBG)	in subordinate
their friends ///	M	H	(NMG)	
her ///			H (NMG)	in subordinate clause

2. // If I had seen my mother // I would have greeted her // If  
 H (AdvG) I H (NMG) dependent  
 Had seen M H (VBG) subordinate clause  
 My mother // M H (NMG) I H (NMG) would  
 have greeted M M H (VBG) independent or

The sentence above has three groups with some groups having double or triple appearances.

3. // The lecturer didn't know // what the students were planning for him //

The lecturer	M	H	(NMG)	independent
what	M	H	(VBG)	
the students	M	H	(NMG)	dependent
were planning	M	H	(VBG)	
for him	H	Q	(PRG)	

The sentence above contains two clauses and three groups, though some groups appeared more than once.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Discuss three types of dependent clause.

### 3.5 Sentence

This is the largest grammatical unit. It is made up of one or more clauses. It has the following features.

1. It can stand on its own, that is, it is independent
2. It embeds all other units
3. It has a subject and a verb (predicator)
4. It cannot be subsumed by other units.
5. It begins with a capital letter and ends with either a full stop mark, question mark, or an exclamation mark. For example,
  1. The students are waiting eagerly
  2. The earth is spherical
  3. Will you see me tomorrow?
  4. You must be joking!
  5. Nigeria plays Tunisia on Sunday.
  6. Who wins the next world cup in South Africa?
  7. The man is happily married
  8. If it rains tomorrow, many students will not come for lecture.
  9. Whenever the chips are down, true champions always emerge.

10. Which of them do you like.
11. I prefer rice to beans
12. We are the apple of God's eyes
13. She is the most beautiful student in this class.
14. I had finished eating before my father came in.
15. What is your maiden name?

### Functional Delineation of Sentences

Sentences are classified according to their function and structure. Functionally, there are four types of sentence, and they are:

1. Declarative
2. Interrogative
3. Imperative and
4. Exclamatory

1. **Declarative sentence:** A sentence is said to be declarative when it expresses a statement or declaration. In other words, any sentence that affirms is a declarative sentence. To affirms means to state experiences, facts or opinion in any given matter. Some examples of declarative sentence are listed below:-

My wife is a good cook  
 Bola died early last year  
 The journey of life is not rosy  
 The gate will be locked at 11.pm.  
 Those children are a pleasure to be with  
 I don't care about being hated.

2. **Interrogative sentence:** A sentence is said to be an interrogative sentence if it asks a question and thus usually end with a question mark. There are basically three types of an interrogative sentence. They are

- (a) Yes or No question
- (b) Wh - questions
- (c) Taq questions (would you mind.....)

- (a) Yes or No question – This type of interrogative sentence requires 'yes' or 'No' for an answer. For example,  
 Have you eaten?  
 Yes, I have  
 No, I haven't

The explanation of the above is that, the question expects the listener to either affirm the statement or refute it. Hence, yes, is an affirmation (or confirmation) while No, is a refutation. More examples

Do you want me to believe you?

Yes, I do

No, I don't

Did she eventually meet the man

Yes, she did

No, she didn't

Is the lecturer telling us the truth?

Yes, he is

No, he isn't

(b) wh – question: A wh-question requires a sentence answer rather than yes or no. It starts with an interrogative pronoun. For example, what is your name?

\* Yes

\* No

Yes or No will not be accepted, as an answer to a wh-question. The question, 'what is your name? Can either be as follows:-

John or

My name is John. Other examples are:

Why is she crying?

Answer: she is crying because she is hungry

Who is the African footballer of the year for 2008

Answer: Emmanuel Seyi Adebayor is African footballer of the year for 2008.

(c) Tag question: A tag question is a kind of interrogative sentence which has three parts:

(i) Statement

(ii) Question and

(iii) Answer

For example,

He is a brilliant student – (statement)

Isn't he?

Yes, he is **or**

No, he isn't

Answer

She will become the next beauty queen  
 Won't she?  
 Yes, she will **or**  
 No, she won't

Tag questions have the following features

1. If the statement is in the positive, the question must be in the negative, for example

I have seen you today (positive)  
Haven't I?

2. If the statement is in the negative, the question must be in the positive. For example,

He will not marry her (negative)  
Will he? (positive)

Please, note that positivity and negativity denote that the verb either takes 'not' (for negative) or does not take not (for positive, that is,  
 verb + not = negative e.g will not  
 verb – not = positive e.g will, can

3. The pronoun in the statement is used in the question and answer parts for example, she has prayed for the country

Hasn't she?  
 Yes, she has **or**  
 No, she hasn't

They will make it in life  
 Won't they?  
 Yes, they will **or**

No, they won't

4. When lexical or main verbs are used in the statement, the form of the primary auxiliary verb 'do' is used. This agrees in number, tense and person with the form of the lexical verb used in the statement. For example,

Jide likes his wife  
Doesn't he?  
 Yes, he does **or**  
 No, he doesn't

5. When a noun is the subject of the statement, the person pronoun must agree in gender with the noun used in the statement. For example,

Mary visited us yesterday

Didn't she

Yes, she did **or**

No, she didn't

There is a particular kind of tag question that changes the general and common notion held about tag questions. Remember, we said that 'yes' means agreement and 'No' means disagreement. In this kind of specially structured tag question the reverse is the case. For example,

Would you mind talking with me?

Yes, I do - disagreement

No, I don't - agreement that is, 'yes' I do means, I don't want to talk with you while 'No', I don't means, I want to talk with you.

- 3. Imperative sentence:** A sentence is said to be an imperative sentence if it commands, or orders, or makes a request. In other words, an imperative sentence makes people carry out an action or instruction. In some cases too, an imperative sentence directs and suggests. For example,

Will you do as I say?

Obey the last order

Would you be kind enough to dust the table?

Come here immediately

Shut the door

To prepare fruit salad, slice the fruits, boil water and allow to cool, etc.

- 4. Exclamatory sentence:** A sentence is said to be an exclamatory sentence if it expresses emotional feelings like sorrow, surprise, shock, wonder, gratitude, e.t.c. In most cases, an exclamatory sentence ends with an exclamation mark. For example,

That's a snake!

My God, what is happening!

What a big shame!

How dare you do that!

How wonderful of you!

Who do we have here!

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Discuss 4 functional types of sentences, giving 2 examples for each.

### Structural Delineation of Sentences

Structurally, there are five types of sentences, these are:

1. Simple sentence
2. Compound sentence
3. Complex sentence
4. Compound complex
5. Multiple sentence

1. **Simple sentence:** a sentence is said to be simple if it contains just one independent clause. Hence, a simple sentence can also be called an independent or an insubordinate clause. For example,

That was a good one  
 Can you lend me your torch?  
 John was here yesterday  
 This lecturer teaches with ease  
 Students are supposed to write well  
 She will soon get married  
 Who is the lucky man!

2. **Compound sentence:** A sentence is said to be a compound sentence if it contains at least two independent clauses which are linked by a coordinating conjunction. This type of conjunction is also called a linker. For example,

That was a good one, please, you should keep it up.

John was here yesterday but he did not meet my father at home.  
 Should I come in or wait for you downstairs  
 James came yesterday and ate the food on the table.

3. **Complex sentence:** A sentence is said to be a complex sentence if it contains at least one independent clause and at least one dependent clause which should be linked by a subordinating conjunction. This type of conjunction that links two clauses of unequal power or status or rank is called a binder. Hence, a dependent clause is bound to an independent clause to have meaning. For example,



If it rains today, the streets will be flooded.

NB: *If it rains today* is a dependent clause while *the streets will be flooded* is an independent clause.

The dog ate the food when the students forgot to lock the door.

NB: *The dog ate the food* is an independent clause while *when the students forgot to lock the door* is a dependent clause.

Whenever it seems there is no way forward, remember someone loves you.

NB: *whenever it seems there is no way forward* is a dependent clause, while *I remember someone loves you* is an independent clause.

Students don't do well in their examination because they don't work hard.

NB *Students don't do well in their examination* is an independent clause, while *because they don't work hard* is a dependent clause.

**4. Compound – complex sentence:** A sentence is said to be a compound – complex sentence if it contains two or more independent clauses and two or more dependent clauses. In this case, there is a combination of both coordinating and subordinating conjunctions. In other words, we make use of both linkers and binders to join or connect the various clauses. For example,

If Deborah refuses to listen to us, we would not hesitate to take her back to Igbogila where she came from, or we would send her to Aiyetoro to continue her studies.

### **Analysis**

NB: If Deborah refuses to listen to us – dependent

We would not hesitate to take her back to Igbogila – independent clause.

Where she came from – dependent

We would send her to Aiyetoro to continue her studies – independent clause.

Note: 2 independent clauses

And 2 dependent clauses

Before I resigned as a secondary school teacher, I was engaged by Jubilee College for a peanut, afterwards, I dusted by books and went back to school for my masters degree but only to be disappointed because I chose a wrong school and I didn't plan for that.

### **NB Analysis**

Before I resigned as a secondary school teacher – dependent clause  
 I was engaged by Jubilee College for a peanut – independent clause.  
 Afterward, I dusted by books – dependent clause  
 And went back to school for my masters degree – independent clause  
 but only to be disappointed – dependent clause because I choose a  
 wrong school – dependent clause and I didn't plan for that –  
 independent clauses.

Note = 4 dependent clauses

3 independent clauses.

- 5. Multiple Sentence:** A sentence is said to be a multiple sentence if it contains three or more independent clauses that are linked or connected by a coordinating conjunction. This coordinating conjunction is also called a linker. For example,

I came to school this morning, had a fine discussion with my friends, but I did not remember to say goodbye to them, or I said it in a hurry.

Mary woke up yesterday, she had her bath, prepared for a nice day at work but the day turned out to be a bad one and she became disappointed.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5**

Explain with the aid of examples the following:

- (a) declarative sentence
- (b) simple sentence
- (c) tag questions
- (d) multiple sentence
- (e) imperative sentence

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

Sentences are classified according to function and according to structure. Functionally, there are four types of sentence and they are:

1. Declarative
2. Interrogative

3. Imperative and
4. Exclamatory

Structurally, we have the following types of sentence.

1. Simple
2. Compound
3. Complex
4. Multiple and
5. Compound-Complex

Thus, the sentence, 'The students are waiting eagerly' can be analysed as follows:-

The students (NMG) The + student + S  
 are waiting (VBG) are + wait + ing  
 eagerly (ADVG) eager + ly

In all, there is one sentence (simple and declarative), one clause (independent), three groups (NMG, VBG and ADVG), five words (article, noun, auxiliary and lexical verb and adverb), and eight morphemes (The, -'S', -ing and -ly are bound, while student, wait and eager are free).

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain, with the aid of examples, the following:
  - (a) Phrases
  - (b) Clauses
2. Explain the relationships that exist among all the grammatical units with these sentences.
  - (a) The lecturers are on strike
  - (b) Uneasy lies the head that wears the crown
  - (c) The oldest men planted trees everyday.

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## UNIT 4 MORPHEME AND WORD

In this unit, we shall look at the morpheme and the word. These are two important elements or items in the grammatical units of English.

The unit is arranged as follows:-

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
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### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The morpheme, in Unit 2, was defined as the smallest meaningful element into which words can be analysed. This nature of morpheme, among other things, is the interest of morphology.

In this unit, we shall attempt to do some analyses of the morpheme and the word.

### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify and explain what is meant by the morpheme
- identify and explain what is meant by the word
- differentiate between a morpheme and a word.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Characteristics of the Morpheme

The morpheme is the smallest grammatical unit in English. One or more morpheme gives us a word. Examples are listed below:-

Manage + ment = management  
Intend + ing = intending

More examples on morphemes

dis + locat + ion = dislocation  
in + depend + ent + ly = independently  
un + gramma + tic + al = ungrammatical  
im + perish + able = imperishable  
mis + represent + ed = misrepresented  
commend + able = commendable  
endow + ment = endowment  
mis + appropriat + ion = misappropriation  
un + educat + ed = uneducated  
commit + ment = commitment

Morphemes could either be free or bound. A free morpheme has a dictionary meaning. Content words are examples of free morpheme. Bound morphemes do not have any meaning independently except being attached to a free morpheme.

For more on morphemes, check Units 1 and 2.

#### 3.2 The Word in English

The word is defined in the dictionary as a single unit of language that has meaning and can be spoken or written. Words are classified as a certain word – class – noun, adjective, verb, adjective, adverb, article, preposition or pronoun as a result of the role it plays in context. Though traditionally, word – classes have roles but these roles change in function. For example, ‘man’ is traditionally a noun but it can be also be used as a verb.

He is a man (noun)  
He will man the post for the team (verb)

Words have some characteristics which have been discussed at length in Unit 3.

Each word in the English language has a particular position which it can operate in. Though this assumption is gradually giving way in the English language as function plays prominent role these days. That is, emphasis is now more on how a word behaves in a sentence.

Morpheme / word relationship can be illustrated with this diagram.

```

w           w
m m m m

```

where *w* stands for word and *m* stands for morpheme.

Examples

Dis + approv + al = disapproval (a word made of 3 morphemes meaning + ful + ness = meaningfulness (a word made up of 3 morphemes).

A major difference between the morpheme and the word is the fact that the morpheme is the unit immediately below the word while the word is the unit next in rank on hierarchy to the morpheme.

Another difference between the morpheme and the word is that the word cannot be embedded into the morpheme but rather the morpheme is embedded into the word.

Also, meaning in the language starts with the unit called 'word' whereas the morpheme maintains non-meaningfulness except for the free morpheme which also qualifies to be called a word.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

State clearly the relationship between the word and the morpheme.

### **3.3 Word Classes in English**

Words are classified as parts of speech in traditional grammar because of the role they play in a sentence. But, traditional parts of speech in modern grammar are now called word classes or classes of words. However, we must understand that, these days in English, prominence is given to function (that is, what the particular word is doing in the sentence) more than mere classification. This is because the same word may serve several grammatical functions, that is, play many roles in different sentences. For example, the word 'round' in these sentences:

- a. The boxer was defeated in the third round (Noun).
- b. The bus driver rounded the corner at 12 noon (Verb)
- c. The earth has been proved to be round (Adjective)
- d. He showed the president round the two teams (Adverb)
- e. The old woman tied a girdle round her waist. (Preposition)

From the examples above, the word 'round' in example:

1. is used as a noun
2. is used as a verb
3. is used as an adjective
4. is used as an adverb
5. is used as a preposition. This proves that a word is a particular word-class in the context in which it is used.

### 3.3.1 Nouns

A noun is the name of any word that can stand as the subject or object of any sentence. There are basically four types of nouns. These are:

- a. **Common Noun:** This is the name of any class of persons, places or even things. For example, man, room, table, Kanji Dam, etc.
- b. **Proper Noun:** This is the name of a particular thing or person. For example, Jide, Mary, Lagos, Benin, Kaduna, etc.
- c. **Abstract Noun:** This type of noun denotes qualities or concepts. For example, Joy, goodness, cowardice, beauty, e.t.c.
- d. **Collective Noun:** This type of noun names a group of things, a whole set or a collection of people or things. Their membership is by the common features displayed. For example, staff, congregation, crowd, electorate, e.t.c.

### 3.3.2 Verb

A verb is that part of a sentence which indicates an action or a state of being carried out by the subject. It is the most important element in the clause structure. This is because it gives meaning to the sentence, and it is mandatory in a sentence. Examples of verbs include come, go, dance, play, jump, e.t.c.

There are two major types of verbs and they are:

- a. Lexical or main verbs
- b. Auxiliary verbs



(a) **Lexical verbs:** These are also called main verbs or full verbs because they carry lexical meanings. All lexical verbs are capable of going through the six forms of a verb. These forms are:-

1. base or base infinitive form e.g. go, dance, sing
2. third person sing. Form (-es) goes, dances, sings
3. continuous form (-ing) going, dancing, singing
4. past tense form (-ed) went, dance, sang
5. participle form (-en) gone, danced, sung
6. to infinitive form (to + base) to go, to dance, to sing

From the verbal conjugation above, 'dance' is an example of a regular verb because it has the same form for the past tense (-ed) and past participle (-en). We can say that it forms its past tense by taking (-ed). The acceptance of (-ed) makes the verb 'dance' a regular verb. Other examples of regular verbs are:

Jump,	jumped,	jumped	
work,	worked,	worked	
walk,	walked,	walked	
hiss,	hissed,	hissed	
stop,	stopped,	stopped	
form,	formed,	formed	e.t.c

Another revelation made from the verbal conjugation above is that some verbs like 'go' and 'sing' do not need the (-ed) morpheme to form their past tense. These verbs are referred to as irregular verbs. An irregular verb changes form (or goes through morphological transformation which is conditioned by phonological rules) to form its past tense and past participle. (We treated phonological rules in module 5).

Other examples of irregular verbs are:

ring,	rang,	rung	
lake,	took,	taken	
give,	gave,	given	
forget,	forgot,	forgotten	
write,	wrote,	written	e.t.c.

(b) **Auxiliary verbs**

Verbs called auxiliary verbs are so named because they need the presence of lexical verbs to operate in a sentence. By their name, they are supporting or helping verb. There are two major types of auxiliary verbs: primary and modal auxiliary verbs.

- (i) Primary auxiliary verbs: these are three and they are: BE, HAVE and DO; the three of them have their sub-forms.

