

### Handout 3 Words<sup>1</sup>

Debate on what units are to be treated as words?

1. All right? Alright? in to or into?

By and large native speakers agree on what is a word and what is not?

2. Amader ekta **khotish** ache!!

#### Exercise

Which words belong to the same lexeme?

Some words and lexemes in pair

#### Word form

Words are actual physical representation of Lexeme.

Words are associated with certain morpho-syntactic properties such as Noun, Adjective, Verb, Tense, Gender, Number

These are called grammatical words

3. I put the ball on the table.
4. I put the ball on yesterday.

**Morphemes:** The smallest units of meaning

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<sup>1</sup> Katamba Chapter II and aronoff chapter 2

Many words are morphologically simple: The, fierce, desk, eat, boot, at cannot be segmented.

Some are morphologically complex like desk-s , tools

Smallest indivisible units of semantic content or grammatical function

A morpheme cannot be divided, either expresses a meaning or perform a single grammatical function like singular and plural.

Un- means a negative prefix uncle and under

Morphemes can be productive or restricted un & dom in kingdom

Exercise

Player, caller, Kindness, goodness, ex wife, ex minister, pre school , miskick , misjudge

- a. Write down the meaning of each morpheme you identify
- b. What is the syntactic category (noun, adjective, verb etc.) of the form which this morpheme attaches to and what is the category of the resulting word?

-er turns something into someone who does X

Player

-ette adds the meaning to smaller in size smaller than Y

Cigarette means smaller than cigar.

## Analyzing words

Problematic

Pre-fer, re-fer, in-fer

Morphemes always can not be identified in terms of meaning but they require formalization in terms of structures.

Morpheme, morphs and allomorphs

The smallest difference in the shape of a word that correlates with the smallest difference in meaning or in the form of a grammatical function .

Morph is the physical form

A recurrent distinct set of sounds or sequence of sounds.

Morphemes may also be distinguished **by tones**.

## Grammatical conditioning

Choice of allomorphs t/d/ed

## Lexical conditioning

-en,  $\Phi$

## Suppletion

Good—

better

## Underlying representations

To bring out a regular distinction between phonological alternations linguists posit an underlying rule or base form from which allomorphs are derived via morphological rules.

Mere listing does not capture eccentric alternations like *good ~ better* and regular alternations like that shown by the negative prefix in- or by the regular -s plural suffix. The latter are general and will normally apply to any form with the relevant phonological properties, unless it is specifically exempted. /s/, /z/ and /-iz/ to virtually any nouns with appropriate sounds.

- Lexically specified condition → go- went, ox-oxen
- A grammatically conditioned rule --- sleep- slep-t [\*slipt]

### Underlying form



### Phonetic representation

Linguists posit a single schema: underlying representation or base form. Apply one or more phonological rules to get the phonetic form from UR. The process is called derivation.

- Ex.. in , before bilabial implausible
- Before velar incongruence
- Before in elsewhere intolerable , before a vowel inactive

UR is [in]... elsewhere and default

Less specified... more specified

Similar phonological rule to similar environment

- English plural morphs apply to English verbs
- Washes... after sibilants /iz/
- After voiced segments and elsewhere read – readz
- After voiceless consonants other than sibilants jump—jumps

Same applies to eng genitives lidz's--- jane's ---jame's

The phenomenon that across morphemes same phonological rule may apply is known as morphophonemics (American linguistics) and morphophonology (European linguistics)

## Nature of the morpheme

Morphemes are not to be confused with syllables

Morphemes are breakable into segments

Syllables are groupings for the purpose of pronunciation.

Word sofa has one two syllables ...cup has one ... camera has three.

But the words books has one syllable but two morphemes.

Morphemes are not mere listings of phonemes. Phonemes themselves have no meaning because the same –er in kinder and water are part of

different morphemes. One is a noun the other is a comparative adjective. Morphs are made up of phonemes.

There might be a one to one correspondence between morph and morpheme such as French word eau /o/ has one morph composed of one phoneme. But say cat has one morpheme and one morph composed of 3 phonemes. Kh, ae,t

Sound and meanings are arbitrary

- one morph three morphemes

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- one morpheme several morphs  
allomorphs
- same string of sounds represent several morphemes  
genitive, tense , plural
- portmanteau morph  
one morph corresponds to several morphemes  
went

Syncretism

Walk walked walked

Read read read

Come came come

But not the irregular ones go-went – gone

One to one correspondence between morph and morpheme is a troublesome

1. I cut the grass. Which tense ? decode by overt adverbials like yesterday or generally.
2. Person personal , but sense—sens-u-al

Reference Katamba