

E-Notes

Class – U.G Sem IV

Papar : - MJC 06

Morphology

Morphology is the science and study of the smallest grammatical units of language, and of their formation into words. Including inflection , derivation and composition. According to Dorfman, Morphology is the study of the ways and methods of grouping sounds into sounds – complexes or words, of definite, distinct and conventional meaning. Bloomfield calls it the study of the constructions in which sound forms appear among the constituents. Broadly speaking, morphology is the study of the patterns of word forms.

The basic unit of morphology is Morpheme.

Morpheme :

A morpheme is the smallest unit of form that has meaning in a given language. The word ‘unlikely’ has three morphemes : un , like , ly ; like is a free morpheme ; un and ly are bound morphemes. A morpheme conforms the following criteria :

- It can be a word one of its constituent which has some meaning latent in it.
- A morpheme can not be further split into meaningful p-arts without destroying its meaning or getting such parts that do not make any sense.
- It retains its meaning in related environments. It can be exemplified with the help of the word “state”.

(I) Anyone with working knowledge of the language shall find it as a word.

(II) It can not be further split into meaningful parts without destroying its meaning . Although the word can be split into such words as ‘tat’ and ‘ate’ etc. but their meaning is in no harmony with that of the word “state”. If we divide it the other way round , we get nonsensical constituents such as /stei/ , st/ and /t/ etc

(III) In related environments such as ‘states’ ‘stated’ ‘stating’ it does retain its meaning. Thus state is established as a morpheme.

Phoneme and Morpheme

Phonemes are the smallest units of sound that distinguish words while morphemes are the smallest units of meaning. A phoneme does not pertain to some definite meaning in grammar but every word and every word group has certain meaning besides the form which is being composed of phonemes. When we switch from form over to meaning we travel from phonemes to morphemes.

Free and Bound Morphemes

Any segment of a language that appears in speech independently with meaning is called a free form of a morpheme. Such a free morpheme which cannot be further split into smaller free forms is a minimum free form. Examples : Boy, good, work, round etc

Any fraction of an utterance that does not appear in speech independently with meaning is called a bound form of a morpheme. It is always bound to one or more morphemes to constitute a word .examples: Re , ment , ex, un, and ing etc

In ‘Undesirable’ desire is a free morpheme where as ‘un’ and ‘able’ are bound morphemes. Free morphemes constitute words by themselves whereas bound morphemes can’t stand alone but attaches to free morphemes.

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