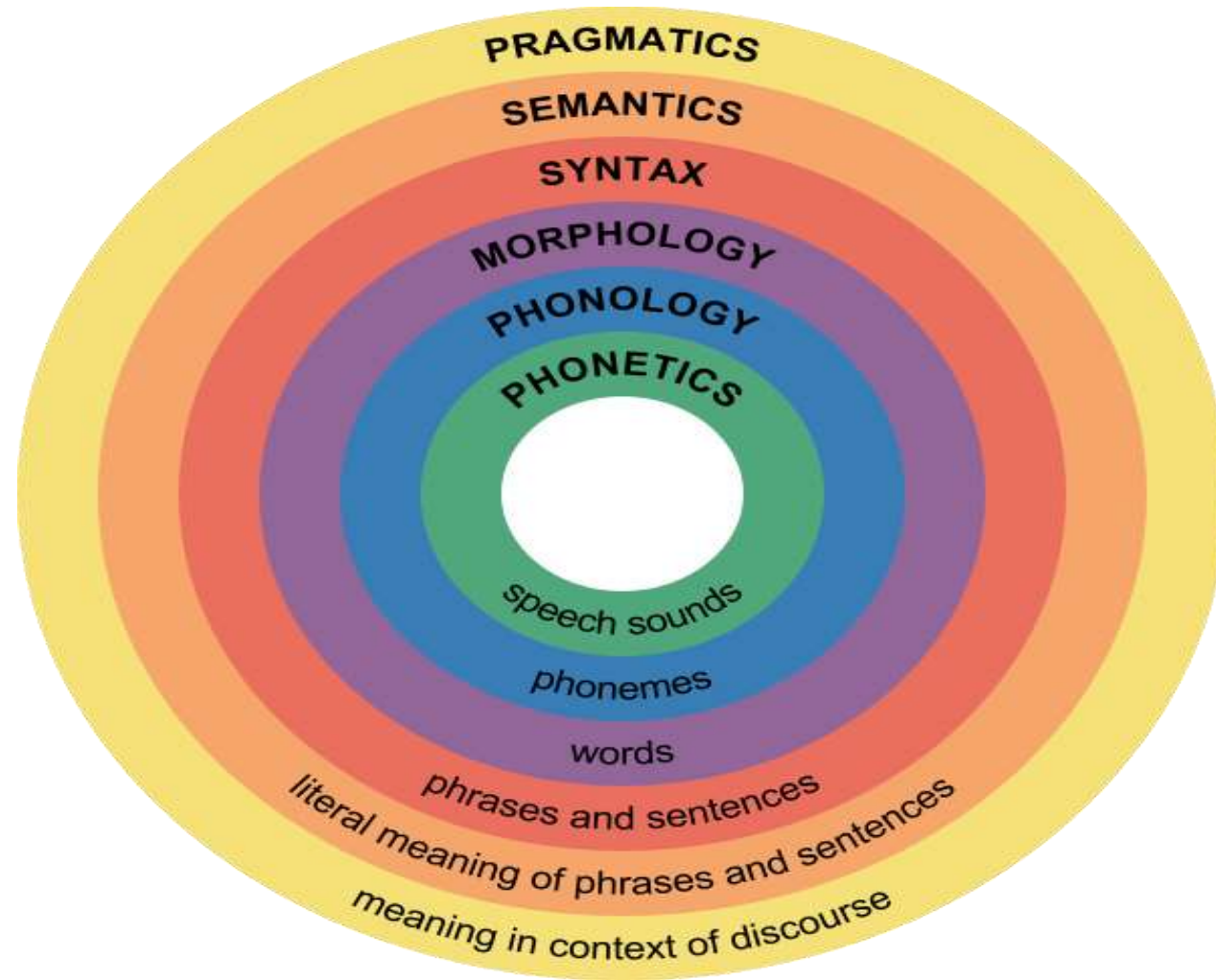# Morphology

Introduction

Dr. Basima Othman

Layers of Linguistic Analysis

Outline

- **Definition of Morpheme**

- **Free and Bound Morphemes**

- **Bases and Affixes**

- **Difficulties in Morphemic Analysis**

Important Terms

Morphology is the study of the internal structure of words, like care, careful, carefully.

Morpheme is smallest meaningful unit in a language.

A minimal meaningful unit of a language that cannot be further divided (e.g. come, -ing, forming incoming).

Morpheme

A morpheme is a short segment of language that meets **three** criteria:

1. It is a word or a part of a word that has meaning.

2. It cannot be divided into smaller meaningful parts without violation of its meaning or without meaningless remainders.

3. It recurs in differing verbal environments with a relatively stable meaning.

An example:
straight

The word **straight** /streit/ in the light of these criteria. **First**, we recognize it as a word and can find it listed as such in any dictionary. **Second**, it cannot be divided without violation of meaning. For example, we can, by dividing straight /stret/, get the smaller meaningful forms of **trait** /treit/, **rate** /reit/, and **ate** /eit/, but the meanings of these violate the meaning of straight. **Furthermore**, when we divide it in these ways we get the meaningless remainders of /s-/, /st-/, and /str-/.

Third, straight recurs with a relatively stable meaning in such environments as **straight**edge, **straight**en, and a straight line. Thus straight meets all of the criteria of a morpheme.

