

# LNG1101

## Introduction to Linguistics

Week 6 : Introduction to Morphology

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*"The limits of my language mean the  
limits of my world."*

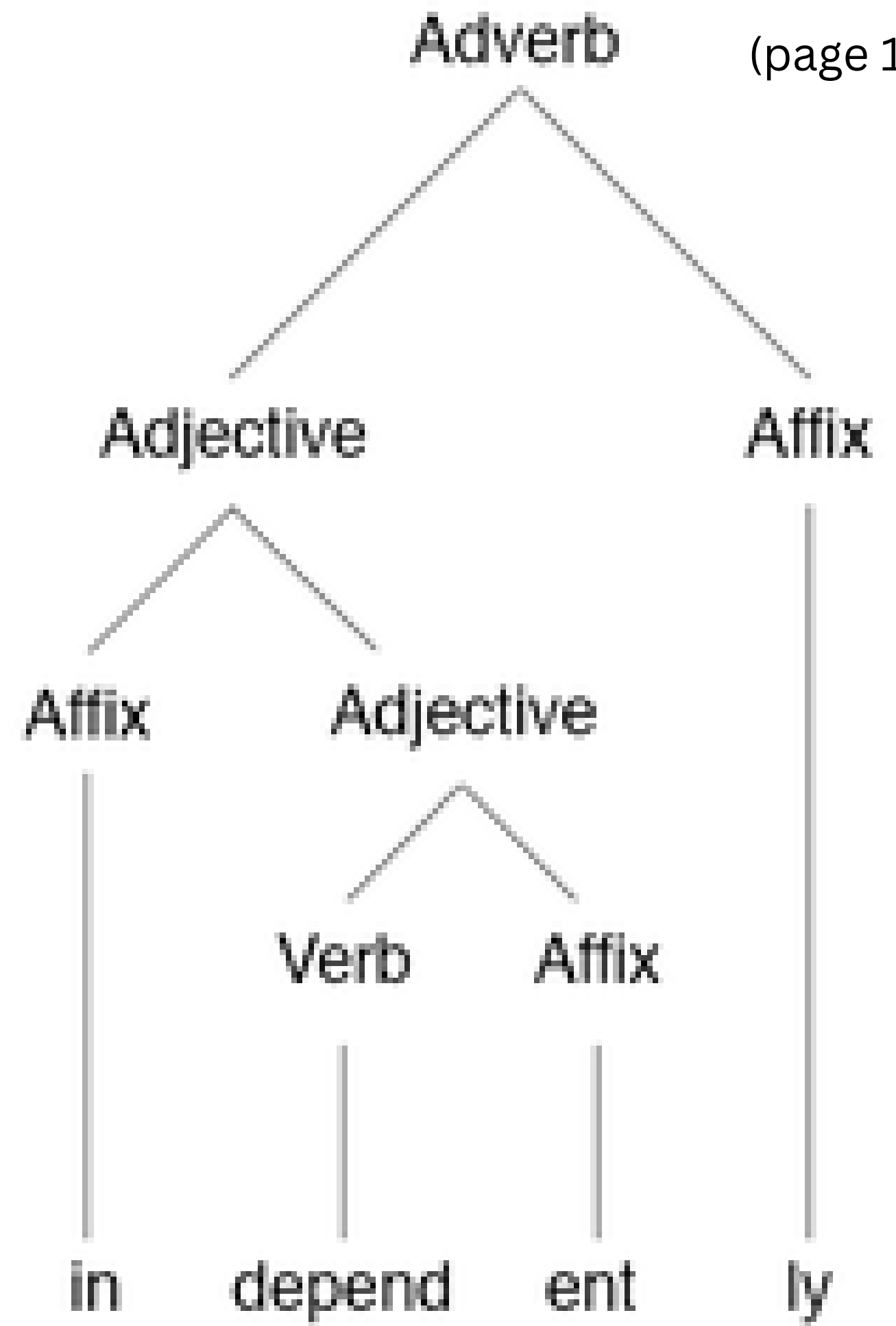
LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

[illegible]



# What is Morphology?

Linguists use the term **morphology** to refer to the part of the grammar that is concerned with words and word formation. As we will see, the study of morphology offers important insights into how language works, revealing the need for different categories of words, the presence of word-internal structure, and the existence of operations that create and modify words in various ways.