	BE	HAVE	DO
Finite forms	am, is, are was, were	has, here had	do, does did
Non-finite forms	be, being, Been	have, having	

**Adapted from Adejare and Adejare (1996).**

- (c) **Modal Auxiliary Verbs:** They are also known as secondary and they reflect or indicate the mood of the speaker in a sentence.

For examples:

can	-	I can drive	(ability)
will	-	I will drive	(intention)
may	-	You may drive	(permission)
must	-	He must drive	(compulsion)

Other examples of modal auxiliary verbs and their 'past tense' forms are listed below:-

Will	-	would
can	-	could
shall	-	should
may	-	might
ought	-	No past tense form
ought		“
dare		“
need		“

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

With 2 examples for each, identify 2 types of noun and verb that you know.

#### 3.3.3 Adjective

An adjective is a word that describes, qualifies or tells us more about a noun or pronoun.

Examples are beautiful, interesting, big, small, round, new, e.t.c.

Adjectives are attributive when they come before the nouns they describe e.g.

Shade has a beautiful dress  
 The brown bag has been stolen  
 That fat boy is naughty  
 The young girl sings well.

And predicative when they come after the nouns they describes as in these examples:

Shade's dress is beautiful  
 That leather bag is brown  
 Michael Jackson died young  
 The naughty boy is fat.

### 3.3.4 Adverb

An adverb is a word class that modifies a verb. In other words, it offers more information about a verb or the action expressed by the verb. This is the reason it is called modifier of the verb. It is also possible for an adverb to modify an adjective, another adverb, a phrase e.t.c. The modifying role of function of an adverb is done by supplying vital information such as telling us place, time, manner, degree, condition, result, purpose, reason etc about the verb.

The underlined words in the following sentences are adverbs:-

- a. The girl runs fast (modifies runs).
- b. He danced well yesterday (modifies danced)
- c. The lecturer often teaches (modifies teaches)
- d. It always rains in July (modifies rains)
- e. That was beautifully done (modifies done)
- f. He defeated the wrestler easily (modifies defeated)

Morphologically, adverbs can be formed from adjectives by adding (-ly) to such adjectives.

For example,

<b>Adjective</b>	<b>Adverb</b>
(a) beautiful = ly	beautifully
(b) easy + ly =	easily
(c) careful + ly =	carefully

(d)	quick + ly	=	quickly
(e)	happy + ly	=	happily
(f)	rapid + ly	=	rapidly
(g)	wrong + ly	=	wrongly
(h)	high + ly	=	highly
(i)	handsome + ly	=	handsomely
(j)	faithful + ly	=	faithfully
(k)	near + ly	=	nearly
(l)	legal + ly	=	legally
(m)	social + ly	=	socially
(n)	political + ly	=	politically e.t.c.

There are several kinds of adverbs though some are not morphologically marked. The most common ones among them are listed below:-

**Adverb of place:** This kind of adverb tells us where an action takes place. Hence, it answers the question where? For example,  
I saw him there (where did I see him?)  
The man searched everywhere (where did the man search?)

The thief hid the money somewhere. (where did the thief hide the money?)

### 3.3.4.2 Adverb of Time

This type of adverb tells us when an action takes place. Thus, it answers the question when? For example,

The match will end soon. (When will the match end?)  
My father traveled today (when did my father travel?)  
The plane leaves for Abuja tomorrow (when will the plane leave for Abuja?)

### 3.3.4.3 Adverb of Manner

This type of adverb modifies a verb by telling us how the action of the verb was carried out. For example, The girl sang sonorously (how did the girl sing?)

The team played well (how did the team play?)

The students politely greeted their president (how did the students greet their president?)

### 3.3.4.4 Adverb of Frequency

This type of adverb only indicates the rate of occurrence or the frequency of the occurrence of an action. For example,

Jide usually goes to school late  
 Politicians always tell lies  
 Lazy students scarcely succeed in life.

### 3.3.4.5 Adverbs of Degree

This type of adverb only intensifies or de-intensifies the action of the verb it modifies. For example,

This food is so delicious that he ate two plates  
 That load is too heavy for you to carry.  
 I almost forgot to say my prayers.

Some adverbs are compared in the same way with adjectives is that they take the morphemes –er or -est, and more or most comparison.

(a) (-er) and (-est)

<b>Adverb</b>	<b>Comparative</b>	<b>Superlative</b>
soon	sooner	soonest
late	later	latest
fast	faster	fastest etc.

(b) (more) and most

<b>Adverb</b>	<b>Comparative</b>	<b>Superlative</b>
diligently	more diligently	most diligently
quickly	more quickly	most quickly
carefully	more carefully	most carefully
gracefully	more gracefully	most gracefully
kindly	more kindly	most kindly
leisurely	more leisurely	most leisurely
generously	more generously	most generously

Some adverbs cannot be compared at all. They include these:

so, ever, never, now, then, too, e.t.c. and some have a peculiar way of being compared

For example:

<b>Adverb</b>	<b>Comparative</b>	<b>Superlative</b>
badly	worse	worst
little	less	least
old	older	older
old	elder	eldest
well	better	best
much	more	most

Old, older and oldest are used for general age. For example, He is old; I am older; He is the oldest of us all; while old, older and eldest is used among siblings or family relationships. For example, I am old; He is my elder brother; He is my eldest brother.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Two classes of words tend to give more information about other words – identify and discuss the words, with examples.

#### **3.3.4 Pronoun**

A pronoun is a word used to replace a noun earlier mentioned in a sentence. This is done to avoid unnecessary repetition of nouns in a sentence. For example,

Jide is a young graduate

Jide will get married to Yinka soon

Yinka is a graduate of the University of Lagos.

The University of Lagos is located in Akoka.

Jide and Yinka will live happily thereafter.

The continuous mentioning of Jide, Yinka and University of Lagos make the sentence monotonous and repetitive. The sentence will be better appreciated like this:

Jide is a young graduate

He will get married to Yinka soon

She is a graduate of the University of Lagos.

It is located in Akoka

They will live happily thereafter. The following changes have taken place:

Jide	He
Yinka	She
University of Lagos	It
Jide and Yinka	They

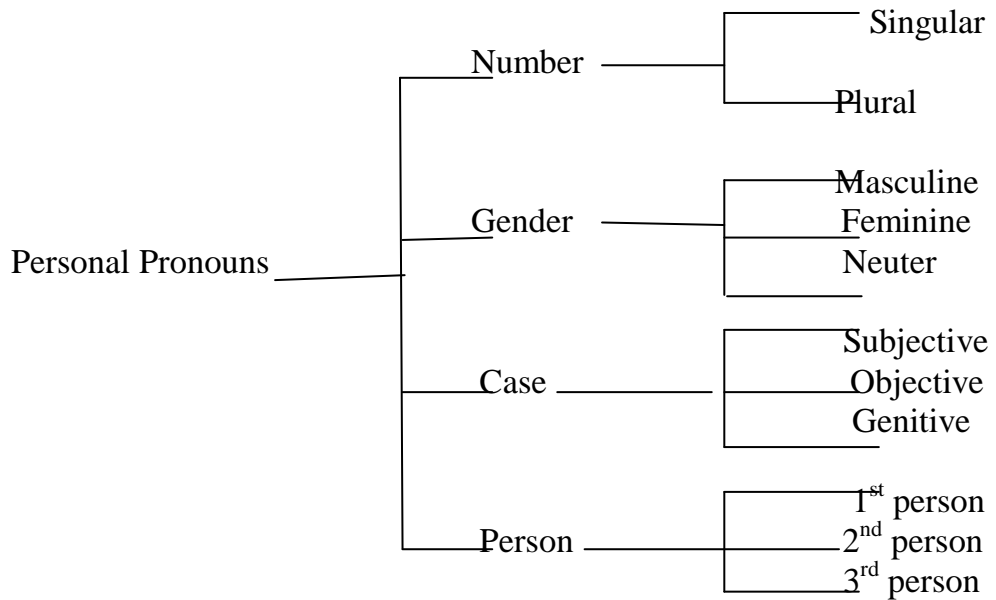
There are many types of pronouns depending on the role(s) played in a sentence as can be seen below:

### 3.3.5.1 Personal Pronouns

They are about the most important subclass of pronouns. They exhibit four features namely:-

- (a) Number
- (b) Gender
- (c) Case
- (d) Person

- (a) **Number:** Number subdivides personal pronouns into two: singular, that is, singular pronouns He, I, it e.t.c. and plurality, that is, plural pronouns they, we e.t.c.
- (b) **Gender:** - This subdivides personal pronouns into three: masculine pronouns for male – He; feminine pronouns for female – she; and neuter pronouns for non-living things and non humans – it.
- (c) **Case** – This subdivides personal pronouns into three: subjective for subjects; e.g. I, we, etc; objective for objects; e.g. us, her etc. and genitive which subdivides into two – adjective e.g. my, our etc, and possessive e.g. mine, hers, ours etc.
- (d) **Person:** - This subdivides personal pronouns into three: 1person – the speaker(s); e.g. I we 2<sup>nd</sup> person – the person spoken to or the listener e.g. you, and 3<sup>rd</sup> person – the person or thing referred to or spoken about. We may use this diagram to illustrate more clearly:



Everything that has been said about personal pronouns can be captured in this larger diagram.

	<b>Subjective</b>	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Adjectival Genitive</b>	<b>Possessive</b>
1 <sup>st</sup>	I	me	my	mine
2 <sup>nd</sup>	you	you	your	yours
3 <sup>rd</sup>	He/She /It	him/her/it	his/her/its	his/hers/its
1 <sup>st</sup>	we	us	our	ours
2 <sup>nd</sup>	you	you	your	yours
3 <sup>rd</sup>	They	them	their	theirs

### 3.3.5.2 Indefinite Pronouns

They do not refer to particular things or persons. In other words, they refer to an indefinite number of people or things. They include, someone, nobody, anything, anybody, everybody, many, few, either, neither, all, e.t.c.

Most indefinite pronouns are used in the singular number. For example,

- Everybody is invited to my birthday party
- No one knows tomorrow except God
- Anything you offer me is good
- Someone is not telling the truth in this matter
- Each of the players is a champion
- Someone should tell this woman to shut up



These days, however, because of sexism and caution on sexist language, these indefinite pronouns now take plural verbs though they sound somewhat ungrammatical. For example,

Someone has left their pen on the floor  
Everybody keeps their problems to themselves  
 If anyone is in doubt, they should consult me  
Everyone should mind their business here

### 3.3.5.3 Reflexive Pronouns

They are so named because they refer to another element (pronoun or noun) earlier mentioned within the clause. In most cases, personal pronouns + self (for singular) and + selves (plural) give us reflexive pronouns.

These personal pronouns must, however, be in their adjectival case before they can take up this extra duty.

This is called co-referentiality in text linguistics. For example,  
 The boy killed himself

The students carried out the assignment themselves  
 Can't you solve that riddle yourself  
 Nigerian politicians destroyed democracy themselves

### 3.3.5.4 Relative Pronouns

These usually link adjectival or relative clauses or rankshifted clauses to their antecedents. The antecedent of a relative pronoun is the noun that comes before it. They include who, whom, that, which, whose, what

- ü This is the man whose daughter eloped with a man
- ü The bag that was stolen has been found by the police
- ü The old man who was rushed to the hospital is Mary's grandfather
- ü The bag which you gave me has lost its value.
- ü The man whom we mistook for the Pastor is the Pastor's friend

### 3.3.5.5 Interrogative Pronouns

These are pronouns that we use to ask questions. They include:- who, whom, why, when, where, which, what, whose. They usually start interrogative sentences, and these sentences end with a question mark.

For example,  
 What is your name?

Who stole my bag?  
 Where are you now?  
 Whose are those pairs of shoes?  
 Which of the items is yours?  
 Why did you do it?

### 3.3.5.6 Demonstrative Pronouns

They are pronouns that point out the location of what they represent. They are, 'this' for singular and near object, with 'these' as the plural; and 'that' for singular and far objects with 'those' as the plural.

Examples are as follow:-

This is my house  
These are my houses  
That is a duster  
Those are fine cars.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Discuss 6 types of English pronouns you know, giving two examples of each.

### 3.3.6 Preposition

A preposition is a word that has the responsibility of showing the relationship that exists between two elements, especially, nominals in a sentence. They include in, on, for, from, to, under, around, about, with, by, below, e.t.c. For example these sentences:-

The bird is *on* the tree  
 We boarded the bus at Agboju bus stop  
 The match will kick off at 4pm.  
 You have the honour of choosing between the two oranges  
 He has lived in America for four years.  
 The ball went over the bar  
 I met him by the gate this morning etc.

### 3.3.7 Conjunction

A conjunction is a word that joins or links words, phrases, groups, clauses and even sentences. There are four types: coordinating conjunction, subordinating conjunction, correlative conjunction and semi-coordinating conjunction.

### 3.3.7.1 Coordinating Conjunctions

They join elements of equal grammatical status or rank. That is, two independent clauses. For example,

Janet and James are sibling  
She or he will watch the match live  
I will see my mother and I will also see a few friends.

### 3.3.7.2 Correlative Conjunctions

They come in pairs, and are used to join structural elements. For example,

Both food and money were made available  
Neither the teacher nor the students are to be held responsible  
Either you leave now or I lock you up.

### 3.3.7.3 Semi-Coordinating Conjunctions

They include as well as, as much as, along with, rather than, e.t.c. for example,

she dances as well as plays football  
The principal, along with the students, was honoured.

### 3.3.7.4 Subordinating Conjunctions

They connect clauses of unequal value or status, that is, an independent and a dependent clause. For example,

If it rains, I will stay indoors

The carpenter could not work on the roof because there was a patient in the hospital.

She was eating when I entered.

### 3.3.8 Interjections

This is a word that is used to show emotions or feelings of joy, anger, surprise, shock, e.t.c. They are accompanied by exclamation mark (!).

For example,

Wow! I was almost robbed  
Oh! It's good to be home.  
Oh dear! You saved my life.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5**

Discuss the main function prepositions and conjunctions perform in sentences.

### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, we have looked at the morpheme and the word with emphasis on their differences. For more on this, please check modules 1 and 2 above.

In this unit, we looked at the morpheme and word. We noted that meaning starts in the language with word. We went on to discuss word classes – Nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, prepositions, conjunctions, pronouns and interjections. We also attempted to look at the different kinds or subclasses of word classes, with copious examples.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 6**

1. With suitable examples, discuss the following:
  - (a) Adverb of time
  - (b) Adverb of manner
  - (c) Conjunctions and its types
  
2. With the aid of suitable examples, discuss the following:-
  - (a) Personal pronouns
  - (b) Indefinite pronouns
  - (c) Reflexive pronouns

### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have studied:

- more about the morpheme;
- more about the word;
- the difference(s) between the morpheme and the word;
- word classes; and
- types of word classes and their subdivisions.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Mention two similarities between the morpheme and the word.
2. Explain two major differences between the morpheme and the word.
3. Discuss verbs and types of verbs known to you.
4. Differentiate between attributive and predicative adjectives.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 5 MORPHEME AND LEXIS, VOCABULARY AND LEXEME**

In this unit, we shall look at the relationship between morpheme, lexis, vocabulary and lexeme. For example, we have known what the morpheme is, how we can identify it, how we can break it down, that is, break a word down to its morphemic components, and the relationship the morpheme has with some other grammatical units in English. Moreover, the knowledge of the vocabulary of English will no doubt enhance the retention of words and precision in their use. This is very vital in the study of vocabulary in English.

The term lexis has been used to define all the words of a language while the lexicon is said to be a collection of all the words in a language which are recorded in a dictionary. Besides, we must understand that the study of vocabulary has not been taken seriously in linguistics, and thus has been taken for granted. However, in the 70s, things changed and since then genuine interest in the field has surfaced. It is this interest that has made it possible to research into the area and discoveries have been monumental. Attempt will also be made in this unit to discuss vocabulary in English as well as lexeme.

The unit is arranged as follows:-

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 What is Lexis?
  - 3.2 Characteristics of the English Lexis
  - 3.3 Why is Lexis Different from Grammar?
  - 3.4 Why is Lexis Different from Morpheme?
  - 3.5 Lexical Units in English
  - 3.6 What is Vocabulary?
  - 3.7 How is it Organized in the English Language?
  - 3.8 Definition of Lexeme
  - 3.9 Examples of Lexemes
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In the previous unit, we discussed the morpheme and the word. We also looked at the differences that exist between the morpheme and the word. For example, we emphasized that one or more morphemes give us a word being the unit immediately above it. In this unit, emphasis shifts to the technical items called lexis, vocabulary and lexeme.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- identify lexis in a stretch of utterance
- mention some of the characteristics of the English lexis
- mention the difference(s) between morpheme and lexis
- mention the difference(s) between lexis and grammar
- identify how the vocabulary in English is organized
- interpret vocabulary in English
- mention the difference between the morpheme and vocabulary
- identify lexeme in English with examples.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 What is Lexis?

The lexis could be defined as all the items in a language which a dictionary attempts to list giving their meanings in an alphabetical order. We could go on to say that all the operational words or items in a language are the lexes of that language. For example, the item ‘school’ is a lexis in English. The dictionary defines a ‘school’ as a ‘place where children are taught’. Hence this question is appropriate, ‘which school do you go to’?

