

Morphology: Basic Terms and Concepts

Intro To Lx
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Introduction

- ◆ Words can be chopped into smaller pieces.
- ◆ At the morphological level, words may consist of more than one unit.

Morphology: definition

- ◆ *Morphology is the study of form or forms.*
 - In biology *morphology refers to the study of the form and structure of organisms/*
 - In geology it refers to the study of the configuration and evolution of land forms.

Morphology: definition

- ◆ In linguistics *morphology* refers to
 - **the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed.**

Morphemes

- ◆ Morphemes are the *ultimate elements of morphological analysis*; they are, so to speak, morphological atoms.

Morphemes

- ◆ **Morphemes**, the morphological building blocks of words, are defined as the **minimal linguistic units with a lexical or a grammatical meaning**.
 - For instance, the noun *buyer* consists of two morphemes, {*buy*} + {-*er*}.

Morphemes

- ◆ Words can be composed of one or more morphemes: **monomorphemic (a)** vs **polymorphemic (b & c)** words

a.	Content	1 word	1 morpheme
b.	Dis+content	1 word	2 morphemes
c.	Dis+content+ed+ness	1 word	4 morphemes

Allomorphs

- ♦ **Allomorph** is a particular phonological form of a morpheme.
- ♦ An allomorph is **one of the possible shapes** that a morpheme can have depending on the context.
 - The English prefixes *im-* and *in-* in “impossible” and “incorrect”, respectively are two allomorphs of the prefix *in-*.



CLASSIFICATION OF MORPHEMES

Types of morphemes

Some morphemes are independent (**Free**) in the language and others are not (**Bound**) .

Bound vs Free

- ◆ **A free morpheme** can appear as a word by itself.
 - house (house-s), walk (walk-ed), of, the, or
- ◆ **Bound morpheme** : cannot function as a word on its own; it combines with other morphemes to create words.
 - -s (dog-s), -ly (quick-ly), -ed (walk-ed);
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Stem

- ♦ *A stem is a base morpheme to which another morphological piece is attached.*
- ♦ The stem can be **simplex (simple)**, made up of **only one part**, or **complex**, itself made up of more than one piece.
 - *In re- consider -ation 'reconsider' is the stem.*

Root

- ◆ A **root**, like a stem, constitutes the **core of the word to which** other pieces attach.
- ◆ If the stem is simplex it is called **root**.



Disagreement

Disagree (**stem**)

Agree (**root**)

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- ◆ Root = Stem – affix
 - ◆ Stem = Root (+ affix)

Problem Morphemes

- ♦ **Zero morphemes – function with no form**
(*a cook / to cook*), (*content*_{adj} / *content*_N)
- ♦ **Empty morpheme – form with no meaning:**
 - re|**ceive**, per|**ceive**, con|**ceive**, de|**ceive**,
 - per|**mit**, sub|**mit**, trans|**mit**, ad|**mit**
 - , straw|**berry** goose|**berry** cran|**berry**