A second example
/-ən/ = make

As a second example let us compare the morpheme **<u>bright</u>** (= light) with the word **<u>brighten</u>** (= make light). In sound the only difference between the two words is the added /-ən/ of brighten , and in meaning the difference is the added sense of "**<u>make</u>**" in brighten . This leads us to conclude that /-ən/ means "make." Thus we see that /-ən/ is a part of a word that has meaning.

We also know that it cannot be divided into smaller meaningful units and that it recurs with a stable meaning in words such as **<u>cheapen</u>** , **<u>darken</u>** , **<u>deepen</u>**, **<u>soften</u>**, and **<u>stiffen</u>** . It is therefore obvious that /-ən/ must be considered a morpheme.

Exercise 8–1

After each word write a number showing how many morphemes it contains.

1. play _____
2. replay _____
3. date _____
4. antedate _____
5. hygiene _____
6. weak _____
7. weaken _____
8. man _____
9. manly _____
10. keep _____

11. keeper _____
12. able _____
13. unable _____
14. miniskirt _____
15. rain _____
16. rainy _____
17. cheap _____
18. cheaply _____
19. cheaper _____
20. cover _____

Exercise 8–2

Write the meaning of the italicized morphemes.

1. *ante*date   _____
2. *re*play   _____
3. man*ly*   _____
4. keep*er*   _____
5. *un*able   _____
6. rain*y*   _____
7. cheap*est*   _____
8. *in*active   _____
9. *im*possible   _____
10. *mal*function (noun)   _____

Free and Bound Morphemes

Morphemes are of two kinds, **free** and bound.

- A **free** morpheme is one that can be uttered alone with meaning, such as the words **straight** or **bright** that we saw earlier.

- A **bound** morpheme, unlike the free, cannot be uttered alone with meaning. It is always annexed to one or more morphemes to form a word. Here are a few examples: **pre**view, play**ed**, act**ive**.
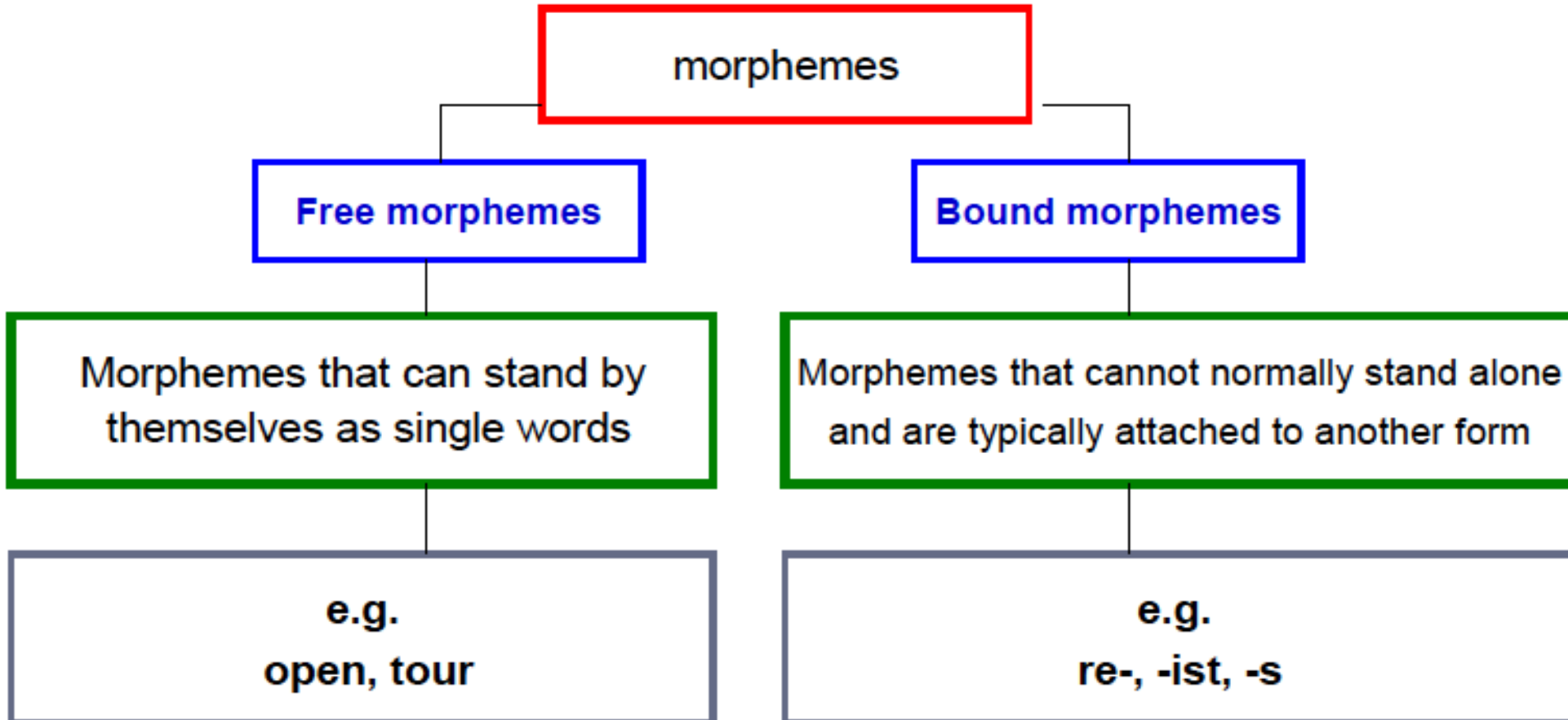
Exercise 8–3

Underline the bound morphemes It is possible for a word to consist entirely of bound morphemes.

