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MORPHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE OF THE ENGLISH WORD

Англис сөздөрдүн морфологиялык структурасы

Морфологическая структура английского слова

Annotation: *The aim and purpose of the present article devoted to the morphological structure of the English word is to bring into prominence some issues of the ultimate unit of the semantic level of language. The morphological structure of a word is not always easy to analyse and describe. The problem of mutual relationship between lexical and grammatical morphology within the word, on the one hand, and the productivity of word-building patterns, on the other, is approached with the help of morphological analysis.*

Аннотация: *Бул макаланын максаты жана маселелери англис сөзүнүн морфологиялык структурасын талдоого – тилдин семантикалык бирдиктеринин маселелерин чагылдырууга арналган. Сөздөрдүн морфологиялык структурасын толугу менен сүрөттөө жана анализ жасоо оңой олтоң иш эмес. Сөз бир эле мезгилде лексикалык жана грамматикалык бирдик боло алат. Биринчиден, морфологиялык анализ сөздүн ичиндеги лексикалык жана грамматикалык морфологиянын ортосундагы мамиле көйгөйлөрдү талдоого багытталса, экинчиден, сөз жасоочу*

моделдердин өндүрүмдүүлүгүнө негизделген. Аннотация: Цель и задача настоящей статьи, посвященной анализу морфологической структуры английского слова — осветить некоторые вопросы предельной единицы семантического уровня языка. Морфологическую структуру слова не всегда легко проанализировать и описать. Слово является одновременно лексической и грамматической единицей. Морфологический анализ направлен на рассмотрение проблемы взаимоотношения между лексической и грамматической морфологией внутри слова, с одной стороны, и продуктивность словообразовательных моделей, с другой.

Key words: *semantic level; morphological structure of a word, lexical morphology, grammatical morphology; productive derivational patterns.*

Урунттуу сөздөр: *сөздөрдүн морфологиялык структурасы; лексикалык морфология; грамматикалык морфология; деривациялык моделдер.*

Ключевые слова: *семантический уровень; морфологическая структура слова; лексическая морфология; грамматическая морфология; продуктивные словообразовательные модели.*

The problem used as the title of the present article has been discussed time and again by leading Russian and Soviet philologists [4], [7], [8], [11] as well as eminent foreign linguists [9], [10]. We proceed from the premise that morphology is a branch of linguistics which concerns itself with the structure of words as dependent on the meaning of the constituent morphemes [1, p. 243]. The ultimate unit of the semantic level of language is the morpheme. Another important thing to highlight is the point that morphemes are of two kinds: lexical and grammatical. Thus, for instance, ‘answered’ and ‘looks’ consist of the morphemes - ‘answer+ ed’ and ‘look+s’. The left-hand parts of these words are called lexical morphemes because they carry the lexical meaning of the words in question. As far as ‘-ed’ and ‘-s’ are concerned they are grammatical morphemes because they are used to stress grammatical meaning [7, p.79].

It should be pointed out in this connection that the global meaning (content) of a word is not a mere sum of the meanings of its component morphemes. It is morphological analysis that enables us to gain a deeper insight into the problem of mutual relationship between lexical and grammatical morphemes within the word, on the one

hand, and the productivity of word-building patterns, on the other.

It requires no comment and explanation that the problem of mutual relationship between lexical and grammatical morphology, or, to use a more conventional terminology, derivation and inflexion, deserves special attention. Not infrequently it is very difficult to make a distinction between the former and the latter. More than that the criteria of establishing this distinction have not yet been adequately investigated. The word is a unit which is both lexical and grammatical. It appears fairly obvious, therefore, that we must begin with morphological analysis in the broader sense of the term, that is, to include both the grammatical and the lexical aspects of morphology [3, p. 170-175].

