

Tying Up Loose Ends for the Midterm

Nir Segal – November 7, 2025

Generalizing the RHHR & The Category of Derivational Suffixes

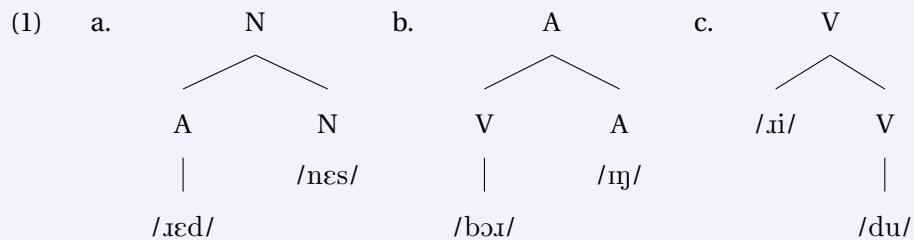
The right hand head rule (RHHR)

The category of a compound* is identical to the category of its head, which is always the rightmost element of the compound.

$$X \rightarrow Y + X$$

We can generalize the RHHR to include *suffixes*: The category of an English word is the category of its right-most morpheme that has a category (i.e., its head)

- For that definition to work, we'll assume that derivational suffixes have a category! (while inflectional suffixes don't)



***A note about compounds:** Every element of a compound must be a word of English

Practice

- (2) For the following words: (i) Show how they are composed from smaller morphemes by using our 'tree notation' (ii) Say what their heads are.
- foolishness
 - unfollows
 - dancers

Morpho-phonology

In the lectures, you analyzed the past tense suffix in English.

[pʰlej]	'play'	[pʰlejd]	'played'
[mab]	'mob'	[mabd]	'mobbed'
[jɛl]	'my house'	[jeld]	'yelled'
[fowld]	'fold'	[fowldid]	'folded'
[bowlt]	'bolt'	[bowltid]	'bolted'
[pʰæs]	'pass'	[pʰæst]	'passed'
[map]	'mop'	[mapt]	'mopped'
[lak]	'lock'	[lakt]	'locked'

We ended up with the following rules: The morpheme /d/ is realized as

- the allomorph [ɪd] after alveolar stops;
- the allomorph [t] after voiceless (non-alveolar-stop) consonants;
- the allomorph [d] elsewhere.

There is a reason why this morpho-phonological process applies in English: it repairs *coda*s that are otherwise phonotactically illicit.

- ↗[majndd]
- ↗[bowltd]
- ↗[mapd]

Cumulative Practice

(3) Please show how our syllabification algorithm would syllabify this made-up word: [p.uuf'ikluiles]

(4) Consider the following data from Russian (Slavic; Russia).

[al ^j t]	'viola'	[p ^j at ^j]	'five'
[tak]	'so'	[d ^j ad ^j ə]	'uncle'
[mat ^j]	'mother'	[m ^j at ^j]	'to crumple'
[da ^j]	'he gave'	[vq ^j]	'your (pl.)'
[tr ^j va]	'grass'	[z ^j at ^j]	'son-in-law'

- a. Do [p^j] and [z^j] contrast in Russian? Why? What does it tell us about those two phones?
- b. Do [a] and [a] contrast in Russian? Why?
- c. If they don't contrast, determine phoneme and provide the conditioning phonetic context for the allophones (form a formal rule as well).

Note: [•^j] is the notation for a **palatalized consonant**.

(5) Consider the following data from Ganda (Bantu; East Africa).

[okugula]	'to buy'	[efirimbi]	'whistle'
[okulexta]	'to bring'	[erina]	'name'
[okutaba:la]	'to attach'	[ettu:ndiro]	'shop'
[le:rwe]	'railway'	[lu:la]	'ruler'
[omulala]	'mad man'	[myere:re]	'only'
[na:lwa:na]	'fought'	[okuli:ro]	'to eat with'
[ebendera]	'banderol'	[safa:li]	'safari'
[tule:ga]	'we tighten'	[olugero]	'story'

- a. Are [l] and [r] allophones of the same phoneme or allophones of different phonemes? For the first option, state what the phoneme is and the conditioning phonetic context for the allophones (form a formal rule as well); for the second option, provide a minimal pair.

(6) The Dutch diminutive has several allomorphs. Determine what they are, and explain their distribution (provide rules, etc.).

[proeim]	'plum'	[proeimpjə]
[lixam]	'body'	[lixa:mpjə]
[bezəm]	'broom'	[be:zəmpjə]
[kɔnmj]	'king'	[ko:nmjkjə]
[fia:rij]	'herring'	[fia:riŋkjə]
[stre:p]	'stripe'	[stre:pjə]
[dif]	'theif'	[difjə]
[alma:nak]	'almanac'	[alma:nakjə]
[ve:rəlt]	'world'	[ve:rəltjə]
[dax]	'day'	[daxjə]
[nø:s]	'nose'	[nø:sjə]
[ba:na:n]	'banana'	[ba:na:nt̪ə]
[kœyl]	'hole'	[kœyl̪ə]
[alta:r]	'altar'	[alta:r̪t̪ə]
[ɛi]	'egg'	[ɛit̪ə]
[kø:]	'cue (for playing billiards)'	[kø:t̪ə]

Now consider the following additional data. How does it affect your previous analysis?

[kam]	'comb'	[kamət̪ə]
[snɔr]	'moustache'	[snɔrət̪ə]
[fio:t̪el]	'hotel'	[fio:t̪elət̪ə]
[fio:rizɔn]	'horizon'	[fio:rizɔnət̪ə]