Morphology I

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Week 4
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LING 20001: Introduction to Linguistics

What is a word?

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- However, we have already seen that some words are complex, e.g. [kɔtɨ] in Polish is [kɔt] 'cat' + [-ɨ] '-s'.
- The study of the structure and form of words is known as **morphology**.

Morphemes

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fighters
/faɪtəɹz/

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Morphemes:

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- There is no meaningful unit /f/, /aɪt/ or /rz/ → not morphemes of English

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- *-er* is a **bound morpheme**. It cannot occur on its own. It requires the presence of another morpheme.

cat	-s	cats
de-	construct	deconstruct
investigate	-ion	investigation
cran-	berry	cranberry

Identifying morphemes: Farsi

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Roots & affixes

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	root	affix
cats	cat	-s
talked	talk	-ed
unreal	real	un-
government	govern	-ment

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- Most words consist of a single **root**.
- However, we have **compounds** in English like *fire-hose* or *sun-flower* (combination of two roots/lexemes).

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- The **circumfix** *ge- -t* attaches to either side of the root (combination of prefix and suffix).

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basa	‘read’	binasa	‘read’
sulat	‘write’	sinulat	‘wrote’

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Both of these involve **infixes** that attach inside a root.

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Are there infixes in English?

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What the rule that determiners where the infix goes? **Stress!**

Reduplication

Identify the plural morpheme in Ilokano:

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[klase]	'class'	[klasklase]	'classes'
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- What exactly is copied? The first CVC (consonant-verb-consonant) sequence of the root.

Non-concatenative morphology

What is the right segmentation in Arabic?

katab	'wrote'
kattab	'caused to write'
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	'cause to V' (causative)
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- This is an example of **templatic morphology** (also known as **root and pattern morphology**)

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[bok]	'You are throwing'	nothing

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Vater	'father'	*Väter*	'fathers'
Feld	'field'	*Felder*	'fields'
Geld	'money	*Gelder*	'monies'
Bad	'bath'	*Bäder*	'baths'
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The plural for bath involves two kinds of plural marking (¨ and -*er*)!

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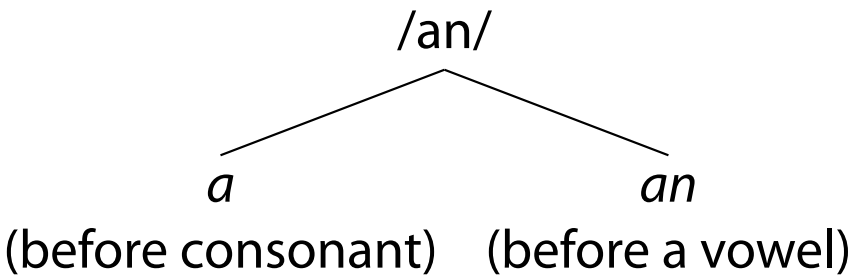

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ton	'money'	*ton-ul*	'money'	(accusative)
chayk	'book'	*chayk-ul*	'book'	(accusative)
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What about the form of conjunction 'and'?

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Can we derive both kinds of allomorphy with phonological rules?

Allomorphy

smart smarter smartest

Allomorphy

smart smart-er smart-est

Allomorphy

smart	smart-er	smart-est
good	better	best

Allomorphy

smart	smart-er	smart-est
good	bett-er	be-st

Allomorphy

smart	smart-er	smart-est	
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mlady	mladší	nejmladší	(Czech)
‘young’	‘younger’	‘youngest’	

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Is this a case of phonologically-conditioned allomorphy?

No, this is **grammatically-conditioned allomorphy** – 'good' has the bound form *bett-* in the comparative and *be-* in the superlative.