1. speak<u>er</u>
2. king<u>dom</u>
3. <u>petro</u>dollar
4. idol<u>ize</u>
5. select<u>ive</u>

6. <u>bio</u>mass
7. <u>inter</u>vene
8. <u>re</u>make
9. dream<u>ed</u>
10. <u>un</u>do

Bound and Free morphemes

```
                          ┌─────────────────────┐
                          │     morphemes       │
                          └─────────────────────┘
              ┌───────────────────────┐   ┌───────────────────────┐
              │    Free morphemes     │   │    Bound morphemes     │
              └───────────────────────┘   └───────────────────────┘
    ┌───────────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
    │ Morphemes that can stand by    │   │ Morphemes that cannot normally stand │
    │ themselves as single words     │   │ alone and are typically attached to  │
    │                                │   │ another form                         │
    └───────────────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────────────────────┘
    ┌───────────────────────────────┐   ┌─────────────────────────────────────┐
    │            e.g.                │   │               e.g.                   │
    │         open, tour             │   │           re-, -ist, -s              │
    └───────────────────────────────┘   └─────────────────────────────────────┘
```

Bases and Affixes

- Another classification of morphemes puts them into two classes: **bases** and **affixes**.

- A **base** morpheme is the part of a word that has the principal meaning, like **deni**al , **lov**able, **annoy**ance, re-**enter**. Bases are very numerous, and most of them in English are free morphemes; but some are **bound**, such as -sent in con**sent**, dis**sent** and as**sent** .

Bound Morphemes = Affixes

Affixation: is the morphological process of adding an established prefix or a suffix to the existing base.

Suffixes attached to the end of another morpheme (such as -**er**/-**or** in words like **open<u>er</u>**, **invent<u>or</u>** and **writ<u>er</u>**).

Prefixes attached to the beginning of another morpheme (such as **<u>re-</u>** in words like **<u>re</u>invent**, **<u>re</u>open** and **<u>re</u>write**).

Bases and Affixes

A word may contain one base and one or more affixes. **<u>Readability</u>**, for example, contains the free base read and the two suffixes -**abil**-_and **-ity**; and **<u>unmistakable</u>** has the free base take and the prefixes **un-** and **mis-**, as well as the suffix -**able**.

Exercise 8–4

Underline the bases in these words.

1. womanly
2. endear
3. failure
4. famous
5. infamous

6. lighten
7. enlighten
8. friendship
9. befriend
10. Bostonian

11. unlikely
12. prewar
13. subway
14. falsify
15. unenlivened

Bound Bases

All the bases in the preceding exercise are free bases. Now we will look at **bound bases**, to which it is sometimes hard to attach a precise meaning.

A good number of bound bases in English come from **Latin** and **Greek**, such as the **-sent-** in **sentiment**, **sentient** , **consent**, **assent**, **dissent**, **resent**. The standard way to pin down the meaning is to search for the meaning common to all the words that contain the **base** (in these words, -sent- means "**feel**"). A base may have more than one phonemic form. In the above list it has these forms:

/senti-/, /sens-/, /-sent/, and /-zent/

Exercise 8–5

Write in the blanks the meaning of the italicized bound bases. To be exact, we should write these words below in phonemic script to show the various forms of the base, but this would involve a complication that will be explained later. So here we must be content to indicate the base in a loose way with spelling.

1. *aud*ience, *aud*ible, *aud*ition, *aud*itory   _____
2. sui*cide*, patri*cide*, matri*cide*, infanti*cide*   _____
3. *or*al, *or*ation, *or*acle, *or*atory   _____
4. *aqua*plane, *aqua*tic, *aqua*rium, *aqua*naut   _____
5. photo*graphy*, xero*graphy*, bio*graphy*, calli*graphy*   _____
6. *corps*, *corpse*, *corpor*ation, *corpor*eal   _____
7. *ten*able, *ten*ant, *ten*ure, *ten*acious   _____
8. *pend*ulum, *pend*ant, sus*pend*ers, im*pend*ing   _____
9. *man*ual, *man*icure, *man*uscript   _____
10. e*ject*, in*ject*, pro*ject*, re*ject*   _____

Bound Bases

This method can be difficult and baffling. An easier way that often works is to look up in your dictionary the word in question, like **consent**, and in the etymology find out the Latin or Greek meaning of the base. Under **consent** you will find that -**sent** means "**feel**" in Latin, and this area of meaning seems to have been retained for the base of all the words in the -sent list.

Also, you will find some of the more common base morphemes listed as separate entries in the dictionary, like phot-, photo- (**light**); xer-, xero- (**dry**); bi-, bio- (**life**); mis-, miso- (**hate**); ge- geo- (**earth**); biblio- (**book**); -meter (**measure**); tele-, tel- (**distant**).

Exercise 8-6

Look up in your desk dictionary the meanings of the bound bases italicized in the words below. Write the meanings of these bound bases in the first column. In the second column write another English word that contains the same base.

