Friedrich Schiller University Jena
Department of English and American Studies
Summer term 2021

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Grammar and Language Use: Morphology

Type of course:	MA.AA.SW10, LG/LR.AA.SE1/2 (Graduate seminar)
Time:	Friday 10–12 a.m. (10:15–11:45)
Venue:	*Zoom*
Workload:	**5 ECTS**

Course description

This module is concerned with those aspects of communication and cognition that influence the development of languages as structural systems and of our mental representation of language. In this semester, we will explore this so-called '**usage-based approach**' to language in the domain of **morphology**. While traditional accounts of morphology tend to focus on "static" 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? How does the storage of words affect more complex aspects of morphology, e.g. the order in which certain morphemes can be combined with one another? 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 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.

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 (everyone except state examination candidates)
- **final assessment:** For everyone except state examination candidates, there is a choice between:
  - **EITHER** a **written examination** (23 July 2021, 10-12 a.m., online examination, invigilation via *Zoom*)
  - **OR** an empirical **term paper** on a topic of your choice (approx. 15 pages, due on 30 September 2021)

Your **mark** for the module will be based exclusively on the final assessment. All other requirements are, however, obligatory "entrance qualifications" (Vorleistungen) for being admitted to taking the final assessment.

Weekly preparation

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

The course management systems

- *Moodle*: the central platform for this class (all texts, materials and assignments, links to screencasts, announcements by email (please check your account for messages regularly))
- *Zoom*: our virtual classroom and our meeting ground for office hours for the time being (please make an appointment by email)

Course programme

	Date	Topic and obligatory literature	Thematic and methodological issues
		Introduction to the course	
		Screencast: Goals and organisation of the course	
1	16.04.21	Welcome and warm-up: Kick-off exercises and discussion	Getting back into morphology. Reactivating morphological categories.
2	23.04.21	Central tenets of the usage-based approach to language structure Diessel 2019: p. 1 & Ch.3	Comparison of the usage-based approach to structuralist and nativist perspectives on language. Understanding domain-general processes.
		A usage-based approach to morphological structure	
3	30.04.21	The building blocks of English morphology (I) Schmid 2016, Ch.1: p. 13 & Ch.2: pp. 23−38	Linguistic classifications as prototype categories ('word', 'inflection/ derivation').
4	07.05.21	The building blocks of English morphology (II) Schmid 2016, Ch.2: pp. 39−49	Challenges for morphological analysis and a morpheme-based approach to morphology. Working with the *OED*. Morphological schemas.
5	14.05.21	Allomorphy; Analytical practice Optional text: Diessel 2019: Ch.4	Morphological corpus data and morphological analysis.
6	21.05.21	Morphological units and the mental lexicon Haspelmath and Sims 2010: Ch.4	Paradigmatic processes in morphology and the moderate word-form lexicon. Storage and decomposition in the usage-based approach.
		Usage-based dynamics of inflectional morphology	
7	28.05.21	English inflection: The global synchronic and diachronic picture Schmid 2016: Ch.3	Core and peripheral functions of grammatical affixes and their allomorphs. Long-term morphological change in English.
8	04.06.21	The diachrony of English inflection from a usage-based perspective Bybee and Thompson 1997	Understanding frequency effects over time (irregular verbs, syncretism and analogical levelling). Optional follow-up text: Lieberman et al. 2007
9	11.06.21	General patterns of morphological change Haspelmath 2002: pp. 51−56 & Bybee 2010: pp. 106−110	Where does morphology come from, and where does it go? Morphologization, reanalysis, secretion, analogy.
		Usage-based dynamics of lexicalization and derivational morphology	
10	18.06.21	Lexeme formation as a structural, cognitive and social process Schmid 2016: Ch.4 & §5.1	On the origin, development and establishment of complex lexemes. Lexeme-formation schemata as prototypes.
11	25.06.21	Productivity of derivational schemas Schmid 2016: Ch.6	Corpus-based measures of productivity. The relation between storage and productivity.
12	02.07.21	Corpus-based analyses of productivity. Restrictions on productivity	Analytical practice with the *COCA* and data sets. Explaining restrictions on productivity.
13 14	09.07.21 16.07.21	Putting it all together: A case study in usage-based morphology Hay and Plag 2004	Explaining ordering restrictions on derivational affixes in English: Parsing ratios vs. selectional restrictions on productivity.
		Conclusion	
14	16.07.21	Wrap-up of the course. Preparation of final assessment forms. Course evaluation Optional texts: Diessel 2019: 67−78, Bybee 1995	Bring any remaining questions, especially also in relation to the final assessment methods.

Major course literature

Bybee, Joan. 1995. Diachronic and typological properties of morphology and their implications for representation. In Laurie B. Feldman (ed.), *Morphological aspects of language processing*, 225–246. Hillsdale, NJ: Erlbaum.

Bybee, Joan. 2010. *Language, usage and cognition.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [selected passages]

Bybee, Joan and Sandra A. Thompson. 1997. Three frequency effects in syntax. *Berkeley Linguistics Society* 23. 378–388.

Diessel, Holger. 2019. *The grammar network: How linguistic structure is shaped by language use.* Cambridge: Cambridge University Press. [Ch. 3 and selected other passages]

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

Haspelmath, Martin and Andrea Sims. 2010. *Understanding morphology.* 2nd ed. London: Hodder Education. [Ch. 4]

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.

Lieberman, Erez, Jean-Baptiste Michel, Joe Jackson, Tina Tang and Martin A. Nowak. 2007. Quantifying the evolutionary dynamics of language. *Nature* 449. 713–716.

Schmid, Hans-Jörg. 2016. *English morphology and word-formation: An introduction.* 3rd edn. Berlin: Erich Schmidt Verlag. [selected chapters]

Initial overview of the framework

In the *Oxford Bibliographies on "Linguistics"* (ed. by Mark Aronoff), Diessel (2014) provides the following succinct description of what the usage-based approach is all about:

> Since the beginning of modern linguistics—that is, since Ferdinand de Saussure's *Cours de Linguistique Générale*—it has been a standard assumption of linguistic research that the study of the linguistic system, or "langue," needs to be distinguished from the study of language use, or "parole." In structuralist and generative linguistics, language, notably grammar, is seen as a self-contained system including discrete categories and combinatorial rules that are analyzed without reference to usage and development. This view of language has been challenged by the usage-based approach, in which grammar and usage are inextricably connected. In this approach, language is seen as a dynamic system of emergent symbolic units and flexible constraints that are shaped by general cognitive processes involved in language use. The usage-based approach has evolved from research in functional and cognitive linguistics combined with psycholinguistic research on sentence processing and language acquisition. The general goal of this approach is to develop a framework for the analysis of linguistic structure as it evolves from general cognitive processes such as categorization, analogy, automatization, and (joint) attention, which are not only relevant for language, but also for many other cognitive phenomena, such as vision, memory, and thought. In order to understand why linguistic structure is the way it is, usage-based linguists study language development, both in history and acquisition. On the assumption that language development is crucially influenced by the language user's experience with particular linguistic elements, usage-based linguists have emphasized the importance of frequency of occurrence for the analysis of grammar. There is a wealth of recent results indicating that frequency has an enormous impact on the language users' behavior in communication and information processing, and on the development of linguistic structure in acquisition and change.