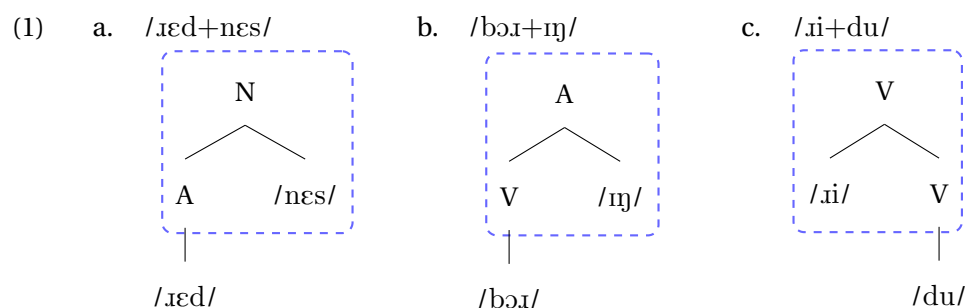# Morphology: Basic concepts & Morphological Rules and Processes

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Basics

- **Morphology**:= (The study of) the rules for forming words (?!) from *morphemes*
- **Morpheme** := any sequence of phones to which meaning is assigned
  (the basic unit)
- We can classify two types of morphemes:
  a. **Free** morphemes := stand-alone-able sequences
     (e.g., *job, most, how*)
  b. **Bound** morphemes := non-stand-alone-able sequences (they need a 'host')
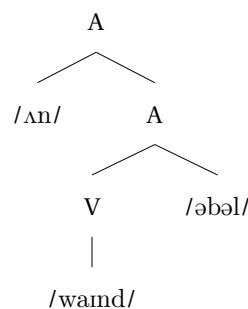   (e.g., *-er, -s, un-*)

We represent the composition of morphemes via ... tree structures.

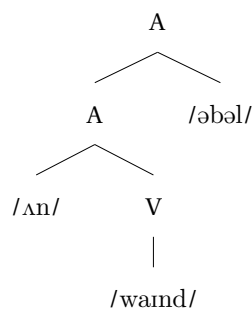(1) a. /ɹɛd+nɛs/   b. /bɔɹ+ɪŋ/   c. /ɹi+du/

Combining more than two morphemes can lead to **morphological ambiguity** (keep in mind, however, that the distribution of affixes is *regular*).

(2) /ʌnwaɪndəbəl/

a. *not windable*   b. *able to be unwound*

Morphemes Composition in Tree Notation

(3) Show how the following words are composed from smaller morphemes by using our 'tree notation'.
  a. 'repayable'
  b. 'uninstaller'
  c. 'unsettling'
  d. 'unfelicitousness'

Morphological Rules and Processes

The rules of word formation: (i) describe general regularities (that means they can apply to nonce words), (ii) are sensitive to the **category** of the input, and (iii) determine the category of the output.

(4) Some word-formnation processes:
  a. **Affixation** := Attachment of a bound morpheme (generally):
     (i) To the *end* of a morpheme **a prefix**
          N → V + /iːɹ/ as in 'player'
     (ii) To the *beginning* of a morpheme **a suffix**
          V → /ɹi/ + V as in 'reinvest'
     (iii) *Inside* a morpheme **an infix**
          'abso-(god)damn-lutely',
          the relevant rule: the infix has to come just before the *syllable* receiving **main stress**
  b. **Reduplication** := Copying (and pasting) a morpheme, or a part of a morpheme.
  c. **Internal Change (Ablaut)** := Altering some phoneme(s) within a morpheme.
     [spik]~[spowk]; [ɹajt]~[ɹowt]
  d. **Compounding** := Forming a *word* (free morpheme) by combining together two other words.
     In English, the category of a compound is 'copied up' from the category of the rightmost word (the **head**) in the compund.

Identifying processes & rules

(5)   Consider the following word pairs of Italian. What kind of word formation process(es) can you find here? State informally the word-formation rule(s).

/tapːeto/	'mat'	/tapːetone/	'big mat'
/tavolo/	'table'	/tavolone/	'big table'
/gatːo/	'cat'	/gatːone/	'big cat'
/kukːjajo/	'spoon'	/kukːjajone/	'big spoon'

(6)   Consider the following word pairs of Armenian. Do the same as before.

/makʰrel/	'to clean'	/makʰrvel/	'to be cleaned'
/grel/	'to write'	/grvel/	'to be written'
/pahel/	'to hold'	/pahvel/	'to be held'
/pac'el/	'to kiss'	/pac'el/	'to be kissed'

(7)   Consider the following word pairs of Hebrew. Do the same as before.

/zakan/	'beard'	/zkankan/	'little beard'
/kelev/	'dog'	/klavlav/	'little dog'
/katom/	'orange'	/ktamtam/	'orangish'
/kaχol/	'blue'	/kχalχal/	'bluish'
/ʃamen/	'fat'	/ʃmanman/	'chubby'
/katan/	'small'	/ktantan/	'tiny'