

## Allomorphs

If different morphs represent the same morpheme, they are grouped together and are called allomorphs of that morpheme. For example, /ɪd/, /d/, and /t/ in *added*, *played* and *stopped* are grouped together as allomorphs of the past tense morpheme in English.

## Phonological conditioning

When the phonological environment determines which allomorph is used, we say that the selection of allomorphs is phonologically conditioned, for example, the labial consonant /m/ occurs in *im-* before a labial consonant (p b m) as in *impossible* and *immovable*, the alveolar consonant /n/ in *in* occurs before alveolar consonants (t d s n) and vowels, e.g. *intangible*, *inactive*. In each case the two consonants end up sharing the same place of articulation. The alveolar consonant /n/ in *in* occurs before the velar consonants (k g), e.g. *incorrect*, *ingratitude*.

## Lexical (Morphological) conditioning

The choice of the allomorph may be lexically conditioned, i.e. use of a particular allomorph may be obligatory if a certain *word* is present. For example, both forms *good/better* represent the lexeme *good* despite the fact that they do not have even a single sound in common. Other examples include *bad/worse*, and the plural allomorphs.

## Exercise 1:

Draw a tree diagram for each of the following:

1. phonologically conditioned allomorphs of the plural morpheme, -s
2. lexically conditioned allomorphs of the plural morpheme, -s
3. phonologically conditioned allomorphs of the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular, -s
4. phonologically conditioned allomorphs of the past tense morpheme, -ed

5. lexically conditioned allomorphs of the past tense morpheme, -ed
6. lexically conditioned allomorphs of the PP morpheme, -en

**Exercise 2:**

Write the base morpheme and its allomorphs for each group. Follow the example below:

	<u>the base morpheme</u>	<u>allomorphs</u>
wide width	{ wide }	/waid/ ~ /wid /
1. broad breadth		
2. wolf wolves		
3. supreme supremacy		
4. fame famous infamy infamous		
5. atom atomic		
6. chaste chastity		
7. correct incorrect correctly incorrectly correctness		
8. divine divinity		
9. Japan Japanese		
10. clear clearly clarity		

**Processes of word formation**

The processes of word formation are *derivation, compounding, acronyms, borrowing, reduplication, conversion, blending, clipping, backformation, and coinage.*

**Derivation**

Derivation is the process of forming new words by combining derivational affixes or bound bases with existing words, e.g. *deplane, ecosystem, and telesales.*

Derivation is by far the most common word-formation process to be found in the production of new English words. It is accomplished by means of a large number of small ‘bits’ of the English language which are generally described as *affixes*. Some familiar examples are the elements *un-*, *mis-*, *pre-*, *-ful*, *-less*, *-ish*, *-ism*, and *-ness* which appear in words like *unhappy*, *misrepresent*, *prejudice*, *joyful*, *careless*, *boyish*, *terrorism* and *sadness*.

### **Affixes**

Some affixes have to be added to the beginning of the word (e.g. *un-*). These are called **prefixes**. Other affixes have to be added to the end of the word (e.g. *-ish*) and are called **suffixes**. All English words formed by this derivational process have either prefixes or suffixes, or both. Thus *mislead* has a prefix, *disrespectful* has both a prefix and a suffix, and *foolishness* has two suffixes.

### **Prefixation**

Prefixes do not generally alter the word-class of the base, e.g. both *literate* and *illiterate* are adjectives. Some prefixes are exception, e.g. *en-*, *em-*. Consider this example, *en-* in endanger changes the word-class of the base into a verb.

### **Suffixation**

Unlike prefixes, suffixes frequently alter the word-class of the base; for example, the adjective *kind*, by the addition of the suffix *-ness*, is changed into an abstract noun *kindness*. The words with which derivational suffixes combine is an arbitrary matter. To make a noun from the verb *adorn* we must add *-ment*, no other suffix will do, whereas the verb *fail* combines only with *-ure* to make a noun, *failure*.

**Note:** Inflectional suffixes, if any, always follow derivational suffixes: *workers*.

### **Infixation**

A definition of an infix might be one or more morphemes which are added inside a word to form another word. Such infixes are said to occur in English since, in colloquial speech, swear words can be inserted into other words, e.g. *I hate this bloody university* can become *I hate this uni-bloody-versity*. In English, such 'infixes' can apparently only be inserted before a stressed syllable.

### **Interfixation**

An interfix is an empty morph inserted between two morphemes in the process of word formation, such as English *-o-*, *-i-*, e.g. *-o-* between *psych* and *-logy* in *psychology*.