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TRADITIONAL INTERPRETATION OF THE CONCEPT OF MORPHEME IN UZBEK LINGUISTICS

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ABSTRACT

As we explore Uzbek linguists' views on the morpheme, we encounter two distinct perspectives: the traditional interpretation of morpheme study and the views of those who support a more modern approach. This article compares the views of scholars who advocate the traditional perspective on morpheme analysis. The author criticizes the evaluation of morpheme as a component of the word. Consequently, throughout this research, the author presents his personal views on the opinions of other scholars in the field.

KEYWORDS

Morpheme, word structure, intermediate morpheme, lexeme-morpheme, intermediate third, agglutinative languages, affixes.

INTRODUCTION

First and foremost, it is important to note that the concept of morpheme was introduced by Baudouin de Courtenay. He defined morpheme as the smallest morphological unit of a language that cannot be further divided into smaller morphological

components. Baudouin was born in Poland, and thus, his definition of morpheme was shaped by the characteristics of Slavic languages. Naturally, the lexical, morphological, and syntactic features of Slavic languages do not align with those of Uzbek, and as a

result, importing lexical and grammatical principles from these languages into Uzbek has caused significant linguistic problems, which will be discussed further in this study.

METHODOLOGY

The concept of morpheme was introduced into Uzbek linguistics during the Soviet era. Due to the strong influence of the Russian language at that time, many new linguistic concepts, including the notion of morpheme, were imposed upon Uzbek linguistics, as Azim Hojiyev puts it, “by force.” Consequently, various problems arose, which continued until the time of academician Azim Hojiyev, who took it upon himself to address these issues. Until then, the view that a morpheme is the smallest, indivisible meaningful part of a word was widely accepted by almost all scholars. This traditional view of morpheme as a component of the word persisted until Hojiyev’s critical reassessment.

In Uzbek linguistics, the concept of morpheme, along with its distinct characteristics in Slavic languages, entered the field. According to the traditional definition, a morpheme is an indivisible, meaningful part of a word. In the following sections, we will examine the views of scholars who accept this concept of morpheme.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

Ayub Ghulomov noted the need to study morphemics and word formation separately, thereby establishing morphemics as a distinct branch of linguistics. In the 1970s, morphemics began to be studied separately in Uzbek linguistics as well. Ghulomov’s major contribution was recognizing morphemes as both a collection of morphs and a generalized unit, affirming their role as distinct elements in the language system.

O. Usmon and B. Avizov suggested that the basic, indivisible part of a derived word is the “root,” while the remaining part after removing inflectional (form-building) elements is the “stem.” This idea, proposed in 1939, was later challenged by Azim Hojiyev in 2010, and no one had previously raised objections. Since the concepts of root and stem are not typical for Turkic languages, we find Hojiyev’s criticism justified.

Yormat Tojiyev emphasized the distinction between words and morphemes, noting that a root morpheme is not equivalent to a word, and a word is not equivalent to a root morpheme. For instance, in the word “ishchi” (worker), the root morpheme is “ish” (work). When an affix is added, the word “ishchi” is formed, which is not simply a root morpheme. Tojiyev also pointed out that the semantic scope of a root morpheme and a word are never the same. The meaning of a root morpheme is extremely limited, and its meaning is defined within the context of a specific word (in a small context—derived word or form).

In contrast, the meaning of a word is determined within a larger context—such as a sentence.

The view that morphemes are part of a word's structure aligns with this perspective. However, as we will explore later, this is not always the case in Uzbek. Additionally, Tojiyev proposed that morphemes are interconnected and lose their morphemic quality when separated. Although this view may have been accurate at the time, it no longer holds in modern Uzbek linguistics. For example, the morpheme “-lar” (plural suffix) exists only when attached to a word and ceases to exist when separated. This viewpoint, though appropriate for its time, does not fit with contemporary Uzbek morphemic theory.

The scholar also observed that affixes may exhibit phenomena such as homonymy, synonymy, antonymy, and polysemy. However, as we will discuss, this is not characteristic of the Uzbek language, or any other language for that matter. This is because it is illogical to analyze affixes, which do not carry lexical meaning, in the same way as words, which can be grouped into categories based on their meanings.

Thus, we have reviewed Yormat Tojiyev's views on morpheme. Although his ideas are not entirely applicable to contemporary Uzbek linguistics, they represented a forward-thinking approach for his time.

Qalandar Sapayev suggested that affixes are of two types: derivational and inflectional, and he discussed

their ordering within words and compound affixes. These views are considered valid, but his claim that affixes such as “-chil” (in “dardchil”) and “-dak” (in “yugurdak”) should not be separated is somewhat debatable. In our view, these elements have not yet fully merged into the word structure, and considering them as separate morphemes is not an incorrect assumption.

Sapayev also mentioned that, like words, affixes may display phenomena such as homonymy, polysemy, and synonymy. However, these phenomena are not characteristic of agglutinative languages like Turkish. Most linguists view morphemes as the smallest meaningful units, thus supporting the idea that words consist of meaningful parts: roots and affixes. Sapayev's use of terms such as root and stem suggests his acceptance of the influence of Russian linguistics on Uzbek grammar.

Interestingly, Sapayev classifies affixes into three types:

1. Derivational affixes,
2. Inflectional affixes,
3. Word-altering affixes.

This classification suggests that Sapayev views word-altering affixes (syntactic inflectional affixes) as separate from inflectional affixes. However, both lexical and syntactic inflectional affixes share the

common grammatical function of giving words a grammatical meaning, and therefore, they should be grouped together.

CONCLUSION

This article provides specific information on the introduction of morpheme into Uzbek linguistics and its subsequent study. It analyzes and compares the views of linguists on this topic, highlighting their similarities and differences. Together, these perspectives reflect the attitudes toward morpheme in Uzbek linguistics. While adapting foreign linguistic concepts can be beneficial, if they are not appropriately adjusted to the characteristics of the Uzbek language, the problems they introduce will persist.

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