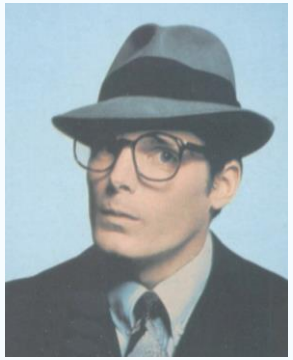
Morphology II:

Allomorphy and Concatenation

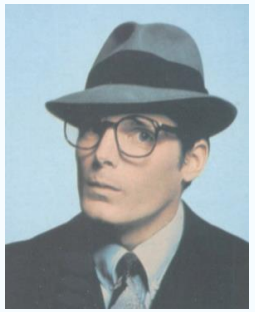
Reading: FRH Ch. 2

PLIN0006: Introduction to Language

Recap: Allos in fiction



When someone is in danger



Elsewhere

Rule:

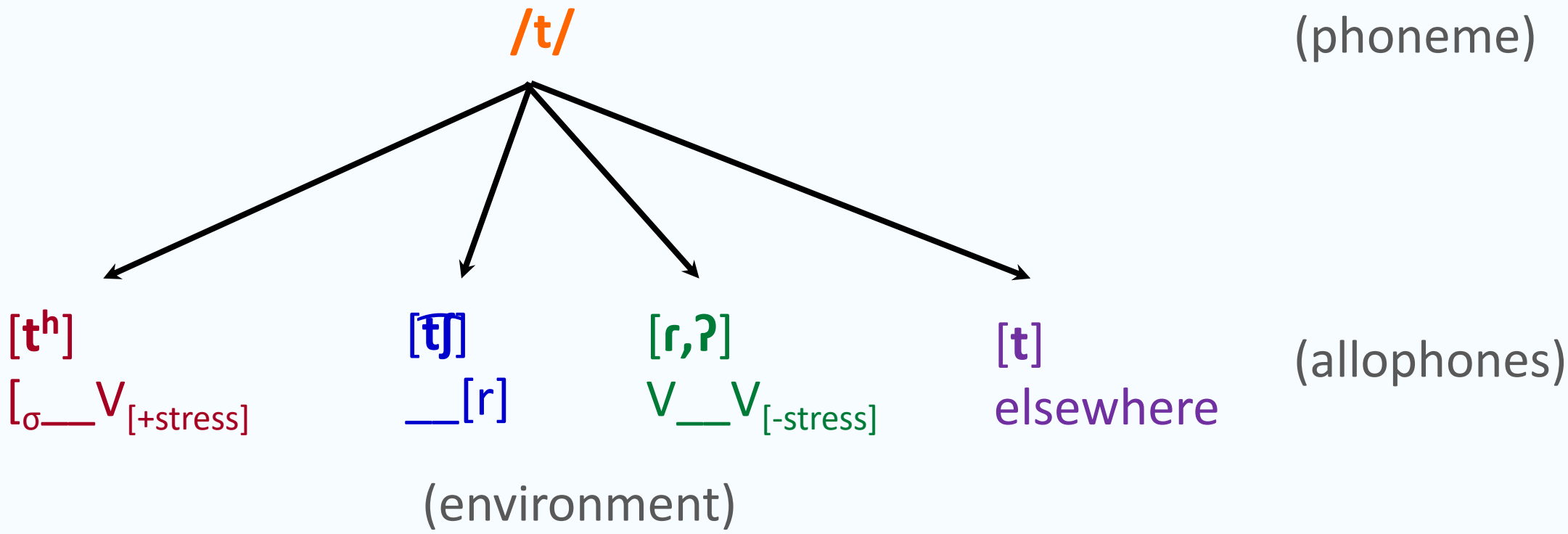
CK → SM / someone is in danger

CK and SM are in **complementary distribution**:

where one appears, the other does not.