The meaning of the above is that what we erroneously refer to as words are not words in the real sense, but lexes. This is because any item that can be found listed in the dictionary with its meaning, pronunciation, origin, word-class, usage; etc is referred to as lexis (singular and lexes plural). It also carries semantic meaning. For instance, the item ‘charlatan’ is defined as ‘someone who pretends to have special skills or knowledge’. It is pronounced as / ʃɑ:lətən /. The usage is ‘The man is a complete charlatan, only in it for the money.’ It is a noun. All the above are the dictionary entry for the item ‘charlatan’, thus, the item ‘charlatan’ is a lexis in the English language.

A distinction is made between lexical words and functional words. Lexical words are also called content words, and they have meaning in isolation, whereas functional words which are also called grammatical words only become meaningful when they are attached to or used with content words in discourse.

In the lexes of the English language, Nouns, Verbs, Adverbs and Adjectives are classified as content or lexical words because they carry meanings. Examples of such lexical or content word are drawn from content or lexical categories as follows:-

1. *run* /rʌ n/, (verb) past tense; *ran* /ræn/, past participle *run* /rʌ n/ means to move quickly on foot by moving your legs more quickly than when you are walking.
2. *story* /stɔ ri/, (noun; means a description of how something happened, that is intended to entertain people, and may be true or imaginary.
3. *room* /ru:m/, (noun); means a part of the inside of a building that has its own walls, floor and ceiling.
4. *rest* /rest/, (verb); means to stop working or doing an activity for a time and sit down or lie down to relax.
5. *rest* /rest/, (noun); means a period of time when you are not doing anything tiring and you can relax or sleep.

### 3.2 Characteristics of the English Lexes

The English lexis has the following distinct characteristics.

1. It usually has a pronounceable or graphic form. This means that every lexis has a way it is pronounced as supplied in the English dictionary. For example, the following lexes have the following pronunciation and graphic forms:

- |     |         |              |
|-----|---------|--------------|
| (a) | come    | /kʌ m/       |
| (b) | brother | / brʌ ðə(r)/ |
| (c) | bank    | / bæŋk /     |
| (d) | mat     | / mæt /      |
| (e) | go      | /gəv/        |

#### 2. It fulfils a grammatical role in a sentence

All English lexis have a grammatical role to play in a sentence and even in isolation. For instance, the underlined lexes are members, verbs, nouns, articles adjectives, adverbs in the following examples:



- |     |   |                     |
|-----|---|---------------------|
| (a) | He <u>comes</u> to school regularly                                 | (verb)              |
| (b) | <u>Jide</u> is a good friend of mine                                | (Noun)              |
| (c) | <u>The</u> National Open University of Nigeria<br>has many campuses | (Noun)<br>(Article) |
| (d) | It is <u>interesting</u> to be a lecturer                           | (Adjective)         |
| (e) | The lady sings <u>beautifully</u>                                   | (Adverb)            |

### 3. It carries semantic meaning

The English lexis especially content or lexical ones have meaning. Their meanings are always listed in the dictionary. For examples, the following lexes have their dictionary meanings written by their sides.

- |     |          |  |
|-----|----------|--|
| (a) | Chamber  | – an enclosed space, especially in one’s body or inside a machine; a room used for a special purpose especially an unpleasant one. |
| (b) | glad     | pleased and happy about something.   |
| (c) | obscure  | to make something difficult to know or understand  |
| (d) | pen      | an instrument for writing or drawing with ink  |
| (e) | penchant | a liking for something, especially something that is slightly disapproved of by other people.                                      |

### 3.3 Why is Lexis Different from Grammar?

It is important to note that lexical studies is different from grammatical studies. We would be making a mistake if we continue to erroneously believe that they are the same thing. There could be an overlap though, but they are distinct subfield. For example, where the units of grammar are morpheme, word, group, clause and sentence (in an ascending order), the units of lexis are collocation, phrasal items, complex items compound items and simple items (in an descending order).

The grammar of the English language is a distinct field in linguistics which can be adequately described using the grammatical units. Also, the lexes of the English language that are listed in the dictionary are describable on their own merits. However, they can co-extend. For example, lexical items could relate to items identified as morpheme in these examples teach(er), brother (hood) e.t.c. where the first items in the combination are lexis in the language. Co-extension can also take place in even large units like ‘the exception that proves the rule’, ‘be a shadow of your former self’. While in some cases, there is no correlation.

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Explain the term 'lexis'. Discuss some characteristics of the English lexis.

### 3.4 Why is Lexis Different from Morpheme?

The English lexis is different from morphemes in a number of ways. While the morpheme is defined as the smallest in the grammatical units of English, the lexis stands as a subfield that has its describable units in the language.

The morpheme of English is divided into two:

Free and bound, the lexes of English have distinct units like; collocation, phrasal items, complex items, compound items and simple items.

From the above, it therefore becomes impossible for the morpheme and lexis to be the same. The lexis, because of its describable components, can be studied and this is what the field, lexical studies in English, is about.

Morphology deals with the structure or shape of words, lexicology is said to be the branch of linguistics that studies and analyses the vocabulary items of a language. It also takes care of their meanings and origin.

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

State two major differences between morpheme and lexis?

### 3.5 Lexical Units in English

Having identified lexicology (lexical studies) as a branch of linguistics, it is important to identify lexical units. Lexical units could be simple, compound, complex, phrasal or clausal (which is also called collocation span by Halliday (1996). They are explained as following from the smallest (simple lexical items) to the largest (clausal or collocational span).

1. **Simple lexical items:** They are made up of one free morpheme, and meaning does not have to be dependent on any other morphemes. Examples of simple lexical items are rat, table, school etc.

- 2. Compound lexical items:** They are lexes that are derived by joining two free morphemes together. For example, free morphemes from different word classes may be joined to have a compound lexical item. Hence, we could have a combination of (i) a verb and a noun, that is,

verb + noun as in:

play + boy	=	playboy
call + girl	=	call girl,
woman + doctor	=	woman doctor

- (ii) an adjective and a noun, that is, adjective + noun as in:

hot + dog = hotdog

hot + pants = hot pants etc.; it is important to note that the meaning of the derived word may not be deduced from the component parts. For example, the compound lexis hotdog has no reference to dog or the state of being hot. It refers to a cooked sausage in a long round piece of bread.

- 3. Complex lexical items:** They are made up of more than two free morphemes which are either written together or hyphenated to connote an idea. In some cases, they could be a single lexis as a synonym. Examples include, the complex items 'newspaperman' which also means a newspaper 'vendor'. Other examples include 'down-to-earth' serious or important; 'an eye for an eye' which is revenge; 'housemanship' training, 'house of prayer' or 'house of worship' church, e.t.c.
- 4. Phrasal lexical items:** phrasal verbs in the language are very important as they are frequently used both in spoken and written, formal and informal contexts or situations.

Phrasal verb and a preposition or adverb (usually called particle) to form a single meaning unit. They are to be learnt the way we learn new verbs. Phrasal verbs are not to be broken up into their respective lexical components. Examples of phrasal verbs include:

- |                |   |
|----------------|---|
| (a) drain off  | to make water or liquid flow off something, leaving it dry.                       |
| (b) flake out  | to fall asleep because you are extremely tired.                                   |
| (c) kid around | to behave in a silly way  |
| (d) knock over | to hit someone with a car while you are driving, so that they are hurt or killed. |

- (e) look into to try to find out the truth about a problem, crime etc in order to solve it.
- (f) tear away to suddenly start moving very quickly.

We must understand that just as verbs are capable of having more than one meaning, a phrasal verb too exhibits this property. The phrasal verb 'take off' is used as an example where it has the following meanings:-

- (a) leave the ground e.g. when will the plane take off?
- (b) remove dress e.g. please, take off your dress before jumping into the swimming pool.
- (c) start a business e.g. when will your new company take off, please?
- (d) A race well e.g. The Black stars of Ghana took off well in the race to South Africa 2010 world cup.
- (e) to run away e.g. the criminal took off before the arrival of the police.

**5. Collocation span (or clausal lexical items):** They include the proverbs, idioms and figures of speech in the English language. They usually have fixed meanings and come together to represent an item since they carry a specific meaning irrespective of the individual meanings of the words which make them up. Examples of this lexical unit or level include:

- (a) to shed crocodile tears; to pretend you feel sad, sorry or upset when you do not really feel that way.
- (b) to be caught in the crossfire; to be involved in a situation in which other people are arguing, when you do not want to be.
- (c) to talk to somebody like a Dutch uncle; to tell someone severely that you disapprove of what they have done.
- (d) to only have yourself to thank; used to say that you are responsible for something bad that has happened to you.
- (e) to be as thick as thieves; if two people are as thick as thieves, they are very friendly with each other and seem to share a lot of secrets.
- (f) to be all things to all men; to behave in a way that makes everyone like you.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Discuss, with examples, 4 lexical units you know.

### 3.6 What is Vocabulary?

Technically, the vocabulary is said to be all the lexical items used by a particular person or all the items that exist in a subject. This can also be referred to as lexicon. Thus, lexicon and vocabulary are synonyms.

Language is not only dynamic but equally enriches itself by borrowing. The assumption, therefore, is that it is difficult if not impossible for a speaker of a given language to know all lexes in any given language. In that instance, we say the number of all the lexes he knows constitute his vocabulary. Thus speaker A may have a richer and distinct vocabulary when compared to another speaker B.

With given disciplines, however, vocabulary refers to all the specialized words found in the register. The vocabulary found in medicine for example certainly differs from those found in the legal register. With a list of lexical items, therefore, one could identify what lexical items of the list will collocate in each of the registers. Vocabulary could also be words used in a particular subject or the list of words with explanation of their meanings in a book for learning foreign languages.

### 3.7 How is Vocabulary Organized in English

The content of the English lexis is words.. In other words, the term lexis is used to refer to all the words in any given language. This discussion takes us back to WORDS. Words have been adequately discussed in unit 1 of this module. You may have to go back to unit 1 to read up on words.

However, we need to emphasise here that the meaning field of a particular thing, concept, notion or activity is constituted by all the words that relate or can relate specifically to the thing, concept, notion or activity. Hence, the lexicon of fields consists of word classes which have been discussed extensively in unit 1.

#### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

State clearly your understanding of vocabulary and how it is organised in English.

### 3.8 Definition of Lexeme

Ajulo (1994:104) defines a lexeme as “A name given by some linguists to a basic unit of the vocabulary of a language, as opposed to a grammatical unit such as the morpheme and a semantic unit such as the sememe. From this definition, the word, basically implies that different

“grammatical lexes” (i.e. lexes which have taken up some grammatical properties in discourse thus becoming words) will be considered different forms of the same lexeme, their different shapes notwithstanding. Thus, the underlined words in the sentences below constitute several forms of the lexeme, **WORK**:

1. I work very hard.
2. She works with the leading insurance company.
3. Bola is working.
4. Mrs Aina has worked for 26 years.

Thus, ‘work’, ‘works’, ‘working’, and ‘worked’ are forms of the lexeme ‘work’. Lexeme therefore, is a new term suggested for the basic unit from which several words having different shapes but the same referents are derived. It is a term introduced by Whorf (1939 cited in Ajulo 1994:51).

Fundamentally, lexeme could be likened to other units identified at different levels of linguistic analysis (i.e. the phoneme, morpheme and sememe). The term ‘bank’, from our examples will have as many distinct lexemes as there are its different meanings.

### 3.9 Examples of Lexemes

Copious examples of lexemes are given below

**Lexeme ‘Write’** ----- write, writes, writing, wrote, written

I will write a letter tomorrow.  
 She writes a letter daily.  
 He is writing a note.  
 The teacher wrote on the board.  
 My father would have written a memo by this afternoon.

**Lexeme ‘Sing’**----- sing, sings, singing, sang, sung.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5

1. Mention two features of the English lexis.
2. What do you understand by collocation span or clausal lexical items?
3. Mention two units each in the grammatical and lexical units or levels in English in their ascending order.
4. Do you agree that lexical studies is a distinct branch in linguistics? Give reasons for your answer.

5. What do you understand by vocabulary?
6. Mention three examples of lexemes and give examples of other forms.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, we have looked at the meaning of the technical term *lexis*, and we said that it is a distinct branch of linguistics which has to be studied on its own merit. We also looked at the characteristics of the English *lexis*. Among other things, we said that the English *lexis* has a pronounceable or graphic form; that it fulfils a grammatical role in a sentence since it belongs to a particular word – class; and that it carries a semantic meaning. We demonstrated that every *lexis* in English has a dictionary meaning, origin and other valuable features. We have also studied vocabulary; how it is organized in English, vocabulary and meaning relations; vocabulary and sense relations, and some registers in English. Some of these were done with diagrams where necessary so as to paint a vivid picture of the topic of discussion. We also looked at the *lexeme* with examples.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have studied:

- What *lexes* are in English
- The characteristics of the English *lexis*
- The difference(s) between the *lexis* and grammar
- The difference(s) between the *lexis* and the *morpheme*
- Lexical units or levels in English with copious examples.
- What vocabulary is
- How vocabulary is organized
- The relationship between vocabulary and *lexemes*
- What a *lexeme* is; and
- Examples of *lexemes* in the English language.

#### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. What do you understand by lexicology in English?
2. Explain the difference between phrasal lexical items and complex lexical items.
3. Give 5 examples each of:
  - (a) simple lexical items
  - (b) compound lexical items
  - (c) complex lexical items

4. Give the forms of the lexemes listed below:
  - a. grace
  - b. jump
  - c. run
  - d. leave
  - e. ugly
  - f. bite
  - g. dig
  
5. What do you understand by lexeme in English?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **MODULE 2      MORPHOLOGY, PHONOLOGY, SYNTAX AND LEXIS**

- Unit 1      Morphology, Its Environment, English Plural Morpheme & Past Tense Morpheme
- Unit 2      Morphology and Syntax
- Unit 3      The Question of Word and Lexical Meaning
- Unit 4      Classifying English Lexis into Types
- Unit 5      Morphological Parsing and the Lexicon

### **UNIT 1      MORPHOLOGY AND ENVIRONMENTS**

In this unit, we shall discuss the relationships that exist between morphology and phonology. In other words, we are going into what linguists have called morphophonemics. We must understand that when pieces of morphological materials are strung together, they have a way of affecting each/one (an) other phonologically. We shall also examine the role phonology plays in determining how the plural marker /z/ is pronounced. We shall also attempt to state phonological rules with examples of morphemes that conform to such rules as well as the role phonology plays in determining how the English past tense morphemes are pronounced.

The unit is arranged as follows:-

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0      Introduction
- 2.0      Objectives
- 3.0      Main Content
  - 3.1      Environmental Effects
  - 3.2      Voiceless Consonants      (Rule 1)
  - 3.3      Voiced Sounds      (Rule 2)
  - 3.4      Sibilants      (Rule 3)
  - 3.5      Vowel Change      (Rule 4)
  - 3.6      No Change      (Rule 5)
  - 3.7      Word Change      (Rule 6)
  - 3.8      Voiceless Consonants      (Rule 1)
  - 3.9      Voiced Sounds      (Rule 2)
  - 3.10     Vowel Change      (Rule 3)
    - 3.10.1    Vowel Change (1)      (Rule 3.1)
    - 3.10.2    Vowel Change (2)      (Rule 3.2)
    - 3.10.3    Vowel Change (3)      (Rule 3.3)

3.11	No Change	(Rule 4)
3.12	With Stops	(Rule 5)
3.13	Stops or Plosives and English Past Tense Morpheme	(rule 6)
4.0	Conclusion	
5.0	Summary	
6.0	Tutor-Marked Assignment	
7.0	References/Further Reading	

## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

Linguistic branches – morphology, phonology, semantics and syntax are interwoven. They all have a way of affecting one another especially in a stretch of utterance. Thus, there are rules: syntactic, morphological, semantic and phonological which are dependent in certain environments which we shall see in this unit and other units in this module.

In this unit, therefore, we shall explain environmental constraints on morphological realization. In other words, we shall be looking at the effect of the environment on the pronunciation of morphemes. We shall further shift emphasis from mere postulation to exact demonstration of phonological rules with English words. Phonology affects morphology in two ways. These are in the way past tense morpheme is pronounced and how plural morpheme is pronounced. We shall conclude the section by looking at the interplay between morphology and phonology with special emphasis on phonology and the English past tense morpheme.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- state the meaning of phonology
- identify the relationship that exists between phonology and morphology
- mention functions of phonological rules
- discuss how plural morphemes in voiceless consonants are pronounced
- discuss how plural morphemes in voiced sounds are pronounced
- discuss how plural morphemes in sibilants are pronounced
- explain what is meant by vowel change in words
- explain what is meant by no change in words
- explain what is meant by word change
- state how past tense morphemes in voiceless consonants are pronounced
- state how past tense morphemes in voiced sound are pronounced

- discuss what is meant by vowel change in past tense morphemes
- discuss what is meant by no change in past tense morphemes.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Environmental Effects

Knowing a language involves having the knowledge of the phonology or sound system of that language. This helps us in identifying the phonetic segments that occur in the language, and the ways in which they are patterned.

Phonology deals with the study of the occurrence, organization, distribution and pronunciation of speech sounds. It is also seen as the study of sound patterns in a language and the interrelatedness between sounds.

Phonology and morphology are related in that while morphology deals with morphemes, that is, word building, phonology deals with the understanding of sounds of languages and their relevance with respect to how they should be used appropriately in communication. The relevant connection between morphology and phonology therefore pertains to the ways in which certain morphemes are pronounced or articulated. Constraints of this sort can be found in both derivational and inflectional morphemes.