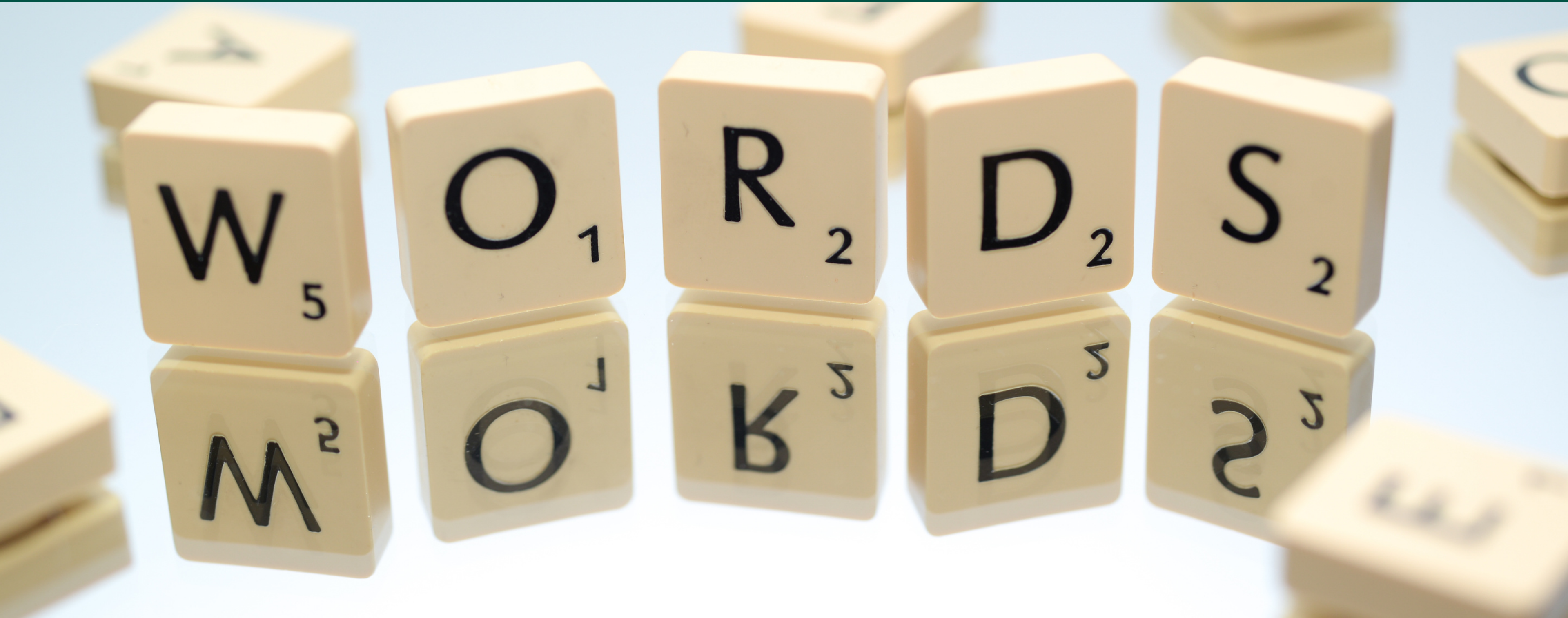


Can you identify all of these words?

Why/ Why not?

**allIwantforchistmasisyau**

# Content Words VS Function Words





# What is a word?

- Orthographic criterion

Benjamin's girlfriend lives in a high-rise apartment building.

Sound structure criterion: Every word have only one main stress.

- Integrity criterion

girls      gi-s-rl      son-in-laws      sons-in-law

- Semantic criterion: 'a united semantic concept'

The smell of fresh rain in a forest in the fall

- Syntactically oriented criterion: Testing whether something is a word by checking whether it belongs to such a word class.



