

Chapter 6: Morphology

Introduction to Linguistics



What is Morphology?



- What is a ‘word’?
- Items marked in black separated by spaces!
- In Swahili :::: *nitakupenda*
- In Arabic :::: يجبرها
- I will love you (ni= I/ ta= will/ ku= you/ penda= love)
- He forces her/ he is forcing her
- The concept ‘word’ turns out to be a complex fuzzy category.
- consider ‘*elements*’ rather than ‘*words*’

Morphology is the field of linguistics that studies the internal structure of words

Morphemes



- Talk, talks, talker, talked, talking
- consist of (one element 'talk' + other elements '-s, -er, -ed, -ing')
- All these elements are described as morphemes

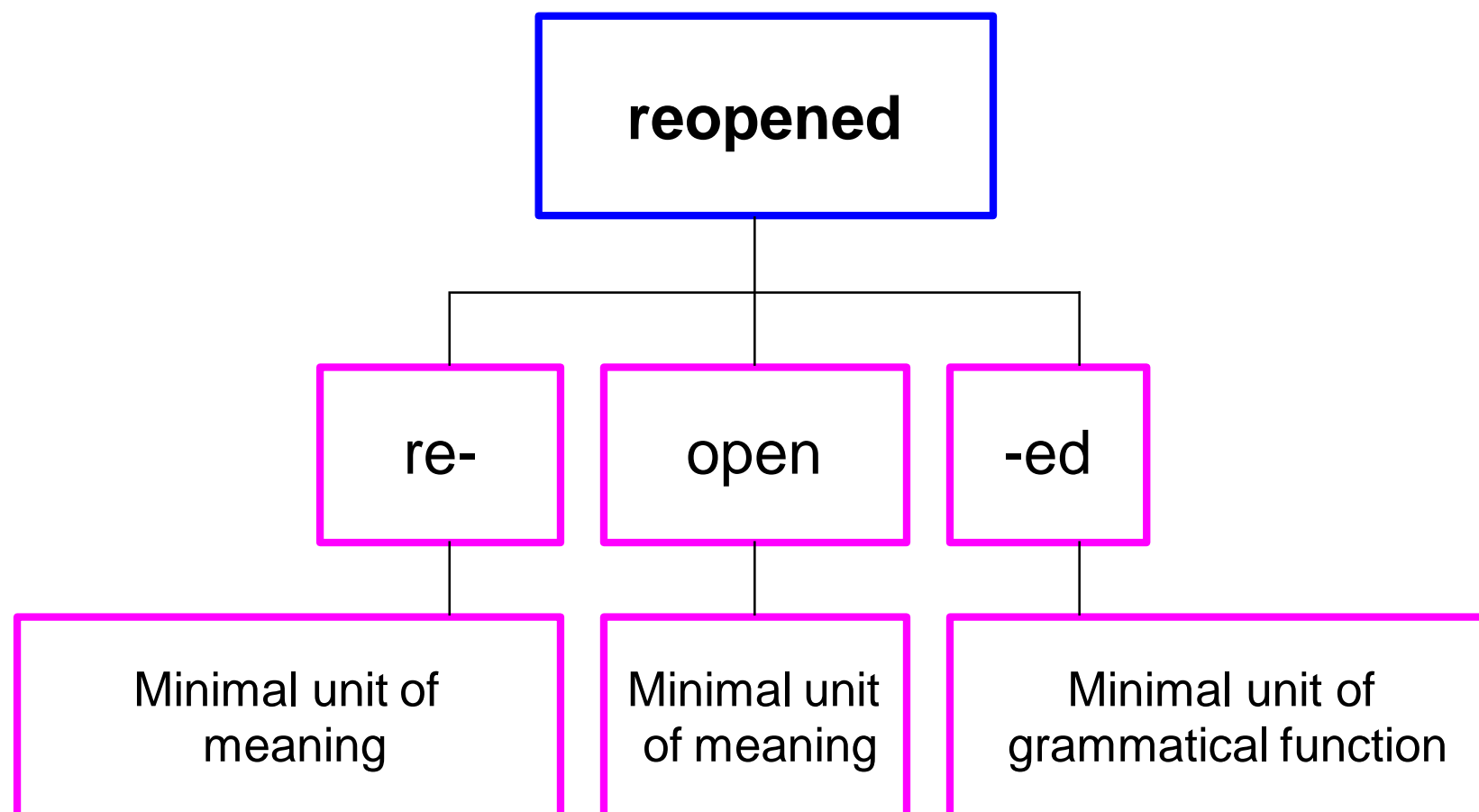
A morpheme: A minimal unit of meaning or grammatical function