This is what morpho-phonemics is all about.

The major function of phonological rule in morphology is to provide the phonetic information necessary for the pronunciation of words. The application of rules in this way is called a derivation.

Some of these phonological rules affect either the plural markers /-s/, thereby making it to be realized as any of these

e.g. book + s = books / buks /  
 e.g. bag + s = bags / bægz /  
 e.g. box + es = boxes / bɒ ksɪ z /

and the regular past tense marker (ed), thereby making it to be realized as any of these:

/d/ e.g. bag + ed = bagged / bægt /  
 /t/ e.g. jump + ed = jumped / dʒʌ mpt /  
 /ɪd/ e.g. want + ed = wanted / wɒ ntɪ d /

We have only given examples to show that truly morphology and phonology are interwoven in the way morphemes or words are pronounced. We are careful not to state the rules categorically because it is not part of our objectives. In the subsequent units, this will be taken care of adequately.

### 3.2 Voiceless Consonants and Morphemes (rule 1)

A consonant is said to be voiceless when during its production or pronunciation, the vocal cords are drawn apart and air is allowed to pass through without vibration. This state of non vibration of the vocal cords is a voiceless state. These phonemes are thus said to be voiceless in English. /p/, /t/, /k/, /f/, /h/, /s/, /t/, etc.

The following realizations take place.

tap + s	=	taps	/tæps/
book + s	=	books	/buks/
state + s	=	states	/steɪts/

From the above, this rule can be stated:

(-s) → /s/                      voiceless consonants ..... #)  
 in words, the plural morpheme (-z) is realized as phoneme /s/ in an environment where a voiceless consonant precedes it.

### 3.3 Voiced Sounds and Morphemes (rule 2)

A sound is said to be voiced when during its articulation, the vocal cords come so close that air forces itself through it. This causes vibration and sounds accompanied by vibration are called voiced sound. All vowels are voiced in English.

These consonant phonemes are voiced:

/b/, /d/, /g/, /v/, /dʒ/, /z/, /dʒ/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, etc.

The following realizations take place

bag + s	=	bags	/ bægz /
day + s	=	days	/ deɪz /
comb + s	=	combs	/ kəmbz /
	/		
father + s	=	fathers	/ fa:ðə(r)z /

From the above, this rule can be stated.

(-s) → /z/    (voiced sound) .....#)

In words, the plural morpheme (-s) is realized as /z/ in an environment where a voiced sound precedes it.

### 3.4 Sibilants and Morphemes (rule 3)

A sibilant sound is any of these sounds /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/. The following realizations take place.

Watch + es	=	watches	/ wɔ tʃɪz /
punch + es	=	punches	/ pʌŋ tʃɪz /
box + es	=	boxes	/ bɔ ksɪz /
bus + es	=	buses	/ bʌ sɪz /

From the above, we can generate this rule:-

(-s) → /ɪz/ (sibilant) ..... #)

In words, the plural morpheme (-s) is realized as /ɪz/ in an environment where a sibilant precedes it.

#### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Explain 2 morphophonemic rules that govern plural morpheme realisation in words.

### 3.5 Vowel Change (rule 4)

Some words do not take an 's' to form their plural; they only go through inflexion. That is, they experience vowel change. For example,

man + s	=	men	/ men /
foot + s	=	feet	/ fi:t /
tooth + s	=	teeth	/ ti:θ /

From the above, this rule can be generated→

(-s) → (V1 → V2) /C – C #)

In words, the plural morpheme (-s) is realized as a vowel change in an environment where the vowel is between two consonants.

### 3.6 No Change in Vowel (rule 5)

Some words do not take as 's' to form their plural; they remain the way they are. For example:-

Sheep + s	=	sheep	/ ʃi:p /
Fish + s	=	fish	/ fɪʃ /

From the above, we can generate this rule

$(-s) \rightarrow (\emptyset)$

In words, the plural morpheme (-s) is realized as a zero morpheme.

### 3.7 Word Change (rule 6)

Some words form their plurals by changing to new words completely.

For example,

child + s = children / tʃɪldrən /

ox + s = oxen / ɔksn /

This is stated as a rule below:

$(-s) \rightarrow (w1 \quad w2)$

In words, the plural morpheme (-s) is realized as a total word change.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Discuss, with examples, 4 morphophonemic rules of English.

### 3.8 Voiceless Consonants and Past Tense Morphemes (rule 1)

Voiceless consonants, /p/, /t/, /k/, /f/, /s/, /t/, etc display this behaviour with the English past tense

Morpheme (-ed). For example,

stop + ed = stopped / stɒpt /

dance + e = danced / dænst /

walk + ed = walked / wɔ:kt /

hiss + ed = hissed / hɪst /

watch + ed = watched / wɔtʃt /

From the above, we can generate this rule.

$(-ed) \rightarrow /t/$  (voiceless consonant.....#)

In words, the English past tense morpheme (-ed) is realized as /t/ in an environment where a voiceless consonant precedes it.

### 3.9 Voiced Sounds and English Past Tense Morpheme (rule 2)

English voiced consonants, /b/, /d/, /g/, /v/, /z/, /h/, /d/, /m/, /n/, e.t.c. and all English vowels (all English vowels are voiced) behave this way with the English past tense morpheme (-ed). For example,

play + ed = played /pleid/  
 ban + ed = banned /bænd/  
 judge + ed = judged /dʒʌ dʒd / e.t.c.

From the above, this rule can be generated.

(-ed) → /d/ (voiced sound .....#)

In words, the English past tense morpheme (-ed) is realized as /d/ in an environment where a voiced sound (whether consonant or vowel) precedes it.

### 3.10 Vowel Change (rule 3)

Some English words change their vowels to form their past tense.

They are of three categories.

take + ed = took /tu:k/  
 run + ed = ran /ræn/  
 come + ed = came /keim/  
 will + ed = came /keim/

From this, we can generate this phonological rule:

(-ed) → (V1 V2) (C – C #)

#### 310.1 Vowel Change (1) (Rule 3.1)

In words, the English past tense morpheme (-ed) is realized as a change in vowel in an environment where the vowel is between two consonants.

#### 3.10.2 Vowel Change (2) (Rule 3.2)

Some English words change their vowel to form their past tense morpheme with the word starting with a consonant and ending with a vowel. For example:

see + ed = saw /sɔ:/



tear + ed = tore / tɔː /

From this, we can generate this phonological rule:

$(-ed) \rightarrow (V1 \rightarrow V2) / (C \_ \#)$

In words, the English past tense morpheme (-ed) is realized as a change in vowel where a consonant precedes the changing vowel.

### 3.10.3 Vowel Change (3) (Rule 3.3)

Some English words change their vowel to form their past tense morpheme with the work starting with a vowel and ending with a consonant. For example:

eat + ed = ate / eɪt /

From the above, we can generate this rule.

$(-ed) \rightarrow (V1 \rightarrow V2) (\#- C\#)$

In words, the English past tense morpheme (-ed) is realized as a change in vowel in an environment where the changing vowel precedes the consonant which is in word final position.

### 3.11 No Change (rule 4)

Some English words retain their base or bare infinitive forms for their past tense form. For example

put + ed	=	put / pʊt /
cut + ed	=	cut / kʌt /
shut + ed	=	shut / ʃʌt /
hurt + ed	=	hurt / hɜːt /
beat + ed	=	beat / bi:t /

From the above, this phonological rule can be generated.

$(-ed) \rightarrow [\emptyset] (C / V, /) \dots \#$

In words, the English past tense morpheme is realized as no change in the word or vowel (zero morpheme) in an environment where vowels /v or ʌ/ is between two consonants.

**3.12 With Stops****(Rule 5)**

Some English words form their past tense morpheme by changing the morphological structure or shape. For example: (rule 5).

do + ed = did / dɪd/  
go + ed = went / went/

(-ed) → (w1 → w2)

In words, the English past tense morpheme is realized as a word changing to another word or word one becomes word two.

**3.13 Stops or Plosives and English Past Tense Morpheme (rule 6)**

Stops or plosives are produced when there is total obstruction in the oral cavity; this leads to build up of air and then followed by a sudden release in the manner of a minor explosion. They have a way of affecting (-ed) morpheme as in these examples.

want + ed = wanted / wɒntɪd /  
land + ed = landed / lændɪd /  
need + ed = needed / ni:ɪd /

From the above, this phonological rule can be generated.

(-ed) → /ɪd/ (stops or plosive)...#)

In words, the English past tense morpheme (-ed) is realized as /ɪd/ in an environment where a stop or plosive sound precedes it.

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

State, with 2 examples for each, 4 rules that affect the formation of past tense morphemes in English.

**4.0 CONCLUSION**

In this unit, we have tried to discuss the interesting relationship that exists between morphology and phonology. We also gave the function of phonological rules as well as cited some examples in our discussion. We have also used phonological rules to explain morphological realizations in words. We noted that some morphemes are phonologically marked because of the environment they found themselves, thus, buttressing the fact that phonological rules are important tools in morphology. Hence, we stated rules for how voiceless consonants affect morphemes; how voiced sounds affect

morphemes, how sibilants affect morphemes e.t.c. Lastly, we have used phonological rules to explain the English past tense morpheme. We also created rules and used our rules, in a number of ways, to explain how voiceless consonants affect English past tense morpheme, how voiced sounds affect English past tense morpheme e.t.c.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt:

- what is meant by phonology,
- how morphology and phonology interact,
- phonological rules of the past tense and plural markers at the introductory level.
- voiceless consonants and their effect on English plural morpheme.
- voiced sounds and their effect on English plural morpheme
- sibilants and their effects in English plural morpheme
- phonological rules governing the above statements.
- the effect of voiceless consonants on the English morpheme.
- the effect of voiced sounds on the English morpheme
- phonological rules governing sound of the statements made above.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Explain what is meant by phonological rule
2. What is the relationship between morphology and phonology?
3. Explain the following with the aid of examples.
  - a. Voiceless sounds
  - b. Voiced sounds
  - c. Sibilants
4. Explain voiced sounds and morphemes with some examples.
5. Write this rule in phonological statement 'the plural morpheme (-s) is realized as phoneme /s/ in an environment where a voiceless consonant precedes it.
6. Explain what is meant by stops or plosives
7. Write this rule in phonological statement. 'the English past tense morpheme is realized as a change in vowel in an environment where the vowel is between two consonants'.
8. State the phonological rule for the examples of the English past tense morphemes below:

see + ed           =     saw  
 tear + ed         =     tore

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 2 MORPHOLOGY AND SYNTAX

Words are framed by combining morphemes and an attempt to analyze them in that manner leads to morphology. Furthermore, words may be grammatically examined with respect to the relationship they hold within phrases, clauses and sentences – this is referred to as syntax. Thus to establish a link for morphology and syntax is to project an affinity for a system of structure within the grammatical unit.. This unit hopes to clear the air on this subject of interrelationship between morphology and syntax.

The unit is arranged as follows:

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 The Field of Morphology
  - 3.2 Early Distinction of Syntax and Morphology
  - 3.3 Modern Distinction of Syntax and Morphology
  - 3.4 Is Morphology Independent of Syntax?
  - 3.5 Nature of Morpho-syntactic Agreement
  - 3.6 The Role of Morphology in syntax
  - 3.7 Morphology and Agreement Structure
  - 3.8 Morpholexical Operations
  - 3.9 Morpho-syntactic Operations
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

In this unit, we shall examine the connection between the ways morphemes are constituted vis-à-vis their operations in syntax. To achieve this, we shall probe into the early distinction established between syntax and morphology to test-run any connection between them. We shall also examine the nature and the role of morpheme in syntax. Our focus will also shift to Spencer and Sandler's (2001) distinction between two sorts of operation which affect valency (i.e., the distribution of the roles and functions of participants within utterances), namely: (1) morpholexical operations and (2) morpho-syntactic operations. This division corresponds to the traditional distinction

between derivation (lexeme-creating) and inflection (creation of distinct forms of a given lexeme).

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- trace the scope of the field of morphology
- explain what the early distinction between syntax and morphology is
- explain the modern distinction between syntax and morphology
- explain whether morphology can do without syntax or otherwise
- define and identify agreement within utterances
- relate parts of sentences in meaningful orders
- discuss the place of morphology in syntax
- choose your words (especially verbs) acceptably to effect desired meanings on different participants within your utterance. By 'participants', I mean, controller (subject) and the target (object/adjunct)
- identify different structures that manifest to alter (but not change) the semantic content of utterances.

## 3.0 CONTENT

### 3.1 The Field of Morphology

Indeed, morphology as a field lies between grammar and lexis (grammar itself being the theoretical analytical explanation for morphological and grammatical synthesis). According to the most usual division of subjects explicated in Ajulo (1994:27)), the field of morphology in general is divided into two major subfields; one is concerned with processes of inflection (for example, with the role of the English nominal endings *-s*, *-es* plural marking), and the other with what we usually refer to as processes of word-formation. This latter subfield of which one is concerned with process of derivation (for example, the derivation of the noun 'national' from 'nation', or the adjective 'advisory' from the verb 'advise') and the other with processes of composition or compounding (for example, the formation of the compounds *blackstar*, *sunbeam* from the simple *black*, *star*, *sun*, *beam* respectively. These processes combined explain the formation of lexemes (the 'lexical word').

### 3.2 Early Distinction of Syntax and Morphology

Positive linguistic wars have so far been fought on the need to explain the mode of interaction between syntax and word formation. As far back

as 1960s and early 1970s, disagreement involving the nature of the Word Formation (WF) component and the lexicon provided the background for the emergence of two radically different trends within generative grammar: Generative Semantics and Lexicalism. The contention lies in the appropriate constraining of the grammar, and whether an independent, list-like lexicon is more or less costly than an extremely powerful syntax in which transformations could derive varying syntactic and morphological structures from unique semantic representations..

This issue reemerged in the mid-1980s, albeit in a slightly different guise. The corpus of work done during that decade has resulted in important structural insights into the nature of word formation, thus strengthening the claim that morphology is an autonomous module, in consonance with the phonological and the syntactic modules, and that it should be understood in these terms. Several other works were later done during that same decade which resulted in the emergence of syntactic systems capable of handling word-formation operations in a more restricted way, therefore avoiding many of the pitfalls encountered by earlier, less constrained such work.

Chomsky (1957:32) viewed syntax as the grammatical sequences of morphemes of a language. Chomsky's morpheme-based theory of syntax has come to adopt, in its most recent development, a rather more traditional view of the complementarity of syntax and inflection than it did in its earlier versions. In particular, it now treats derivational morphology as something which is not handled by the central syntactic component of the grammar, but as relating to the structure of the vocabulary (or lexicon). In general, morphology was not held to be a separate field of study. Lees (1960/1963) is a key document of the approach that attempts to explain word-formation processes in terms of syntactic transformations. For example, a compound such as *manservant* was seen to incorporate the sentence *The servant is a man*; this sentence by transformation generates the compound. Such a description is naturally highly problematic, especially when confronted with the idiosyncrasies of derived and compound words. Perhaps, this may have prompted Lyons (2005:100) to submit that it is 'inflection', not 'morphology' that opposes 'syntax' in traditional grammar.

### **3.3 Modern Distinction of Syntax and Morphology**

Early transformational grammarians continued the structuralist tradition of blurring the morphology/syntax division. Highlighting the original but relegated role of syntax in morphology, Adejare and Adejare (2006:16) refers to syntax as a description of word-order in which grammatical and lexical (morphological) units are treated together as in

Transformational model. The modern distinction of syntax and morphology, according to which syntax deals with the distribution of words (i.e. word-forms) and morphology with their internal grammatical structure is, at first sight, very similar to the traditional distinction of syntax and inflection. But it differs from it in two respects: (a) morphology includes not only inflection, but also derivation; (b) it handles both inflection and derivation by means of roles operating upon the same basic units – morphemes (Lyons *ibid*:103). For example, as the derivation form *teacher* is made up of the two more basic units *teach* and *-er*, so the inflection form *teaching* is made up of the two more basic units (morphemes) *teach* and *-ing*. Furthermore, it is the same process of **affixation**: i.e. of adding an **affix** (either prefix or suffix) to a base form in each case. Looked at from this point of view, morphemes – minimal forms – are seen as the basic units of grammatical structure; and a good deal of morphology can be brought within the scope of syntax by denoting the word from its traditional position of centrality in grammatical theory.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Distinguish between syntax and morphology, using a diachronic approach.

### 3.4 Is Morphology Independent of Syntax?

It is within this enhanced understanding of both syntax and word-formation that the same question is now raised: is word formation an independent module, subject to restrictions all of its own, or should it be subsumed under syntax, obeying syntactic restrictions which are independently motivated? If we assume that word-formation exists as an independent component, how is the interaction between such an independent word-formation component and the syntax be characterized?

Borer (2001:152) reviews very briefly some of the answers that have been given to these two questions in recent studies, pointing out the strengths as well as the weaknesses of these positions. In six segments, he surveyed a number of important issues that have emerged in an attempt to model the relationship between word-formation and syntax. He looks exclusively at syntactic and lexicalist models, surveying a number of issues that emerge in each. He shows that the lexical/syntactic distinction interacts with another and as well resolves the issue of isomorphism, which cuts across the lexical /syntactic distinction. He also looks at mixed systems, where solutions to the interaction between morphology and syntax are given in terms of partitioning the morphological component, allowing it to accomplish its



task in slightly different ways, depending on the way in which it interacts with the syntax. The obvious conclusion is that from the range of models and possibilities, issues concerning the interaction between word-formation and syntax are not resolved, and they remain sensitive to theoretical contributions to syntactic theory on the one hand, and to WF theory and phonology on the other.

