Lecture 3 – Semantically Non-Concatenative Morphology

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MorphologyFest
Morpheme-based Morphology

A common view: Words are hierarchically organized combinations of non-overlapping morphemes, where each morpheme consists of a discrete, continuous sequence of sound linked to distinct components of content (syntax and meaning).

\[
\left\{ \begin{array}{c}
/\text{inflejt}/ \\
\text{INFLATE}
\end{array} \right\} + \left\{ \begin{array}{c}
/\text{abl}/ \\
\text{Adj}
\end{array} \right\} \Rightarrow \left\{ \begin{array}{c}
/\text{inflejtabl}/ \\
\text{Adj}
\end{array} \right\}
\]

\('\text{inflatable}'\) = \('\text{inflatable}'\)
Words are exhaustively composed of morphemes (signs).

Sign: one-to-one association of elements of form and elements of content.

Each morpheme should consist of one chunk of form linked with one chunk of content.

Sign composition is strictly monotonic and incremental (additive, concatenative).

A derived form should properly contain its base.
Morpheme-based Morphology

- Well known problems of form:
  - Non 1-to-1 relations: Circumfixes, infixes, multiple exponence; cumulative morphs
  - Form without content: empty morphs, superfluous morphs
  - Content without form: zero morphs
  - Non-concatenative form: apophony, metathesis, subtraction
Well known problem of content: non-compositionality

- Solution: lexical listing (appropriate because idiosyncrasies are properties of individual items)

A less well-known problem: subtractive semantics

- Icelandic ‘middle’ verbs in -st:
  - gleðja ‘gladden (s.o.); gleðjast ‘rejoice’
  - kvelja ‘torment (s.o.); kveljast ‘suffer’
  - týna ‘lose (s.t.); týnast ‘be, get lost’
This analysis asserts that in the interpretation of the derived -st verb, there is an implied generic or other agent responsible for the patient’s state.

But that is simply false: no agent is present in the interpretation of these verbs.

Semantics of the transitive verb: (CAUSE x (BECOME (P y)))

Addition of -st has the effect of deleting the (CAUSE x y) predicate.
At night, Fred’s sleep is tormented (by thoughts of things left undone).

Lögreglan drap hundinn.
the.police killed the.dog
‘The police killed the dog’

Hundurinn var dreppinn (af lögreglunni).
the.dog was killed by the.police
‘The dog was killed (by the police)’

Hundurinn drap-st (*af lögreglunni).
the.dog killed-MID by the.police
‘The dog got killed’ (Sigurðsson 1989:268)
Bíllinn var seldur (viljandi) (af bílasala).
the.car was sold intentionally by car.salesman ‘The car was sold (intentionally) (by a car salesman)’

Bíllinn seldi-st (*viljandi) (*af bílasala).
the.car sold-MID intentionally by car.salesman ‘The car got sold’ (Hrafnbjargarson 2005)

Conclusion: Unlike true passives, Icelandic middles in -st have no representation of the Agent (or corresponding causative predicate) found in the corresponding transitive verb.
Subtractive Semantics
Navajo

a. Ashkii dibé neini\q\kaad
‘the boy is herding sheep’

b. Ashkii léi na’ni\q\kaad
‘a boy is (engaged in) herding’

c. Éí táididoogish ‘he will shear it/them’

d. Éí tádi’doogish ‘he will engage in shearing’

(Fernald et al, 2000)
Patient Suppression

“X verbs Y” = “X verb ⊓ X verb' Y” (i.e. X performs an action and this results in X having a corresponding effect on Y”

‘DETRANS’ in Navajo results in deletion of the effect clause from the semantics, leaving only the action.
Detransitivizers

- **Panare** (Carib; Payne 1990): ëwachíka ‘make sneeze’, sëwachíka ‘sneeze’; uka ‘kill’, suka ‘die’; ëka ‘fatten’, tëka ‘be fat’


- **San Ildefonso Tultepec Otomi** (Palancar 2006): dí-peng-a-ma pahni ‘I’m washing my shirt’; dí-m-pen-i ‘I’m doing my washing’ [transitive verbs such as pe ‘weave’, pë ‘steal’, koki ‘sweep’, etc. are converted to intransitive activity verbs by the nasal prefix]
Detransitivizers

