CHAPTER 8

MORPHOLOGICAL STUDIES AFTER JESPERSEN
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8.1.0. Introduction: Jespersen's work on morphology (1942), the VI Volume of "A Modern English Grammar", shows the climax of a trend which did not considerably break away from the traditional, classical and historical perspectives which reached a level of perfection in him. Jespersen's attempt was to break away fully from the prescriptive kind of approach to grammatical analysis and to discover and describe the central principles underlying the grammar of a language. It is from this viewpoint that we find him emerging with the volume: Morphology, the last work that Jespersen himself published.

8.1.1. Bloomfield: Jespersen's Morphology was published at a period when investigations into the nature of the phonology and morphology of language took a swift turn after the publication of Leonard Bloomfield's Language (1933). The decade which followed after the publication of Language was a period heightened enquiry into phonological aspects of languages and we find a considerable number of significant contributions during this period on phonology as the early contribution of structuralist linguists. The 1960s in particular, we know, was a period of intensive research into syntax marked by Noam Chomsky's contributions into the study of syntax. But it was the 1940s that was most significant in so far as morphological studies were concerned. That was the decade where morphological studies reached a climax throughout the history of linguistic studies. Most important contributions to the understanding of the
morphological structure of languages was made during that
decade.

8.1.2. **Approach to Morphology**: The term 'morphology' was
loosely applied to that branch of linguistics which is concerned
about the 'forms of words' in a variety of uses and construc-
tions viewed as part of the sentences of any language, before
Jespersen's time or rather before Bloomfield's *Language* was
published. Jespersen's work came during a period when the Bloom-
fieldian linguists in America were busy providing to the study
of morphology a much more scientific shape than hitherto done.
The attention which the study of morphology received during
that period was unparalleled in the history of linguistics, a
spirit which was never again to be revived in so comprehensive
and pursuasive a manner. The Bloomfieldian linguists showed
during this period a unique interest in demarcating the field
of morphology, defining the specific areas which should fall
within its scope, and in sharpening the methods of morphological
analysis within the limits which an empirical study permitted.

8.1.3. **Morphology in 1940s**: The most significant contributions
to the study of morphology during the period between 1940 and
1955 came in the form of essays in journals in linguistics such
as *Word*, *Linguistica* and *Language*. *Language* as the 'Journal of
the Linguistic Society of America' (Baltimore) brought out most
of the research material on morphology produced with specific
reference to English and published in English. An anthology
of some very relevant contributions of a lasting value is
Martin Joos's Readings in Linguistics I & II. In the same year as Jespersen's *Morphology* (1942) was published Zallig S. Harris came out with a contribution in morphology entitled 'Morpheme Alternants in Linguistic Analysis' (1942). Harris points out in the essay that the method of morphemic arrangement and description consists of three steps: (1) Harris recommends to divide each phonemically written linguistic utterance into its smallest parts which recur with the same meaning in different utterances, and we call each such part a morpheme alternant, secondly (2) he says that all the alternants which are identical in meaning and which do not occur in identical environments should be grouped into a different class. As step (3) Harris suggests in the article that general statements should be made for all such classes which retain identical difference between their alternants. Harris also recommends that the linguist should state (i) the difference between the alternants, (ii) the morphemic environments in which the alternants occur and the nature of the units in which each alternant occurs.

8.2.1. Zelling Harris: In 1946 Harris published his second important essay on morphology entitled 'From Morpheme to Utterance'. In this essay an attempt is made to answer quite a number of questions which are pertinent to the study of morphology: What is the difference between morphology and syntax? What is a word? What is the difference between 'endocentric' and
'exocentric' constructions? How long can an English sentence be made? How different can languages be from one another? Harris outlined in that essay a dynamic procedure which consisted of a series of substitutions beginning with the whole utterance and working down until the smallest unit instead of working upwards from the smallest analyzable unit to the largest.

8.2.2. Charles Hockett: Charles F. Hockett in 1947 proposed another procedure of morphemic analysis in the essay 'Problems of Morphemic Analysis'. Hockett proposed six steps as constituting any morphemic analysis. He held the view that all the empty morphs in a language are in complementary distribution and have the same semantic content (nothing). These empty morphs in complementary distribution could be grouped together into a single morpheme empty morpheme, as usual, which Hockett thought, was necessary for methodological convenience. The notion of an 'empty morpheme' has not found favour with the present-day linguists.

8.2.3. Bernard Bloch and Eugene Nida: Bloch's 'English Verb Inflection' (1947) and Eugene A. Nida's 'The Identification of Morphemes' (1948) were two of the most important contributions of the period. These represented two distinct streams of thought on morphology. Bloch intended in his paper a departure from the contemporary approach to morphology in terms of the morphological processes. These are processes by which various underlying bases, by undertaking a structural description of specific forms and
their occurrence. The theoretical specifications and the content of general procedure were the same as those developed by others except that he proposed a distinct method of morphological classification. Nida's essay (above) along with his manual for morphemic analysis: *Morphology* (1949) have made classical contributions to the study of morphology especially useful to the students of linguistics who would like to be conversant with the structuralist method of morphemic analysis. The hair-splitting morphemic distinctions which Nida makes both in the essay and the book have lost their theoretical significance in the present-day context of a more synthetic and unified approach to the study of morphology. Nida reviewed and revised in his article many principles of analysis and classification employed by earlier writers like Bloch and Hockett.