1. *geo* graphy _____ _____
2. *bio* logy _____ _____
3. *biblio* phile _____ _____
4. inter*vene* _____ _____
5. com*prehend* _____ _____
6. re*cur* _____ _____
7. in*spect* _____ _____
8. op*pose* _____ _____
9. in*spire* _____ _____
10. *rod*ent _____ _____
11. *port*able _____ _____
12. *rup*ture _____ _____
13. *ann*ual _____ _____
14. *carn*al _____ _____
15. big*amy* _____ _____

Difficulties in Morphemic Analysis

The **first** difficulty is that you have your own individual stock of morphemes just as you have a vocabulary that is peculiarly your own.

An example will make this clear. Tom may think of **automobile** as one morpheme meaning "car," whereas Dick may know the morphemes **auto-** (self) and **mobile** (moving), and recognize them in other such words as **autograph** and **mobilize**.

Dick, on the other hand, may consider **chronometer** to be a single morpheme, a fancy term for "**watch**," but Harry sees in this word two morphemes, **chrono-** (time) and **meter** (measure), which he also finds in **chronology** and **photometer**, and Sadie finds a third morpheme -**er** in it, as in **heater**; thus, **mete** (verb) to measure, + - **er**, one who, or that which.

Difficulties in Morphemic Analysis

The **second** difficulty is that persons may know a given morpheme but differ in the degree to which they are aware of its presence in various words. It is likely, for instance, that most speakers of English know the agentive suffix /-or/ (spelled -er, -or, -ar) meaning "**one who, that which**," and recognize it in countless words such as **singer** and **actor**. But many may only dimly sense this morpheme in **professor** and completely overlook it in **voucher**, **cracker**, and **tumbler**.

Thus, can we say that **sweater** has enough pulse in its -er to be considered a two-morpheme word? This will vary with the awareness of different individuals.

Difficulties in Morphemic Analysis

Morphemes may slowly fade away into **disuse** as the centuries roll by, affecting our view of their morphemehood. For instance, we can be sure that **troublesome**, **burdensome**, **lonesome**, and **cuddlesome** are two-morpheme words consisting of a base morpheme plus the suffixal morpheme -**some**.

Winsome, however, has an obsolete base (Old English **wynn** (pleasure)), so that the word is now monomorphemic.

Between these two extremes are words like **ungainly**. This means of course **not gainly**," but what does **gainly** mean? Certainly it is not in common use. In current dictionaries it is called "**rare**" or "**obsolete**" or "**dialectal**," or is unlabeled. Then should we call **ungainly** a word of one or two or even three morphemes?

Difficulties in Morphemic Analysis

Another problem results from the fact that metaphors die as language changes. Let us take the morpheme **-prehend-** (seize) as an example. In **apprehend** (= to arrest or seize) and **prehensile** it clearly retains its meaning, but in **comprehend** the metaphor (seize mentally) seems to be dead, and the meaning of the word today is merely "**understand**'. Does it then still contain the morpheme –**prehend**?

Another case is seen in **bankrupt** (bench broken). The morpheme bank, in the sense of a bench, may be obsolete, but **-rupt** is alive today in **rupture** and **interrupt**. The original metaphor is dead, however, and the meaning of these two morphemes does not add up at all to the current meaning of **bankrupt**. Is the word then a single morpheme?

Difficulties in Morphemic Analysis

This last matter, **additive** meanings, is a problem in itself. Meaning is very elusive and when morphemes combine in a word, their meanings tend to be unstable and evanescent; they may even disappear altogether. Consider, for example, the morpheme **pose** (place). In '**pose** a question" the meaning is clear, and it is probably retained in **interpose** (place between).

But in **suppose** and **repose** the meaning appears to have evaporated. Between these extremes are words like **compose**, **depose**, **impose**, **propose**, and **transpose** in which the sense of **pose** seems to acquire special nuances in combination Which of all these words, then, may be said to contain the morpheme **pose** (place)? Such are some of the problems in morphemic analysis that have plagued linguists.

Affixes

Affixes
Outline

- **Affixes (Prefixes, Infixes & Suffixes)**

- **Inflectional and Derivational Affixes**

- **The Differences between Inflectional and Derivational Affixes**

- **Suffixal Homophones ({-er} , {-ing}, {-d}, {-ly})**

Affixes

An affix is a bound morpheme that occurs **before** or **within** or **after** a base.

There are three kinds: **prefixes**, **infixes**, and **suffixes**, two of which you have already met in passing. Now we will deal with them in greater detail.

Prefixes are those bound morphemes that occur before a base, as in **import**, **prefix**, **reconsider**.

Prefixes in English are a small class of morphemes, numbering about seventy-five. Their meanings are often those of English **prepositions** and **adverbials**.

Exercise 8-8

Look up in your desk dictionary each italicized prefix. (Be careful here. If you are looking up the prefix in- in a dictionary, you will find various entries for in, including the word in itself, which you don't want. Prefixes will be indicated as such by a hyphen after the morpheme; thus, in-.) Sometimes, when you have located the exact entry you want, you will find several meanings for it. From the meanings given for the prefix, choose the one that fits the word and write it in the first column. In the second column write another word containing the same prefix with the same meaning. Numbers 3, 7, 8 , and 11 contain variants of a prefixal morpheme.