- Neverver (Vanuatu; Barbour 2012)
- Reduplication makes transitive verbs intransitive:
  - Object incorporation: sil ‘roast, burn’; sil-sil-kha ‘burn trees (na-kha ‘tree, wood’)’
  - Reflexives, reciprocals: khur ‘scratch’, ni-khur-khur ‘(I) scratched myself’; te ‘fight’, at-te-te ‘(they) fought each other’
  - ‘inherent objects’: min ‘drink’, min-min ‘drink (alcohol)’; rakh ‘clear (garden area)’, rakhrakh ‘do the weeding’
  - “In each case, a particular object is implied, although it is ungrammatical to encode it explicitly.”
Anti-Passive

- **VERB [ERG, ABS] → VERB\text{\textsubscript{ANTIPASSIVE}} [ABS](,OBL)**

- Chukchi (Kozinsky et al. 1988, \textit{apud} WALS)

- a. ?aaček-a kimit?-ə ne-nl?etet-ən
  youth-ERG load-ABS 3PL.SUBJ-carry-AOR.3SG.OBJ
  ‘The young men carried away the/a load.’ (transitive)

- b. ?aaček-ət \underline{ine}-nl?etet-g?e-t kimit?-e
  youth-ABS \textit{ANTIP-carry-AOR.3SG.SUBJ-PL} load-\textit{INSTR}
  ‘The young men carried away the/a load.’ (anti-passive)
Anti-Passive

- Hinuq (Forker 2013):
  - Anti-passive usually adds iterative meaning, and can be added to stems of any transitivity.
  - “Monotransitive verbs decrease their valency of one argument [...], the original A becomes S while the original P disappears and cannot be expressed in an oblique case.” [my emphasis]
W. Greenlandic Anti-Passive

(a) i. Jaakup ujarak tiguaa
    Jacob-Erg stone-Abs he-took-it
    Jacob took a/the stone

ii. Jaaku ujaqqamik tigusivuq
    Jacob-Abs stone-Inst he-took-AP
    Jacob took a/the stone

(b) i. Jaakup illu taanna sanavaa
    Jacob-Erg house-Abs this-Abs he-builds-it
    Jacob built/was/is building this house (and may have finished it)

ii. Jaaku illumik taassuminnga sanavug
    Jacob-Abs house-Inst this-Inst he-builds-AP
    Jacob was/is building this house (and hasn’t finished)

(c) i. Fred shot Bill vs. Fred shot at Bill;

ii. Harry chewed his steak vs. Harry chewed on his steak;

iii. I read War and Peace to my wife last night vs. I read from War and Peace to my wife last night
W. Greenlandic Anti-Passive

(c) i. atuartut ilaat ikiurtaraiqarpara
of-students one-Abs I-must-help-him/her
I must help one of the students (namely, Nanuq)
≡ ∃x[x is one of the students & I must help x]

ii. atuartut ilaannik ikiuisariaqarpunga
of-students one-Inst I-must-help-AP
I must help one of the students (but it doesn’t matter which one)
≡ It is necessary that (∃x[x is one of the students & I help x])

(d) i. Jaakup siumukkurmiuq ajugaassasuraa
Jacob-Erg member-of-“Siumut”-Abs he-believes-he-will-win
Jacob believes a member of “Siumut” will win
≡ ∃x[x is a member of “Siumut” & Jacob believes (x will win)]

ii. Jaaku siumukkurmiumik ajugaassasurinnippuq
Jacob-Abs member-of-“Siumut”-Inst he-believes-will-win-AP
Jacob believes a member of “Siumut” will win
≡ Jacob believes ( ∃x[x is a member of “Siumut” & x will win ] )
Laughren 1988:

a. i. [Verb—[Erg][Abs]], ‘I got yams by I dig’
   ii. [Verb—[Erg][Dat]], ‘I dug in order to I get yams’

b. i. [Verb—[Erg][Abs]], ‘I broke up earth by I dig’
   ii. [Verb—[Erg][Double-Dat]], ‘I dug in order to I break up earth’
Conclusion

The most we can say about the analysis of word structure:
A linguistic sign (including ‘partially motivated signs’, or morphologically complex words) relates a word’s content and its form. The content can be divided into its syntactic properties and its meaning; each of these can be further analyzed. The form can be analyzed into phonological units (segments organized into syllables, feet, etc.). *The relation between content and form may be partially systematic.*