### 3.5 Nature of Agreement

In order to be able to generalize about different types of agreement, Corbett (2001:191) introduces a set of terms. He calls the element which determines the agreement (say the subject noun phrase) the ‘controller’. The element whose form is determined by agreement is the ‘target’. The syntactic environment in which agreement occurs is the ‘domain’ of agreement. And the respect in which there is agreement (e.g. agreement in number) he refers to as ‘agreement features’.

Traditional accounts treat agreement as a matter of syntax. However, there are well-known cases where the information available to the syntax is inadequate to allow a full account without the aid of semantics. For example, the noun *police* will only be capable of selecting its appropriate verb agreement if meaning is explicit. Thus it is possible to derive two notions of agreement from *police* if meaning is considered as the case below:

The police has issued a warning to the terrorist.  
The police have issued a warning to the terrorist.

### 3.6 The Role of Morphology in Syntax

The role of morphology in syntax is to mark the agreement information (whether of syntactic or semantic/pragmatic origin) on the element whose form is determined by agreement. Let us illustrate with example of an utterance with agreement that related to number.

I saw two boys

In the above sentence, the morphological role of the inflection *-s* in the morpheme *boy* is made explicit by the syntactic role of *two* in the noun phrase *two boys*.

Given the nature of agreement just discussed, this means that agreement morphology will mark on target information which relates primarily to ‘controllers’. Note especially that the morphological part of agreement need not mirror syntax: dependants may agree with their heads, mirroring the syntactic dependency; but, conversely, the syntactic head

may bear agreement morphology controlled by its syntactic dependent (Nichols 1985; Zwicky 1993: 293, 303-10).

In other words, the agreement ‘controller’ may be the syntactic dependent. In summary, it is worthwhile to establish that within the morphosyntactic structures of elements within the domain of agreement, different forms can be selected in the agreement process as exemplified below:

The apples and potatoes are ripe

Here we find noun phrases headed by nouns of the same gender, both plural, and the verb takes the same plural form. Now consider phrases headed by non-human plural nouns which are of different genders, but whose subject agreement forms happen to coincide:

The dogs and the plates are there.

The gender/number marker on the verb is that corresponding to all the plural genders. The regularity here is that if noun phrases headed by plural nouns which would take the same target gender form are conjoined, then that ‘target’ gender form will be the preferred form. For further discussion on agreement morphology see Spencer & Arnold (2001); Zwicky (1991); Gvozianovic (1991) and Carstairs – McCarthy (1992).

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Describe the way agreement links syntax and morphology.

### **3.7 Morphology and Agreement Structure**

In English, we can say (1a) or (1b):

- 1(a) The mother sang for the child.
- (b) The mother sang the child a song.

However, although we can say (2a), we can’t say (2b):

- 2(a) My mum put salt in the stew.
- (b) \*My mum put the stew in the salt.

And while we can say (3b), we can’t say (3a):

- 3(a) \*The boy filled water into his belly.
- (b) The boy filled his belly with water.

Further, we can say (4a) or (4b):

- 4(a) Sola broke the glass.
- (b) The glass broke.

Yet, although we can say (5a), we can't say (5b):

- 5(a) He fenced his house.
- (b) \*His house fenced.

Examples such as these raise the question of how participants which are entailed by the lexical meaning of predicates are made explicit in the morpho-syntactic representation, and whether and under what conditions they may remain implicit: that is, issues of valency. In addition, they raise the question of alternations: that is, where two morphologically relate (or even identical) predicates differ in their lexical semantics and in the way participants are realized in the morpho-syntactic and, in particular, in morphology. This facet of the morphology – syntax interface has come to be referred to as ‘argument structure’.

### 3.8 Morpholexical Operations

This is a ‘meaning-changing’ operation that alters the semantic content of predicates. It is the hybrid of morphology and lexical semantics. Let me exemplify this with the examples below:

- (a) The blacksmith hammered the metal.
- (b) The blacksmith hammered the metal flat.

This example illustrates an operation which is appropriate for verbs in certain semantic clues, and adds a semantic argument to a predicate. This argument expresses the resultant state, *flatness*, of the object, *metal*. Evidently, the resultative construction increases the syntactic valency of the predicate – in (8b), *hammer* in the resultative complex *hammer flat* has a surface syntactic valency of three. The claim that result predication is a semantic or morpholexical operation is based on the assumption that the syntactically bivalent predicate illustrated in (8a) expresses a relation between just two semantic arguments, without entailing an end result. That is, (8b) crucially means that the blacksmith flattened the metal by means of hammering activity. This can be further illustrated below:

They drank the teapot dry.

Since one cannot drink a teapot, the above utterance must be interpreted as ‘they rendered the teapot dry by drinking (from it)’.

### 3.9 Morpho-syntactic Operations

This ‘meaning-preserving’ operation alters the syntactic manifestation of a given semantic representation, particularly the way that it is mapped on to grammatical relations.

Two constructs in English, dative shift and passive, are often taken to be examples of morpho-syntactic operations. These are illustrated in (10) and (11):

#### 1. Dative Shift

- (a) Chuks gave some money to his mother.
- (b) Chuks gave his mother some money.

#### 2. Passive

- (a) Chuks killed the goat
- (b) The goat was killed (by Chuks).

Each operation brings about an alteration in the morpho-syntactic manifestation of the semantic dependents of a predicate, but they do not alter the basic semantics of the predicate itself. The first of these alternations, dative shift, appears to involve a simple alternation between two different syntactic manifestations of the same semantic roles. In (1a), the direct object realizes the Theme role, and in (1b), it realizes the Recipient. Now, other things being equal, you might expect morpho-syntactic operations to be unconstrained by the semantics of the predicate. This is largely true of the passive in English for instance. On the other hand, dative shift is restricted in applicability to verbs of transfer respecting rather subtle semantic constraints.

Turning to the set of examples under passive constructions, it is common to treat passivisation as a morpho-syntactic operation involving the suppression of the external argument, or most prominent argument. If passive is a morpho-syntactic operation, you would expect that the semantics of the predicate would remain constraint across the voice alternation. A consequence of this in English and many other languages is that the Agent is available semantically, and enjoys a certain presence syntactically without necessarily being syntactically expressed. In many languages, this suppressed argument may be expressed as an oblique or an adjunct of some sort, as in the English optional *by* phrase in (2b). If the passivization process is simply one of syntactic suppression (as opposed to downright deletion), you would expect the first argument to be available for processes which are semantically rather than syntactically governed, and indeed this seems to be the case.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

1. State and discuss two morpho-syntactic operations you have learnt about in this course.
2. State a clear distinction between morpho-lexical and morpho-syntactic operations of words.

#### 4.0 CONCLUSION

So far, we have traced the relationship between syntax and morphology. We have pinpointed the reformations that take place as well as established the gap that exists in terms of the extent of morphological dependency on syntax. An attempt is also made to clear the air on the subject of morphology and agreement. The process is steeped in our appreciation of the role of word-formation in making utterances appear correct and intelligible. It has been largely established that meaning cannot be divorced from syntax or else what will be left will only spell 'disagreement' among constituents of sentences. You have learnt that valency alternations can be of two distinct types: morpholexical operations at a semantic level and morpho-syntactic operations at a level of argument structure. The morpholexical operations are likely to be semantically or lexically restricted, and to bring with them semantic changes which cannot always be predicted from the valency shift as such.

Morpho-syntactic operations are more often semantically unrestricted, and are thus often defined solely in terms of input/output conditions on argument-structure representations, independently of the semantic representation. They generally do not give rise to additional semantic effects.

#### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have studied the following:

- the summary of the scope of morphology;
- the early and modern distinction of morphology and syntax;
- the latest position of scholars relating to the autonomy of morphology or otherwise.
- how to make sentence parts agree (and I do hope you can still remember the technical names given to each parts of a sentence that must agree);
- the role of semantics (i.e. meaning) in syntax; and
- the place of morphology (i.e word-formation in agreement process).

- how to choose words to change the roles and functions of participants within utterances; and
- how change of structures can affect (but not change) the meanings of utterances.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Assess the contribution of modern grammar to our understanding of the relationship between morphology and syntax.
2. In what ways is the modern distinction of syntax and morphology different from the traditional distinction of syntax and inflection?
3. Is morphology independent of syntax? If yes, how. If no, why?
4. Account for the ungrammaticality in the sentence below:  
\*The boys has won a contract.
5. Define the following terms – controller, target, domain of agreement, agreement features.
6. What role does morphology play in syntax?
7. What is the role of meaning in agreement?
8. Discuss how choice of words can change the roles of participants within utterances.
9. To what extent do dative shift and passive manifest to alter the semantic content of utterances.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## UNIT 3 THE QUESTION OF WORD AND LEXICAL MEANING

In this unit, we shall look at word and lexis and see their relationship with morphology.

The unit has been organized as follows:

### CONTENTS

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Why Study Lexis in English?
  - 3.2 The Nature of Lexicon (in Word Meaning)
  - 3.3 Features of Words
  - 3.4 The Lexis and Other Units of Grammar
    - 3.4.1 The Lexis and the Word
  - 3.5 Lexis as a Level of Linguistic Description
  - 3.6 Lexical Collocation and Set
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### 1.0 INTRODUCTION

The study of lexis is the study of the vocabulary of languages in all its aspects: words and their meanings, how words relate to one another, how they may combine with one another, and the relationships between vocabulary and other areas of the description of languages (phonology, morphology and syntax). Morphology, as has been carefully defined in several units, relates to the study of different methods of forming words.

If the word is an identifiable unit of a language then it must be possible to isolate a core, stable meaning that enables its consistent use by a vast number of users in many contexts over long periods of time. Linguists have attempted to see the meaning of a word in terms of the features that compose it (componential features) and the process of analysis of those features (lexical composition). Most important in this respect is the work of Katz and Fodor (1963).

As with morphemes, specific characteristics of the referents of words, serve to differentiate between different word senses. For instance, to define a word orthographically would entail a clarification of the role of the morphemes *in*, *consequent* and *-tial* which make up the word

‘inconsequential’. Two out of the three morphemes above (‘in-’ and ‘-tial’) make meaning but cannot be described as words. Apart from these, there are sequences in the lexicon which make meaning but cannot be described as words. These include, items like *un-*, *-ing*, *pre-*, etc., which go into the construction of words and which actually have their own meanings (Oloruntoba-Oju 1994:74). Thus, to describe the ‘word’ as a meaning bearing sequence is to include a very wide, incompatible range of sequences which are framed from various components of morphemic alignments. The synthesis of morphemes and lexemes therefore lead us into the heart of the organization of the lexicon – the discussion which forms the core of this segment.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- highlight the reasons for lexical study
- relate word usages with respect to what they mean
- identify and define various components of word structures that enhance its meaning potential
- highlight issues surrounding lexis on the one hand, and lexis and word on the other.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Why Study Lexis in English?

Lexical studies in English, which is an examination of the behavioural patterns of lexical items within the English language, is a subject relevant not only for second language learners of the language but for native speakers as well. To a large extent, language use involves the choice of lexical items, bringing them together in discourse to pass meaningful message.

An understanding of it and how it behaves not only exposes the learner/user to the fundamentals (i.e. linguistic root) of the language but equally makes him explore the language better knowing what lexis to make occur together to get a desired communicative result. Ignorance of the concept, therefore, can only result in our inability to manipulate the language and of course our difficulty in managing both man and our environment. Language use itself is more about using words to make a change, a resolution, create effects or even manipulate fellow humans.

The study of lexis in English also helps in the analysis of the language. A careful study of the lexis, for instance, has revealed that the language is basically isolating/analytic and partly agglutinating and synthesis. The



fact remains that we could not, as linguists have been able to do a comprehensive analysis of the language without first studying the lexis of the language.

Similarly, the lexicographer's compilation of the dictionary was made possible by the findings from the synchronic as well as the diachronic studies of the language. The dictionary therefore, as common and as simple as it appears is the physical realization of the in-depth underlying findings and conclusions of the linguist – that is, her/his in-depth study of the lexis.

Synonyms, homonyms and antonyms abound in the language. The study of lexis shows that synonyms, though distinct lexical items, are actually semantically similar since they reflect almost the same meaning. It would be wrong, for instance, to use two or more synonyms in the same sentence realizing them as different lexical items just for reasons of their different alphabetical shapes. A similar explanation applies to homonyms – words with same spellings but different reference – whose meaning can only be deduced from an understanding of the other lexical items with which they co-occurs in the sentence. Consider the use of the item, *bank*, in the sentences below:

- (a) My friend saves with Oceanic *Bank*.
- (b) I *bank* on his rich knowledge and experience.
- (c) On getting to the *bank* of the river, Kunle decided to have a rethink on the project.
- (d) There is a blood *bank* for accident victims.

Our study and understanding of lexis also provides insight into the differences of meaning brought about by the different combination of items and the environment in which such combinations are made in the language. The distinction between the phrasal verb and the prepositional verb can be discerned by our understanding of the functions of the prepositions in the sentences. With the prepositional verbs, the addition of prepositions to verbs that require them does not affect the underlying meaning of the sentence since such prepositions perform grammatical rather than semantic functions. Consider the following phrases: *kick out*, *kick against*, *kick in*, *kick around*, *kick up*, *kick back*, *kick off*.

Furthermore, knowledge of lexis will help our understanding of the morphological rules which guide the formation of words and their morphological arrangements.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

State the reason for studying the English lexis.

### 3.2 The Nature of Lexicon (in Word Meaning)

According to Ogbulogo (2005:63), the lexicon provides a complete list of words in a language. The lexicon provides a complete list of words in a language. It is an unordered mental lists of words in which a user of a language operates. It is mental because it is not written down. When the lexicon is ordered and externalized, it becomes the dictionary as can be found on book shelves. The lexicon (including the dictionary) provides phonological, syntactic and semantic information about words. Phonological information specifies the pronunciation of the word. Syntactic information shows the categorical features and distributional possibilities of a word in the sentence, while semantic information is related to the meaning associated with the word. Phonological information is clearly outside the domain of semantics.

### 3.3 Features of Words

Lexical items are grouped into specific categories – nouns, verbs, adjectives, adverbs, pronouns, conjunctions, prepositions, etc. Words can also be grouped into content and form words. Content words have their independent meaning, and can occur in isolation. Content words have an open class system because they can accept new words with the expansion of the vocabulary of the language. Form words do not have specific meanings when they occur in isolation.. Instead, they occur with other words to signal syntactic or grammatical relationships within larger structures. Form words belong to a closed system because they cannot be expanded. Form words are few in number. They include pronouns, auxiliaries, conjunctions, prepositions, determiners and particles. Since the meanings of form words derive from their relationship in larger structures, such words are also referred to as *grammatical, function or structural* words.

Words can also be transparent or opaque. Transparent words are those words the meaning of which can be determined from the meaning of their parts. For instance, by breaking the following words into their morphological structures, we can derive their meanings. Indeed, most content words are transparent.

<i>in-</i>	<i>correct</i>	<i>-ness</i>
negative prefix	word stem	noun forming suffix

This means that the word *incorrectness* refers to the *negative* form of the noun form of the adjective *correct*.

anti-	dis-	establish	ment-	arian-	-ism
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negative	negative	word	stem	noun	agent-	(noun)
agent	idea forming	idea	forming	idea	forming	idea forming
suffix	forming	prefix	prefix	suffix	suffix	
	suffix					

(Adapted from Ogbulogo 2005:65)

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Give 10 verb-forming affixes that you know.

### 3.4 The Lexis and Other Units of Grammar

Though it may be argued that lexis cannot be studied in isolation without reference to its basis – the morpheme, or without relating it to the body from which it takes its relative meaning i.e. the syntax, lexis on its own could depict a sense or meaning beyond the morpheme and below the clause. The use of the lexical item, *hospital*, in response to the question, *where is he coming from?* suggests that *hospital* cannot be explained in the light of a word such as *coming* which is made up of two morphemes (*come + ing*) in that capacity. Though an item at the surface level, *hospital* is equivalent to the sentence, *He is coming from the hospital*.

From this analysis, we see that lexis lies between the morpheme and the clause and thus must be studied as a separate and distinct level of analysis, and not in relation to some other classes or levels of language as has been the case. Lexicology, therefore, must be given as much attention as is accorded phonology, morphology or grammar in language.

#### 3.4.1 The Lexis and the Word

Lexis or lexicon consists of all the words and phrases used in a language. To the layman, the terms lexis and word are synonymous and may be used interchangeably. However, the two concepts differ scientifically with respect to their linguistic properties and usage. While lexis refers to the individual items that the dictionary attempts to list in some alphabetical order, the meaning of a word cannot be given without reference to some semantic relations that exist in discourse.

The meaning given to an item depends, not only on its structure or class, but on the resultant derived meaning it gets from the other words with which it is occurring in the sentence, and of course to the interpretation given it by the user. Thus, a word does not have any specified meaning except it is examined in discourse.