1. *anti*freeze
2. *circum*vent
3. *co*pilot
   *col*lapse
   *com*pact
   *con*vene
   *cor*rode
4. *contra*dict
5. *de*vitalize
6. *dis*agreeable
7. *in*secure
   *im*perfect
   *il*legible
   *ir*reverent
8. *in*spire
   *im*bibe
9. *inter*vene
10. *intra*mural
11. *ob*struct
    *op*pose
12. *pre*war
13. *post*war
14. *pro*ceed
15. *retro*active
16. *semi*professional
17. *sub*way
18. *super*abundant
19. *un*likely[2]
20. *un*dress

Infixes

Infixes are bound morphemes that have been inserted **within** a word.

As a general rule English **does not** have infixes, though we should acknowledge a **few** exceptional cases. Consider, for example, what we find in **un get at able**, where the preposition **at** of **get at** is kept as an infix in the -able adjective, though the preposition is usually dropped in similar words, like **reliable** (from rely **on**) and accountable (from account **for**).

It might be tempting to consider as infixes **the replacive vowels** that occur in a few noun plurals, like the -**ee**- in **geese**, replacing the -**oo**- of **goose**, or those that occur in the past tense and past participles of some verbs, like the -**o**- of **chose** and **chosen** replacing the -**oo**- of **choose**.

But these are more precisely "**replacive allomorphs**" and will not be considered to be infixes. These allomorphs will be examined later.

Exercise 8-9

In the following groups of words, underline each infix. In the case of verbs, the stem (= dictionary-entry form) is the form into which the infix is inserted. Thus, in *freeze, froze, frozen* the stem is *freeze*, and into this the infix *o* is inserted in the past tense *froze* and the past participle *frozen*.

1. foot, feet
2. mouse, mice
3. take, took, taken
4. grow, grew, grown
5. spin, spun, spun

6. shake, shook, shaken
7. ring, rang, rung
8. tear, tore, torn
9. ride, rode, ridden
10. find, found, found

Suffixes

Suffixes are bound morphemes that occur **after** a base, such as **shrink<u>age</u>**, **fail<u>ure</u>**, **nois<u>y</u>**, **real<u>ize</u>**, **nail<u>s</u>**, **dream<u>ed</u>**.

Suffixes may pile up to the number of **three** or **four**, whereas **prefixes** are commonly **single**, except for the negative **un-** before another prefix.

In **norm<u>alizers</u>** we perhaps reach the limit with **four** suffixes: the base **norm** plus the **four** suffixes **-al**, -**ize**, -**er**, -**s**. When suffixes multiply like this, **their order is fixed**: there is one and only one order in which they occur.

Exercise 8–10

In these words the base is italicized. After each word write the number of suffixes it contains.

1. *organists* _____
2. *personalities* _____
3. *flirtatiously* _____
4. *atomizers* _____
5. *friendliest* _____

6. *contradictorily* _____
7. *trusteeship* _____
8. *greasier* _____
9. *countrified* _____
10. *responsibilities* _____

Exercise 8–11

Each group contains a base and suffixes. Make each into a word. In each case see if more than one order of suffixes is possible.

1. -ed, live, -en _____
2. -ing, -ate, termin _____
3. -er, -s, mor, -al, -ize _____
4. provinc, -s, -ism, -ial _____
5. -ly, -some, grue _____
6. -ity, work, -able _____
7. in, -most, -er _____
8. marry, -age, -ity, -abil _____
9. -dom, -ster, gang _____
10. -ly, -ion, -ate, affect _____

Inflectional and Derivational Affixes

Inflectional and Derivational Affixes

• **Inflectional** (**grammatical**):

For example, changing singular to plural (dog → dog**s**), or changing present tense to past tense (walk → walk**ed**).

• **Derivational** (**meaning**):

The new word has a **new** meaning, "derived" from the **original** word, for example, teach → teach**er** or care → care**ful.**

Inflectional Suffixes

The inflectional affixes can be schematized as follows:

Inflectional Affix	Examples	Name
1. {-S pl.}	dogs, oxen, mice	noun plural
2. {-S sg ps}	boy's	noun singular possessive
3. {-S pl ps}	boys', men's	noun plural possessive
4. {-S 3d}	vacates	present third-person singular
5. {-ING vb}	discussing	present participle
6. {-D pt}	chewed, rode	past tense
7. {-D pp}	chewed, eaten, swum	past participle
8. {-ER cp}	bolder, sooner, nearer	comparative
9. {-EST sp}	boldest, soonest, nearest	superlative

Exercise 8–12

Write the morphemic symbol and name for each inflectional affix in bold-face type. The term *affix* here includes both suffixes, like dream*ed*, and infixes, like sw*u*m, r*o*de, r*a*ng.

