

# Variability of languages in time and space

## Lecture 6: Variability in word-formation

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reawakenings

- Morphemes in word formation
- Word-formation processes
  1. Adding bound lexical morphemes (affixation)
  2. Combining free lexical morphemes (compounding etc.)
  3. Without addition of derivational material (conversion etc.)
- Approaches to cross-linguistic study of word formation
  - Productivity-based approaches
  - Attestedness of word-formation processes across languages
  - Derivational potential of a sample of underived words

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Štekauer & Lieber (2005:212)

“Word-formation deals with productive and rule-governed patterns (word-formation types and rules, and morphological types) used to generate motivated naming units in response to the specific naming needs of a particular speech community by making use of word-formation bases of bilateral naming units and affixes stored in the Lexical Component.”

= **onomasiological approach** to word formation

vs **semasiological approach** that proceeds from the already existing words to their meanings

# Types of morphemes

two oppositions combined:

- **grammatical** vs **lexical** morphemes
  - grammatical morphemes change inflection
  - lexical morphemes have (more or less general) lexical meanings on their own
- **bound** vs **free** morphemes
  - a bound morpheme cannot stand alone
  - a free morpheme can stay as a single word

## – bound grammatical morphemes

= “inflectional morphemes” (endings etc.)

- add inflectional features without changing lexical meaning: used to create word forms of a given lexeme with the same lexical meaning but different inflections
- often more than one inflectional meaning (portmanteaus)
- occur outside derivational morphemes

e.g. *play-s*, *play-ed*, *play-ing*; *play-er-s*, *book-s*, *dis-lik-ed*

## – free grammatical morphemes

= “function words”

e.g. *in a book*, *but*, *that*, *them*

lexical morphemes have a lexical meaning by themselves

- **free lexical morphemes**

  - = “content words” (roots and stems)

  - e.g. *book*, *book-s*, *play*, *play-er-s*

- **bound lexical morphemes**

  - = “derivational morphemes” (derivational prefixes, suffixes etc.)

    - cannot be used separately

    - combined (as **affixes**) with free morphemes to form a new word

    - change the meaning and/or the part-of-speech category of words

    - have specialized meanings, added in succession

    - derivational suffixes occur before inflectional morphemes

  - e.g. *book-ish*, *play-er-s*, *dis-lik-ed*; Cz. *učí-tel-k-a*



# Morphemes around one root

- ex. the morphemic structure of the words:
  - En. *chair*, *chairs*, *dismissed*
  - Cz. *nahořklý* 'slightly bitter', *neuvěřitelný* 'unbelievable'

prefix	root	suffix
	<i>chair</i>	
	<i>chair-</i>	<i>-s</i>
<i>dis-</i>	<i>-miss-</i>	<i>-ed</i>
<i>na-</i>	<i>-hořk-</i>	<i>-lý</i>
<i>ne- u-</i>	<i>-věř-</i>	<i>-i- -teln- -ý</i>

- ex. the morphemic structure of the following compounds:
  - Ger. *Abschlussprüfung* 'final exam'
  - Ger. *Jahresabschluss* 'end of the year'
  - Cz. *modrooký* 'blue-eyed'

prefix	root	interfix	prefix	root	suffix
<i>Ab-</i>	<i>-schluss-</i>			<i>-prüf-</i>	<i>-ung</i>
	<i>Jahr-</i>	<i>-es-</i>	<i>-ab-</i>	<i>-schluss</i>	
	<i>modr-</i>	<i>-o-</i>		<i>-ok-</i>	<i>-ý</i>

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- Štekauer et al. (2012) distinguish three groups of word-formation processes according to which type of morphemes is used:
  1. adding bound lexical morphemes (derivational affixes)
    - = affixation / derivation
    - 1.1 prefixation
    - 1.2 suffixation
    - 1.3 circumfixation
    - 1.4 infixation
  2. combining free morphemes (roots):
    - 2.1 compounding
    - 2.2 reduplication
    - 2.3 blending
  3. without addition of derivational material:
    - 3.1 conversion
    - 3.2 stress, tone/pitch

# 1. Affixation / derivation

= formation of new lexemes by **adding bound lexical morphemes** to a morpheme or to a word in order

(a) to **change its part-of-speech category**

*bad*.adj > *badly*.adv

*špatný* 'bad' > *špatně* 'badly'