Can't be broken down any further

Morphemes



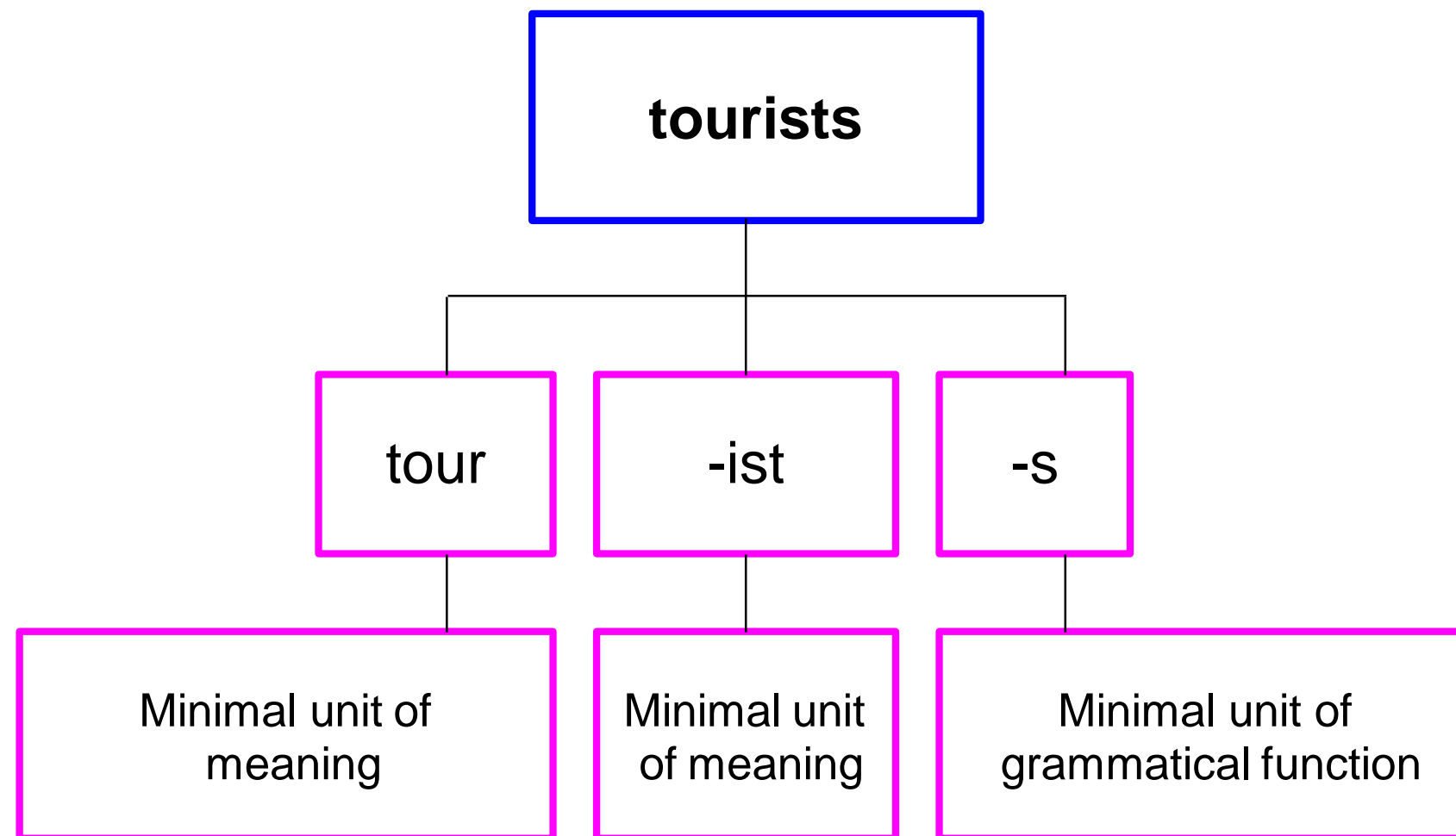
*The police **reopened** the investigation.*