The difference between the two morphologies may be demonstrated in the following way: grammatical morphology is 'allomorphic but sememic', while lexical morphology is 'morphemic but semic' (Raun Alo. Grammatical Meaning. Verba docent: Juhlakija Lauri Hakulisen 60-vuotispäiväksi. Helsinki, 1959, p. 346-348). An allomorph is a variant of one and the same morpheme [1, p.40]. For instance, [-s] and [-z] are allomorphs of the morpheme of the third person singular Present Tense Active Voice. In, for example, 'he sobs' [-z] vs 'he sips' [-s] – [-z] and [-s] are variants of the same unit [6, p.11-13].

'Sememic' means belonging to the system. Grammatical morphemes are allomorphic but sememic, that is, they can be understood only as part of the whole system of grammatical opposition. Thus, for example, [-s] and [-z] are allomorphs of the morpheme of the third person singular when attached to the verbal stem. But when they are attached to the nominal stem they denote plurality (as in 'books', 'beds', etc.). It follows, then, that taken in isolation [s] and [-z] do not convey a distinct grammatical meaning, for it becomes clear only against the background of the entire system of grammatical opposition [7, p.98-99].

With lexical morphology things are quite different. According to our terminology lexical morphemes are morphemic but semic. It means that a lexical morpheme has no allomorphs. The suffix '-ness', for example, is morphemic because it has no variants, no allomorphs. Its realization is practically unique, morphemic.

On the other hand, it is semic. We do not have to reach a very high level of abstraction to understand the meaning of this lexical morpheme. Otherwise stated, the meaning of a lexical morpheme is apparent as it stands, within the particular realization.

In the case of lexical morphology we are faced with quite a few problems which still remain far from clear. One of these problems can be formulated in the following way: how do we discover what parts the word consists of? Obviously, one of the criteria is a close one-to-one correspondence between expression and content. On the basis of the unity of the given form and the given meaning it is rather easy to establish the way the following words are divided into parts: girl – ish, man – ly, mad – ness, water – y, read – able, etc., because their inner form is transparent and no special problem actually arises.

But when we turn to a great number of words already existing in the language the, obviously, what we have to decide is whether in each particular case we are dealing with a monomorphemic or polymorphemic word. A case in point is the English word 'cranberry'. This word in the system of the English language is part of a long series of words each denoting a particular variety of berries, for example, 'blueberry, blackberry, gooseberry, raspberry', etc. But in contrast with 'blueberry' and 'blackberry', for instance, which are readily divided into two morphemes, 'cranberry' looks like a monomorphemic word because 'cran-' has got nothing to do with 'cran' meaning 'measure for fresh herrings' (37, 5 gallons) [5, pp. 94-95].

In Russian and Soviet linguistics we find two approaches to the problem, namely, 'one way' and 'both ways' of segmenting lexical material - 'po odnomy r'adu' and 'po dvum r'adam' [3], [2]. These terms are used to distinguish between words which are segmentable either 'one way' or 'both ways'. Thus, for instance, the word 'beautiful' is segmentable into 'beauti-' and '-ful' because in the English language there are plenty of words with [' bju:ti -] as the stem (or root morpheme) – 'to beautify', 'beauteous', 'beautician', etc., on the one hand, and even a larger number of words with the morpheme '-ful' like 'careful', 'wonderful', 'hopeful', 'plentiful', 'shameful', etc., on the other.

As noted by G.O. Vinokur it is necessary to segment a stem according to the 'both ways' principle. It appears, then, that comparing different words in terms of the 'both ways' relationship we discover what parts this or that word consists of [2, pp. 419-442]. But when

we turn to language it appears to be fairly obvious that words can be segmented according to quite another principle. Professor A.I. Smirnitsky spared no effort in showing that morphological analysis is assured if a sufficiently clear-cut lexical morpheme is powerful enough to induce meaningfulness in the rest of the word [4, p.58-64]. Otherwise stated, when a word is segmented according to the 'one way' relationship the second morpheme is induced. It follows that 'cran-' in 'cranberry', 'mal-' in 'malina', 'klubn-' in 'klubnika' are morphemes because '-berry' and '-in-', '-ik-' are.