8.2.4. L.C. Analysis: As morphology and morphemic analysis are the stepping stone to syntax a study of 'morphemes and their arrangements' the identification and description of morpheme units and their sequences' were the concentrated preoccupation of quite a number of linguists during the period between 1940 and 1951. In 1951 Zellig Harris published an important work: *Methods in Structural Linguistics* which is regarded as the climatic and last contribution by structuralists. It is during the same period that a number of textbook in descriptive linguistics came to be produced which contained the theory of 'immediate constituent analysis' as developed on the Bloomfieldian lines by authors like Gleason, Hockett, Nida, Fries
and Wells. I.G. analysis dealt with the ordering of morphemes and higher units of language as constituent units with specific relations within the sentence. I.G. analysis showed the constituent units which were supposed to be grammatically held together in terms of their function. An immediate constituent is one of the two or more elements of which a particular construction is formed as 'a very good man' shows that 'a' and 'good' are constituted with 'man' while 'very' and 'good' are I.C.s of the construction 'very good'. The I.G. model is taken up later in transformational generative grammar and applied to kernel sentences as 'phrase-structure grammar' with the 'phrase-structure rules' as rules which hold the I.C.s together.

8.3.0. Morphological Models: It was during this period as mentioned above that different theoretical models were worked out for the analysis and description of the grammar of a language. Hockett in 'Two Models of Grammatical Description' (1954) refers to three different models as frames of reference for grammatical description. The first he calls 'Word and Paradigm Model' (1) the second 'Item and Arrangement Model' (2), and the third (3) 'Item and Process Model'. P.H. Mathews in his book: Morphology (1974: 116) discusses the three models as representative scheme for outlining the three most important trends of morphological analysis in the history of linguistics. Mathews views in a critical manner the entire range of theories on morphology in a comprehensive manner on the basis the three models first outlined by Hockett in Language (1954).
8.3.1. **Word and Paradigm Model**: The traditional model of grammatical analysis with stress on the paradigms is known today as 'Word and Paradigm Model'. The structuralist trend of morphological analysis with stress on the structural description of morphemes and their distribution (arrangement) in utterances is known as 'Item and Arrangement Model'. With emphasis on what we call 'morphological process' rather than structural description present-day linguists stress the components of morphology with a set of processes that link these components. A model that stresses this aspect of morphological process is known today as 'Item and Process Model'.

8.3.2. **Intersecting Morpho-Syntactic Categories**: The Word and Paradigm Model proposed a framework of intersecting morpho-syntactic categories. Tense, voice, number etc. constitute the categories of this model; and word-inflection is the central theme of the framework. As categories of the work, tense, voice, number etc. play a major role in framing and shaping the rules of syntax as the traditional grammarians saw it. The inflectional classes, decided by the morphological rules determine the form which are inflection will assume from one paradigm to another. The definitions of the categories took care of both the morphological and syntactic functions of words in the Word and Paradigm Model. The structuralist linguists as seen in earlier sections set aside this model of grammatical description and developed what we know as the Item and Arrangement Model, a label which reflect the basic trends of the structurali
8.3.3. **Item and Arrangement Model:** The item and Arrangement Model is better known as the 'Morphemic Model'. The morpheme came to be received as the central unit of grammatical analysis. Every utterance is represented as a sequence of morphemes. Linguists during this period spoke more of 'utterances' than of 'sentences' meaning that a definite priority is given to the spoken form of the language, and held the view that speech constituted actual language. The morpheme is considered an 'abstract concept' and concrete utterances consist of what is called 'allomorphs'. An allomorph in the system is defined as a 'morpheme alternant' conditioned by a given environment. For instance the allomorphs of the English morpheme -Z alternate between -s, -z, and -iz as realized in forms like 'walks, moves and watches'. Or the allomorphs of 'catch' alternate between [kætʃ], and [kɔː], -t being usually assigned to the past tense morpheme -D.

8.3.4. **Form-meaning Identity:** Independently considered [-s] [-z] and [-iz], [-t] and [kɔː] are called 'morphs', the same labelled as 'allomorphs' with reference to their respective morphemes. The notion of morpheme is an abstraction derived from the set of morphs having characteristics of identical phonetic features and identical meaning i.e. having form-meaning identity'. Recognition is made, for instance, of the following morphemes:
1. \{-Z_1\} Plural : men, girls, cups.
2. \{-Z_2\} Genitive : boy's, boys'
3. \{-Z_3\} Third Singular : moves, puts, pushes.
4. \{-D_1\} Past tense : walked, ran caught.
5. \{-D_2\} Participle : moved, learnt, run
6. \{-η\} Gerund : dancing, singing.
9. \(x\{ai\}x\) replacement : bite - bit.
10. \(x\{\}\) suffixation : orderly.
11. \(\{\}x\) prefixation : injustice.
12. \(\{x\}\{x\}\) compoundin : cross roads.

