Morphology
- Ling 105-

Spring 2023

Giuseppina Silvestri
(she/her)

Week 2, Class 2

Roadmap for today's class

1. More on allomorphy
2. Morphology Lab 3
3. Suppletion
(4. Affixation and Compounding)

5. How to formulate research questions

allomorphs in roots

- Also **roots** and **stems** may have different **allomorphs**

For example:

In English verbs such as <sleep>, <keep>, <deal>, <feel>, <mean>

- the root has the long vowel [i:] in the present-tense forms
- the root has an **allomorph** with short [ɛ] in the past-tense forms:

<slept>, <kept>, <dealt>, <felt>, <meant>

historical motivation of allomorphy

- it is evident that in some cases the historical reason for the existence of the morphophonological rule is for the allomorphy is to facilitate pronunciation
- for instance, if the English plural were uniformly [-z], words such as cats and faces would be almost unpronounceable (try to pronounce [kætz] and [feisz]!)

- We will go back to phonological allomorphs later on!

important aspects about allomorphs

- phonological allomorphs represent a single morpheme whose form varies slightly depending upon the phonological context created by combining morphemes

- the underlying and surface representations may be the same, or they may differ as a result of the application of morphophonological rules

- *however*, always remember that the underlying representation is a tool used by linguists, not by speakers
- there are examples where it seems *unlikely* that there is a single underlying representation in the minds of speakers
  - we see this in another type of allomorphy: **suppletion**

important aspects about allomorphs

- there are examples where it seems *unlikely* that there is a single underlying representation in the minds of speakers

- we see this in another type of allomorphy: **suppletion**

Morphology Lab 3: Turkish

- If we looked at the Turkish data, the primary finding was that the morphemes could be arranged in a linear order, which could be expressed as five slots.

- In a long word like *ellerimizde* 'in our hands', all five slots get filled.

- In an ***agglutinating*** language like Turkish, every slot is filled with a morpheme.

➢ By observing the word *ellerimizde* (and/or the other two words on row 36), can you tell me what the order of the morphemes is?

(answer on the next slide: don't look!)

Morphology Lab 3

- If we looked at the Turkish data, the primary finding was that the morphemes could be arranged in a linear order, which could be expressed as five slots. In a long word like *ellerimizde* 'in our hands', all five slots get filled

ellerimizde

Stem	*Plural*	*Possessor Person*	*Possessor Number*	*Case*
el	*-ler*	*-im*	*-iz*	*de*
hand	plural	1st	plur. poss.	locative

Stem		*Plural*	*Possessor Person*		*Possessor Number*	*Case*	
el	'hand'	-ler	-im	1st	-iz plural	∅	nominative
ev	'house'		-in	2nd		-i	accusative
zil	'bell'					-e	dative
						-de	locative

Suppletion: what is it?

- morphemes may also have allomorphs that are not at all similar in pronunciation
  - These are called **suppletive allomorphs**.

- for instance, the English adjective 'good' has the suppletive stem 'bett-' in the comparative degree ('better')

Q: what verb paradigms below display suppletive allomorphs?

bake	*go*	*be*
I bake	I go	I am
we bake	we go	we are
she bakes	she goes	she is
he baked	he went	he was
they baked	they went	they were
have baked	have gone	have been

Suppletion: more examples

Italian

verb ‘go’
present indicative

SG 1	vado	‘I go”
2	vai	‘you go’
3	va	‘s/he/it goes
PL 1	andiamo	‘we go’
2	andate	‘you go’
3	vanno	‘they go’

adjective ‘good’

positive grade ‘**buono**’ (MSG)

comparative grade ‘**migliore**’ (M/F SG)

superlative grade ‘**ottimo**’ (FSG)

Suppletion: more examples

- Spanish verb ***ir*** 'go' has the suppletive stem ***va***- in the present tense:

  - ***vas*** 'you go'
  - ***va*** 's/he goes'
  - ***vamos*** 'we go' etc

- The term **suppletion** is most often used to refer to stem shape
  - ***ir*** and ***va-*** are both verb stems

- some linguists reserve the term for the above use
- other linguists also talk about affixes as being potentially **suppletive** (we'll see an example from Persian)

Suppletion: definition

a kind of allomorphy in which
two allomorphs of the same morpheme
are not similar in pronunciation

there are two subtypes of suppletion:

1. strong suppletion
2. weak suppletion

Is it phonological alternation or suppletion?

- not always easy to decide whether an alternation is phonological or suppletive
- why? because the categories are end points on a continuum of traits, rather than a clear-cut binary distinction
- Some examples are therefore intermediary.

For example:

English *buy/bought*, *catch/caught*, *teach/taught*
[bai]/[bɔ:t] , [kætʃ]/[kɔ:t], [ti:tʃ]/[tɔ:t]

- roots not as radically different as *go/went*
- but are not similar enough to be described by phonological rules

➢ **weak suppletion**

What counts as weak suppletion?

- not always clear
- where to set the limit for what counts as weak suppletion, introduces the criterion of *uniqueness*.
- The alternation of two related forms counts as suppletive if it is the only **one of its kind** in the language (Mel'čuk 1994:367)

For example

English *child-children* count as suppletion in English

run-ran do not not since they are part of a pattern

[Principle of Uniqueness]

underlying form of suppletive form? no, thanks!

- it is theoretically possible to posit an underlying representation from which suppletive allomorphs are derived by rule

- *However*, the underlying representation would need to be very abstract, and the rules no convenient

- There is no evidence that language users make such abstractions, so underlying representations are perhaps best treated as useful metaphors

Allomorphy, weak suppletion, strong suppletion

Type of allomorphy	Description	Example
Phonological allomorphy	Alternation could be described by a rule of pronunciation	English plural [-z], [-s],[-əz]; Russian *zamok/zamk-*
Weak suppletive allomorphy	Allomorphs exhibit some similarity, but this cannot be described by phonological rules	English *buy/bough-*, *catch/caugh-*, etc.
Strong suppletive allomorphy	Allomorphs exhibit no similarity at all	English *good/bett-*

Suppletion in affixes? Persian

Persian plural marking: human nouns *-an*, non-human nouns *-ha*

-an	*mœrd*	'man'	*mœrd-an*	'men'
	geda	'beggar'	*geday-an*	'beggars'
-ha	*gorbe*	'cat'	*gorbe-ha*	'cats'
	ettefaq	'incident'	*ettefaq-ha*	'incidents'

(Mahootian 1997: 190)

- suppletive affixes based on **lexical conditioning**

- lexical conditioning: the choice of a suppletive affixes is dependent on other properties of the base, for instance semantic properties
- lexical conditioning is also involved where the choice of allomorph cannot be derived from any general rule and must be learned individually for each word

allomorphy and its conditioning

Type of conditioning	Description	Example
Phonological conditioning	Choice of allomorphs depends on phonological context	English plural depends on final sound in stem
Morphological conditioning	Choice of allomorphs depends on the morphological context	Spanish *ir*, *va-* or *fu-*, depending on tense
Lexical conditioning	Choice of allomorphs depends on the individual lexical item	English past participle *-en*/*-ed* is unpredictable and depends on individual verbs

Suppletion: definition 2

An **irregularity** in *inflectional* paradigms
created by the use of stems
from *etymologically* different sources in the same paradigm,
e.g.: English *go, went*.
In a purely synchronic sense,
the term is used for paradigms whose forms are so different
that they could *not* be plausibly derived
from one underlying form.

I will see you on next Tuersday (4/18): what can we do in the meanwhile?

- review the lecture slides
- do reading from the textbook
- start working on Assignment 1
- attend sections

STAY SAFE