As far as the controversy between G.O. Vinokur and A.I. Smirnitsky is concerned we would venture to suggest that it can be accounted for by the fact that while the former concentrated on Item and Arrangement, the latter dealt with the other aspect of morphology, that is, Item and Process [11, p.27].

To reiterate: in the case of lexical morphology we must clearly distinguish between the two aspects of investigation: 1) Item and Arrangement and 2) Item and Process. When we analyse words in terms of Item and Arrangement we deal mainly with the ways of segmenting the already existing lexical material. In other words, morphological analysis is aimed at segmenting words without taking into consideration the character of their formation and, thus, the derived word is regarded statically.

When, however, we concentrate on the productivity of certain patterns, on discovering their potentialities we pass on to the level of Item and Process analysis, which enables us to gain a deeper insight into the dynamic process of word-derivation. The difference between the two approaches can be easily illustrated in the following way. Let us take as an example words in '-able'. Of course, quite a few of them can be segmented according to the 'both ways' principle. They may be formed from a verbal stem: 'readable, answerable, thinkable, showable, translatable', etc., or a nominal one: 'comfortable, impressionable, knowledgeable, marriageable', etc. At the same time one cannot help registering those words in '-able' which are segmented only 'one way'. Thus, for example: 'affable, palpable, capable, placable, probable', etc.

If we turn to words in '-er' we shall again observe both principles. Thus, the 'both ways' principle formed from a verbal stem: 'speaker, reader, thinker, maker, doer, knocker', etc., and coined from a nominal stem: 'islander, officer, phalanger, banker, hatter', etc. The 'one way' principle can be illustrated with the help of 'barber, grocer, mercer, monger', etc.

What has been emphasized on the foregoing pages clearly demonstrates that one and the same suffix can be studied in terms of both Item and Arrangement and Item and Process. A very interesting point to be underlined in this connection is the fact that the morphological structure of a word is not always easy to analyse and describe. To prove it let us turn to the following chunk of speech: "It was precisely the question I was waiting for," he replied. "His inspiration is considerable".

It is crystal clear that we cannot possibly subject all the words we come across in the text to morphological analysis. In what follows we shall concentrate on those parts of the above adduced text which are of most interest and discuss the morphological structure of the underlined words. Thus, the word 'precisely' lends itself to morphological analysis rather easily. The boundaries between the morphemes constituting this word are clear-cut: [pri`said -li]. In this case '-ly' is an adverb forming suffix (we come across quite a few words coined with the help of this suffix: easily, obviously, quickly, accordingly, etc.). [Pri`said] is an indivisible unit though at first sight it seem to be a complex formation because the second part of the word (-cise) never figures as a separate morpheme.

Before we go any further one more important point should be clarified. In Modern English we have two different '-ly's which actually should be regarded as homonyms. In Old English there were two different suffixes '-lic' and '-lice'. The latter was an adverb forming suffix, while the former was an adjective building one. As the final 'e' has disappeared together with the 'c' in the course of time, they both became '-ly' [li] and hence homonyms [1, p. 287].

Let us consider the definite article 'the' which is a syncategorematic word. The morphonology of all syncategorematic words is connected mainly not with their actual morphemic structure but with the way they function in different syntactic position. The definite article 'the' may be used either in its strong or its weak form. According to grammar books the strong form of the definite article is [ði:]. But if we turn to oral speech we cannot but notice that the actual strong form of the article is a kind of [ðΛ].

Let us now take the word 'inspiration'. At first sight it does not seem to present any problem though its morphological structure is rather complex: ['in-spi-rei-ʃ(ə)n]. Indeed, as is well-known, [in-] is a variant of the negative prefix 'in-', which is always ready to assimilate with the first consonant of the stem (ir-, im-, il-). Hence: 'illegible', 'immovable', 'irrelevant', etc. But in this particular case [in-] is not a negative prefix. More than that, in Modern English [in-] in 'inspiration' cannot be considered a separate morpheme in contrast with Latin, for example, in 'spirare' '-breath'. Therefore we should regard [inspir-] as one global morpheme.