1. The flagpole st**oo**d in front of Main Hall.

_____

2. Four pledg**es** were initiated.

_____

3. Shirley pledg**es** to do her best.

_____

4. The pledge**'s** shirt was torn.

_____

5. The pledges**'** shirts were torn.

_____

6. We were discuss**ing** the editorial.

_____

7. The novel was short**er** than I had expected.

_____

8. They wait**ed** at the dock.

_____

9. Which is the long**est** route?

_____

10. Have you tak**en** calculus yet?

_____

11. Chris play**ed** well in the second set.

_____

12. The dealer weigh**ed** the poultry.

_____

13. Would you mind repeat**ing** the question?

_____

14. The sheets were soon iron**ed**.

_____

15. He never lock**s** the door.

_____

Derivational Affixes

Derivation is the process of creating **new** words that a meaning related with the **original** word by adding **derivational affixes**. It deals with the study of the formation of new words, like:

kind (adj.) – kind**ness** (n.)

final (adj.) – final**ize** (v.)

solve (v.) – solv**able** (adj.)

quick (adj.) – quick**ly** (adv.)

man (n.) – man**hood** (n.)

The Differences between Inflectional and Derivational Affixes

The words to which these suffixes are attached are called **stems**. The stem includes the **base** or **bases** and all the derivational affixes. Thus, the stem of **cowboys** is **cowboy** and that of **beautified** is **beautify** .

The **inflectional** suffixes differ from the **derivational** suffixes in the following ways, to which there are **few** exceptions:

1. The **inflectional** suffixes **do not** change the part of speech. like: sled, sleds (nouns), cough, coughed (verbs), cold, colder (adjectives).

    While derivational affixes may (or may not) change the part of speech, like:

    kind (adj.)/kind**ness** (n.), man (n.)/man**hood** (n.)

The Differences between Inflectional and Derivational Affixes

2. The **Inflectional** suffixes **close off** a word, like: wait**ed**, villaini**es**, industrializ**ing**. However, **derivational** suffixes **do not** close off a word; that is after a derivational suffix one can sometimes add another derivational suffix and can lastly add an inflectional suffix. Like, to the word fertil**ize**, which ends in a derivational suffix, one can add another one, **-er** ; and to fertil**izer** one can add the inflectional suffix-**s** (fertil**izers**), closing off the word.

3. The **Inflectional** suffixes go with all stems of a given part of speech. Examples: He **eats**, **drinks**, **dreams**, **entertains**, **motivates**. While 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**.

The Differences between Inflectional and Derivational Affixes

4. The **Inflectional** suffixes do not pile up; only **one** ends a word. Examples: flak**es**, work**ing**, high**er.** An exception here is (**s pl ps**), the plural possessive of the noun, as in: **the students' worries.** However, we can add several derivational suffixes to a base, like: norm**alizer** (-al, -ize, -er).

5. The **Inflectional** affixes are mainly suffixes, like: book**s**, work**ed**, play**ing**, tall**er**.   But the derivational affixes can be prefixes (sure (adj.)-ensure (v.)) and suffixes (short (adj.) shorten (v.))

To sum up

Inflectional

1. They **never** change the part of speech.

2. They **close off** a word.

3. They go with **all** stems of a given part of speech.

4. They do **not** pile up.

5. They are mainly **suffixes.**

Derivational

1. They **may** change the part of speech.

2. They do **not** close off a word.

3. Words with which derivational suffixes combine is an **arbitrary** matter.

4. They **pile up**.

5. They can be **prefixes** and **suffixes.**

Exercise 8–13

The left-hand column contains ten words. The right-hand column contains thirteen derivational suffixes used to make nouns and having the general meanings of "state, condition, quality, or act of." By combining these suffixes with the words listed, make as many nouns as you can.

1. happy	1. -hood	11. -ance
2. friend	2. -acy	12. -th
3. girl	3. -ism	13. -ure
4. compose	4. -ness	
5. shrink	5. -ment	
6. active	6. -age	
7. supreme	7. -y	
8. true	8. -ation	
9. pagan	9. -ship	
10. discover	10. -ity	

Nouns: _____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

_____ _____ _____

Exercise 8–14

The words in the second column are formed by the addition of a derivational suffix to those in the first column. After every word in both columns indicate its part-of-speech classification by N (noun), V (verb), Aj (adjective), or Av (adverb).

1.	break	_____	breakage	_____
2.	desire	_____	desirable	_____
3.	conspire	_____	conspiracy	_____
4.	rehearse	_____	rehearsal	_____
5.	ideal	_____	idealize	_____
6.	false	_____	falsify	_____
7.	sweet	_____	sweetly	_____
8.	doubt	_____	doubtful	_____
9.	mouth	_____	mouthful	_____
10.	sing	_____	singer	_____
11.	familiarize	_____	familiarization	_____
12.	passion	_____	passionate	_____
13.	host	_____	hostess	_____
14.	gloom	_____	gloomy	_____
15.	martyr	_____	martyrdom	_____
16.	novel	_____	novelist	_____
17.	day	_____	daily	_____
18.	prohibit	_____	prohibitory	_____
19.	excel	_____	excellent	_____
20.	create	_____	creative	_____
21.	vision	_____	visionary	_____
22.	cube	_____	cubic	_____
23.	ripe	_____	ripen	_____
24.	real	_____	realism	_____
25.	accept	_____	acceptance	_____

Exercise 8–15

Add a derivational suffix to each of these words, which already end in a derivational suffix.

1. reasonable _____
2. formal _____
3. organize _____
4. purify _____
5. purist _____

Exercise 8–16

Add an inflectional suffix, one of those listed on page 92, to each of these words, which end in derivational suffixes. In the third column put any words you can think of that are formed by a suffix following the inflectional suffix you added in the second column.