# Content Words

The words that conveys conceptual meanings  
(nouns, verbs, adjectives etc.)

**New class:** new types of content words can be  
added all the time.

# Example

**selfie** *noun*

🔊 /'selfi/

🔊 /'selfi/

*(informal)*

★ a photo of yourself that you take, typically with a smartphone or **webcam**, and usually put on **social media**

# Function Words

The words that convey grammatical meaning (articles, prepositions, conjunctions, etc.)

**Closed class:** new function words are rarely added to a language

# Example

## Open Class

Frequently adopt new members

nouns (e.g. computer)

verbs (e.g. run)

adjectives (e.g. beautiful)

adverbs (e.g. slowly)

## Closed Class

Not frequently adopt new members

determiners (e.g. the)

prepositions (e.g. to)

quantifiers (e.g. every)

conjunctions (e.g. and)



# Words and Word Structures

Linguists define the **word** as the smallest **free form** found in language. A free form is simply an element that does not have to occur in a fixed position with respect to neighbouring elements; in many cases, it can even appear in isolation.

Dinosaurs are extinct.

\*Dinosaur are -s extinct.

Is *Dinosaur* a word?

Is -s a word?



# Morpheme





# Morpheme

Words have an internal structure consisting of smaller units organized with respect to each other in a particular way. The most important component of word structure is the **morpheme**, the smallest unit of language that carries information about meaning or function.

**magnifying glass**

**magnifying glass** *n.* **le**  
**nify.**

**magnitude** /'mægnɪ,tju  
ness. 2 size. 3 importanc  
brightness of a star. b  
arranged according to t  
magnitude). □ of the fl  
very important. (Latin

# Properties of Morphemes

**Isolability:** A morpheme must be isolatable, that is, it must be possible to identify the unit and separate it from the rest of the word.

**Contrastiveness:** In the context identified, the morpheme must be able to be replaced by other morphemes, giving rise to grammatical and semantic differences.

**Recurrency:** A morpheme cannot be restricted to one specific word.

**Meaning:** A morpheme must be associated with a specific meaning.



# Morpheme

## Words

endanger

motivation

activity

banana

ungrammatical

## Morphemes

{en-} + {danger}

{motive} + {-ate} + {-tion}

{act-} + {-ive} + {-ity}

{banana}

{un-} + {grammar} + {-ical}

# Example

TABLE 4.1 Words consisting of one or more morphemes			
One	Two	Three	More than three
and couple hunt act	couple-s hunt-er act-ive	hunt-er-s act-iv-ate	re-act-iv-ate

