CHAPTER 1

SCOPE OF THE INVESTIGATION
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1.1.1: Introduction:

Language is a structured system of components and needs to be viewed as a complex phenomenon. Morphology occupies an important place in the structure of language. During Jesperson's time the study of morphology was limited to the 'Shape of words.' The term 'morphology,' from the Greek 'morphe' meaning 'shape' was liberally used at the time. The distinction between morphology and Syntax was not very clearly drawn until the early half of the twentieth century. It was in the 19th century that the term morphology appeared in linguistic treatises to cover both 'inflection' and 'derivation.'

The knowledge that inflectional and derivational processes had much in common led the linguists to the concepts of morpheme and morphology. Accordingly morphology came to deal with the internal structure of words, and syntax with the rules governing the ordering of words in sentences. The different forms which words assume as they get into the structure of a sentence also come under the scope of morphology. This was what morphology meant in the context of traditional grammar.

For Bloomfield morphology included constructions of words and parts of words while syntax includes constructions of phrases.\(^1\) Harris defined morpheme boundaries not on the basis of considerations interior to the utterance, but on comparison with other utterances on minimal difference.\(^2\) Hockett, following Bloomfield's definition, describes a morpheme as a linguistic form which bears no partial phonetic-semantic resemblance to any other form; it is a combination of phonemes with a meaning.\(^3\)

1.1.2. Directions in the understanding of word-forms:

The present investigation provides directions in the analysis of word-forms on the grounds of Jespersen's theory of morphology. Word Structure analysis was almost the essence of all grammatical studies down the ages. It was the core of language study which has been an age-old discipline. A fundamental way of understanding a language is to study its words carefully. Whether in speech or in writing we find that words are understood as the units to convey some essential meaning. The common man perceives the words as the smallest units of the language. Traditionally scholars have been fascinated with the history of words not so much with the structure of words themselves. For most traditional grammarians words formed the basic unit of language. One of the most fundamental questions usually asked is whether grammarians

\(^1\) Bloomfield, 1933 : 207.
\(^2\) Zellig Harris, 1951 i 161.
\(^3\) Hockett, 1942 : 85.
should first of all identify words and then account for their structure, or account for the structure in terms of the permissible ordering of constituent words. Historical studies concentrated on etymological aspects, word-changes, new coinages, loan words and on the semantic changes of words. This has remained for long a fascinating area for scholars which has been taken over by present-day scholars in the area of lexicography.

The present study highlights Jesperson's contributions to the understanding of the manifold aspects of the morphology of language, and thus provides directions to the solution of some fundamental problems related to the structure of word-forms and the classes and categories under which aspects of morphology can be grouped. The study enquires into the nature of (a) inflectional morphology and (b) derivational morphology, and into the intricate paradigmatic link that exists between forms among themselves as members of the same paradigm as well as the relation between members of different paradigmatic classes.

1.1.3. Directions in the Study of Phonology:

The study of morphology provides the necessary directions to the understanding of problems related to phonology. Every natural language has a phonological structure which come to be expressed in the orthography of the language. Language is a

phenomenon which in the last analysis consists of the phonological units which we call phonemes. While phonemes constitute the smallest definable unit of sound, the letters of the alphabet the smallest unit of written language. As phonemic units go into the making of larger units which bear meanings, there are a large number of problems related to the combination of phonemes into morphemes.

A comprehensive study of phonology therefore is not possible so long as the phonemes are regarded as isolated entities that can be studied separately. A study of phonology assumes the status of what has come to be called morphophonology. This area takes care of those specific features of sounds which determine the combination of morphemic units. The form /haus/ loses its /s/ and assumes /z/ as it takes up the plural suffix /iz/ and becomes /hauziz/.