8.3.5. **Supra-Segmental Morphemes**: Classification of morphemes in this manner becomes an endless task depending on the class or function a morpheme may be assigned to. Identification and classification of morphemes include also the 'suprasegmental features' of stress, intonation and transition. Emphasis put on a given word in an utterance designates some special meaning resulting in an additional suprasegmental morpheme emphasis which fall on the regular morpheme as in the sentence, 'Is he going to come?' The entire 'Item and Arrangement Model' views language as an organization of structural system in the form of a mosaic, and attempt is made to discover new and
significant features and elements within such morphological system.

8.4.0. Item and Process Model; P. H. Mathews: The third model of grammatical analysis is known as 'Item and Process Model' which has gained foothold within the transformational generative grammar (P. H. Mathews. 1974: 116). Mathews provides a comprehensive and lucid account of the post-Chomskyan views on the morphology of language. 'Morphological processes' have come to obtain the central place in the new approach. In the place of the static morphemic model of the structuralist school as observed above, greater stress is put on the operational aspects of morphology. It can be said that the traditional model and the morphemic model is replaced by the process model.

8.4.1. Morphological Processes:

The process model includes processes of the following kind to describe aspects of morphology: 1. affixation, [2. prefixation, 3. Infixation and 4. Suffixation], 5. reduplication, 6. modification, 7. vowel change, 8. suppletion, 9. subtraction and sub-phonemic affixation.

It may be noted that Jespersen took very special care to emphasize the process aspect of these morphemes within the scope his historical perspective at a time where the morphemic model was gaining foothold.

8.4.2. Formal Rules of the Model: The first major division of morphological processes is between 'affixation' which consists of the operations of prefixation, infixation and
suffixation, and all the rest. The lexical structure of the
word 'regeneration' which is explained through the process
model will have the following shape:

\{re\} \; + \; \{generate\} \; \rightarrow \; regenerate.

\{regenerate\} \; + \; \{-tion\} \; \rightarrow \; regeneration

\{X\} \; + \; \{X\} \; \rightarrow \; regenerate

\{X\} \; + \; \{X\} \; \rightarrow \; regeneration

8.4.3. Reduplication and Modification: The process of
reduplication in a word like 'tintinnabulation' can be
represented schematically as follows:

\{tintinnabulation\} \; \rightarrow \; \{tin\} \; + \; \{tinnabulation\}

\{X\} \; \rightarrow \; \{X\} \; + \; \{X\}

The process of modification in 'sink \rightarrow sank' as an instance
of vowel change may be represented as:

\{sink\} \; \rightarrow \; \{sank\} : /i \rightarrow se/

8.4.4. Process Morphemes: \{X\} \; \rightarrow \; \{X\} is a general
operation which will include all the cases of voewel or
constant changes or both whether medial or final as in
'man \rightarrow men' and 'send \rightarrow sent'. The Item and Process
model has gained popularity with the generative grammarians
and it has got rid of much of the cumbersome and hair-split-
ting details of morphological description developed by the
structuralists. A generative grammar as a set of formal
rules which generate the sentences of a language and assign to them specific structural descriptions can very well take care of morphological processes as part of the generative grammatical description. Transformational generative grammar, all the same, do not view morphology as a level distinct from syntax. With a view to giving shape to descriptions which are adequate and formal, the 'formative' of a sentence in the generative grammar, as morphemes, are represented together with what may be called 'process morphemes' as sets of rules. The past form of sing i.e., sang is assigned the representation of

\[
\text{Sang} : \text{SING} + \text{PAST}
\]

\[
\left[ \left[ \text{vowel change} \right] \right] + P 
\]

The plural 'men' will have the representation of

\[
\text{Men} : \text{MAN} + \text{PLURAL}
\]

\[
\left[ \left[ \text{vowel change} \right] \right] + P_1 
\]

8.4.5. Appraisal: it is interesting to note that every one of the models presented above including the one taken up transformational generativists has limitations of its own. Each can only be described as attempts to provide a description of the morphological aspect of grammar in a more formalized and systematic manner than what came earlier. The trends which have been examined and their inconclusive nature
show that enquiry into the morphology of language have still a long way to go before linguists will be in a position to speak of a comprehensive, objective and adequate theory of morphology incorporating maximum possible components which will be of universal nature. The three models of grammatical analysis in spite of significant differences in approach show the same fundamental components and line of analysis. The traditional categories which are often rejected as inadequate and prescriptive are still invoked as the fundamentals on which new trends stand. Model 3 is based on the theory of morphemes developed within the scope of Model 2 which is in turn developed on the shoulders of the traditional categories which form the content of Model 1.