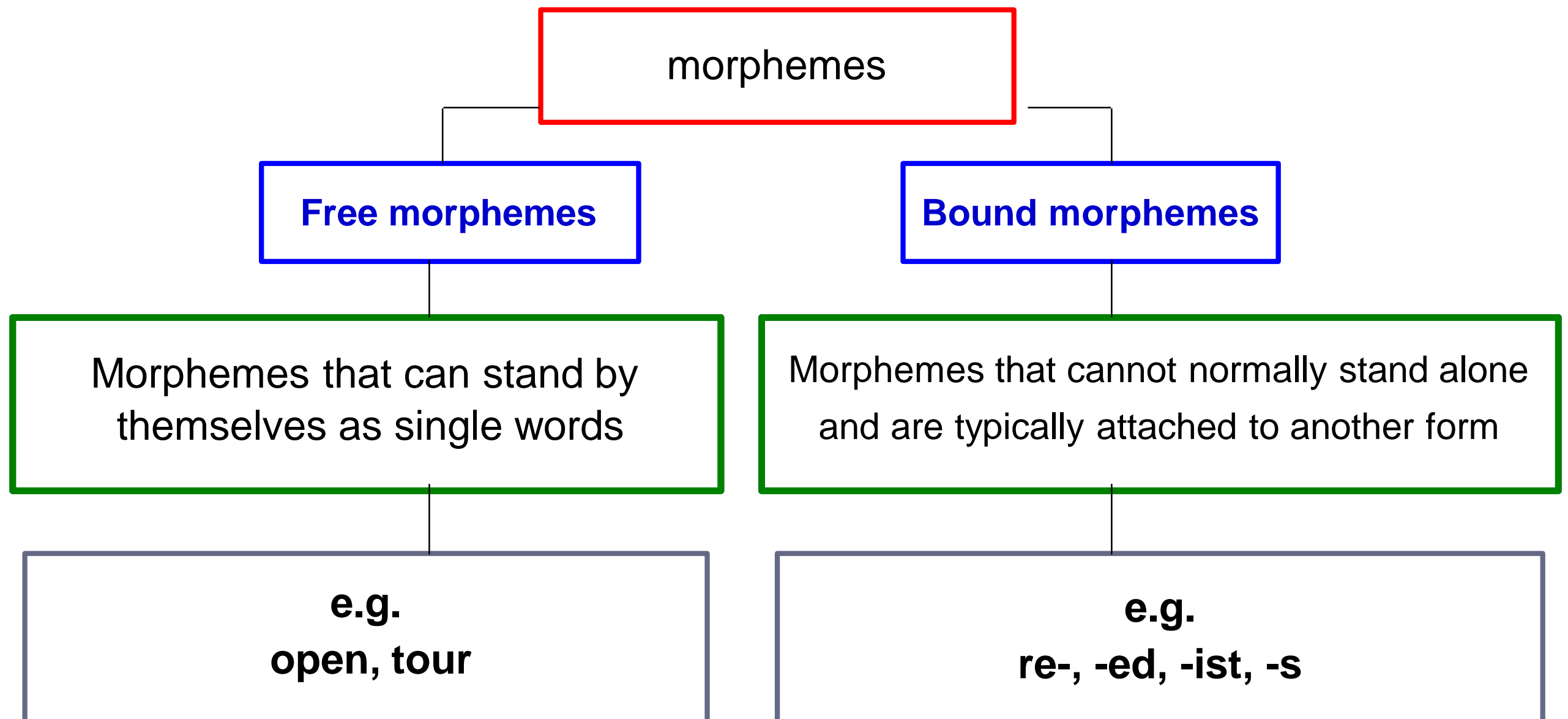
Morphemes



*The **tourists** were so happy.*



Free & bound morphemes



Free & bound morphemes



- All affixes (prefixes & suffixes) in English are **bound morphemes**.
- **Free morphemes** = separate English word forms (basic nouns, adjectives, verbs, etc.)
- When free morphemes are used with bound morphemes, the basic word forms are known as **stems**

undressed

<i>un-</i>	<i>dress</i>	<i>-ed</i>
prefix	stem	suffix
(bound)	(free)	(bound)

carelessness

<i>care</i>	<i>-less</i>	<i>-ness</i>
stem	suffix	suffix
(free)	(bound)	(bound)

Free morphemes: Lexical & Functional



Lexical morphemes:

- ordinary nouns, adjectives and verbs
- carry the 'content' of the messages we convey
- e.g. *girl, man, house, tiger, sad, long, yellow, open, look, break*
- New lexical morphemes can easily be added to the language, so they are treated as an open class of words

Functional morphemes:

- Functional words (conjunctions, prepositions, articles, pronouns)
- e.g. *and, but, when, because, on, near, above, in, the, it, them*
- Because we almost never add new functional morphemes to the language, they are described as a closed class of words.

