

The typology of morphological length

In many languages, morphological contrasts are expressed by intricate changes in segmental length, e.g. Bavarian [fi:f] (singular, with long vowel) vs. [fi:f:] (plural, with long final consonant) ‘fish(es)’. In this talk, I present an overview of the crosslinguistic spectrum of morphological length operations (lengthening, shortening, length polarity and beyond) with a focus on the linearization properties of length exponents. Based on a typological survey, I will show that the linearization of weight morphology mirrors closely the distribution of segmental affixes with a preference for suffixation vs. prefixation and infixation, indicating that weight morphology is basically a concatenative phenomenon.