

## <sup>1</sup>Handout # 2 Types of morphemes

### Roots

A root is the irreducible core of a word and absolutely nothing else attached to it.

Example *walk* is a root, *kri* is a root.

Roots which can stand alone are called free morphemes –man, book, pain, cook etc.

### Lexeme

Abstract representation of the word, written in capital letters

The physical word forms	realization of LEXEME
boil, boiled, boiling, boils	BOIL
Good, better	GOOD

### Lexemes vs. function words

Lexemes represent semantic content

- They refer to individuals (john)
- Attributes (big, red)
- describe actions, process and states (hit, write, love)
- expressing relations (in, on)
- describing circumstances such as manner (slowly, kindly)

Another class of morphemes is called function words.

Articles, demonstratives, pronouns and conjunctions

Not all roots are free as in *mit* in permit, remit, commit and admit

### Affixes and affixation

**Affix:** an affix is a morpheme that only occurs when attached to some other morpheme or morphemes such as the root or stem or base.

**Stem:** part of a word that is in existence before any inflectional affixes being attached to it. Work □ worker

**Base:** is a root form which is ready to be attached to any affix.

### Prefix, Suffix, Circumfix and infix

- infixes and circumfixes.

Both are classic challenges to the notion of morpheme. Infixes are segmental strings that do not attach to the front or back of a word.

Tagalog

Root	-um- (infix)
/sulat/	/s-um-ulat/ ‘one who wrote’.
/gradwet/	/gr-um-adwet/ ‘one who graduated’.

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<sup>1</sup> Katmba chapter 3

This seems to be a property of *-um-* rather than *sulat*.

K-t-b → k-i-t-a-b (infix)

Circumfixes are affixes that come in two parts. One attaches to the front of the word and the other to the back. Circumfixes are controversial because it is possible to analyze them as consisting of a prefix and a suffix that apply to a stem simultaneously. One example is Indonesian (bahasa Indonesia)

besar 'big' to form a noun ke-**besar**-an meaning 'bigness, greatness'

### More Morphology

- Novel words and word play
- suffix *-ly* can turn an adjective to an adverb ex: quickly
- it can also turn a noun into an adjective love-ly
- *ly* at the surface level has one form but it has two distinct functions
- prefix *re* does not change the category ; suffix *-ation* does

Rebop : originally a term used by young black jazz musicians , it was one of the non sensical term that the musicians used to throw for their vocal improvisation. then it turned to bop , a name for this particular musical form. In Newyork it's a name of a music shops which sells CDs. Bop means bounce and *re* is an accomplishment suffix. Its just to attract the customers.

Unbreak my heart, uncry these tears. Tony Braxton.

- Productive system: generative

We could easily go on to create more words on these patterns

- Difference between morphology and syntax

When we saw or heard them for the first time, they leapt out at us. It is interesting that novel words do this to us, because novel sentences generally do not.

### Morphological facts

Morphological plurals

\*We eat two melon a day.

Take Bangla/Assamese/Hindi

Native speakers don't notice it. Others find them difficult

But again in English

The evil giant at the top of the beanstalk eats two melons, **three fish**, and four children a day.

**Chinese**, we would not distinguish between claim and claimed in a sentence like this, because the adverb *zuótiān* 'yesterday' is sufficient to indicate past tense:

(8) jī-ntiā-n tamen shuo- ta-men xī-ngqī- wu<sup>ˇ</sup> ké yī<sup>ˇ</sup> xiu- ha<sup>ˇ</sup>o zho- nglóu, ke<sup>ˇ</sup> shì zuótiā-n

today they say they Friday can fix well clock.tower  
but yesterday

ta- men què shuo- zhì sha'ǒ xu- yào yíge yuè

they however say at least need a month

‘Today they claim that they will fix the clock tower by Friday, but yesterday they claimed that it would take at least a month.

### **The pronominal system:**

Who threw a pool ball inside the room, not me

But full answer would be I did not not me did not

### **Number system:**

Dual numbers

English has one, both and all

Some languages have dual marking

### **Introduction to morphological analysis**

Analysis and synthesis

The analytic approach has to do with breaking words down, and it is usually associated with American structuralist linguistics of the first half of the twentieth century.

Synthesis basically says, “I have a lot of little pieces here.

How do I put them together?” This question presupposes that you already know what the pieces are. Analysis must in some way precede synthesis.

Speakers apply morphological analysis when they read or hear a complex word they have never encountered before. In order to understand it, they pull it apart and ask themselves whether they recognize any of the pieces. Speakers use synthesis whenever they create new forms from pre-existing pieces.

### **Analytic principles**

#### **Principle 1**

**Forms with the same meaning and the same sound shape in all their occurrences are instances of the same morpheme.**

Type and token

to look for elements that have the same form and the same meaning

Spanish

buenísimo ‘very good’

(< bueno ‘good’), riquísimo ‘very delicious’ (< rico ‘delicious’), and utilísimo ‘very useful’ (< útil ‘useful’). In each case, the suffix -ísimo contributes the same superlative meaning, and it has the same shape.

#### **Principle 2**

**Forms with the same meaning but different sound shapes may be instances of the same morpheme if their distributions do not overlap.**

#### **Allomorphs**

The regular plural marker in English has several allomorphs – voiceless velar fricative /s/, voiced alveolar fricative /z/, schwa plus voiced

alveolar fricative /z/, syllabic alveolar nasal /ɳ/, and Ø – as shown in (16):

6) seat-/s/

shade-/z/

hedg-/ ez/

ox-/ɳ/

fish-Ø

### **Principle 3**

**Not all morphemes are segmental.**

run ran

speak spoke

eat ate

breath<sub>N</sub> breathe<sub>V</sub>

cloth<sub>N</sub> clothe<sub>V</sub>

house<sub>N</sub> house<sub>V</sub>

### **principle 4**

A morpheme may have zero as one of its allomorphs provided it has a non-zero allomorph.

Fish □ fish-Φ

Frog □ frogs