Jesperson's theory of morphology concentrates on problems arising out of such morphophonological combinations and features as seen above. A study of Jesperson's morphology as envisaged in the present investigation can be of great help in understanding the problems related to the area of morphophonology. Since languages share in the total universal stock of phonemic units, the phonological combinations that are realised in every language is most specific. The morphological structure of Indo-European language differs considerably from that of, say, the Dravidian or Semitic languages. Morphology with parallel semantic constituents is capable thus of providing directions in highlighting the sound combinations of languages. The study of Jesperson's morphology provides scope in this direction.
1.1.4. Directions in the Understanding of Syntactic Features:

The present study provides, again, directions to the understanding of the syntactic features of language, just as morphology highlights solutions to the problems of phonological combinations, it is capable of extending itself to the solutions of problems related to the study of syntax. The structure of the morphology of English expresses itself in the paradigmatic relations realised in its morphology while the structure of syntax expresses itself in the Syntagmatic relations realised in the grammar of English. It is impossible to establish a borderline between the two areas of grammar; morphology and syntax, and say where exactly morphology ends and syntax begins. For this reason a level of morpho-syntactics is proposed to account for the specifications of grammar which cannot be assigned clearly either to morphology or syntax. The best example to illustrate the area of morpho-syntactics is the case system in English and other languages. Especially in English the case-system is so much linked with the syntactic functions that a distinction drawn above is almost levelled. A transition from the 'inflectional system' of the classical languages like Latin and Sanskrit to the Case Grammar itself shows how significant the cases are as a morpho-syntactic unit.

Jespersen recognises that the 'external structure' of individual words which constitutes part of the morphological structure of words enter into and influence the construction of sentences. The Plural and the Third Person Suffix - S,

the Past Tense Suffix - \textit{\text{-ed'}}, the Gerund Suffix - \textit{\text{-ing'} etc., in all their different phonological realisations are recognised by Jespersen as the material for investigation into the structure of morphology while functionally these are syntactic features by nature. The structure, formation and distribution of these formatives are an area which come under morphology while the concord which controls those phenomena belongs to syntax. Jespersen's works throw considerable light into this phenomenon and help us understand the implications of morphosyntactics.

1.1.5. \textbf{Directions in the Study of Suprasegmental Features}:

The study of morphology provides directions, again, in our understanding of the characteristic functioning of the suprasegmental features. An understanding of the morphological structure of language brings us a long way ahead in our understanding of the suprasegmental features. The suprasegmental features are amorphous by nature as is evident from the theoretical treatment this area received in the hands of the structuralist linguists. The question has always been whether the suprasegmental features belong to the area of phonology or morphology.

The structuralists spoke of \textit{suprasegmental phonemes} on the one hand and suprasegmental morphemes on the other. This ambiguity lies at the core of the suprasegmentals. The main suprasegmental elements are (i) the stress, (ii) the pitch levels,
(iii) the tonal contours, and (iv) the features of transition. These have been receiving considerable attention because of their unique place in spoken language. These are distinguished from segmental phonemes with their characteristic distinctive features which demarcate one phoneme from another. As such these are not definable as the segmental phonemes are. On the other hand the suprasegmental features are some of the most powerful elements in the structure of a sentence. These features carry differences of meaning. Differences in stress, intonation and juncture alone bring meaning differences respectively in words and sentences. The stress difference in 'suspect vs su'pect or 'conduct vs con'duct, or differences in the tonic features in the sentences 'Are you a thief?' vs 'Are you a thief?' etc., are instances where the suprasegmental features have significant roles to play.

As the suprasegmentals are primarily sound elements they come under the scope of phonology and are known as 'suprasegmental phonemes.' On the other hand, as these features are capable of introducing differences in meanings they are referred to as 'suprasegmental morphemes.' Jespersen attempted to show that a study of the aspects of morphology comes to our aid in understanding the suprasegmental features much better. The present study highlights the problems related to the nature of the suprasegmental features.

1.1.6. Directions in the Study of Meanings:

Unlike the traditional position meanings are now understood as very complex entities. A unit of meaning can be
represented by the smallest possible morpheme, and a sentence or a group of sentences do represent a unit of meaning. The meaning unit 'food' though consists only of three phonemes /fuːd/ and four letters of the English alphabet is a complex of numerous 'semantic specificities' a statement of which will differ considerably from community to community. The cultural element 'food' generates the meaning 'food' with all the varied semantic specifications and this further generates the linguistic form 'food' in terms of a definite combination of sound units in speech and letters of the alphabet in writing.