For example, the lexical item, *go* (to move away from a speaker or place), could mean several other things. In other words, *go* could function as different words in different linguistic environments.

Consider the following sentences:

2. Bola goes to school daily.
3. The time goes fast.
4. Mary goes well with Henry.
5. This road goes to Badagry.
6. The song goes thus ...
7. Nigeria has been recently classified the most corrupt nation in the world. It then goes that we must all collectively strive hard to redeem the lost glory.

Though the lexical item, *go*, is common to all the sentences, it does not have the same meaning in the contexts. This is probably what Crystal (1977) means when he refers to words as sitting uneasily at the boundary between morphology and syntax. Ajulo (1994:28) attempted a distinction between morphology and lexis by arguing that forms derived from an item such as *happiness*, *unhappy*, and *happily* (from *happy*) do not have the same primitive stock as base, but are realizations of separate lexemes HAPPY, HAPPINESS, and HAPPILY which are entered under separate headings by the lexicographer into the dictionary. Ajulo's argument is that no grammatical item is completely devoid of lexical content and vice-versa. Thus, a wrong use of a lexical item in discourse almost usually results in some semantic-unreasonableness at the other level on the scale.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

Distinguish between the lexis and the word.

### 3.5 Lexis as a Level of Linguistic Description

There have been arguments on where to place lexis on the level of linguistic analysis. In Derbyshire's view, "Lexis is that branch of linguistics which deals with the major units of language that carry the burden of referential meaning" (1967:139). Derbyshire's conceptualization of lexis as a major unit of language probably means to have revealed that all other categories on the scale of the linguistic analysis of language including their components and structure form a combination of lexis. The sentence, the highest level on the hierarchy, for instance, gets its meaning and, consequently, our understanding of it from the individual unit of the lexical items and the internal relationship

which exists between such. The sentence, phrase or group can only be completely analysed from our understanding of the lexis.

It may appear difficult to have lexis occupy a specific position on the rank scale. An examination of methodological rank scale reveals the fact that items sometimes co-extend with other items on the other ranks. On the rank of the morpheme, for instance, the addition of the bound morpheme (-er) to a verb e.g. *play*, a free morpheme, generates a new lexical item, now the noun class i.e. *play* + *er* = *player*. The bound morpheme (-er) in this derivative position, functions more like a lexis rather than a morpheme. Its function, in this position, for instance, cannot be likened to (*un-*) or (*dis-*) in *unlikely* and *disallow* respectively.

In a similar vein, other levels on the scale could be equated with lexis. This further goes to show that lexis could co-extend with other items on the other ranks. For example, phrases as well as clauses could function as lexical items. Examples are seen in *an for an eye*, *in good faith*, *ups and downs*, *turn over a new leaf*, *throw in the towel*, etc., each being possibly replaced by a lexical item. From our analysis, we can then agree with Lyons (1977) that “there is no generally accepted solution to the problem of lexical entries”.

#### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4**

Discuss your understanding of the lexis as a level of linguistic analysis.

#### **4.0 CONCLUSION**

I have synthesized the features and essence of the word and lexis, their nature in morphological arrangement and their formation with respect to how they sound and mean.

#### **5.0 SUMMARY**

In this unit, you have learnt the following:

- why we study lexis;
- words, their meanings and their relationship with one another;
- how they may combine with one another, and the relationships between vocabulary and other areas of the description of languages (phonology, morphology and syntax).
- the meaning and features of lexemes as well as their relationships with other units of grammar.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Why do we study lexis?
2. What is the word?
3. Analyse the process that informs the formation of these words – *incorrectness, inadequate, maladministration, unitarianism, unproblematic.*
4. Critically assess the difference between the word and lexis.
5. How do we justify lexis as a level of linguistic description?

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

- E.B Ajulo (1994). *Investigating Lexis in English; Problems of Theory and Pedagogy*. Ibadan: Striling-Horden.
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## **UNIT 4 CLASSIFYING ENGLISH LEXIS INTO TYPES**

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Classifying Languages into Types
  - 3.2 Lexical Types
    - 3.2.1 Agglutinating Type
    - 3.2.2 Semi-agglutinating Type
    - 3.2.3 Synthetic/Inflecting Type
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit offers a general approach to the classification of languages in general and lexis in particular. It specifically discusses the ways lexes are framed to project meaning. The unit is arranged as follows:

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- state parameters for classifying languages
- identify lexical types and explain them.

### **3.0 CONTENT**

#### **3.1 Classifying Languages into Types**

The genetic and typological classifications are two ways of classifying languages into types. With genetic classifications, linguists simply examine early remains of particular language or make deductions so as to reconstruct the form of the parent language. With the typological classification, languages are grouped together into structural types based on the similarities that exist between them at different levels of linguistic analysis. Unlike the genetic classification type, this method does not consider historical relationship, which may exist among languages.

Languages can also be classified with respect to their word order, that is, if they are fixed or not and which order is preferred.

Genetically, English is a Germanic language. Ordinarily, however, the language displays characteristics peculiar to languages in other groups. From a typological viewpoint, English is more similar to an isolating language while having some characteristics of agglutinating and synthetic languages. Analytic/isolating languages are those languages, which have their lexes being free and not fused as the case may be. Examples of such isolating languages include Chinese and Vietnamese. With agglutinating languages, lexes are made up of morphemes brought together with these morphemes being separable. Almost all languages have this characteristic of agglutinating. Yoruba's *onile* and *alata* could be broken into:

Onile ----- oni + ile (owner of house)  
Alata ----- oni + ata (seller of pepper)

Japanese, Swahili and Turkish are examples of agglutinating language types. Words, in these languages, are made up of long sequences of units with each expressing a clean grammatical meaning. Synthetic/inflecting languages have their lexes being made up of fused morphemes – those, which cannot be easily broken into parts. *Went* and *mice* (from *go* + *ed*) and (*mouse* + *s*) are examples of inflection. With the Eskimo, Mohawk, and Australian languages, words are often very long and complex.

The English language, from our previous discussion of morphemes in the language, is basically analytical. That is, have most of its lexes being made of free morphemes. Words here have meaning in isolation and do not have to be dependent on some other forms to be meaningful. Examples include *table*, *girl*, *she*, *go*, *church*, etc.

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

State two parameters that you can use to classify languages.

### 3.2 Lexical Types

#### 3.2.1 Agglutinating Type

English could either be agglutinating or semi-agglutinating. The agglutinating features of the language could be seen in compound words where two morphemes of isolating language types come together to form an entirely new lexical item in the language. Examples are *greenhouse*, *schoolboy* and *playboy*. The overall meaning of the newly formed compound word does not often depend on our understanding of the individual morphemes that make up the compound. The item *playboy*, for instance, does not really refer to a teenager but an adult. Compound words therefore, have to be learnt, as we will do new words.

### 3.2.2 Semi-agglutinating Type

With semi-agglutinating we really do not have free morphemes coming together to make a word but a case of a free + bound. An example of semi-agglutinating in English is seen in the morph (-er), which is found in the comparative forms of adjectives (*longer* and *slower*) and in 'agent' nouns formed from verbs (i.e. *teacher* and *farmer*).

### 3.2.3 Synthetic/Inflecting Type

Synthetic/inflecting forms could either be partial or full depending on if they are partly or wholly indeterminate with respect to segmentation. Semi-inflection could be seen in *goes* and *washes* while inflecting the forms of the verbs for the third person singular. There are few instances of full inflection. The comparative forms *better* and *worse* could be very difficult to segment. These are instances of full inflection.

One other example of full inflection is the third person singular of the verb, *to be*. The form *is* might be segmented into [i] an allomorph of *be* if we assume that, the [s] in *is* is merely the present tense singular marker. However, it will be meaningless to analyze it thus since [i] occurs nowhere else as an allomorph of *be*.

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Identify and explain three lexical types that you have come across in the course.

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

Generally, we could conclude that the language has a reasonable number of its lexes being isolating because many English words have no internal grammatical structures. We could equally rightly say that some of the words are agglutinating because they are complex but more loosely knit with categories not being so closely associated with the words individually. We will also be right to say that the English language displays properties of inflecting languages where it has some of its words being centrally tightly knit together and often of complex units carrying in themselves many of the basic grammatical categories.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have studied the following:

- parameters for classifying languages
- lexical types with examples

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What are the parameters for classifying languages?
2. With ample examples, discuss lexical typology.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 5 MORPHOLOGICAL PARSING AND THE LEXICON**

This unit will foster your appreciation of the relevance of morphology within lexical studies as it projects various ways of arranging morphemes to fit together into one whole word and/or lexical item. By extension, it infers the relationship that exists between morphology and lexical study.

The unit is arranged as follows:

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Meaning and Relevance of Morphological Parsing to Lexical Studies
  - 3.2 Morphology 'in the Lexicon'
    - 3.2.1 The First Justification
    - 3.2.2 The Second Justification
  - 3.3 Morphology versus the Lexicon
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

Lexical items occur in various ways to function and project meaning. This says much of the dynamism of human language and the extent of the creativity of its usage projects an enormous amount of experience and knowledge on the part of the user. Much that can be learnt of the role of morphology in lexicology therefore is desirable to accentuate meaning realization within discourse.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- define morphological parsing and state its relevance to lexical studies
- discuss the justification for the relationship between morphology and lexical studies.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Meaning and Relevance of Morphological Parsing to Lexical Studies

Parsing, as the term implies, simply means breaking up words into their component parts. Morphological parsing is useful to the study of lexis in language for a number of reasons such as:

1. It helps us know in what order phonemes can come to make meaningful words in languages. For instance, the bound morpheme *pre*, base on meaning, can only appear before a word with which it functions and not after it e.g. *pre-election*, *predetermine*, etc. The same applies to *ante* (also meaning 'before') as in *ante-natal*, etc
2. It helps reveal the finest meanings of words in language. For instance, with the aid of our understanding of the function of *pre*, we may talk about *pre-election campaign* not *pre-election vote*.
3. It explains the patterns of combination of morphemes that can produce words in the language. For instance, the combination of the bound morpheme *dis-*, the free morpheme *trust* and the bound morpheme *-ed* produce the lexis *distrusted*.
4. It provides ways for writing the dictionary. Lexicographers employ the logical arrangement of morphemes to produce lexical entries for dictionaries.

#### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Define morphological parsing and clearly state how it is relevant to lexical studies.

#### 3.2 Morphology 'in the Lexicon'

According to one widely accepted view (Aronoff 1976, 1982), the morphology of a language, because it is part of grammar and trades in structural matters, deals primarily with the internal structure of the potential complex words of a language. These words may not all exist, but they all conform to the morphological structure of the language. By contrast, the lexicon of a language is a list of existing items in the language, those that a speaker has to know because they are arbitrary signs: unpredictable in some way. Most of the items on this list are words, though the lexicon also contains larger units like idioms, and may also be smaller units like affixes. On this view, in which the regular morphology and the irregular lexicon are separate entities, one might imagine the two having very little to do with one another, since the morphology deals only with potential words and the lexicon only with

the existing words. In fact, the two systems do have a great deal to do with one another, for two simple reasons.

### **3.2.1 The First Justification**

The first justification is that they serve the same role in a language: both provide words. This overlap has even led some linguists to say that morphology is “in the lexicon” (Jensen and Strong-Jensen 1984), although in doing so, these linguists are using the term lexicon in a much broader and different sense, to mean the source of all words, actual and potential, rather than in the narrow sense of a list of unpredictable items that we have inherited from traditional grammar and from Bloomfield (Bloomfield 1933, Zwicky 1989, Aronoff 1994).

### **3.2.2 The Second Justification**

The second reason is that morphology and the lexicon are interdependent. Most centrally, the morphology, which forms words from words, finds the words that it operates on (its bases) in the lexicon. I will explore each of these interactions in a separate section.

## **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Discuss the relevance or irrelevance of morphology to lexicon, justifying your position.

### **3.3 Morphology versus the Lexicon**

Aronoff and Anshen (2001:238) illustrates the ‘rivalry’ between morphology and the lexicon like any two entities that share a task, which do not always do so happily. The rivalry of morphology and the lexicon, they say, is not empty, but plays a central role in the larger system of the language. In order to understand its nature, they consider a single speaker/hearer. Speaking of the lexicon from this perspective, they speak of the individual’s mental lexicon, the list of irregular items that the speaker/hearer carries around in his/her head. They define the difference between existing words and potential words in terms of this mental lexicon and establish that any word that is stored in a single speaker/hearer mental lexicon or list of irregular items is an existing word, and that nothing else is. In particular, a word that meets all the criteria for being a word of the language but that is not in an individual’s mental lexicon does not exist for that person, though it may exist for another speaker/hearer. The unlisted word is a potential word, and morphologically well-formed complex potential words are provided by the morphology not by the lexicon. Thus, the conventional idea that the existing words of a language – English for example – comprise all the



words in the Oxford English Dictionary or some other comprehensive dictionary does not apply in this model of the lexicon and the morphology. The difference between which words exist and which are potential is defined solely in terms of the individual's lexicon and morphology.

Most importantly for these purposes, even if an ideal speaker/hearer has spoken or heard (or read) a particular word before, if that word has not been stored in that person's mental lexicon for some reason, then the word is still a potential word rather than an existing word as far as the mental lexicon is concerned. Which words are stored? In the simplest case, a word will be stored because it contains only one morpheme. Take the word *bamboozle*. It has no morphological structure, so nothing to predict its meaning. Someone who hears this word, even in a context in which its sense is clear, must enter into memory in order to use it again, so it will enter the hearer's mental lexicon. Similarly, a morphologically complex word must be placed in the lexicon if a piece of it is unknown to the hearer. An example of this type is *hornswoggle*, which is almost synonymous with *bamboozle*. One of its components, *horn*, is recognizable, but the other one, *swoogle*, is not, so that, again, even if we can deduce its sense from the context in which we hear it. Yet again, all the components of a word may be familiar; its sense may not be deducible from them. Here too we must put the word in our lexicon. An example of this phenomenon is yet a third synonym, *hoodwink*. Both *hood* and *wink* are familiar words, but the sense of the entire word *hoodwink* has little to do with the sense of its parts, so even here our ideal speaker/hearer must resort to lexical storage in order to have a hope of reusing the word. So if a word is unpredictable, it must be stored in the lexicon.

So far, the morphology and the lexicon do not interact. The first creates regular words, and the second stores irregular words. To see how they do interact, we must look at a case where both the lexicon and the morphology are in principle capable of being invoked. Let us take our example from that of the plural of a noun in English. Some plurals come from the lexicon, and some from the morphology. The plural will come from the lexicon in case it is irregular and stored there on account of its irregularity, like *women* and it will come from the morphology in case it is regular, like *dogs*. But a question arises. If a word has an irregular plural stored in the lexicon, why does it not also have a regular plural, which comes from the morphology? In the case at hand, how does a speaker know not to say *womans* instead of *women*? Or why doesn't the speaker sometimes say one and sometimes the other? Something must be preventing the morphology from producing a regular plural just in case an irregular plural for the same word exists in the lexicon. The same is true of irregular past tenses of verbs.

A person who knows that the past tense of *go* is *went* (a fact that must be stored in the lexicon) will not say *goed*, although a young child or someone in the early stages of learning English as a second language might say *goed*, because the child or learner hasn't yet learned the form *went*. The lexicon and the morphology seem to interact in assuring that only one form will be used, but how? Does the speaker/hearer sometimes check the lexicon to see if a word is there, and only resort to the morphology if there is none?

A clue to the right answer to this question has been known for centuries: languages tend to avoid synonyms (though not always, as *bamboozle*, *hornswoggle*, and *hoodwink* reveal). In most cases, the speaker will use a word from his/her lexicon (*women/went*) rather than resort to the morphology to produce a new word with the same meaning. This phenomenon, "the nonoccurrence of one form due to the simple existence of another" (Aronoff 1976:43), is called *blocking*, and its effects can be seen not only in inflection, but also in derivation, where a word like *\*furiousity* (formed from *furious*) will be blocked by *fury*, which already exists in a speaker's lexicon. We can tell that blocking is at work in rendering *\*furiousity* unacceptable, because other words of the same pattern are perfectly acceptable, when there is no already existing word to block them. *Curiosity*, on the other hand, which is structurally analogous to *\*furiousity*, is perfectly acceptable because there is no word *\*cury* to block it.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

How does blocking operate in morphological processes?

## 4.0 CONCLUSION

The relevance of lexical studies to the understanding of English language cannot be overemphasized, just as you have learnt in this unit. The relationship between morphology and the lexicon however, has also been discussed with an outcome that suggests a stringent cordiality for both aspects of studies.

## 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have learnt the following:

- the meaning and relevance of morphological parsing to lexical studies in English; and
- the attempt to relate morphology and lexicon.

## 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. What is morphological parsing and why is it relevant to lexical studies particularly in English?
2. Critically examine the relationship between morphology and lexical studies.
3. Assess the 'rivalry' between morphology and the lexicon.

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **MODULE 3 MORPHOLOGICAL PROCESSES**

- Unit 1 Clipping, Affixation, Borrowing, Blending and Stress Shift
- Unit 2 Conversion, Compounding, Back-formation, Coinage, Acronym Reduplication and Nominalization

### **UNIT 1 CLIPPING, AFFIXATION, BORROWING, BLENDING AND STRESS SHIFT**

Morphological processes, otherwise known as word-formation processes, are processes through which words are formed from morphemes in the language. There are various ways of forming words in the language. Each of them will be adequately centred for in this module. However, because of space, word-formation processes have been divided into two units with each unit discussing a set or group of processes.