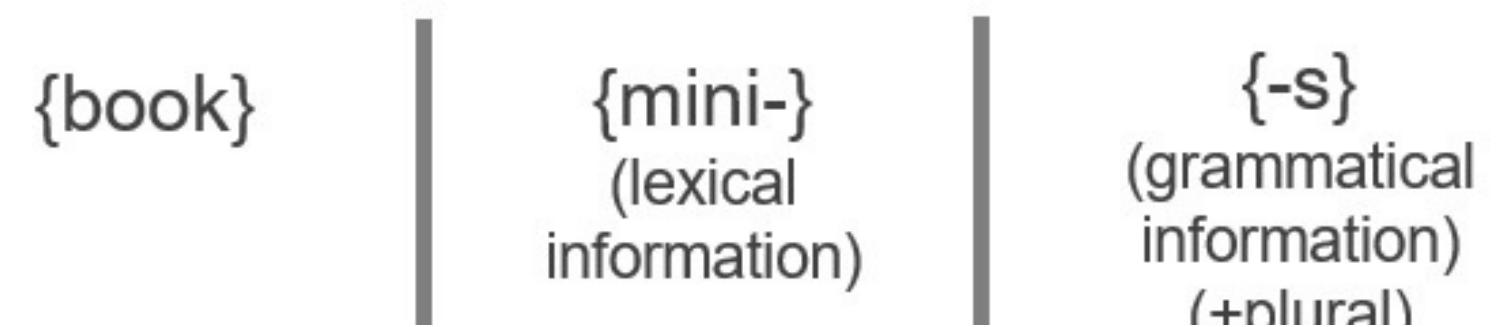
# Internal Structure

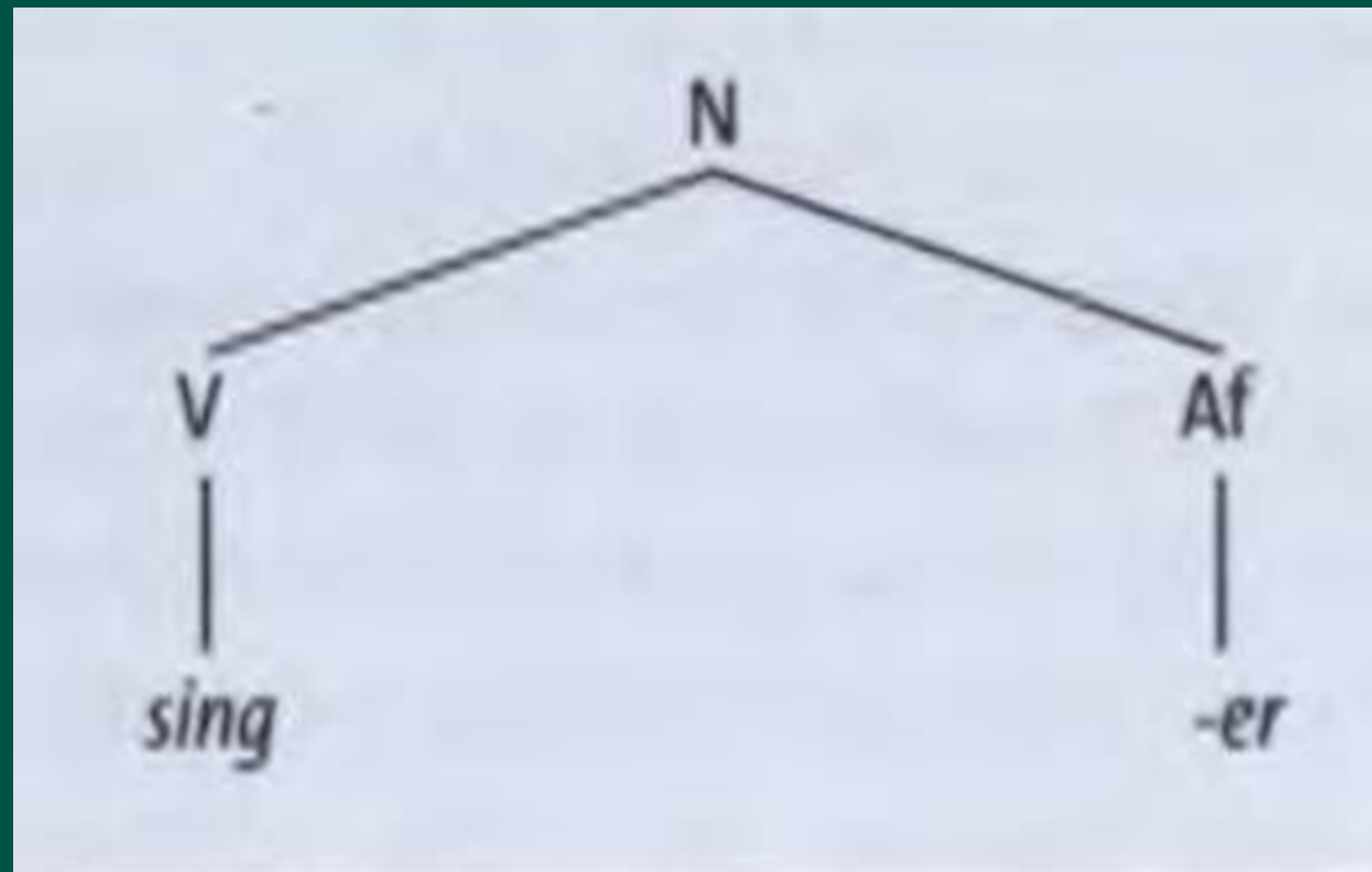
Morphemes are designated in braces - { }.