Bound morphemes: Derivational & Inflectional



Derivational morphemes:

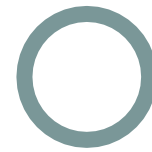
- We use them to make new words or words of a different grammatical category from the stem.
- They include suffixes & prefixes
- e.g.

good (adj.)	>>	goodness (n.)
care (n.)	>>	careful or careless (adj.)
write (v.)	>>	rewrite (v.)
judge (v.)	>>	prejudge (v.)

More examples:

- | | | | | | | |
|---------|------|----|------|---------|----|------------|
| • -ic | Noun | >> | Adj | alcohol | >> | alcoholic |
| • -ly | Adj | >> | Adv | quick | >> | quickly |
| • -ate | Noun | >> | Verb | vaccine | >> | vaccinate |
| • -ity | Adj | >> | Noun | active | >> | activity |
| • -ship | Noun | >> | Noun | friend | >> | friendship |
| • -ish | Adj | >> | Noun | fool | >> | foolish |
| • -ment | Verb | >> | Noun | pay | >> | payment |

Bound morphemes: Derivational & Inflectional



Inflectional morphemes:

- Not used to produce new words in the language.
- Used to indicate aspects of the grammatical function of a word. (plural, singular, past tense, comparative, possessive)
- In English, all the inflectional morphemes are suffixes.
- English has only **8** inflectional morphemes

- Noun

- -s plural e.g. books
- -'s possessive e.g. The girl's book

- Verb

- -s 3rd person singular simple present e.g. walks
- -ing present progressive e.g. walking
- -ed past tense e.g. walked
- -en past participle e.g. written

- Adjective

- -er comparative e.g. taller
- -est superlative e.g. the tallest

Morphological description



- An **inflectional morpheme** never changes the grammatical category of a word.

e.g. old, old**er**, old**est** are all adjectives

- A **derivational morpheme** can change the grammatical category of a word.

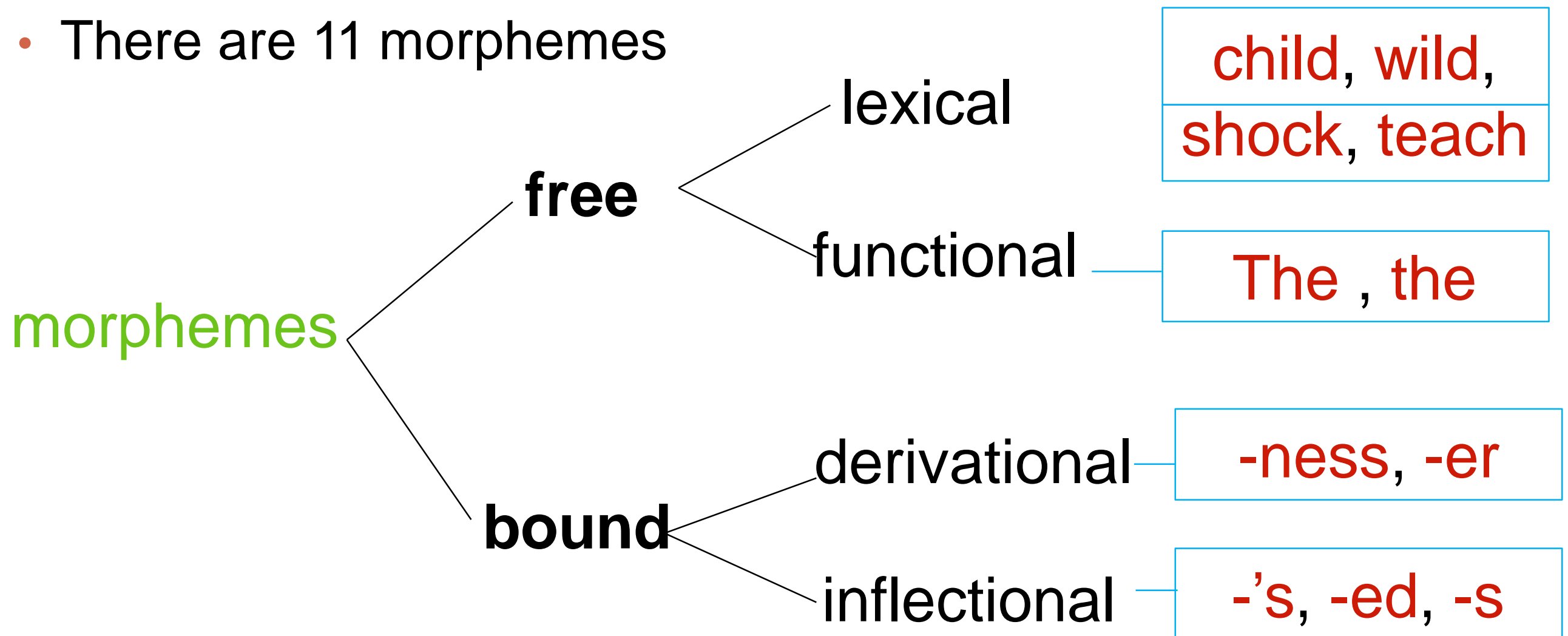
e.g. teach (v.) >> teach**er** (n.)

