

# Introduction to Linguistics

## Morphology I: Morphemes & Allomorphs

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**1** Recap: Suprasegmental Phonology

**2** Rhythm and Stress

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**4** Morphemes

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## Phonotactics:

Study of the restrictions on permissible syllables in a language.

Example: English

**No /ŋ/ in onset** \*ŋam \*ŋujen ...

**No plosives n, m in onset** \*knet \*bmæp ...

**CCC must begin with /s/** \*prsep \*ntrep

# Excursion: Phonotactics around the world

Recap: Suprasegmental Phonology   Rhythm and Stress   The Word   Morphemes   Allomorphs

## Phonotactics in Hawaiian:

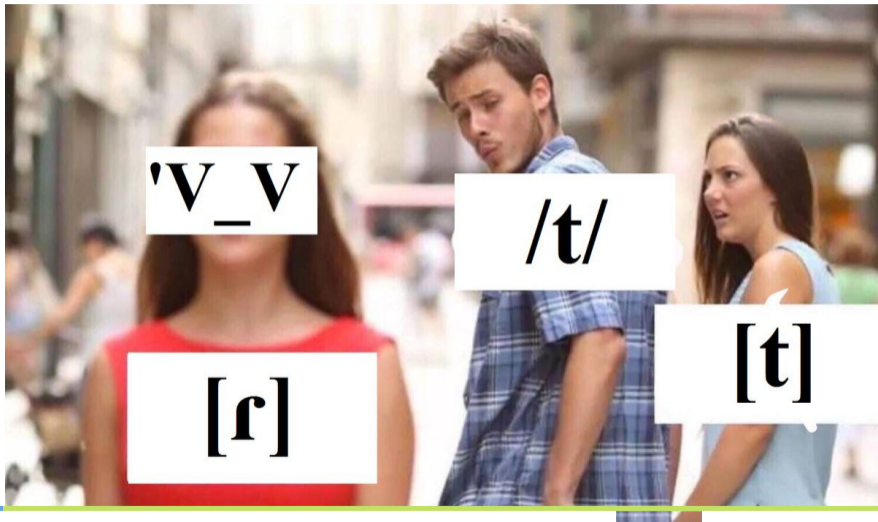
<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=0h-gbel0AFQ>

## Phonotactics in Japanese:

Only two syllable types  
CV or CVC<sub>NASAL</sub>

English loans are integrated  
e.g. *girlfriend* — *garufurendo*





## In English ...

### Stress

Variable stress

Root-initial stress in Old English.

French, Latin and Greek have added a lot of vocabulary with irregular stress patterns.

### Rhythm

Stress-timed

Stressed syllables separated roughly equally

### Spanish

syllable-timed

syllables separated equally

### Intonation

Discourse functions

e.g. rising intonation in questions

Most East-Asian languages have **lexical tone**

i.e. intonation patterns function phonemically

# Strong and weak forms

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Many function words in English have **stressed** and **unstressed** forms. This is a result of syllable-timed rhythm.

Examples:

**them**   strong form: /ðem/, weak form: /(ð)əm/

**are**   strong form: /ɑ:(r)/, weak form: /ə(r)/

**some**   strong form: /sʌm/, weak form: /səm/

Strong forms typically occur in **stressed position** and at the **beginning** or **end** of an utterance.

**neutral**                    /sʌm əv əm ə strɒŋ/

**stress on are**            /sʌm əv əm ɑ: strɒŋ/

**stress on them**        /sʌm əv ðem ə strɒŋ/

*Grammar is a piano I play by ear. All I know about grammar is its power.*

Joan Didion—journalist & author

## Morphemes and Allomorphs



When linguists speak of grammar,

- ▶ They do **not** refer to spelling or punctuation.
- ▶ Orthography is usually of marginal interest.
- ▶ Think in terms of phonological form!

Compare:

There aren't two different vowels in *key* and *ski*— [ki:] vs. [ski:]

There aren't two different suffixes in *gasses* and *buses*— [gæsi:] vs. [bʌsi:]

## morphology, n.

**Pronunciation:** Brit. /mɔː'fɒlədʒi/ , U.S. /mɔr'fælədʒi/

**Etymology:** < French *morphologie* (1822 in sense [1](#), 1865 in sense [3](#)) < German *Morphologie* (1790 in Goethe in sense [1](#), 1859 in a paper by A. Schleicher in sense [3](#)) < ancient Greek *μorpή* form (see [-morph comb. form](#)) + German *-o-* [-o- connective](#) + *-logie* [-logy comb. form](#).

(...)

3. ***Linguistics.* The structure, form, or variation in form (including formation, change, and inflection) of a word or words in a language; the branch of linguistics that deals with this. [...]**

(OED Online, s.v. *morphology*)

## Orthographic criterion — spaces/hyphens?

*rain forest*  
*long-term*

*raincoat*  
*long term*

## Phonological criterion — one main stress?

*'blackbird*

*'black 'bird*

## Semantic criterion — coherent meaning?

*white wine, white board*

*white flower*

## Morphological criterion — indivisible morphologically?

*truck driver*

*\*trucks drivers, \*trucks driver*

How can we break up words into parts?