In this unit, clipping, affixation, borrowing, blending and stress shift will be discussed at length.

The unit is arranged as follows:-

#### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main content
  - 3.1 Clipping
  - 3.2 Affixation
  - 3.3 Borrowing
  - 3.4 Blending
  - 3.5 Stress Shift
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

#### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

This unit is the first of the two units set aside for the discussion of morphological processes which is also known as word-formation processes in the language. Word-formation processes are as important as morphology itself. This is because it is an attempt to generate new words in the language. If new words are not generated in the language

then the English language will be dead because there would be monotony in the language.

In this unit then, we shall concentrate on clipping, affixation, borrowing, and word stress.

## 2.0 OBJECTIVES

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain clipping as a word-formation process
- explain affixation as a word-formation process
- explain borrowing as a word-formation processes
- explain blending as a word-formation process
- explain stress shift as a word-formation process
- give examples of each of the word-formation processes discussed in this unit.

## 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

### 3.1 Clipping

Clipping or abbreviation, as a morphological process, is very productive; not only in the English language but also in many African languages. It involves some element of reduction in the length of a word. According to Adeniyi (1997), clipping is a pseudo-lexical unit which results from the grapho-phonemic reduction of a word, which still shares the semantic and paradigmatic relationship with the full form of the word. It can also be seen extracting a shortened form of a word from its longer morphological form. In English, for instance, ‘telephone’ becomes *phone*; brassiere is *bra*; In some cases, the clipped version has more or less completely replaced the original longer word, e. g. *flu*. Note that a clipped form is a complete lexical unit which should not be confused as abbreviation of its full form. Crystal (1999) defines ‘clipping as a type of word formation in which new words are derived by shortening another word’. Some of the examples he gave include, exam from *examination*, and ad for *advertisement*. However, Aronoff (1997) defines clipping as a process that shortens a polysyllabic word by deleting one or more syllables. He gave examples such as Liz, Ron, Rob, Sue, and so on. In all the definitions above, it is clear that both the clipped form which it originates share both semantic and syntactic features. However, the two words are distinct lexical units with separate morphological identities.

We have to note that the various types of clipped form are restricted to everyday casual and informal discourse among family members,

friends and acquaintances. However, the full length of these names are usually reserved and employed for formal interactions and official records. We can identify two types of clipping in the English language. These are **back clipping** and **fore-clipping**. In **fore clipping**, an element or elements are taken from the beginning of a word. Some of the examples in this category include (ham) burger, (omni) bus, (alli) gator, (tele) phone, (heli) copter and many more. This type of clipping also occurs with personal names in the English language. Some of these examples include, Becky for Rebecca, Drew, for Andrew, Grinny for Virginia. In the case of **fore clipping**, an element or elements are taken from the end of a name. What we then have is an abridged version, which can still stand in its place. In English for instance, the following have undergone various back-clippings as can be seen from the following examples; chimp (panzee), deli (catessen), hippo (potamus), lab(ratory); gas (oline), Pro(fessor) and many more. Many names in the language have been clipped to the extent that some native speakers cannot relate the full version of the name with the clipped version.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1**

Explain the morphological process of clipping with 10 practical examples.

### **3.2 Affixation**

The term ‘affixation’ can be defined as a morphological process of attaching an affix to the root or base of a word.

Affixes are classified based on two criteria. The first criterion is the position in which the affix occurs relative to the location of the root of the word, while the second is the function an affix performs when it is attached to the root of a word. Let us examine these criteria one by one.

#### **Positional classification of affixes**

If we use the position in which an affix occurs relative to the location of the root of a word as the basis for classifying affixes, we shall have the following types: prefix, suffix, infix, interfix, circumfix, and superfix or suprafix. Let us discuss these affixes one by one.

#### **The prefix**

A prefix is an affix which occurs before the root or base of a word. Examples of prefixes in English are presented in table 4 – 11

**Table 1: Negative Prefixes**

<b>Prefi x</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Host</b>	<b>Examples</b>
a-	'lacking in'	adjective noun	Asexual Asymmetry
de-	'the opposite of'	noun verb	Demerit Demystify
dis-	'the opposite of'	adjective verb noun	Disloyal Disrespect Dishonour
il-	'the opposite of'	adjective	Illegal
im-	'the opposite of'	adjective	Impossible
in-	'the opposite of'	adjective	Insensitive
ir-	'the opposite of'	adjective	Irregular
mis-	'the opposite of'	noun verb	Misconduct Misdirect
non-	'not'	various	Non-starter Non-binary
un-	'the opposite of'	adjective	Unwise

**Table 2: Reversative Prefixes**

<b>Prefi x</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Possible Host</b>	<b>Examples</b>
de-	'to reverse an action'	Verb  Noun	Defrock Defrost Delocalize deforestation
dis-	'to reverse an action'	verb	Disconnect Disorganise
un-	'to deprive of'	verb	Unmask Unhorse
un-	'to reverse an action or 'to reveal'	verb	Untie Undress unlock

<b>Prefi x</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Possible Host</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Inter-	'between'	adjectival verb	Intercontinental Interfuse
sub-	'beneath'	Noun	Submarine Subsoil
super -	'over'	Noun	Superstructure
trans -	'across or 'from one location to another.	Adjectival Verb	Transcontinental transplant



**Table 3: Age, Size and Degree Prefixes**

<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Possible Host</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Arch-	‘highest in status’ or ‘worst’	Noun	archangel arch-enemy
hyper-	‘excessive’	adjective	hypersensitive hyperactive
mini-	‘diminutive’	noun	minibus minicomputer
neo-	‘new’ or modern version’	noun	neophobia neo-colonialism
out-	‘to surpass’	verb	outgrow outshine
over-	‘to exceed’	verb	overbook overcharge
proto-	‘first in origin’ or ‘primitive’	Noun	protomartyr photo-language
semi-	‘half of’, or ‘partly’	noun adjective	semi-metal semi-literate
sub-	‘lesser in status’	verb adjective	sub-lease substandard
supra-	‘above’ or ‘beyond’	Noun	supranational supramundane
sur-	‘additional’	Verb Noun	surcharge surcoat
ultra-	‘extreme’ or ‘beyond’	Adjective	Ultra- conservative
under-	‘diminutive’	Verb Adjectival Noun	Underestimate Underdeveloped Underdog
vice-	‘deputy’	Noun	Vice-chairman

**Table 4: Temporal, Scope and Sequential Prefixes**

<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Possible Host</b>	<b>Examples</b>
ex-	'former'	Noun	ex-wife ex-soldier
fore-	'before'	Noun Verb	Foreplay Foresee
Pan-	'all'	Adjective	Pan-African
Post-	'alter'	Noun Adjective Verb	Post-modern Posthumous Post-date
pre-	'before'	Noun Adjective Verb	Preview Premature pre-date
re-	'again', 'back' or 'change order'	Verb Noun	Restructure, regain representation

**Table5: Derogatory or Prejudice Prefixes**

<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Possible Host</b>	<b>Examples</b>
Mal-	'amiss' or 'badly'	Verb Noun Adjective	Maladminister Mal-administration maladjusted
mis-	'wrongly'	Verb Noun Adjective	Misapply Misbelief Misbegotten
pseud o-	'unreal', 'false' or not genuine'	Noun	pseudo-science pseudo-language
quasi-	'seemingly' or 'not really'	Adjective Noun	quasi-independent quasi-democracy

**Table 6: Quantity Prefixes**

<b>Prefix</b>	<b>Meaning</b>	<b>Possible Host</b>	<b>Examples</b>
bi-	‘having two’ or ‘occurring twice’	adjectival  noun	biannual biennial bilingual bicycle
di-	‘having two’	Adjective Noun	disyllabic digraph
mono-	‘having one’, ‘single’ or ‘alone’	Noun  Adjective	monoculture monolingual monosyllabic
multi	‘many’ or ‘several’	Adjective Noun	multi-ethnic multi-millionaire
Poly-	‘many’ or ‘several’	Adjective Noun	polyvalent polytheism
quadri -	‘having four’	Adjective	quadrilateral
tri-	‘having three’	Noun Adjective	tricycle triangular
uni-	‘having one’	Adjective Noun	unidirectional uniformity

**Note:-**

The learner should always note the difference in the use of biannual and biennial. Biannual means ‘occurring twice a year’ while biennial means occurring once in two years. So a biannual conference, for instance, means a conference that holds twice a year, while a biennial conference means a conference that holds once in two years.

**Table 7: Other forms of prefixes**

Prefix	Meaning	Possible Host	Examples
auto-	‘or sell’	adjectival noun	autobiographic auto-erotism
bio-	‘of life’	Adjective Noun	biodegradable biodiversity
Psycho -	‘of the mind’	Adjective Noun	psychosexual psychoanalysis

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2**

Give 5 types of prefixes, with two examples of each.

**B. The Suffix**

The suffix is an affix which occurs after the base or root of a word. Examples of suffixes in English are presented in tables 12-13.

**Table 8: Quality Suffixes**

Suffix	Meaning	Possible Host	Examples
-(e)ry	‘behaviour’	Noun Adjective	mastery, thuggery bravery
(-i)ty	‘state’	Adjective Noun	equality gentility
-able/ -ible	‘worthy of’	verb adjective	Forgivable Forcible
-al/ial/ -ical	‘quality of being’	Noun Adjective	logical memorial periodical
-er	‘occupational’, comparative, instrumental, agenitive, etc.	Varied	Teacher Taller Cooker Player

-ess	'effeminate'	Noun	Portress
-est	-superlative'	Adjective Adverb	Smallest Soonest
-ful	'having the quality of'	Noun Adjective	Careful Dutiful
-hood	'status'	Noun	Womanhood
-ic	'quality of being'.	Noun Adjective	metallic alcoholic
-ish	'having the character of'	Noun Adjective	Boyish Childish
-ist	'member of' or 'believer of'	Noun Adjective	Capitalist Socialist
-ive/ -ative	'quality of being'	Verb Adjective	Informative Attractive
-less	'lacking'	Noun Adjective	Motherless Powerless
-let	'diminutive'	Noun	Eaglet
-like	'having the quality of'	Noun Adjective	Manlike Christlike
-ly	'in a manner'	Adj Adverb	Bravely Slowly
-ness	'state'	Adj Noun	Sadness Goodness
-or	'agentive'	Verb Noun	Sailor Director
-ship	'status'	Noun	Fellowship
-wise	'in the manner of'	Noun Adverb	Clockwise Lengthwise
-y	'be like'	Noun Adjective	Oily Juicy

**Table 9: Causative and Activity Suffixes**

Suffix	Meaning	Possible Host	Examples
-age	'the result of'	Verb Noun	linkage leakage
-ation	'the act of'	Verb Noun	importation fertilization
-ed	'past'	Verb	talked
-en	'past participle'	Verb	beaten
-en	'to cause to become'	Adj Verb	deafen gladden
-ify	'cause to become'	Noun Verb	tesify exemplify
-ing	'progressive'	Verb	Singing
-ize	'cause to become'	Adj Verb	Regularize Familiarize
-ment	'the act of'	Verb Noun	Amendment Entertainment

**SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3**

Discuss 4 types of suffix and give 5 examples of each.

**The Infix**

An infix is an affix which is incorporated inside the root of a word. In other words, an affix interrupts the sequence of a root. English does not have any clear-cut case of an infix, even though some people seem to argue that the changes we witness in words, such as:-

foot	feet
tooth	teeth
man	men
come	came
give	gave
get	got

are instances of infixes. The sensible position to take appears to be that the changes observed in the above examples are not infixes. For

instance, there is no such root in English as \*ft or \*tth pointing to the same core of meaning as foot and tooth respectively. In fact, there are no such roots in English.

Please note that the asterisk mark (\*) means that the construction it precedes is an unlikely structure.

#### **D. The Interfix**

An interfix is an affix which occurs between two identical or sometimes non-identical roots. In other words, an interfix interrupts the sequence of two roots. Of all the affixes identified in human language, the interfix is the least discussed.

English does not have any case of interfixation. But Yoruba has many good examples of interfixes, as we see in the following examples:

Omo +ki + omo= Omokomo

Ile + ki +Ile = Ilekile

Owo + bi +owo = Owobowo

Eya + mo +eya Eyameya

In the above examples, bound morphemes such as *ki*, *bi* and *mo* are all example

#### **E. THE CIRCUMFIX**

The circumfix is sometimes called a discontinuous morpheme. It is an affix that surrounds the root of a word. In other words, a circumfix is an affix which has two parts, so that the first half occurs before the root of a word, while the second half occurs after the root. Circumfixation is, in essence, a situation where both the prefix and suffix are simultaneously employed to express one meaning. It is like “a combination of a prefix and suffix operating as unit” (Allerton 1979:220).

#### **F. THE SUPERFIX OF SUPRAFIX**

All the affixes we have discussed so far are of the segmental type. Let us now turn to discuss affixes of a non-segmental type. Superfix or suprafix is an affix which is marked over the syllables that form part of a root. Superfixes come in the form of tones/or stress marks placed over words. Superfixes are also morphemes because they carry some element of meaning. Tone or stress marks can cause meaning differences between morphemes or words that are segmentally alike.

In table 10 below, we shall use some examples in English to show how a change in stress placement can trigger a meaning difference between segmentally identical words:-

**Table 10: Stress as a Superfix in English**

Nouns	Verbs
'Insult	In'SULT
'CONvert	Con'Vert
'Import	IM'port
'Rebel	re'BEL
'Export	ex'PORT
'SUBject	sub'JECT
'CONtest	con'TEST
'PERmit	per'MIT
'SURvey	sur'VEY
'PROtest	Protest

The syllables in upper case (capital letters) in the table are the stressed ones. From the above examples, we can see that a change in stress placement results in a change in meaning.

In a tone language (i.e. a language where a variation in the pitch of the voice causes a change in meaning between segmentally identical utterances) such as Igbo, tone can also be said to be a superfix, as we can see in the following examples:

**Table 11: Tone as a Superfix in Igbo**

isi 'head'	Ike 'strength'
isi 'odour'	Ike 'to share' or 'buttocks'
isi 'blindness'	Ike 'to tie'
isi 'to cook'	Ike 'bunch'
oke 'rat'	akwa 'a cry'
oke 'boundary'	akwa 'cloth'
oke 'a share'	akwa 'egg'
oke 'male'	akwa 'bed' or 'bridge'



From each set of examples above, we can see that it is only tone (i.e. a variation in the pitch of the voice) that causes the change in meaning between words which look alike in all respects.

#### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4**

Discuss a major defining factor for affix types.

Discuss superfix type, using 10 examples.

#### **Classification of Affixes Based on Function**

In the foregoing section, we classified affixes based on the position they occupy vis-à-vis the position of the root or base of a word. In this part of the book, we shall classify affixes based on the function they perform when attached to a word.

Affixes can perform essentially three functions when they are attached to the root of a word. These are inflectional, derivational and extensional functions. We shall discuss these functions under inflectional, derivational and extensional affixes.

#### **INFLECTIONAL AFFIXES**

An inflectional affix is that affix which performs a grammatical function without changing the part of speech of the word to which it is attached. Inflectional affixes are not used to create new words; rather they are used to show if a word is singular or plural, if the tense of the verb is past or non-past, if the word expresses comparative or superlative degree, or to show the case feature of the word in question. Case is a grammatical category which is concerned with the ability of a nominal (noun or pronoun) to change its form with respect to the environment in which it occurs.

Examples of inflectional affixes in English are presented in table below:-

**Table 12: Inflectional Affixes in English**

<b>Inflectional Affix</b>	<b>Function/meaning</b>	<b>Examples</b>
-s (N)	plural	bo <u>ys</u>
-ed	past tense	work <u>ed</u>
-ing	progressive	work <u>ing</u>
-s (V)	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular simple	e <u>ats</u> run <u>s</u>

	present	
-en	past participle	eate <u>n</u>
-er	Comparative	shorte <u>r</u>
-est	Superlative	shorte <u>st</u>
-‘s	Possessive	John’ <u>s</u>

All the inflectional affixes in English are suffixes, and they are few. The inflectional affixes in English are ‘morphemes of the outer layer’, because it is not possible to have another suffix after an inflectional affix.

Another interesting quality of inflectional suffixes in English is that it is not possible to have more than one of them hosted by the same root at a time. It is, however, possible for a semantically empty formative to occur between the root or stem and the inflectional suffix. Such semantically empty formatives have been referred to as stem extenders. An example of a stem extender in English is the –r- which occurs between the root *child* and the –en plural marker, as in *child-r-en*.

### DERIVATIONAL AFFIXES

A derivational affix is that which changes the part of speech or alters the meaning of the word to which it is attached. Robins (1964:258) divides derivational affixes into class changing and class maintaining types. Both the class changing and class maintaining derivational affixes affect the lexical meaning of the word to which they are attached, while only the class changing ones affect the syntactic value (i.e. the part of speech) of the word. But based on the enormous evidence from some African languages, the need to re-examine the status of the so-called derivational affixes which merely alter the meaning of their hosts without changing their parts of speech has arisen. It is now a common practice to treat affixes which extend or modify the meaning of their hosts separately from the class-changing ones. Hence, in this unit, we limit the discussion of derivational affixes to the class-changing affixes.

