

## English Morphology: Structure, Usage and Cognition

Type of course: BA.AA.SW07 (Advanced module *English Grammar*)  
Time: Monday 10–12 a.m. (10:15–11:45)  
Venue: Carl-Zeiss-Str. 3, SR 120  
Workload: 5 ECTS



### Course description

Building on the first-year introductory classes in linguistics, this seminar embarks on a more detailed exploration of the internal structure of English words and the means by which the English word-stock can be expanded beyond its current inventory. However, while traditional accounts of morphology tend to focus on purely structural questions (such as a precise formulation of the 'rules' underlying complex words, or the structure of morphological paradigms), this class will encourage students to ask some important 'why'-questions behind the scenes of English morphology. For example, why does English have irregular verbs, and why do morphological irregularities crop up in strikingly similar places across many languages? Where do bound morphemes like *-ment*, *-ly*, *-ing* and so on come from, given that such forms are not readily 'invented' (unlike many content words)? How are morphologically complex words stored in the mind, i.e. what is the status of morphology in the mental lexicon? What are the cognitive mechanisms behind word-formation patterns like compounding, conversion or blending? In order to address these and similar issues, we will have to pay due attention to the ways in which sociopragmatic and psychological factors guide the shape and development of morphological patterns in actual language use, and we will have to turn to different kinds of empirical data (notably corpus and experimental data) that do justice to this approach. From a methodological perspective, the focus of this module is on practising the students' skills in linguistic analysis and the reading of original empirical research on morphology.

### Requirements and marking system

- regular **attendance**, active **participation** and thorough weekly **preparation** (see below)
- short **presentation** of an analytical problem set, a corpus search or some other assignment
- **term paper** on a morphological topic of your choice
  - approx. 12–15 pages, due on **27 March 2020** (second attempt: 29 May 2020)
  - must include a report of empirical work on the topic and can include your own small-scale empirical study

The final mark for the module will be based exclusively on the term paper. All other requirements are, however, obligatory "entry qualifications" (Vorleistungen) for being admitted to writing the term paper.

### Weekly preparation

The seminar discussion is based on obligatory weekly texts (see course programme for details) and accompanying homework assignments. It is crucial that you come to class thoroughly prepared since the texts and assignments will generally serve as an important basis for the ideas to be developed in our discussions.

*A general note on your preparation:* Since a B.A. seminar is supposed to provide a chance to practise the in-depth reading, analysis and discussion of academic texts, the amount of time that you'll probably need to put into the weekly preparation of each session is not to be underestimated! Please remember that the course is worth 5 ECTS (which amounts to a sum total of 150 hours of work).

### The course management system

The course management system of our department, called **WORDWISE**, will be the online platform of this class. It is there that you download the preparatory texts, follow-up handouts and materials, etc. Important information on the organisation of the course (e.g. announcements etc.) will also be distributed via **WORDWISE** (to your email address). Therefore, please enrol into this course on **WORDWISE** (the password was announced in class) and stay updated.

## Course programme (open to changes and suggestions)

DATE	TOPIC AND OBLIGATORY LITERATURE	THEMATIC AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES
1	14.10.19 <b>Introduction to the course</b> <i>Aims and structure of the course. Organisation. Kick-off exercises and discussion.</i>	Goals and scope of morphology. Central tenets of a cognitive and usage-based approach to morphology.
2	21.10.19 <b>Foundations of morphology</b> <i>The building blocks of English morphology (I)</i> Schmid 2016, Ch.1: p. 13 & Ch.2: pp. 23–38	Linguistic categories as prototypes ('word', 'inflection/derivation').
3	28.10.19 <i>The building blocks of English morphology (II)</i> Schmid 2016, Ch.2: pp. 39–49	Challenges for morphological analysis and a morpheme-based approach to morphology. Working with the <i>OED</i> . Morphological schemas.
4	04.11.19 <i>Allomorphy; Analytical practice.</i>	Morphological corpus data and morphological analysis.
5	11.11.19 <i>Morphological units and the mental lexicon</i> Haspelmath and Sims 2010: Ch.4	Paradigmatic processes in morphology and the moderate word-form lexicon. Storage and decomposition in the usage-based approach.
6	18.11.19 <b>Inflectional morphology</b> <i>English inflection from a synchronic perspective</i> Schmid 2016, Ch.3: pp. 51–60	Core and peripheral functions of grammatical affixes. More on allomorphy. Analytical challenges in inflection.
7	25.11.19 <i>English inflection from a diachronic perspective</i> Schmid 2016, Ch.3: pp. 60–67	Long-term morphological change in English. Understanding frequency effects over time (irregular verbs, syncretism and analogical levelling).
8	02.12.19 <i>Morphological change and structure from a usage-based perspective</i> Haspelmath 2002: pp. 51–56	Where does morphology come from, and where does it go? Morphologization, reanalysis, secretion, analogy.
9	09.12.19 <b>Word-formation processes</b> <i>Fundamentals of word-formation and overview of English word-formation processes</i> Schmid 2016: Ch.4 & §5.1	On the origin, development and establishment of complex lexemes. Demarcation problems in determining word-formation processes.
10	16.12.19 <i>Cognitive perspectives on word-formation</i> Schmid 2016: §5.2.5, §5.3.3 and a group-specific excerpt on a particular formation process	Conceptualization and profiling. Understanding the cognitive functions of compounding, prefixation, suffixation and conversion.
11	06.01.20 <i>Productivity</i> Schmid 2016: Ch.6	Corpus-based measures of productivity. Restrictions on productivity. The relation between storage and productivity.
12	13.01.20 <i>Corpus-based analyses of productivity</i>	Analytical practice with the <i>COCA</i> and data sets.
13	20.01.20 <i>Empirical research in morphology: A case study</i>	Publication types in linguistics. Quality criteria of linguistic research. Foundations of empirical research.
14	27.01.20 Hay and Plag 2004 <a href="#">Guidelines for Writing Papers in Linguistics (PDF)</a>	Structure and stylistic conventions of linguistic papers.
15	03.02.20 <b>Conclusion</b> <i>Wrap-up of the course. Organisation of the term paper. Course evaluation.</i>	Bring any remaining questions, especially also in relation to the term paper.

### References for the major course literature

*General textbook:*

Schmid, Hans-Jörg (2016). *English Morphology and Word-Formation: An Introduction*. 3<sup>rd</sup> ed. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag.

*Additional texts:*

Haspelmath, Martin and Andrea Sims (2010). *Understanding Morphology*. 2<sup>nd</sup> ed. London: Hodder Education. [Ch. 4]

Haspelmath, Martin (2002). *Understanding Morphology*. London: Arnold. [excerpts from Ch. 3]

Hay, Jennifer and Ingo Plag (2004). What constrains possible suffix combinations? On the interaction of grammatical and processing restrictions in derivational morphology. *Natural Language and Linguistic Theory* 22.3: 565–596.