## Phonemes

<i>father</i>	/fɑ:ðə/
<i>fathers</i>	/fɑ:ðəz/
<i>fatherly</i>	/fɑ:ðəlɪ/
<i>grandfather</i>	/græn(d)fɑ:ðə/
<i>grandfathers</i>	/græn(d)fɑ:ðəz/

## Syllables

<i>father</i>	/fɑ:.ðə/
<i>fathers</i>	/fɑ:.ðəz/
<i>fatherly</i>	/fɑ:.ðə.lɪ/
<i>grandfather</i>	/græn(d).fɑ:.ðə/
<i>grandfathers</i>	/græn(d).fɑ:.ðəz/

## Morphemes

<i>father</i>	{fɑ:ðə}		
<i>fathers</i>	{fɑ:ðə}	{z}	
<i>fatherly</i>	{fɑ:ðə}	{li}	
<i>grandfather</i>	{græn(d)}	{fɑ:ðə}	
<i>grandfathers</i>	{græn(d)}	{fɑ:ðə}	{z}

## How do the words in (a) differ from those in (b)?

(a) *duck, schizophrenia, walk, green, pen, balcony, mike, beer, geese, wrote*

(b) *horses, rewrite, hay fever, thoughtless, blueish, staircase, walked, microphone*

a. simple (i.e. **monomorphemic**) — e.g. *duck*

b. complex (i.e. **polymorphemic**) — e.g. *ducks, duckling*

# Simple vs complex words

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**Simple words** consist of 1 **root** morpheme  
duck, man, agile ...

**Complex words** consist of 1 **root** morpheme and **affixes** or other root morphemes  
(compunds)  
ducks, men, agility



## How do the morphemes in (a) and (b) differ?

(a) {buy}, {red}, {funny}

(b) {ness}, {ible}, {s}, {un}, {ish}

a. **free** morphemes — e.g. *help* in *helped*

b. **bound** morphemes — e.g. *-s* and *-ling* in *ducks*, *duckling*

## Compare

read-able  
fals-ify  
blue-berry

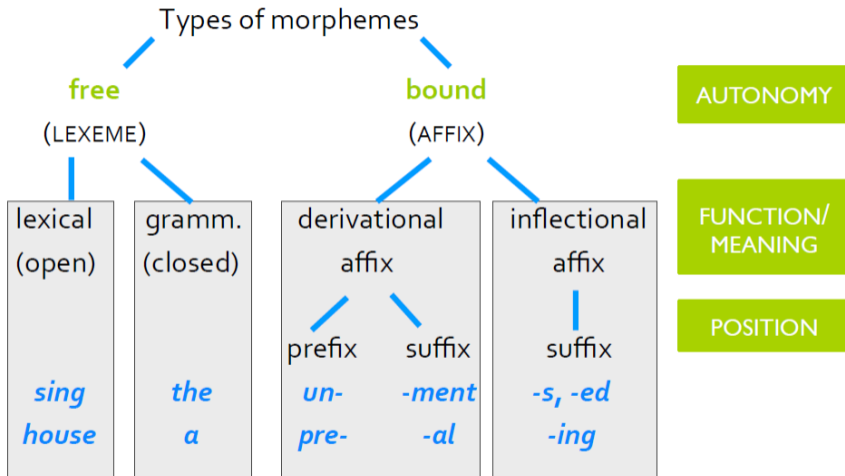
leg-ible  
magn-ify  
cran-berry

**free root**

**bound root**  
(cranberry morphemes)

# Categorization

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Morphemes can have different phonological forms.

**Morphs** and **allomorphs**

Example: the **plural** suffix in English

What is the difference?

- ▶ tree — trees
- ▶ park — parks
- ▶ boss — bosses

The morpheme {z} can have three regular forms:

- /z/ after voiced phonemes
- /s/ after unvoiced phonemes
- /ɪz/ after sibilants

Allomorphs of the plural {z}

## 1 Phonological conditioning

cf. plural

## 2 Morphological conditioning

*agile* — {agile} — /'ædʒaɪl/

*agility* — {agility} — /ə'dʒɪlɪti/

## 3 Lexical conditioning

*help* / *helped* — *helped* + {ed}

*cut* / *cut* — *cut* + {∅}

- 1 Phonological conditioning**  
fully regular and predictable
- 2 Morphological conditioning**  
moderately regular and predictable
- 3 Lexical conditioning**  
completely irregular and unpredictable  
(often etymological/historical)

# Spellings vs. Morphemes

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Different spellings do not (necessarily) indicate a different morph(eme)

**tree – trees**                    /tri:/—/tri:z/

**puppy – puppies**                /pʌpi:/—/pʌpi:z/

**tell – telling**                    /tel/—/telɪŋ/

**compel – compelling**        /kəmpel/—/kəmpelɪŋ/

This is **not** allomorphy (!) but simply spelling conventions.

# References

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