Morphemes may carry (1) lexical information but also (2) grammatical information.

English words consist of a single morpheme (e.g. book)

book + -s = books  
mini- + book = mini-book  
mini + book + -s = mini-books





Morpheme representation in a tree diagram

Morpheme representation in square brackets

$[_N[_V sing] [_{Af} er]]$



# Types of Morpheme

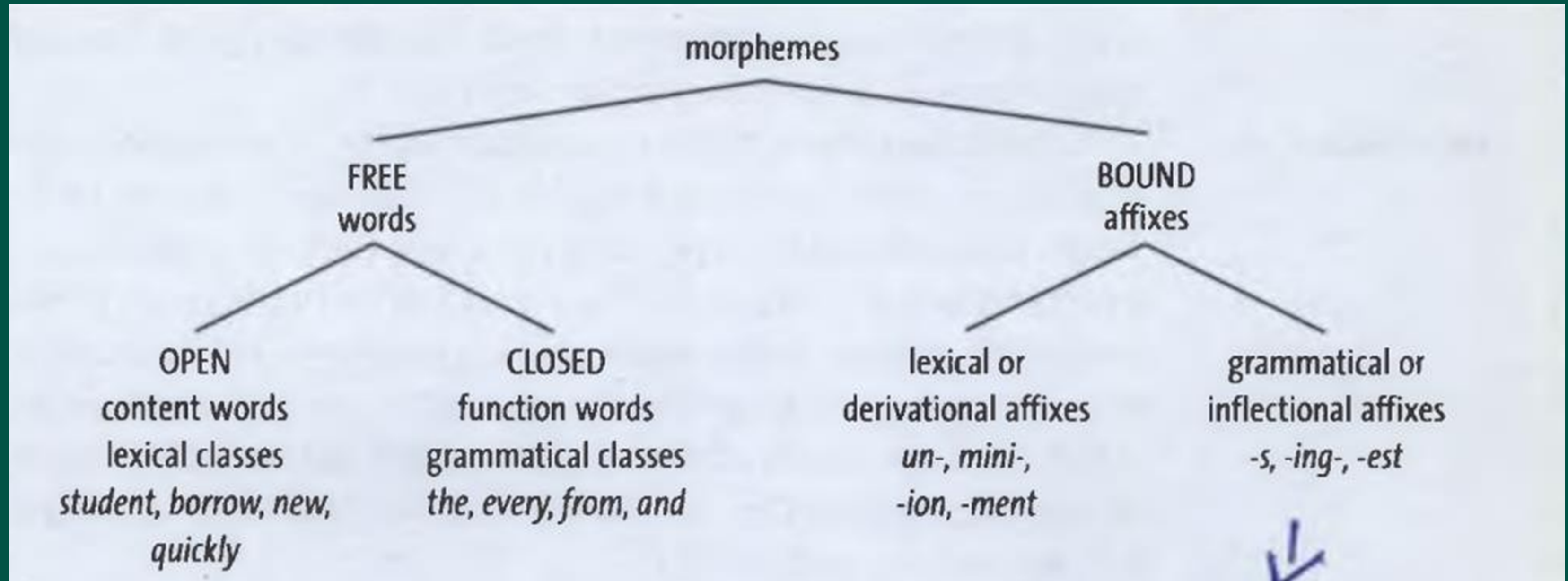
## Free Morpheme

A morpheme that can be a word by itself

## Bound Morpheme

A morpheme that must be attached to another element

# Types of Morpheme



# Allomorph

The variant pronunciations of a morpheme

a/ an

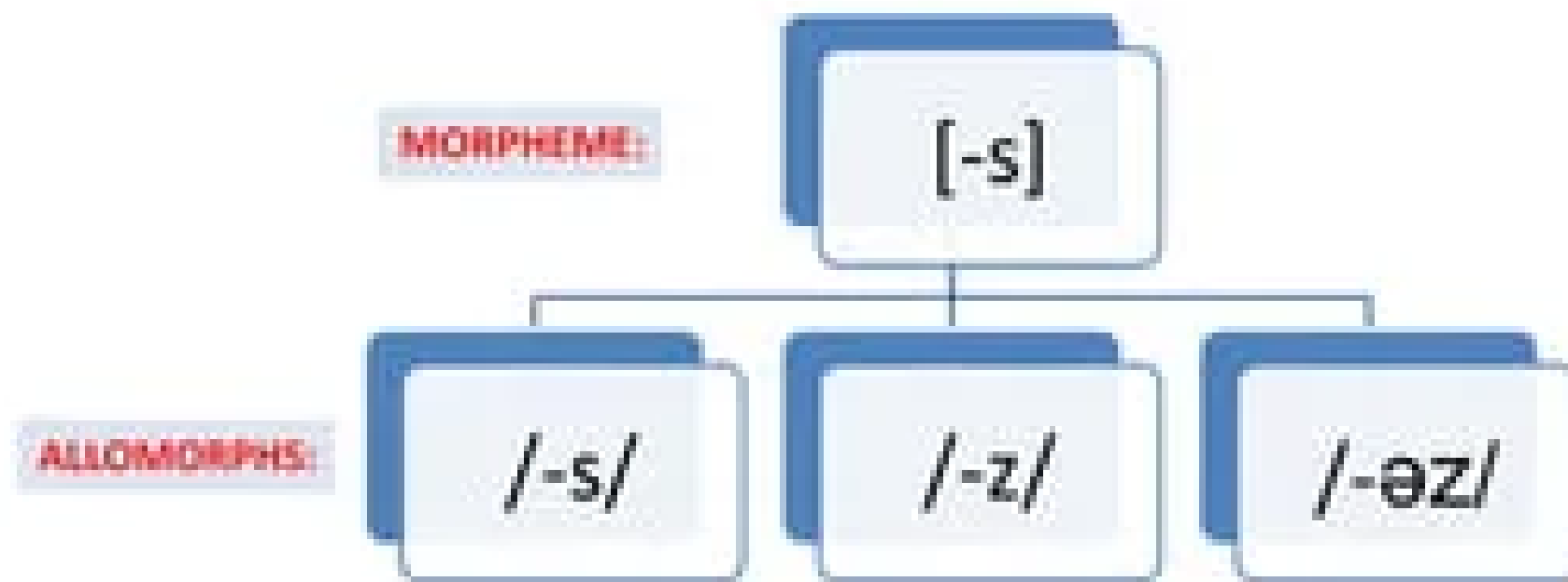
a dog    an apple

-s

dogs    cats    watches

/dɒgz/    /kæts/    /wɒtʃɪz/

# Allomorph



**/ɪd/**

- verbs whose stem ends with the alveolar stops /t/ or /d/
- EX: *hunted, branded*

**/t/**

- verbs whose stem ends with voiceless phonemes other than /t/
- EX: *fished, slipped*

**/d/**

- verbs whose stem ends with voiced phonemes other than /d/
- EX: *buzzed, slammed*

# Roots, Bases and Stems



## Base

### BASE

Most linguists call any form to which an affix is attached a base.



## Root

### ROOT

If a word is stripped of all its affixes, both derivational and inflectional, the remaining part is called the root.



## Stem

### STEM

The bases that remain when only the inflectional affixes are taken away are also called stems.



# Can you tell the differences between these words?

god - goddess

eat - eats

child - children

happy - unhappy

Linguist - Linguistic - Linguistics

believe - believable - unbelievable

# What about these words?

Tue ( Tuesday)

Forex (Foreign Exchange)

POTUS (President of the United States)

SSRU (Suan Sunandha Rajabhat University)

# Contemporary Linguistic Analysis

< AN INTRODUCTION >

eighth edition

William O'Grady John Archibald



## Reading List





Any Questions?

# Thank you

We can discuss in class or  
contact me via email



# See you next week!