(b) to **modify or add a non-grammatical meaning to it**

*child*.noun > *childhood*.noun

*učitel* 'teacher' > *učitelka* 'female teacher'

(c) to do **both**

*child*.noun > *childish*.adj

*dítě* 'child' > *dětský* 'childish'

# Direction in derivation

**base word** = the input of derivation vs **derivative** = the output of derivation

the derivative is based both formally and semantically on the base word  
= **motivation**

- the base word expected to have a **simpler morphemic structure** than the derivative
- the base word expected to have a **broader meaning** than the derivative
- plus other features be employed, e.g. corpus frequency
  - the base word is often **more frequent** than the derivative  
*child* (47,629) > *childhood* (642) “state/period of being a child”  
*large* (26,212) > *to enlarge* (503) “to make larger”

(absolute freq from the InterCorp corpus v10; Klégr et al. 2017)

# 1.1 Prefixation

= a bound morpheme (prefix) is attached to the front of a word or of a free morpheme

- in English (Bauer 1983)

- majority of prefixes of Latin and Greek origin

*moral* > a*moral*, *act* > i*nteract*

- native prefixes from prepositions

*line* > u*nderline*, *load* > o*verload*

- a continuum between prefixes and first parts of compounds (*neoclassical formations*): *psycho-*, *eco-*, *techno-*

- in Slavic languages

- mostly without changing the part-of-speech category

*veliký*.adj 'big' > p*řeveliký*.adj 'very big'

*psát*.verb 'write' > z*apsat*.verb 'write down'

- highly productive with verbs

Cz. *psát* 'write' > d*opsat* 'finish writing' | p*řipsat* 'add by writing' |

v*ypsat* 'excerpt' | p*odepsat* 'sign' | n*adepsat* 'entitle' | u*psat* (*se*)

'subscribe' | v*epsat* 'insert by writing'

## 1.2 Suffixation

- = a bound morpheme (suffix) is attached to the end of a word or of a free morpheme
  - Cz. *učitel* 'teacher' > *učitelka* 'female teacher'
- both as a class-maintaining or a class-changing process
  - Ger. *Tänzer*.noun 'dancer' > *Tänzerin*.noun 'female dancer'
  - En. *work*.verb > *workers*.noun



# Multiple prefixation and suffixation

- words can be derived through a sequence of prefixation or suffixation steps applied successively
  - prefixation and suffixation  
En. *taste* > *tasteful* > *tastefully* > *distastefully*  
or *taste* > *tasteful* > *distasteful* > *distastefully*
  - multiple prefixation  
Cz. *skočit* 'jump' > *vyskočit* 'jump up' > *povyskočit* 'jump up a little'
  - multiple suffixation  
Cz. *strom* 'tree' > *stromek* 'small tree' > *stromeček* 'very small tree'

# 1.3 Circumfixation

- = prefix and a suffix are added in one step  
but neither the prefix and the root nor the suffix and the root are attested alone
- derivation of collective nouns in Tagalog (Štekauer et al. 2012):
    - *Intsik* ‘Chinese person’ > *kaintsikan* ‘the Chinese’
    - *pulo* ‘island’ > *kapuluan* ‘archipelago’
  - derivation of adjectives of small portion of quality
    - Cz. *drzý* ‘impudent’ > *přidrzlý* ‘slightly impudent’, but neither \**drzlý* nor \**přidrží* exist
    - must be distinguished from subsequent affixation:
      - cf. suffixation followed by prefixation in Cz.
      - otrávit*.verb ‘poison’ > *přiotrávit*.verb ‘poison partially’ > *přiotrávený*.adj ‘partially poisoned’

## 1.4 Infixation

- = a bound morpheme (infix) inserted into a free morpheme
- an infix inserted before the last syllable to derive a negative in Hua (Štekauer et al. 2012):
  - *zgavo* 'embrace' > *zga-'a-vo* 'not embrace'
  - *harupo* 'slip' > *haru-'a-po* 'not slip'

## 2.1 Compounding

- = two (or more) free morphemes are combined to form a new lexeme
- a compound prototypically consists of two parts
  - two root morphemes
    - first / left-hand part vs second / right-hand part
  - with or without a linking element
- attested across languages, but delimited differently
- borders to other areas are not clear-cut
  - to derivation
    - cf. elements *eco-*, *techno-*, *agro-* interpreted either as prefixes or as first parts of compounds
  - to syntax
    - cf. *flower pot*, *flower-pot*, *flowerpot* (Lieber – Štekauer 2009)

