

Morphology

What could be the **morphology** of the word '*morphology*'? Well, if you rely on or believe in the *Latin source* or notion of *Latin root* (i.e. a notion that will be explained to you later in the course), you could say that the morphology of "Morphology" is "*morph*"- 'form/shape' and "*ology*"- 'study' or 'branch of knowledge'. So, we can say that "Morphology" is the study of shape/form of words.

Word

A word may be defined either as a sound or a union of complex arrangement of sounds which obeys the syllabic rules of the language and we could get a particular meaning of the unit. Nevertheless, the unit must also have a Grammatical Category and should be able to occur on its own in the language. Let us explain with examples what we mean by the aforementioned definition of the word:

1. **ɑ = आ** → This particular sound in Hindi conveys many things:
 - i. a phoneme: Ex. k-**ɑ**-m = work
 - ii. a bound morpheme : Ex. ləɾkɑ kɑm kəɾ-t-**ɑ** hɛ = Infl for Masc. Gender
Ex. ləɾki kɑm kəɾ-t-**i** hɛ = Infl for Fem. Gender
 - iii. a free morpheme : Ex. ləɾkɑ g^həɾ **ɑ** gəyɑ hɛ = Come (as verb stem)
 - iv. a sentence : Ex. (tu) **ɑ** ! = you come.

2. **ləɾkɑ** is a word and it has a complex arrangement of the sounds. It obeys the syllabic rule of the language. This fact is explained based on the examination of the other possible arrangements of the sounds of the word e.g. * əɾkɑ, ɾəlkɑ, ɑɾlk etc.

3. The word '**ləɾkɑ**' also has a meaning 'boy' in Hindi.

4. In addition, it has a Grammatical Category i.e. 'Noun' and it can occur on its own in the language.

Based on the aforementioned discussion of the word, we can say that a unit which can qualify the test of word should pass thorough the following criteria:

The unit should pass thru:

- a. the phonetic test (i.e. either a sound or combination of sounds)
- b. phonological test (i.e. should follow the syllabic pattern / should be pronounceable)
- c. semantic test (i.e. should have a meaning)
- d. syntactic test (i.e. should have a Grammatical Category and should occur on its own).

It should be mentioned at this stage that a word according to Saussure has two properties i.e. a. form and b. substance. According to Saussure, like all grammatical units, a word is an element of 'form' arbitrarily related to its 'substantial' realization on the phonological or orthographical level of the language. The above Saussurean classification of 'form' and 'substance' as the properties of word must be distinguished from the Aristotelian opposition of these terms. It is difficult to go into the details of the Aristotelian metaphysics with its rich terminology of distinctions such as 'substance', 'matter', 'form', 'essence', 'existence' etc. but it must be kept in mind that the classical grammar rests upon the metaphysical assumptions of a more or less Aristotelian kind. In particular, it presupposes the distinction between the 'essential' and the 'accidental' properties of an object. For instance, it is part of the essence of man to be intelligent and to have two legs; whereas it is accidental quality that some men have red hair and blue eyes while others have different color of hair and eyes. Similarly, a word has certain 'essential' properties which we have highlighted above in levels (a & b), while based on the uses of the word the properties listed in (c & d) might change according to the context of the usage. Therefore, the properties listed in (c & d) are accidental according to Aristotle.