One more very important point to be made in connection with 'inspiration' is the phenomenon of morphonological gradation. We can observe the sound [r] in the word 'inspiration', which does not exist in the verb 'to inspire'. What we are interested in is where did this [r] come from? The original Latin [r] is still in the orthography. However, in the Southern variant of English [r] is not pronounced any longer but it is pronounced in the North of England, in Ireland and many other dialects of the English language. So this [r] is a reality and there is absolutely no reason why it should not be retained in all those positions which are favourable to its realization. [r] of the stem in the final position where it is dropped comes back to life in ['in-spi-`rei-ʃ(ə)n] because here it occurs at the beginning of the stressed syllable.

It should be noted that the word under consideration is a good example of the [aiə] / [i] gradation of vowels accompanied by changes in the accentual structure. One more point to be made is the following. In Modern English a certain irregularity in the relation between nouns of this kind and corresponding verbs is observed. If, for instance, we take 'dictation' derived from 'dictate' we can easily explain the alternation of [t] and [ʃ] on the basis of morphonological gradation. In the case of the word 'inspiration' there is no corresponding verb 'to inspire'. The point is that in English the suffix [eɪʃn] which in some cases was further on decomposed (when it was in direct morphonological gradation with the corresponding verb), in other cases was apprehended as one global whole and was thus attached to verbal stems.

Next comes the word 'considerable'. The root morpheme of the word is clearly 'consider'. The element '-able' is easily singled out because there exist so many words with the same suffix: 'readable, answerable, eatable', etc. The suffix '-able' is of particular interest because it is absolutely productive and this is borne out by the fact that we can coin as many new words with the help of this suffix as we wish. But, obviously, many of these new coinages would be active on the metasemiotic level, that is, the level where the content and the expression of a linguistic unit taken together become the expression for a new content -metacontent [1, p. 488].

It should be mentioned in connection with the analysis of words in '-able' that here we deal with the case of the overlapping of the two morphologies – the lexical and the grammatical ones [4]. In what follows we shall dwell at some length on this intricate problem. Words in '-able' are traditionally regarded as adjectives formed from verbal stems with the help of the absolutely productive suffix [10, p. 16]. It is interesting to note that words in '-able' preserve verbal character, i.e., they not infrequently display characteristic features of Participle II.

In this connection the question is bound to arise: how do we know that '-able' is a word-building suffix? Might not it, just as well, be a grammatical suffix used to form a special kind of 'modal Participle'? If we take '-ed', for example, we find that it is a Participle forming suffix: 'he was visited by a friend; she was admired by the people; he was questioned twice', etc. It follows, then, that we normally form participles by adding '-ed' to verbal stems. Why, then, should '-ed' be regarded as a grammatical element while '-able' is referred to lexicology?

There is every reason to believe that words in '-able' are what can be described as modal participles within the grammatical category of adjectival representation of action meaning that a certain object **may be** subjected to the action expressed by the stem, in contrast with participles formed with the help of '-ed', meaning that an object **is** subjected to the action expressed by the stem. If we compare, for instance, 'to accept, to be accepted, acceptable', 'to accent, to be accented, accentable', etc., we cannot but notice that units in '-able' easily correlate with other verbal slovoforms. At the same time we have to admit that words in '-able' display adjectival characteristic as well. It follows that in this case we observe a phenomenon of overlapping of lexical and grammatical morphologies [4, p. 141].

Thus, we have tried to show various phenomena which have to be contended with because of the ‘de-etymologization’ and different morphonological processes which take part within a word.

The main purpose of the article was to give the reader an idea of what it actually looks like when we are concerned not with isolated, hand-picked words, but with an actual utterance. We repeatedly lay special emphasis on the fact that it is essential to analyse a chunk of speech as actually produced by a native speaker of the language in order to gain an insight into the morphological structure of a word.

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