1. kindness   _____   _____
2. beautify   _____   _____
3. quarterly   _____   _____
4. popularize   _____   _____
5. depth   _____   _____
6. pressure   _____   _____
7. arrival   _____   _____
8. orientate   _____   _____
9. friendly   _____   _____
10. funny   _____   _____

Paradigm

A glance in the dictionary will reveal that many words have relatives, close and distant, and in grammatical study it is often necessary to examine families of related words. To label such families we employ the word **paradigm**.

There are **two** kinds of paradigms, **inflectional** and **derivational**. The inflectional will be explained in greater detail later. The derivational paradigm is **a set of related words composed of the same base morpheme and all the derivational affixes that can go with this base**. Here is an example:

man, manly, mannish, manful, manhood, manikin, unman, manliness, manward, manfully, mannishly.

Exercise 8–17

You are given here five bases, or words with their bases italicized. Give all the words in the derivational paradigm of each. Do not include words with two bases, like *manhunt* or *manpower*. (Use other paper for this exercise.)

1. sin
2. kind
3. live /laiv/
4. trans*port* (-port = carry)
5. *aud*ible (aud- = hear)

Check!

disestablishmentarianism

Suffixal Homophones

Suffixal Homophones

Homophones:

Each of two or more morphemes having the **same pronunciation** but **different meanings.** For Example - er:

teach**er** (n.) (-er = one who) = derivational

tall**er** (adj.) (-er = more (comparative)) = inflectional

Suffixal Homophones

Some suffixes, both inflectional and derivational, have **homophonous** forms. The inflectional morpheme {-er cp} has two homophones.

The **first** is the **derivational** suffix {-er n}, which is attached to **verbs** to form **nouns**. This is a highly **productive** suffix, that is, it is used to produce hundreds of English nouns, such as **hunter**, **fisher**, **camper**, **golfer**, **lover**. It is often called **the agent -er** and conveys a meaning of "that which performs the action of **the verb stem**," as in **thriller** and **teacher**.

It may **also** be attached to **nonverbal stems**, such as **probationer**, **New Yorker, teenager, freighter**. The -er on such words could be said to convey a more general meaning of "**that which is related to**"; and because this meaning is inclusive of the previous one, both these -er suffixes can be considered to belong to {-er n}.

The Second Derivational -er Morpheme

The second derivational -er morpheme appears at the end of such words as **chatter**, **mutter**, **flicker**, **glitter**, **patter**. This {-er rp} conveys the meaning of **repetition**.

The acceptance of this {-er rp}, however, is **problematic** and raises questions about the analysis of the **remainders** in words of this class. For example, if the -er in **glitter** is a morpheme meaning **repetition**, we are left with the remainder **glitt-**, whose morphemic status is dubious.

Exercise 8–18

Identify the italicized *-er* as

1. {-ER cp} inflectional suffix, as in *bigger*
2. {-ER n} derivational suffix, as in *singer*
3. {-ER rp} derivational suffix, as in *flutter*

1. This is a heavi*er* tennis racket than I want. _____
2. We watched the shimm*er* of the evening light on the waves. _____
3. The fight*er* weighed in at 180 pounds. _____
4. He was tough*er* than he looked. _____
5. The jabb*er* of voices came through the open door. _____

The Suffix {-ing}

The verbal inflectional suffix {-ing vb} has **two** homophones in –ing:

The first one is the **nominal** derivational suffix {-ing nm}, which is found in words such as meetings, **weddings**, **readings**. This nominal {-ing nm} is obviously derivational, because it permits the addition of an inflectional suffix to close it off, the noun plural {-s pl}.

When such a word occurs alone without the inflectional suffix, e.g., **meeting**, the -**ing** is ambiguous, for it could be either {-**ing vb**}, as in "**He was meeting the train**" or {-**ing nm**}, as in "**He attended the meeting**."

The Suffix {-ing}

The second homophone of {-ing vb} is the **adjectival** morpheme {-ing aj}, as in **a charming woman**.

There are **two tests** by which the **verbal** {-ing vb} can be distinguished from the **adjectival** {-ing aj}.

1- The **verbal** {-ing vb} can usually occur **after** as well as **before** the noun it modifies, for example:

• **I saw a burning house.**
• **I saw a house burning.**

The Suffix {-ing}

The **adjectival** {-ing aj} can be preceded by a qualifier such as **very**, **rather**, **quite**, or by the **comparative** and **superlative** words **more** and **most**, as in:

- **It is a <u>very comforting</u> thought.**
- **This is a <u>more exciting</u> movie.**

But not :***1 saw a <u>rather burning</u> house.**

Also, compare: **that <u>interesting</u> snake**

that <u>crawling</u> snake

The Suffix {-ing}

The **adjectival** {-ing aj} can occur after **seems**:

That snake <u>seems interesting</u>.

Whereas the **verbal** {-ing vb} cannot:

*That snake <u>seems crawling</u>.

