

# Morphemes: Lecture 5



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# Allomorphs



- When handling different forms of a word, we may notice occasional variation in phonemic form.

e.g.    pressure            depth  
          press                deep

- A morpheme has more than one phonemic form.



- The morpheme {-D pt} has three phonemic forms depending on the preceding sound:
  1. /ə d/ after alveolar stops /t/ and /d/.
  2. /t/ after a voiceless consonant.
  3. /d/ after a voiced sound other than /d/
- These phonemic forms are not interchangeable: the occurrence of one of them depends on the phonological environment.



- This pattern of occurrence of related forms, according to which each form occupies its own territory and does not trespass on the domain of another, is called complementary distribution.



- When the related forms of a set, like the three forms of {-D pt} have the same meaning and are in complementary distribution, they are called allomorphs, or positional variants, and belong to the same morpheme.
- So we say that the morpheme {-D pt} has three allomorphs:  
 $\{-D\ pt\} = /- \text{əd}/ \sim /-t/ \sim /-d/$



- It must be emphasized that many morphemes in English has only one allomorph:  
    {boy}    /bɔɪ/



- We must refine our understanding of free and bound morphemes.
- It is really not the morpheme, but the allomorph that is free or bound:
  - {louse} /laws/ as a singular noun
  - /lawz-/ in the adjective lousy

# Conditioning: Phonological and Morphological



- The three allomorphs of {-D pt} are in complementary distribution determined by the phonological environment, in this case: the preceding sound.
- When the phonological environment determines which allomorph is used, we say that the selection of allomorphs is **phonologically conditioned**.





- The morpheme {-S pl} has different allomorphs
  1. /-ən/ in ox-oxen
  2. /Ø/ in sheep-sheep
- The use of these allomorphs is conditioned by the very exact morphemes that require them.
- In such cases, when we describe the environment that requires a certain allomorph only by identifying specific morphemes, we say that the selection of allomorphs is morphologically conditioned.



- The morpheme {-S pl} has different allomorphs:
  - a. Phonologically conditioned
  - b. Morphologically conditioned

Thus,

{-S pl} = /-əz/ ~ /-z/ ~ /-s/    /-ən/    /-ɪz/

- Exercise 8-31

# Replacive Allomorphs



- Most of the allomorphs we have been dealing with so far were additive allomorphs: forming words by adding prefixes and suffixes to bases.
- Another type of allomorphs is replacive.
- We can illustrate the replacive allomorph by going back to the past-tens {-D pt}.

# Replacive allomorphs

cont.,



- {-D pt} has three allomorphs: / -əd ~ -t ~ -d /
- How do u account for forms like sang?
- What happens in sang is that there is a replacement here instead of an additive.

# Replacive allomorphs

cont.,



- The /ɪ/ in sing is replaced by the /æ/ to signal the past tense. This is symbolized as follows:

$$/sæŋ/ = /sɪŋ/ + /ɪ > æ/$$

- **The** /ɪ > æ/ is another allomorph of {-D pt}
- It is in complementary distribution with the other allomorphs.



- Replacive allomorphs are sometimes called infixes because they are positioned within a word.
- Exercise 8-32

# Homophones



- Homophones are words that sound alike but differ in meaning:  
air, heir                                      pare, pair, pear
- It is important to remember that words like these are different morphemes.
- The same applies to bound morphemes  
it feels /-z/ good                      those frogs /-z/
- Exercise 8-33

# Phonesthemes



- Phonesthemes are sounds that in themselves express, elicit, or suggest meaning.

- Example:  
to guess the meaning of two Chinese words

Try

ching	heavy
chung	light

- The vowels in these words elicit the meaning.
- These vowels are called phonesthemes.





- English phonesthemes:

- a. /i/
  - b. /ɪ/
- } indicate smallness

peep, squeak, ping, bit



- c. /ə/ expresses the meaning of “undesirable”  
dung , flunk, grudge
- d. /gl-/= light                      glow, gleam
- e. /fl-/= moving light              flame, flash
- f. /sp-/= point                        spot, spire
- g. /sl-/= movement                  slide, slink
- h. Check pg. 116



- It is important to note that phonesthemes do not meet all the conditions that should be present in a morpheme.
- Therefore, they are considered a different linguistic form.
- Exercise 8-34



Thank you..