

Morphology

Morphological Description

- The difference between derivational and inflectional morphemes is worth emphasizing. An inflectional morpheme never changes the grammatical category of a word. For example, both *old* and *older* are adjectives. The *-er* inflection here simply creates a different version of the adjective. However, a derivational morpheme can change the grammatical category of a word. The verb *teach* becomes the noun *teacher* if we add the derivational morpheme *-er*. So, the suffix *-er* in English can be inflectional morpheme as part of an adjective and also a distinct derivational morpheme as part of a noun. Just because they look the same (*--er*) doesn't mean they do the same kind of work.
- Whenever there is a derivational suffix and inflectional suffix attached to the same word, they always appear in that order. First the derivational (*--er*) is attached to *teach*, then the inflectional (*--s*) is added to produce *teachers*.
- Armed with all these terms for different types of morphemes, we can now take more sentences of English apart and list all the "elements". For example. In the sentence: The child's wildness shocked the teachers, we can identify eleven morphemes.
- The (**functional**) child (**lexical**) --'s (**inflectional**) wild (**lexical**) --ness (**derivational**) shock (**lexical**) --ed (**inflectional**) the (**functional**) teach (**lexical**) --er (**derivational**) --s (**inflectional**)
- **A useful way to remember all these different types of morphemes is in the following:**
Morphemes: free (either lexical ` child & teach) or functional ` the')
Morphemes: bound (either derivational ` -ness' or inflectional ` -'s, --ed)

Problems in Morphological Description

- The description before conceals a number of outstanding problems in the analysis of English morphology. So far, we have only considered examples of English words in which different morphemes are easily identifiable as separate elements. The inflectional morpheme *-s* is added to *cat* and we get the plural *cats*. What is the inflectional morpheme that makes *sheep* the plural of *sheep*, or *men* the plural of *man*? And if *-al* is the derivational suffix added to the stem *institution* to give us *institutional*, then we can take *-al* off the word *legal* to get the stem *leg*? Unfortunately, the answer is "No".

Morphs and Allomorphs

- One way to treat differences in inflectional morphemes is by proposing variation in morphological realization rules. In order to this, we draw an analogy with some processes already noted in phonology. Just as we treated phones as the actual phonetic realization of phonemes, so we can propose MORPHS as the actual forms used to realize morphemes. For example, the form *cats* consists of two morphs, *cat + --s*, realizing a lexical morpheme and an inflectional morpheme (plural). The form *buses* consists of two morphs (*bus + --es*), realizing a lexical morpheme and an inflectional morpheme (plural). So, there are at least two different morphs (*--s and --es , actually /s/ and /ez/*) used to realize the inflectional morpheme "plural". Just as we noted that there were "allophones" of a particular phonemes, so we can recognize the existence of **ALLOMORPHS** of a particular morpheme. That is, when we find a group of different morphs, all versions of one morpheme, we can use the prefix *allo-* (one of a closely related set) and describe them as allomorphs of the morpheme.
- Take the morpheme "plural". Note that it can be attached to a number of lexical morphemes to produce structures like "*cat + plural*", "*bus + plural*", "*sheep + plural*" and "*man + plural*". In each of these examples, the actual forms of the morphs that result from the morpheme " plural" are different. Yet they are all allomorphs of the one morpheme. So, in addition to */s/ and /ez/*, another allomorph of "plural" in English seems to be a **zero-morph** because the plural form of *sheep* is actually "*sheep + zero*". When we look at "*man + plural*", we have a vowel change in the word as the morph that produces the irregular plural form of *men*.
- There are a number of other morphological processes at work in a language like English, such as those involved in the range of allomorphs for the morpheme "**past tense**". These include the common pattern in "*walk + past tense*" that produces *walked* and also special pattern that takes "*go + past tense*" and produces "**irregular**" past from *went*.

Internal Change

Internal change is a process that substitutes one non-morphemic segment for another.

Sing (present)	sang (past)
Sink (present)	sank (past)
Drive (present)	drove (past)
Foot (singular)	feet (plural)
Goose (singular)	geese (plural)

Verbs such as **sing, sink, and drive** form their past tense by changing the vowel (e.g., from *i* to *a* in the first two examples). The term **ABLAUT** is often used for vowel alternation that mark grammatical contrast in this way. Ablaut can be distinguished from **UMLAUT**, which involves the fronting of a vowel under the influence of a front vowel in the following syllable. Historically, this is what is responsible for the use of **feet** and **geese** as plural forms of **foot** and **goose**.

Stress and Tone Placement

Sometimes, a base can undergo a change in the placement of stress or tone to reflect a change in its category. In English, for example, there are pairs of words such as the following in which the verb has stress on the final syllable while the corresponding noun is stressed on the first syllable.

Impl`ant (verb)	`implant (noun)
imp`ort (verb)	`import (noun)
pres`ent (verb)	pr`esent (noun)
subj`ect (verb)	s`ubject (noun)
Cont`est (verb)	c`ontest (noun)

Compounding

Still another common morphological process in human language involves **COMPOUNDING**, the combination of lexical categories (nouns, adjective, verbs, or prepositions) to create a larger word.

There are countless compounds in English, some of which are the following:

- Street+light (noun+noun)
- Book+case (noun+noun)
- Blue+bird (adjective+noun)
- Happy+hour (adjective+noun)
- High+chair (adjective+noun)
- Swear+word (verb+ noun)
- Scrub+lady (verb+noun)
- Over+load (preposition+noun)
- Out+house (prepostion+noun)
- In+group (preposition+noun)

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