In spite of all the tall claims that have been made about semantics we are still at the level of the lexical item only. Semantic studies have taken most unexpected turns during the last one decade with most significant contributions made by authorities in semantics like George Lakoff\(^1\), James McCawley\(^2\) and so on. Semantic studies have taken the most rigorous directions to avoid its traditional links with disciplines like philosophy and psychology. In spite of all this advancement often the work comes down to various levels of lexical analysis without attempting in any serious way to explain the ordinary native Speaker's intuition of the sound-meaning relationship of language.

The present study of the morphological theory of Jespersen points out how a study of morphology can in some way provide directions to the study of semantics. Elements lower than the

1. Lakoff. 1971
2. McCawley. 1968
word and units higher than the word are centred on the word as a central unit of any language. This is unquestionable. Again, the combinations of words into idioms and phrases, sentences and higher discourses of all kinds often introduce change in the meanings of the words which enter into the structure of these higher units of expression. All the same it is a fact that the meanings of all higher units of language are determined by the meanings of the individual words which enter into such combinations. And as such an understanding of the features of morphology is central to the study of semantics.

1.2.1. Impact of Historicity on Morphology:

The present study highlights the historicity of language and the way history i.e., the vertical dimension of language change has a definite say in the accounting of the morphology of language. The earliest systematic study of language is traced back to the Greeks. From the time of the Greek Philosophers onwards a keen interest in the historical change of the word-forms and meanings was present. Language change is almost identical with the history of language. The history of a language is a history of change in the three elements: the formal, functional and the semantic. Again the history of language is embedded so to say in the forms of words, both spoken and written. It is in the context of the historical and comparative linguistic studies of the 18th and 19th centuries that the role of morphology began to emerge most emphatically.
The role of the history of language becomes clearly visible in Jespersen's works. He nurtured a deep faith in the historical evolution of language and drew inspiration in his study of language, especially morphology from history. Jespersen's 'Growth and Structure of English Language' bears testimony to the place he assigned to the history of language in his search for an understanding of the nature of language.

1.2.2. Central Role of Morphology in Linguistics:

The present study highlights the central role morphology plays in the study of language. As we have seen the study of morphology provides directions to our understanding of phonology, syntax and semantics in a number of ways. It is therefore agreed that in many ways morphology is central to the study of language as a whole. Jespersen attaches greats importance to morphology in the study of language. He makes this clear in his introduction to Morphology.

Morphology is regarded as the meeting place between phonology and syntax, so far as the formal aspects of language is concerned; and it is regarded as the meeting place of sounds and meanings from the view point of both function and meaning. The aspects of 'form, function and meaning' constitute the essence of Jespersen's theory of language in general and of morphology in particular. The foundation of Jespersen's theory of morphology is the interaction of these three fundamental

I. Jespersen . 1938 b.
constituents of language. These constituents meet at the level of morphology.

1.2.3. **Productive Nature of Language:**

The present study provides directions and highlights our understanding of the productive nature of language. One thing stands out most evidently in all of Jespersen's works: the productive nature of language. Language is a structured system for Jespersen too. He was in a position to identify the structure of language from language as a behavioural system. The former is the actual objectum formale of linguistics while the latter is the concern of psychology and more specifically of psycholinguistics. From this viewpoint Jespersen's system is as much 'Structural linguistics' as Saussure's or Bloomfield's theories are. But there is something more in Jespersen that we do not find in several others i.e., Jespersen equally emphasises the functional aspects of language as do the later transformational generativists.

In Jespersen we find a much greater concern than is usually understood to achieve a balance between the structural and functional aspects of language. This synthesis is most expressed in Jespersen's emphasis on language as a productive phenomenon as well as a living and evolving thing in the cognitive realm of the speech community. Just as language change gets mostly embedded in the morphological structure of
language the productivity of human language too is most evident in morphology. An investigation into Jespersen's morphology highlights this significant aspect of language.

