

**On flexibility between form and meaning—
a typology of parts-of-speech systems based on the levels of root, stem and
word**

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Approaches to parts of speech tend to focus on words as holistic units, paying relatively little attention to their internal morphological structure. In my presentation I will attempt to provide a more systematic account of how the morphological levels of root, stem, and word interact with word class. Starting from an input–output model in the sense of Aronoff (1994) for comparing word-class flexibility at each level, I will suggest eight morphological word-class types. These types are established on an empirical basis which particularly includes typological challenges from languages described as omnipredicative, nominalistic and probabilistic in the literature (Classical Nahuatl, Tagalog and Classical Chinese, respectively). While this approach shows that Aronoff's generalization is clearly too strong, it supports Haig's (2006) and Lehmann's (2008) weaker generalization that there is a decrease in flexibility from root > stem > word if one only considers the morphological word-class types which can operate (almost) exhaustively in an individual language. To conclude, I will highlight some challenges from my morphological approach for theories like Functional Discourse Grammar, Radical Construction Grammar, and Distributed Morphology.

References

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