# Delimiting compounds in English

- Lieber (2005) discusses criteria used for delimitation of compounds in English – most of them are problematic:
  - stress (on the first part)
    - *trúck driver, ápple cake* (but *apple píe*)
  - spelling
    - varies a lot: *daisy wheel, daisy-wheel, daisywheel*
  - lexicalized meaning
    - not applicable to new compounds
  - unavailability of the first part to inflection, anaphora and coordination
    - but *children's hour, medical and life insurance*
  - inseparability of the first and second part
    - *truck driver* – \**truck fast driver*

## 2.2 Reduplication

= a free morpheme is repeated to form a new word

- attested both in derivation and in inflection
- more frequent in derivation
- different functions:
  - It. *neri neri* ‘really black’
  - Cz. *šir-o-šir-ý* ‘extremely vast’
  - Sp. *Es un coche-coche* (is-a-car-car) ‘It is a very good car’
  - Indonesian *buah-buah-an* (fruit-fruit) ‘various sorts of fruit’

## 2.3 Blending

= two free morphemes are reduced and joined to form a new word

- En. smoke + fog > smog
- En. breakfast + lunch > brunch

• the base morphemes often overlap in one or more phonemes/graphemes

- Fr. photocopy + pillage > photocopillage 'illegal photocopying'
- It. cantante + autore > cantautore 'singer-songwriter'

## 3.1 Conversion

- = a new word is coined simply by the change of the part-of-speech category
  - *run.verb* > *run.noun*
- in languages with inflectional morphology, the change of the part-of-speech category can be seen as the change of the set of inflectional features (change of inflectional paradigm)
  - = **transflexion**
    - Cz. *zlý.adj* 'evil' > *zlo.noun* 'evil'
    - Ger. *schlafen.verb* 'sleep' > *Schlaf.noun* 'sleep'



## 3.2 Stress and tone / pitch

- rarely, the replacement of stress is used to form new words
  - e.g. in Vietnamese, or
  - En. *recórd.verb* > *récord.noun*
    - rather classified as conversion

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# Language typology of word-formation?

## Comparing word-formation across languages

Körtvélyessy (2017:2):

“**Language typology** is a system or study that divides languages into smaller groups according to similar properties they have. [...] These smaller groups are called **language types**.”

- detailed linguistic descriptions of word-formation systems available for esp. Indo-European languages
- only 1 derivational feature in *WALS*
  - reduplication as one of morphological features
- cross-linguistic study / linguistic typology of word formation very recent

- i. productivity-based approaches
- ii. attestedness of individual word-formation processes across languages
  - 55 languages from 28 families (Štekauer et al. 2012)
  - saturation value (Körtvélyessy 2016, Körtvélyessy et al. 2020)
- iii. derivational potential of a sample of underived words in individual languages
  - 40 European languages (Körtvélyessy et al. 2020)

## i. Productivity-based approaches

### Productivity (Schultink 1961:113)

“the possibility for language users, by means of a morphological process which underpins a form-meaning correspondence in some words they know, to coin, unintentionally, a number of new formations which is in principle infinite”

- category-conditioned degree of productivity  $P = n_1/N$  (Baayen 1992)
  - $n_1$  number of hapax legomena with the particular suffix (words that occur just once in a corpus)
  - $N$  token frequency (number of all tokens containing the suffix under analysis)
- hapax-conditioned degree of productivity  $P^* = n_{1,E,t}/h_t$  (Baayen 1993)
  - $n_{1,E,t}$  number of hapax legomena with a certain suffix
  - $h_t$  total number of hapaxes in the corpus
  - “Denoting the number of hapaxes observed for category E after t tokens of the corpus have been sampled by  $n_{1,E,t}$ , and denoting the total number of hapaxes of arbitrary constituency in these t observations by  $h_t$ , we find that the required conditional probability, say  $P^*$ , equals  $n_{1,E,t}/h_t$ .”

