

# Linguistics 288b

## Morphology 2

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## Isolating morphemes

- Match recurring forms with recurring meanings. E.g. Spanish gender and number marking:

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## Spanish gender and number

- amigo 'male friend'
- amiga 'female friend'
- amigos 'male friends'
- amigas 'female friends'
- gato 'male cat'
- gata 'female cat'
- gatos 'male cats'
- gatas 'female cats'

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## Isolating morphemes

- What recurring forms in the Spanish data match the meanings 'friend' and 'cat', as indicated by the English gloss?
  - the root *amig* in Spanish appears every time we have the gloss 'friend' in English. We can conclude that *amig* = 'friend'.
  - the root *gat* in Spanish appears every time we have the gloss 'cat' in English. We can conclude that *gat* = 'cat'.

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## Isolating morphemes

- What recurring form in Spanish means 'masculine gender'?
  - The suffix *-o* in Spanish every time we have the gloss 'male' in English. We can conclude that the suffix *-o* = 'masculine gender'
- Similar reasoning leads to the identification of the suffix *-a* as the indicator of 'feminine gender'.

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## Isolating morphemes

- Finally, what recurring form in Spanish means 'plural'?
  - The inflection *-s* in Spanish appears every time the English gloss indicates a plural reading. We can thus conclude that the suffix *-s* = 'plural'

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## Isolating morphemes

- Be careful when recognizing morphemes:
1. do not expect the order of morphemes in one language to be the same in another language.  
e.g. Malay: kuda itu  
          horse this     = 'this horse'

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## Isolating morphemes

2. do not expect meaning distinctions that are marked in one language to be maintained in another.  
e.g. Swahili: anapenda = 'he/she likes'

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## Isolating morphemes

3. Do not confuse orthographic differences with morphological differences.  
e.g. English: *happy* and *happily*

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## Isolating morphemes

4. Do not assume that a difference in form automatically entails different morphemes. Look out for allomorphy.  
e.g. English: [ən] orange and [ə] book

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## Allomorphy

- The same morpheme may have more than one phonological manifestation
- Different phonological realizations of a morpheme are called **allomorphs**.

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## Allomorphy

[ɪn]sincere  
[ɪm]polite  
[ɪŋ]correct  
[ɪ]licit  
[ɪ]regular  
[ɪm]operable

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## Allomorphy

- Allomorphy is often the result of the interaction between morphology and phonology.
- Combination of morphemes often creates combinations of segments that are subject to phonological processes.

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## Allomorphy

- **English plural**: an illustration of phonologically-conditioned allomorphy.

plural /z/: [kæt s] ↘  
[dag z] → Allomorphs of plural /z/  
[bʌ s əz] ↗

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## English plural

1. [s] after non-strident voiceless segments
  - /kæt + z/ = [kæts]
  - /kæp + z/ = [kæps]
2. [z] after non-strident voiced segments
  - /dag + z/ = [dagz]
  - /bij + z/ = [bijz]
3. [əz] after strident segments
  - /bʌ s + z/ = [bʌ s əz]

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## English plural

- NB: these are not rules but **descriptions** of the environments in which [s], [z] and [əz] are found.
- The description results from the application of **two rules**.
- We will return to this once we learn phonology.

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## Quick homework

- Examine the following words from Michoacan Aztec and divide them into morphemes.

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nokali	my house	mopelo	your dog
nokalimes	my houses	mopelomes	your dogs
mokali	your house	ipelo	his dog
ikali	his house	kalimes	houses
mokwahmili	your cornfield	ikwahmili	his cornfield

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1. What is the morpheme meaning 'house'?
2. What is the morpheme meaning 'cornfield'?
3. How would you say 'his dogs'?
4. If *mahkwa* means 'friend', how would you say 'my friends'?
5. What is the morpheme meaning 'dog'?