- **Bound morphemes** always appear in order, first **derivational** then **inflectional**. (e.g. *teach**er**s*)

Morphological description



- The child's wildness shocked the teachers
- There are 11 morphemes



Morphs and allomorphs



cars (car + -s) = (lexical + inflectional 'plural')

buses (bus + -es) = (lexical + inflectional 'plural')

- 2 morphs (-s & -es) used to realize the inflectional morpheme 'plural'.
- -s & -es are allomorphs of the morpheme 'plural'

- Cat + plural = cats = (cat + -s)
- Bus + plural = buses = (bus + -es)
- Sheep + plural. = sheep = (sheep + \emptyset)
- Man + plural = men = ($\text{æ} \rightarrow \text{ɛ}$)

Morphs and allomorphs



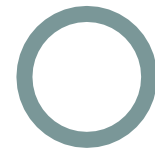
- **Morphs** are the actual forms used to realize **morphemes**.
- When we find a group of different **morphs**, **all versions of one morpheme**, we can use the prefix ‘allo-’ and describe them as **allomorphs** of that morpheme

Analyse the following words into morphemes



impossible	im- is a derivational bound morpheme possible is a lexical free morpheme
terrorized	terror is a lexical free morpheme -ize is a derivational bound morpheme -ed is an inflectional bound morpheme
him	to is a functional free morpheme
desks	desk is a lexical free morpheme -s is an inflectional bound morpheme
dislike	dis- is a derivational bound morpheme like is a lexical free morpheme
humanity	human is a lexical free morpheme -ity is a derivational bound morpheme
to	to is a functional free morpheme

Analyse the following words into morphemes



fastest	fast is a lexical free morpheme -est is an inflectional bound morpheme
premature	pre- is a derivational bound morpheme mature is a lexical free morpheme
and	and is a functional free morpheme
untie	un- is a derivational bound morpheme tie is a lexical free morpheme
darken	dark is a lexical free morpheme -en is a derivational bound morpheme
fallen	fall is a lexical free morpheme -en is an inflectional bound morpheme
faster	fast is a lexical free morpheme -er is an inflectional bound morpheme
lecturer	lecture is a lexical free morpheme -er is a derivational bound morpheme

Analyse the following words into morphemes



growing	grow is a lexical free morpheme -ing is an inflectional bound morpheme
because	because is a functional free morpheme
followers	follow is a lexical free morpheme -er is a derivational bound morpheme -s is an inflectional bound morpheme
she	she is a functional free morpheme
the	the is a functional free morpheme

Identify the different types of morphemes



- *The young boy played with his friends.*

The	A functional free morpheme
Young	A lexical free morpheme
Boy	A lexical free morpheme
Play	A lexical free morpheme
-ed	An inflectional bound morpheme
With	A functional free morpheme
His	A functional free morpheme
Friend	A lexical free morpheme
-s	An inflectional bound morpheme

Remember



less

-less

e.g. less than

e.g. careless

functional free

derivational bound

Remember



or

-or

e.g. red or blue

e.g.editor

functional free

derivational bound

Remember



Doer
One who does
the action

-er

e.g. teacher

derivational bound

Superlative
adjective

-er

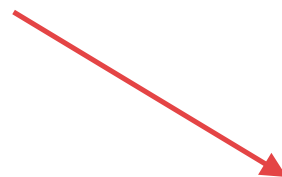
e.g. longer

inflectional bound

Remember



Pas participle
write - wrote - written



-en

e.g. written

inflectional bound

short (Adj) / shorten (V)
shorten - shortened - shortened



-en

e.g. shorten

derivational bound

References



Yule, G. (2010). *The study of language*. (4th ed.) Cambridge: Cambridge University Press.



THANK YOU