- discussion and objections:
  - rejection of the possibility to derive productivity from frequencies (van Marle 1992, Dressler – Ladányi 2000)
  - debatable nature of hapax legomena (Dal 2003)
  - impact of the data size
  - problems of automatic preprocessing of the data (Evert – Lüdeling 2001)
  - limited applicability to low-frequency words (Fernández-Domínguez et al. 2007)
- variable-corpus approach (Gaeta – Ricca 2006)
- combinations of quantitative and qualitative analysis (Lüdeling – Evert 2005, Plag 1999)

## ii. Attestedness of word-formation processes across languages

- Štekauer et al. (2012) studied word formation across **55 languages**
  - from 28 language families and 45 language genera (classification based on *WALS*)
- similarities and differences among languages evaluated in terms of presence vs absence of individual word-formation processes
  - in which and in how many languages from the sample, a word-formation process is attested?

- some form of **derivation** attested in all but one languages in the sample of 55 languages
  - no affixation at all in Vietnamese (isolating language), only prefixation but no suffixation in Yoruba (isolating language)
  - the significance of derivation varies across languages (about 300 suffixes in Slovene, 1 genuine prefix in Finnish - negation)
- compounding
  - 91 % of languages in the sample
- reduplication found very frequently
  - 80 % of languages in the sample
- conversion
  - 62 % of languages in the sample
- stress and tone / pitch are minor in word formation
  - with 7 and 13 % of languages, respectively



- indicates the degree to which a particular word-formation system makes use of all the word-formation options under examination
  - for Slavic languages (Körtvélyessy 2016)
  - for 40 European langs (Körtvélyessy et al. 2020)
- which and how many word-formation processes are attested in a language
  - Körtvélyessy's study (2016) based on representative descriptions of particular word-formation systems in Müller et al. (2016)
- absence/presence of a word-formation process in a language (in POS terms)
- the productivity of a word-formation process not taken into consideration
  - cf. prefixation vs postfixation in Czech

# Saturation value: prefixation in Slavic languages

Körtvélyessy (2016:483ff):

feature	mkd	bos	slv	hrv	srp	bul	hsb	pol	csb	ces	slk	ukr	bel	rus	SAT
N>N	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	14
V>V	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	14
A>A	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	14
Adv>Adv				X	X					X	X	X	X	X	7
SAT	3	3	3	4	4	3	3	3	3	4	4	4	4	4	
A>N				X											1
V>N				X											1
Adv>N															0
A>V										X	X				2
N>V	X														1
Adv>V															0
N>A									X						1
V>A				X						X	X				3
Adv>A															0
N>Adv															0
V>Adv															0
A>Adv							X								1
SAT	1	0	0	3	0	0	1	0	1	2	2	0	0	0	
total SAT	4	3	3	7	4	3	4	3	4	6	6	4	4	4	

number of lang.: 14

number of features: 17

total saturation value: 59

average saturation value (total sat. value / number of lang.): 4.214

relative saturation value (total sat. value / (number of features \* number of lang.)): 24.79 %

### iii. Derivational potential of a sample of underived words

derivational networks in 40 European languages

(Körtvélyessy et al. 2020; <https://www.ugr.es/~svalera/Monika/index.html>)

- composed of an unmotivated word and all its direct and indirect derivatives
- unmotivated words selected from Swadesh list
  - 10 nouns: *bone, eye, tooth, day, dog, louse, fire, stone, water, name*
  - 10 verbs: *cut, dig, pull, throw, give, hold, sew, burn, drink, know*
  - 10 adjectives: *bad, new, black, straight, warm, old, long, thin, thick, narrow*
- three dimensions of the derivational network:
  - 1/ derivatives organized into **derivational series** (= a set of words directly motivated by the same base but not mutually motivating one another) ... horizontal dimension of the network
  - 2/ derivatives organized into **derivational paradigms** (= a set of words that share a common root and each of them motivates the item that immediately follows it) ... vertical dimension of the network
  - 3/ semantic category added through the affix ... semantic dimension

# Semantic concepts in affixation (Bagasheva 2017)

- 50+ comparative semantic categories applicable in cross-linguistic research into affixation
  - what meaning is added by attaching the affix to the base word?

<i>Action</i>	En. <i>reading</i> , Bul. <i>strelba</i>
<i>Agent</i>	En. <i>killer</i> , Bul. <i>ubiec</i>
<i>Abstraction</i>	En. <i>justice</i> , Bul. <i>pravda</i>
<i>Causative</i>	En. <i>empower</i> , Bul. <i>zaliva</i>
<i>Composition</i>	Bul. <i>orehovka</i>
<i>Diminutive</i>	En. <i>piglet</i> , Bul. <i>pospya</i>
<i>Hyperonymy</i>	En. <i>archbishop</i> , Bul. <i>nadreden</i>
...	

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