Chapter 2

Words and Lexemes

Contents of this chapter

- What is a word?
- Types of words
- Inflection vs. derivation
- Item-and-arrangement model
- Item-and-process model
- The lexicon

Words

- Words can have different morphosyntactic functions:
  - Squad helps dog <u>bite</u> victim

- Lexical categories: noun, verb, adjective, adverb
  - all languages?
    - what about languages in which adj=adv?
  - other classes?
    - what about interjections, conjunctions?

Syntactic <u>definition of words</u>

- Word = smallest unit of sentences?
  - no, inflections are not words, still they are meaningful, syntactically necessary units (e.g. –s in <u>coughs</u>)
    - <u>free</u> vs. <u>bound</u> morphemes
  - no, some words cannot stand alone in a sentence (*<u>My</u>.)

- Easier to define "morpheme"
  - smallest meaningful units in a sentence
  - –s, my and table are all morphemes

<u>Phonological</u> definition of words

- Word = domain of stress assignment?
  - not always, e.g. **clitics** are words (or "half-words") which require a host; stress is assigned to the combination
  - many function words (you, the, n't) are stressless

  - this criterion is useless in languages that have no stress (in tone languages, all words that have a tone?)

Speaker intuition

- Also questionable/wrong
  - long tradition of discussing this question in Chinese

- "We know a word when we see one"
  - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/I_know_it_when_I_see_it
  - Is that always true? e.g. compounds
    - honey bee, orange lemonade
    - aren't, gotta

Workable definitions

- rabbit and rabbits are two *different* **grammatical / morphosyntactic** words

- They are grammatical word forms of the same **lexeme** RABBIT
  - same meaning: rabbit in rabbit means the same thing as rabbit in rabbits
  - rabbit would be in the dictionary, not rabbits

- The contrast vs. to contrast: two lexemes
  - different lexemes: different dictionary entries

- bank, punch: two meanings: two lexemes

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Tests for wordhood

- Within a word, the order of morphemes is fixed (unlike in a sentence)
  - either fixed order (suffix –s is never a prefix)
  - or meaning change (up-hold vs. hold-up)

- Within a word, a morpheme cannot be broken up (=**integrity**)
  - although: infixes, circumfixes

- Stress assignment differences
  - [hot] [dog] vs. [hot dog]

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Words, clitics, affixes

- Phonologically dependent forms are called clitics:
  - enclitics (following the host) I'**d** in English
  - proclitics (preceding the host) **ne** sais in French

  - no stress of themselves (like most affixes)

  - ➢ difference between clitics and affixes?
    - ➢ (freedom of movement; idiosyncratic affixes, etc.)
    - ➢ see exercises this chapter

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Content vs. function words

- Content words: (relatively) fixed phonological shape, open class
- Function words: often reduced phonetic shape, closed class
  - e.g. articles, auxiliaries, prepositions

- Historically, function words often develop into clitics then into affixes
  - = grammaticalization (cf. mouth full > mouthful) (perhaps John his > John's)

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Lexemes (instead of words)

- Dog: different meanings
  - as noun: different meanings $\{dog\}_{1,2}$
  - can also be used as a verb $\{dog\}_3$
- Different **lexemes**

- Borderline between different/same lexeme not very sharp (e.g. dog_2, "very ugly person", derived from dog_1)
  - metaphors, e.g. "stream of news"
  - topic for semantics/pragmatics/CL

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Paradigm

- Definition: all the inflected forms of a lexeme
  - e.g. sing, sings, sang, sung, singing
  - so derived forms are not part of the paradigm (beautiful is not part of the paradigm of beauty)
  - inflected forms not in dictionary: not separate lexemes
  - though note: sometimes it is hard to distinguish between inflection and derivation (e.g. –ly in English)

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Inflection vs. derivation

- Inflection: formation of **grammatical word forms** – past, present, plural, masculine, nominative case, etc.
  - depend on syntax; more regular

- Derivation ("word formation"): formation of **new lexemes** – noun from verb, -ity, -ness, compounding, etc.
  - often closer to the root than inflection; more allomorphy

- Meaningful distinction in every language?

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Approaches to morphology

- Item-and-arrangement (IA)
  - language as a set of elements and patterns in which they occur ("building **blocks**")
  - books = book + s

- Item-and-process (IP)
  - no independent status to items
  - book + plural → s ("function **rule**")

  - Mainly a different point of view, but sometimes there are (slight) problems with IA

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Example

- -er affixation
  - runner = run + er
  - worker = work + er
  - filler = fill + er

- in Item-Process model
  - V + -er → N
    - additive phonologically, semantically and syntactically
- in Item-Arrangement model
  - combination of building blocks: root and affix
  - combination of the properties of both

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Special: subtractive

- Sometimes a particular meaning is associated with **taking away** (not adding) a number of segments
  - imperfective → perfective in Papago
    | him | 'walking' | hi: | 'walked' |
    | hihim | pl. | hihi | pl. |
    | 'elpig | 'peeling' | 'elpi | 'peeled' |
    | 'e'elpig | pl. | 'e'elpi | pl. |
  - what is the PERF **morpheme**? negative
  - does not fit nicely into the IA model

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Non-affixal morphology

- Other problems for the IA model
  - e.g. English noun-verb pairs
    - CONtrast vs. conTRAST
  - more fitting as a process than an item

- Jeroen model: item-and-pattern
  - regular relations between these words in the lexicon
    - no individual morphemes in lexicon
    - no rules

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Two views on the lexicon

1. One native speaker's word capacity

- A list of indivisible morphological units ("building blocks")
- A list of irregular and arbitrary forms

- ➢ many morphologically complex words, even phrases, must be stored in the lexicon
  - ➢ cf. psycholinguistics

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Lexicon –cont.

2. Lexicon = "linguistic <u>memory</u>", a list of forms that you know
- crucially: also the <u>relations</u> between them (e.g. contrast$_N$-contrast$_V$)

- Much current research about the nature of the lexicon
  - frequent forms vs. infrequent forms
  - relations between words (network)

Conclusion

- Difficulties defining 'word'
- Instead use 'lexeme' and 'grammatical word'
- clitics vs. affixes
- content vs. function words
- inflection vs. derivation
- Item-and-Arrangement and Item-and-Process
- The lexicon (network model)

Homework

- Read chapter 2 especially carefully; note down any questions (also have a look at Ch. 3)

- Please prepare exercises **1, 2, 3, 5, 6, 7, 9, 12** (Chapter 2)

- Note down any **new words** you hear in English or Chinese (every week)
  - or find interesting mistakes in newspapers/novels

- Thank you