Exercise 8–19

Identify the -ing's of the italicized words by these symbols:

V-al = verbal {-ING vb}
N-al = nominal {-ING nm}
Aj-al = adjectival {-ING aj}

1. It was a *charming* spot.   _____
2. Jim lost both *fillings* from his tooth.   _____
3. It was located by a sweetly *babbling* brook.   _____
4. It was *exciting* to watch the flight.   _____
5. Old *sayings* are often half-true.   _____
6. From the bridge we watched the *running* water. _____
7. That *barking* dog keeps everyone awake.   _____
8. He told a *convincing* tale.   _____
9. The *shining* sun gilded the forest floor.   _____
10. Matisse's *drawings* are magnificently simple.   _____
11. A *refreshing* shower poured down.   _____
12. The attorney made a *moving* appeal.   _____
13. A *moving* elephant is a picture of grace.   _____
14. What an *obliging* fellow he is!   _____
15. That was a *touching* scene.   _____

The Suffix {-d pp}

The **verbal** inflectional {-d pp} has a homophone in the **adjectival** derivational {-d aj}, as in:

Helen was <u>excited</u> about her new job.

She was a <u>devoted</u> mother.

The **adjectival** {-d aj} is characterized by its capacity for modification by **qualifiers** such as **very**, **rather**, **quite**, and by **more** and **most**. Example:

A rather <u>faded</u> tapestry hung over the fireplace.

The Suffix {-d pp}

The **verbal** {-d pp}, on the other hand, **does not** accept such modifiers. We would not, for example, say:

***The very <u>departed</u> guests had forgotten their dog.**

The **seems** test for adjectival {**-ing aj**} is applicable to adjectival {**-d aj**}; for example:

"**The tapestry seems faded.**" but not *"**The guests seem departed**."

Exercise 8–20

Identify the suffixes of the italicized words with these symbols: V-al = {-D pp}; Aj-al = {-D aj}.

1. You should read the *printed* statement. _____
2. Merle was a *neglected* child. _____
3. This is a *complicated* question. _____
4. His *chosen* bride had lived in India. _____
5. He bought a *stolen* picture. _____
6. The *invited* guests all came. _____
7. We had a *reserved* seat. _____
8. The skipper was a *reserved* (= quiet) man. _____
9. A *celebrated* painter visited the campus. _____
10. A *worried* look crossed his face. _____

Exercise 8–21

Ambiguity occurs when the -*ed* suffix can be interpreted as either {-D pp}
or {-D aj}. This exercise will illustrate. For each sentence below write two
meanings.

1. It was a finished job.

   a. _____

   b. _____

2. Our new surgeon is reserved.

   a. _____

   b. _____

The Suffix {-ly}

The adverbial derivational suffix **{-ly av}** is added to most adjectives to form adverb of manner as in **rich, richly; land, kindly; formal, formally; happy, happily**. A small group of adjectives does not this **{-ly av},** among them **big**, **small**, **little**, **tall**, **long**, **fast**.

The **adverbial {-ly av}** has as a homophone the derivational suffix **{-ly aj}**, an **adjectival** morpheme that is distributed as follows:

1. It is added to monosyllabic **nouns** to form **adjectives** that are inflected with -er, -est. Examples:

     love, lovely; friend, friendly; man, manly

The Suffix {-ly}

2. It is added to **nouns** to form **adjectives** that are **not** inflected with -er, -est. Like: **king, kingly; beast, beastly; scholar, scholarly; mother, motherly, leisure, leisurely**

3. It is added to a few **adjectives**, giving **alternate adjectival** forms that are also inflected with - er, -est. Like: **dead, deadly; live, lively; kind, kindly; sick, sickly**

Here the **adjectives kindly** and **lively** are homophonous with the **adverbs kindly** and **lively**, which end in {-ly av}. For example, we see the **adverb** in **She spoke kindly to the children**, and the **adjective** in **She was the kindliest woman in the village**.

4. It is added to a short list of "**time**" **nouns** to form **adjectives**. Examples: **day, daily; hour, hourly; month, monthly.** These are **not** inflected with -er, -est and some of them undergo functional shift to become **nouns**, like:

He subscribes to two dailies and three quarterlies.

Exercise 8–22

Identify the italicized -*ly* as either (1) {-LY av} adverbial derivational suffix, as in *glumly;* or (2) {-LY aj} adjectival derivational suffix, as in *fatherly.*

1. The witness testified false*ly*. _____
2. Grace has a dead*ly* wit. _____
3. Janet always behaved with a maiden*ly* demeanor. _____
4. He tiptoes soft*ly* into the room. _____
5. Jimmy receives a week*ly* allowance. _____
6. The dear old lady has a heaven*ly* disposition. _____
7. She spoke quiet*ly* to her grandson. _____
8. What a time*ly* suggestion! _____
9. What a manner*ly* child! _____
10. It was a coward*ly* act. _____

Exercise 8–23

This is an exercise reviewing the inflectional and derivational suffixes. Label the italicized suffixes as DS (derivational suffix), IS (inflectional suffix), or Amb (ambiguous).

1. prince*s* _____
2. princ*ess* _____
3. find*ings* _____
4. friendli*er* _____
5. show*s* _____

6. weav*er* _____
7. lean*er* _____
8. satir*ize* _____
9. sputt*er* _____
10. bright*en* _____

11. quickly _____
12. rectify _____
13. brotherly _____
14. respectable _____
15. younger _____

16. hearing _____
17. drier _____
18. grievance _____
19. droppings _____
20. sunny _____