1.2.4. Synchronic Study of Word-forms:

A synchronic study of word-forms is concerned about the nature and structure of the formal aspects of the lexical items of the language as they are available at the time of the description without in any way relating these formal aspects to the past historical development of the forms. A synchronic study is a descriptive approach to the nature and structure of language. It is always the description of the language element as is found at a given time. Most study of the word-forms of the past had been diachronic (historical) studies. It was only recently that grammarians attempted structural, descriptive study of the word-forms of English without drawing inspiration from the historical development of the forms. The first comprehensive synchronic study of morphology was undertaken by the structuralists in the 40's and the 50's.

All the same a purely synchronic approach to the problems of morphology has not been found satisfactory. Jespersen was the first linguist to synthesise the two approaches in the study of morphology having realised this pitfall of the synchronic study. The best illustration of the drawbacks of such a study is available from the structuralists themselves.
How suddenly, in a matter of a few years the morphological analysis of the 40's and 50's is forgotten! For many it has almost become 'a classical study' in linguistics without any relevance to the present-day approaches. Every chapter of Jespersen's Morphology bears witness to Jespersen's concentration on this synthesis. The synchronic analysis as said above takes care of the structural features of word-forms, such as 'oxen' or 'mice' and the linguist looks for more instances of that kind to arrive at a regularity on whose basis a descriptions can be provided. This description is looked upon as an accounting of the structural features of 'oxen' or 'mice'. Jespersen on the other hand undertakes such a description on the one hand and links the structural features of the present form with the phases of historical development or change the form underwent. This approach has been said to provide a level of significance to the description which it is otherwise deprived of.

1.2.5. **Diachronic Study of Language:**

The present study of Jespersen's morphology provides directions in the diachronic study of morphology. The diachronic study of word-forms in general or morphology in particular is concerned with the actual historical background of particular forms. Such a study traces the historical changes that have occurred, undertakes a description of the structure of the forms during the various phases of development
and establishes a link among such stages of development in order to lead to the nature of the form as is found at the time of the study. It is therefore synchronic with respect to the description of every given stage but diachronic where a link is established as stages of the past.

Jespersen is found at his best in his diachronic perspectives as he does it in the most documented way drawing upon the authority of a large variety of authors from a variety of disciplines. Again, it is his theory of morphology which benefits most from his historical perspective. In spite of all the drawbacks which need not be over-looked, the detailed and thoroughly documented analysis of the large variety of morphological elements of English is fascinating. A lot of significance is derived from the history of the development of forms in our understanding of the structural specifications of these forms. The transformation the particular form assumes until it reaches the present shape highlights in several ways the structure it has assumed today. In forms such as 'oxen' 'went' etc., any amount of synchronic analysis does not take us any further.

1.2.6. Essential Components of a Theory of Morphology:

The present investigation provides guidelines in our understanding of the essential components of the theory of morphology. This has been stated as one of the aims of the investigation. The theory of morphology within linguistics has had a very chequered history with a variety of approaches
trying to give a final word on the theory. In this development the components that constituted such a theory varied from time to time. The aspects that were part of morphological studies with traditional grammar were discarded by the comparativists and further by the structuralists. The approaches of Henry Sweet\(^1\) on the one hand and Eugene Nida\(^2\) on the other, stood poles apart. But we find both concerned about one and the same aspect of language: morphology.

The present investigation employs Jespersen's works and theory as the foundation and attempts to draw an outline of such a theory of morphology. The ultimate aim of the present research is an understanding of the essential component of the theory of morphology as envisaged and developed by Jespersen as contrasted to contributions by other linguists and grammarians of various periods. It brings together whatever is best in Jespersen's theory of morphology within the framework of a set of parameters employed in the present study as the basic criteria for the appraisal. Each area included above functions as the broad framework within which to undertake the appraisal.

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