In the following table, we present the major differences between inflectional and derivational affixes in English:

**Table 13: Differences between inflectional and derivational affixes in English**

Inflectional affix	Derivational Affix
1. Maintains part of speech of its host.	1. Changes part of speech of its host
2. Always a suffix	2. Can be a prefix or suffix
3. Always one in a word.	3. Can be more than one in a word..
4. Morpheme of the outer layer (i.e. always occurs last)	4. Morpheme of the inner layer (i.e. can be followed by other affixes)
5. Few in number	5. More than the inflectional affixes.
6. Occurs more frequently than any particular derivational affix.	6. Occurs less frequently than any particular inflectional affix

Having demonstrated the differences between inflectional and derivational affixes in English. Let us now give examples to show derivational affixes that change the part of speech of their hosts.

**Table 14: Derivational prefixes in English**

Prefix	Function(s)	Examples
A-	V Adj	<u>A</u> float
be-	N V Adj V	<u>b</u> ewitch <u>b</u> efool
de-	N V	<u>d</u> efrost
em-	Adj. V	<u>e</u> mbitter
en-	N V	<u>e</u> nslave

Note: The derivational prefix em- is a variant of en- when it occurs before bilabial consonants.

### 3.3 Borrowing

One of the commonest ways of creating new words in human language is by borrowing. Borrowing simply means the process of taking words from one or more languages to fit into the vocabulary of another. It is important to mention that no language is free from borrowing. Borrowing presupposes some element of cultural contact. According to Donwa-Ifode (1995:132).

“Two or more languages are said to be in contact if they are used by the same individuals or group of persons alternately. The individual using the languages is referred to as the ‘locus’ of the contact. The language that borrows from the other is said to be the ‘recipient’ language, while that from which the item is borrowed is known as the ‘donor’ language”.

There are different forms of borrowing. They are loan-word, loan-blend and calque or loan-translation.

A loan-word is that which “a recipient language has lifted from a donor language to mean the same object and practice to which it originally referred in the donor language” (Donwa-Ifode 1995:135). Examples of loan-words in English include:

Piano (from Italian),  
 Alcohol (from Arabic),  
 Zebra (from Bantu),  
 Tycoon (from Japanese),  
 Angel (old French and Ecclesiastical Latin),  
 Advertise (French)  
 Adventure (from old French)  
 Browse (from Old French)  
 Tailor (from Latin)  
 and many more etc.

A loan-blend is a hybrid word created by combining morphemes of two or more languages in its creation. The process of forming a word by combining morpheme of different languages is known as hybridization.

Examples of hybrid words in Igbo include

Ite <i>pootu</i>	‘metal pot’
tekinuzu	‘technology’
uzo moto	‘tarred road’

The morphemes in bold face in the above examples are of English origin, while others in the normal type-face are of Igbo origin.

### **Claque or loan translation**

**A claque or loan-translation** is a word created by using the morphemes of a recipient language to represent all the senses in a donor language.

Below are examples of calques in Igbo:

Ugbo elu (literally: a vessel that flies in the air)	‘aeroplane’
ugbomniri (literally: a vessel that moves on water)	‘boat’
ugbo ala (literally: a vessel that moves on land)	‘vehicle’
mmo ozi	‘Angel’

(literally: a benevolent and errand spirit)

mmuo nso  
mmuo ojoo

‘Holy Spirit’  
‘evil spirit’

### 3.4 Blending

Blending is a morphological process of creating a new word by combining parts of two or more already existing words in the same language. Examples of blends in English include:-

brunch	(derived from breakfast plus lunch),
smog	(derived from smoke plus fog),
motel	(derived from motor plus hotel),
telecast	(derived from television plus broadcast),
urinalysis	(derived from urine plus analysis),
fantabulous	(derived from fantastic plus fabulous),
Amerindian	(derived from American plus Indian), and
Eurovision	(derived from European plus television).

From the above examples, it seems that a blend is achieved by taking only the beginning part of one word and joining it to the end of another word. But it is necessary to mention that the decision as to where to begin or end the cut is arbitrary.

### 3.5 Stress – Shift

This is also referred to as functional shift. It is a change in lexis that as a result of change that occurs in stress placement e.g. re’cord (v) and ‘record (noun). Indeed, a change in stress placement on a word may classify two utterances into different category of the units of grammar. Take a look at the examples below.

Kola & John like Mary (that is, both ‘Kola’ and ‘John’ have affection towards ‘Mary’)

Kola & John, like Mary love table tennis. (that is, ‘Kola’ and ‘John’ both love to play table tennis game as much as ‘Mary’).

In the first example, ‘like’, which is said with a rising tune is a linking verb that connects the subjects ‘Kola’ and ‘John’ to the object ‘Mary’. In the second example, the ‘like’, produced with a falling tune changes its role as a verb to an adverb and turns ‘Mary’ to a qualifier element in the adverbial group.

### Self Assessment Exercise 5

1. Explain what is meant by Blending as a word-formation process with examples.
2. Differentiate between stress shift and clipping as word-formation processes.

### 4.0 CONCLUSION

In this unit, we looked at a group of morphological or word-formation processes. These include clipping, affixation, borrowing, blending, and stress shift.

### 5.0 SUMMARY

In this unit, you have studied about:

- Clipping as a word-formation process
- Affixation as a word-formation process
- Borrowing as a word-formation process
- Blending as a word-formation process
- Stress shift as a word-formation process

### 6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT

1. Itemise and discuss the various types of affixations that we have in the English language.
2. What is the difference between borrowing and *claque* or loan translation?
3. What do you understand by acronym pronounced as sequences of letters (alphabetism) and acronyms pronounced as words?
4. What are the bases or roots of these words?
  - (a) encouragement
  - (b) internationalization
  - (c) disappointments
  - (d) Illegality
  - (e) disability
  - (f) unquestionable

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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## **UNIT 2      CONVERSION, COMPOUNDING, BACK FORMATION REDUPLICATION, NOMINALIZATION, ACRONYM AND COINAGE**

In this unit, we shall discuss the third group of the set of morphological processes which we started in this module in unit one. We shall however concentrate on conversion, compounding, back-formation, reduplication, nominalization, acronym and coinage.

The unit is arranged as follows:-

### **CONTENTS**

- 1.0 Introduction
- 2.0 Objectives
- 3.0 Main Content
  - 3.1 Conversion
  - 3.2 Compounding
  - 3.3 Back-formation
  - 3.4 Reduplication
  - 3.5 Nominalization
  - 3.6 Acronym
  - 3.7 Coinage
- 4.0 Conclusion
- 5.0 Summary
- 6.0 Tutor-Marked Assignment
- 7.0 References/Further Reading

### **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

In this module, we started our discussion of morphological processes. In unit one, we looked at, clipping, affixation, borrowing, blending and stress shift.

In this unit, are looking at conversion, compounding, back-formation, reduplication nominalization, acronym and coinage.

### **2.0 OBJECTIVES**

At the end of this unit, you should be able to:

- explain conversion as a word-formation process
- explain compounding as a word-formation process



- explain back formation as a word-formation process
- explain reduplication as a word-formation process
- explain nominalization as a word-formation process
- explain acronym as a word-formation process.

### 3.0 MAIN CONTENT

#### 3.1 Conversion

Conversion, as a morphological process, involves neither the addition nor subtraction of any morpheme. This derivational process simply involves a change in the function of a word. For example, a verb may be used as a noun or vice-versa, without adding any suffix. Examples include verbs changing into nouns, e.g.:

Talk	-	The talk was lengthy.
Cheat	-	The boy is a cheat.
Guess	-	He made a guess.

Nouns too may be converted into verbs, e.g. *bottle* (*she bottles up her anger*); also, *referee* (*He referees the match*). This process makes the creation of new words a daily occurrence.

Conversion processes establishes the extent to which lexical items can be related in terms of meaning. Ajulo (1994:65) opines that

once it is decided that different meanings of a single lexical item are likely to be related, it is necessary to determine precisely how such meanings are related.

In general, he proposes four principal types of relation out of which three are relevant to our discussion on conversion – (1) Derivation, (2) Replacement, (3) Figurative Extension and (4) Peripheral Clustering. All are relevant except ‘Replacement’.

Derivation refers to all the essential components of an underlying base which are incorporated into another meaning, belonging to a distinctly different semantic domain. For example, compare *man* in the following two contexts

- (a) I saw a *man* approaching
- (b) They *man* the house in case of emergency.

The meaning of *man* is included within the meaning of the first *man* which refers to a human being and the second *man* which refers to an activity. The two belong to entirely different semantic domains.

Figurative extension of meaning involves a radical shift in semantic domains in which the semantic relations between base and extended meaning depend upon either a ‘supplementary’ or ‘secondary’ component or a reinterpreted diagnostic component. For example, if you hear a wife addressing her husband in a sentence such as “You are a dog”, the meaning of dog obviously does not have as a referent a particular quadruped of a canine class. Rather, this meaning of a dog is roughly equivalent to the abstract *contemptible*, and in this meaning *dog* belongs to the semantic domain of such words *contemptible*, *base*, *mean*, *worthless*, *despicable* with which it overlaps meanings.

Peripheral clustering involves linked sets of diagnostic components, which form a semantic chain binding a series together. There may also be certain common components which serve to unite such a set. Compare, for example, *paper* in the following contexts:

I know a famous company that manufactures *paper*.  
 Fred just bought the *paper* from the vendor.  
 Professor Adam’s *paper* was the first to be presented  
 at the conference.  
 Biodun will *paper* his defaced and cracked walls soon.

What is observable in the four contextual uses of the single English lexical item *paper* would seem to make it clear that the meanings of the first three italicized items above constitute central - peripheral meanings, while the meaning of the last italicized item is a derivation of the first. The question deducible from this analysis is which of the ‘papers’ can be considered the central or base meaning of ‘paper’? Thus it is established that it is almost impossible to provide a semantically neutral text. To resolve this seeming crack, linguists prefer to examine the nature of lexical meanings and their distribution in English not only in terms of their specific ‘semantic’ uses as individual item but also in terms of their relations to certain features of certain critical area of experience in which lexical items have been used. This entails the observation of the sum of its syntactic features or possible grammatico-semantic (and phonological) manifestations.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 1

Explain what you understand by conversion, in morphological terms.

### 3.2 Compounding

This is another morphological process in which two or more words are put together to act as a single lexical word with a distinct meaning.

Examples are *girlfriend*, *boyfriend*, *blackbird*, *blackboard*, etc. Different word combinations are possible:

- (i) Noun + Noun compounds: windmill, paperback, steamboat, steam engine, iron filing, test tube, gas jar, electron theory, filter paper.
- (ii) Noun + Adjective compound: accident-prone, power-mad, bloodthirsty, praise worthy, colour – blind, rent-free.

Other possible combinations are Adjective + Noun, Verb + Noun, Noun + Verb, Verb + Preposition. The combinations involving nouns and adjectives are very common in English, whereas, compounds containing verbs and prepositions are less productive and subject to constraints. The compound of load (*offload the truck* is possible, but the combination “off bed” is not possible).

Odebunmi (2006:45) observes that in forming compounds, two or more words are combined, with or without hyphenation: for example, *schoolboys*, *blackbird*, *call-girl*, *playboy*, etc. Compounds may be solid, hyphenated or two-word in form e.g. offshore (solid); shore-boat (hyphenated); ill luck (two-word).

It is important to note that compounds are constantly generated by good users of English to do their specific bidding in informal situations. In most of these instances, the structure of compounds may go beyond two-word level: for example:

1. a not-too-brilliant idea
2. chop-I-chop party
3. a-do-or-die affair

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 2

Give 10 examples each of solid, hyphenated and two-word compounds

### 3.3 Back Formation

This reduction process occurs when a word (root morpheme or combination of morphemes) that is usually a noun is reduced to form another word belonging to a different word-class. For example, *enthuse* (verb) formed from *enthusiasm* (noun) *televise* (television), *opine* (opinion), *posit* (position), etc.

In backformation, a shorter word is created from a longer one by a subtraction method most especially where a structure gap exists in language. Usually, backforms are derived from conceptual or agentive nouns, and are turned into verbs.

### 3.4 Reduplication

This is the compounding of identical (*goody-goody*) or slightly different morphemes (*wishy-washy*). Usually, the difference in the different morphemes types in single phonemes at either initial or medial positions. Their use is usually informal. In reduplication, there is a process of addition leading to the compounding by repetition of a part or the whole of a stem morpheme. There is identity relationship between the items so repeated in terms of their phoneme make-up, as well as their morphologically shapes. In English, such examples as *wishy-washy*, *walkie-talkie*, *tick-tock*, *hanky-panky* illustrate reduplication as a morphological process. There are other morphologically processes that are equally important; not only to English, but also to all other languages.

The difference between the two elements comprising reduplication may be phonologically: the initial consonants in both elements differ, as in *walkie-talkie*, or in the medial vowels e.g. *criss-cross*. Reduplicative have certain common uses as noted by Ajulo (ibid: 24):

- (a) to imitate sounds: e.g. tick-tock ('of clock'), ping-pong (of hitting table or lawn tennis ball), rat-a-tat (knocking on door), bow-bow (of dog).
- (b) to suggest alternating movements, for example: seesaw, flip-flop, ping-pong.
- (c) to disparage by suggesting instability, nonsense, insincerity, vacillation, etc. higgledy-piggledy, hocus-pocus, hodge-podge, wishy-washy, dilly-dally, shilly-shally, mumbo-jumbo.
- (d) to intensify, for example, teeny-weeny, tip-top, willy-nilly.

### SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 3

What do you think appears to link backformation and reduplication as morphological processes?

### 3.5 Nominalization

Words other than nouns or pronouns converted from other word classes and are made to behave as nouns are called nominalizations. They include verbs and adjectives – determiners, ordinals, or genitive phrases. As converted nouns, they function as headword in the group in which they occur.

## Verbs

These can be in any of the following forms. Gerundive nominalizations are morphologically marked by the *-ing* suffix, e.g.

Writing is a lot easier than singing.

Eating vegetables has been a good habit.

John's paintings of yesteryears are no longer available.

Infinitival nominalization – the verbs are usually marked by ‘to’ e.g. to be, to sing, to err, to sleep, etc. e.g.

To err is human but to forgive is divine

To write has been a Herculean task.

## Adjectives

This may function like noun as follows:

Ugly/Absurd is the best way to describe the incident.

Red is his usual colour.

The rich also cry.

The young must be protected.

The suffix *-ness* can be added to an adjective to form a noun:

thoughtful + ness = thoughtfulness; careful + ness = carefulness  
big/good + ness = bigness/goodness; kind + ness = kindness as in

His *kindness* has earned him an award.

His *goodness* endures forever.

The *bigness* of a problem is not equal to defeat.

People's *thoughtfulness* makes them do good things.

Other adjectives functioning as nouns include: *all*, *both*, *some*, *such*, *first*, *a few*, etc.

All are cordially invited.

Both are acceptable options.

Some will not come.

A few were present.

## SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 4

Discuss three possible nominalisation processes you have come across in this unit.

### 3.6 Acronyms

It is possible to create new words from the initial letters of a set of other words. Words formed in this way are called acronyms. Acronyms often consist of capital letters, as in:-

NYSC	(derived from 'National Youth Service Corp
WAEC	(derived from 'West African Examination Council')
UNO	(derived from 'United Nations Organization')
OAU	(derived from 'Obafemi Awolowo University')
UNESCO	(derived from United Nations, International Children's Emergency Fund)
AIDS	(derived from Acquired Immuno Deficiency Syndrome),
RADAR	(derived from 'radio detecting and ranging') and
LASER	(derived from 'light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation')
SARS	(derived from Severe Acute Respiratory Syndrome)
WHO	(derived from World Health Organisation)

When an acronym gains much currency in a speech community, it can lose its capital letters as we see in laser and radar.

### 3.7 Coinage or Neologism

This is a morphological process of creating new words to name previously non-existent objects or phenomena that result from cultural contact. The coined word, with the passage of time, gains currency within a speech community. Invented trade names such as Xerox and Kleenex are recent additions to the English language. They have quickly become everyday words in the language. The word Xerox used to refer only to a company that produces a type of photocopying machine. Recently, the word has come to be used to refer to the process of photocopying in general. Also the Kleenex used to refer to a brand of facial tissue, but now it has come to denote facial tissue in general.

Again, the word crane is a name for a very large bird with very long neck. But now there is a heavy-duty machine called crane which is used

for lifting heavy objects. This machine also has a long neck. In a way, the machine has taken its name from the bird.

### **SELF ASSESSMENT EXERCISE 5**

1. State what you understand by the following word-formation processes, with practical examples?
  - (a) Back-formation
  - (b) Conversion
2. Differentiate between Nominalization and Back-formation with examples.

### **4.0 Conclusion**

In this unit, we looked at the third group of morphological processes thereby ending the module as scheduled.

### **5.0 Summary**

In this unit, you have studied about:

conversion, compounding, back-formation, reduplication, nominalization, acronym, coinage.

### **6.0 TUTOR-MARKED ASSIGNMENT**

1. Give five examples each of these morphological processes
  - (a) Nominalization
  - (b) Conversion
  - (c) Back-formation
2. With five examples each, explain what is meant by
  - (a) Reduplication
  - (b) Compounding
  - (c) Acronym

## 7.0 REFERENCES/FURTHER READING

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