

Usage-based Approaches to English Morphology

Type of course: E-Ling-B (*From the Phoneme to the Word II*)
Time: Tue. 10-12 a.m. (10:15 - 11:45)
Venue: LS1 R.208b
Workload: 5 ECTS



Course description

Building on the first-year introductory classes in linguistics, this seminar provides a more advanced survey 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 go one step further and 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 words)? 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 structures in actual language use, and we will have to turn to data sources that do justice to this approach (such as corpus data). From a methodological perspective, the focus of this module is on developing students' skills for writing a first term paper in linguistics. To this end, we will practise the identification and reading of original research on morphology and the analysis of variegated morphological data.

Requirements and marking system

- All participants: Regular attendance, thorough preparation of each session and active class participation = a noticeable commitment to the course
- Non-graded participants: 2 written homework assignments or 1 such assignment and a 'mini presentation' (e.g. recap of previous session, presentation of your solution to an assignment, etc.)
- Graded participants: Term paper (min. 7 pages, to be submitted on 15 September 2015 at the latest); in keeping with the *Modulkatalog*, the final mark for the course will be based on the term paper only.

Weekly preparation

An essential part (and requirement) of the course is your in-depth preparation of each session at home. This usually comes in the form of **readings** (excerpts from textbooks, handbook or journal articles, handouts, etc.) and accompanying **homework**.

A general note on your preparation: As an advanced module is supposed to provide a chance to gain a deeper understanding of linguistic phenomena and the relevant research, 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 the university, **OLAT**, will be the online platform of this class. It is there that you download the weekly readings, follow-up handouts and materials, etc. Important information on the organisation of the course (e.g. announcements etc.) will also be distributed via OLAT (to your email address). Therefore, please enrol into this course on OLAT (the password was announced in class) and stay updated.

Course programme (syllabus)

DATE	TOPIC AND OBLIGATORY LITERATURE	THEMATIC AND METHODOLOGICAL ISSUES
1 14.04.15	Introduction to the course <i>Aims and structure of the course. Organisation.</i>	Goals and scope of morphology. Central tenets of a cognitive and usage-based approach to morphology.
2 21.04.15	Foundations of morphology <i>The building blocks of English morphology (I)</i> Schmid 2011, Ch.1: 13 & Ch.2: 23-38 & 44-46	Linguistic categories as prototypes ('word', 'inflection/derivation'). Allomorphy. Extracting morphological information from corpora.
3 28.04.15	<i>The building blocks of English morphology (II)</i> Schmid 2011, Ch.2: 39-44 & 46-49	Challenges for morphological analysis and a morpheme-based approach to morphology. Working with the OED. Morphological analysis.
4 05.05.15	<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.
5 12.05.15	Inflectional morphology <i>English inflection from a synchronic perspective</i> Schmid 2011, Ch.3: 51-60	Core and peripheral functions of grammatical affixes. A deeper understanding of allomorphy. Some contrastive notes on English morphology.
6 19.05.15	<i>English inflection from a diachronic perspective</i> Schmid 2011, Ch.3: 60-67	Long-term morphological change in English. Understanding frequency effects over time (irregular verbs, syncretism and analogical levelling).
7 26.05.15	<i>Morphological change and structure from a usage-based perspective</i> Haspelmath 2002: 51-56	Where does morphology come from, and where does it go? Morphologization, reanalysis, secretion, analogy.
8 02.06.15	Word-formation processes <i>Fundamentals of word-formation and overview of English word-formation processes</i> Schmid 2011: Ch.4 & §5.1	On the origin, development and establishment of complex lexemes. Demarcation problems in determining word-formation processes.
9 09.06.15	<i>Productivity</i> Schmid 2011: Ch.6	Corpus-based measures of productivity. Restrictions on productivity. The relation between storage and productivity.
10 16.06.15	<i>Cognitive perspectives on word-formation</i> Schmid 2011: §5.2.5, §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 23.06.15	<i>Empirical research in morphology: A case study</i>	Publication types in linguistics. Quality criteria of linguistic research. Foundations of empirical research.
12 30.06.15	Hay and Plag 2004 Guidelines for Writing Papers in Linguistics (PDF)	Structure and stylistic conventions of linguistic papers.
13 07.07.15	Conclusion <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 (2011). *English Morphology and Word-Formation: An Introduction*. 2nd ed. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag.

Additional readings from:

Haspelmath, Martin and Andrea Sims (2010). *Understanding Morphology*. 2nd 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.