Handout 1:

On Morphological Typology:

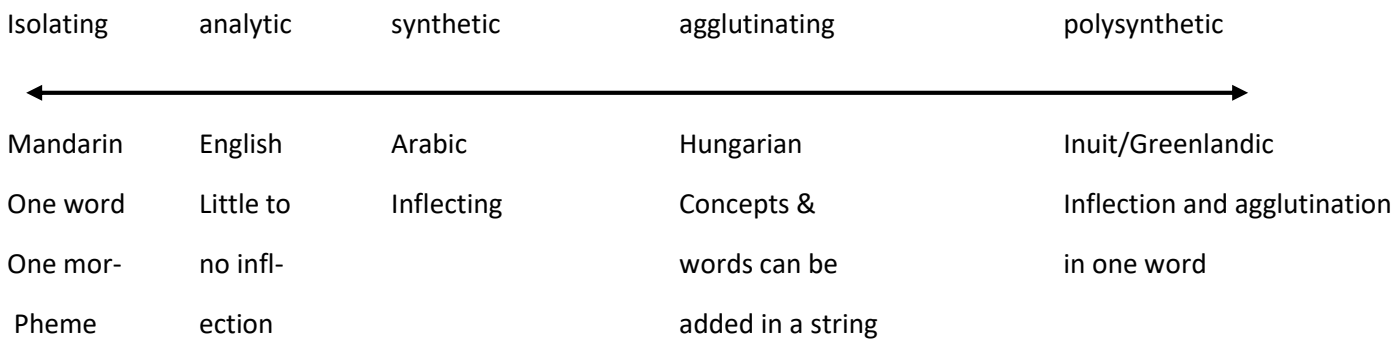
Haspelmath & Sims p. 4-6

Analytic and **synthetic** languages are at the two extremes of the morphological spectrum.

Analytic languages tend to have a **one-to-one** kind of correspondence between words and meaning. This means that analytic languages usually have a word for each morpheme or morphological entry. For example, English uses the morpheme '-s' to express plurality on most nouns, that is, English uses morphology to realize a process of pluralization through the addition of a morpheme '-s' to a singular noun. Another language may not use an added morpheme to pluralize its nouns, but instead use a whole standalone word to express that. Imagine a language where 'gi' means 'book', and 'po gi' means 'books' wherein 'po' is the pluralizing particle. In said language, morphology is being utilized less than English, and such a morphological system is called analytic.

At the other end of the morphological range sit **synthetic** languages, where morphology is highly utilized and a single word may contain many morphemes. Again, consider English 'their books', where the 3rd person plural possession is expressed with a separate word 'their' while plurality is expressed with the morpheme '-s'. However, a language like Arabic already expresses possession on the noun itself: 'kutubun' where 'kutub' is the plural of 'kteb' and '-un' is the 3rd person plural possessive marker, i.e. 'their'. Such a language, and others that utilize morphology even more than Arabic does are called synthetic languages. In these languages, 1 word does not always correspond to 1 morpheme (see analytic languages above), but rather corresponds to 2 or more.

At the very extremes of both ends, we have isolating languages (highly analytic), where each word stands for a morpheme, while polysynthetic languages at the other extreme exhibit agglutination and inflection on one word.



Concatenation and Non-Concatenation:

Hippisley & Stump p. 335, 339-341, 4

A concatenative morphology is one where **morphemes are chained or stringed**, one after another, such that we can **segment these morphemes** and assign **specific meanings** to them.

An example of morphologically complex words, yet are concatenative would be ‘unashamedly’ and ‘disgracefulness’.

Question: What are the constituent morphemes of the above words? Can you break them down and assign meanings to each one of them?

In a concatenative system, words are typically formed by ‘sticking’ morphemes to each other.

Reduplication, for example, is a non-concatenative process that many languages make use of. Reduplication involves the partial or complete repetition of a sound, syllable or word/morpheme.

Question: Can you think of an example of reduplication in English?

Hungarian is a concatenative language, all things considered, a word like ‘hibátlanul’ ‘flawlessly’ can easily be broken down to the morphemes that make it up. However, Hungarian sometimes makes use of reduplication, which is a non-concatenative process. Think of a word like ‘icipici’, the equivalent of which in English is ‘teeny-weeny’ or ‘itsy bitsy’ which are also instantiations of reduplication. Here, ‘ici’ is an altered reduplicated form of ‘pici’, but what does it really mean?

Question: To those who speak Hungarian, is the word ‘tanitani’ ‘to teach’ (the accent on the first i notwithstanding) an instance of reduplication?

What about fully reduplicated form, e.g. Tagalog ‘araw-araw’ ‘every day’ from ‘araw’ ‘day’? Why is this not concatenative?

A non-concatenative system, on the other hand, is a system that does not make extensive use of morphemically-segmentable processes. An example of such a system would be Arabic.

Arabic heavily relies on templates, i.e. non-segmentable melodic variations, in its derived forms.

For example, the equivalent of English’s agentive suffix ‘-er/-or’ as in ‘player’ is not an affix in Arabic, but rather the template: $C_1eC_2iC_3$. In Arabic, these consonants represent what is known as the root, which is an abstraction of what the ‘skeleton’ of the base looks like.

So, a word like ‘writer’, which English forms by suffixing ‘-er’ to the verb ‘write’, is actually ‘ketib’ in Arabic, conforming to the abovementioned template $C_1eC_2iC_3$. This allows us to ‘distill’ the root into its consonants, called root radicals, in which case they are ‘k-t-b’ ‘related to writing’. This root can be projected unto several other templates in order to yield different meanings.

Causative constructions in Arabic are of the template $C_1aC_2C_2aC_3$, and by projecting the root ‘k-t-b’ unto this template, we get ‘kattab’ ‘to make someone write something’.

Let us take another example. The root ‘l-b-s’ ‘related to clothes’ may be projected unto the aforementioned templates:

$C_1eC_2iC_3$ (agentive) = ‘lebis’ ‘wearing/wearer (active participle)’

$C_1aC_2C_2aC_3$ (causative) = ‘labbas’ ‘to make someone wear something OR to clothe someone’

Then, instead of affixation or concatenative processes where separate morphemes can be demarcated and assigned meaning, Arabic makes use of templates, where the melody/consonant alternations carry meaning.