

MORPHOLOGY

Morphology is that branch of linguistics in which we study about words. Usually words are the groups of letters which are joined together to produce meaning, and so, these are considered as the meaningful units of a language. One word may have either one or more than one group of letters within it that can be identified on the basis of its meaning. For example, the word 'wise' has only one group of letters that gives one meaning, whereas the word 'unwise' has two groups of letters 'un' and 'wise' and it gives a different meaning from the word 'wise' in combination. These two groups of letters are distinguished on the basis of meaning that they produce in the internal constitution of the word 'unwise'. It shows that a word has one or more than one meaningful unit inside it that produces the meaning. In English, there are words like laws, lawful, lawfulness, unlawful, lawfully etc. which have been derived from the source word 'law'. Hence, morphology deals with each meaningful unit of a word.

Some Important concepts of morphology

(I) morpheme:

It is the smallest grammatical meaningful unit of a language. It is that linguistic unit which exists, either as a word or a constituent of a word.

Let us consider these words and their constituents.

Possible — no constituent

Impossible — im-possible

A social — a-social

Boys — boy-s

Toothfulness — tooth-ful-ness

Unfaithfulness — un-faith-ful-ness

Here all the constituents are morphemes as all of these affect the meaning of the word in some way or other. In some cases, the grammatical class of the word changes, and in others, the meaning changes to a certain extent after addition of morphemes. In some words, it changes the number or the gender as well. It is required to mention here that morphemes are placed under the braces like [].

— x — x —

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