Recap: Allos in phonology

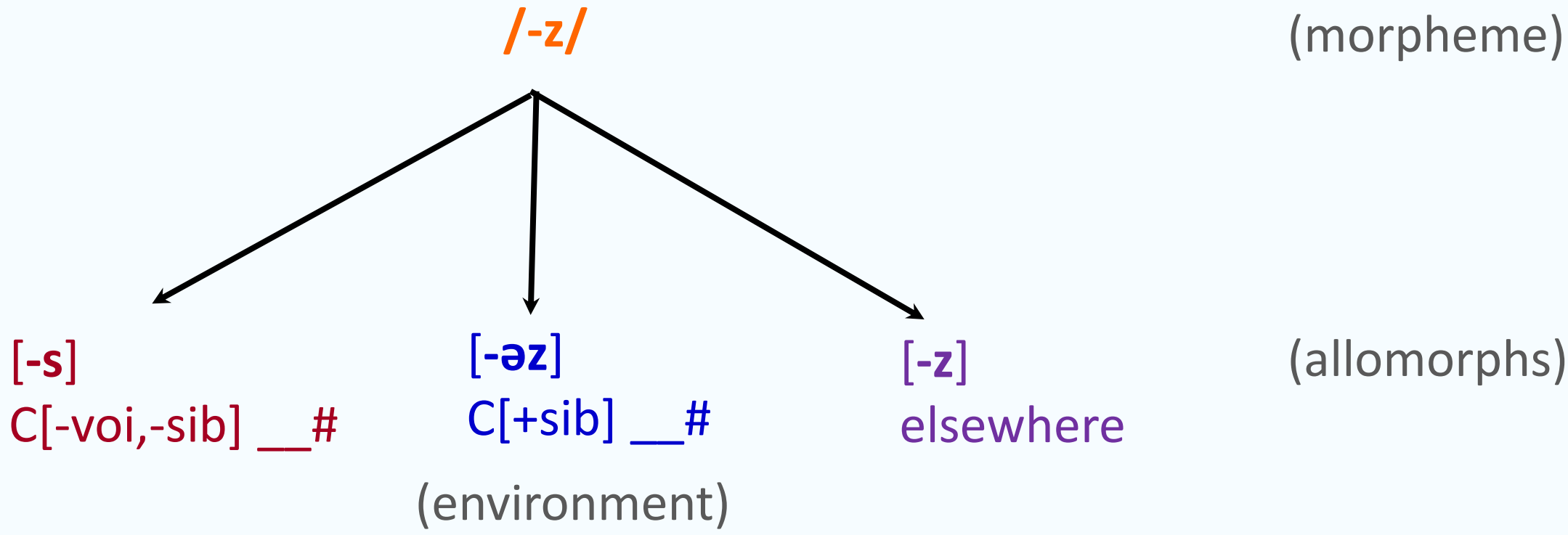
Examples: **t**op, **t**ree, bu**tt**er, s**t**un



These variants of /t/ are also in **complementary distribution**: where one occurs, the others do not.

Allomorphy

The plural morpheme /-z/: cat-**s**, wish-**es**, dog-**s**



Allomorphs are also in **complementary distribution**.

The English Indefinite Article

- **an** before vowels (**an** apple, **an** igloo)
- **a** before consonants (**a** book)

- But: a unicorn, not *an unicorn. Why?

Letters ≠ Sounds

The English Indefinite Article (Continued)

- **an** before vowels (**an** apple, **an** igloo)
- **a** before consonants (**a** book)

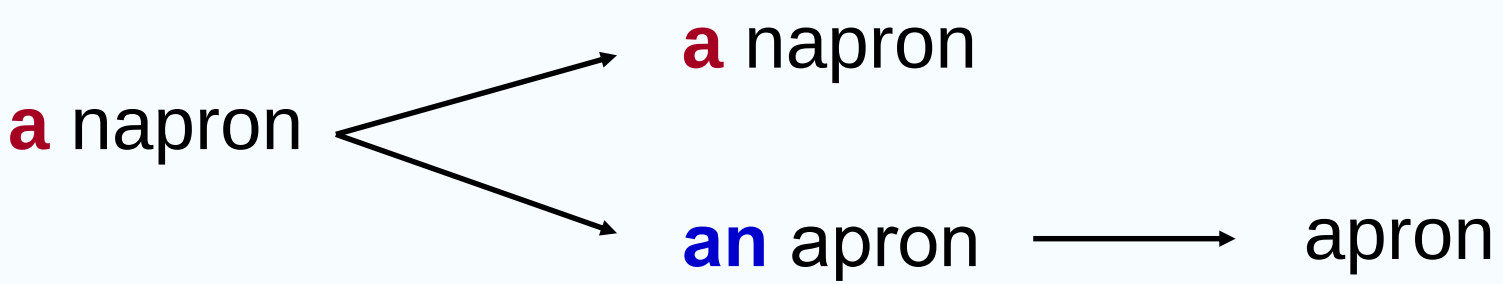
- But: a unicorn, not *an unicorn. Why?
- Answer: **unicorn** begins with a consonant: [juːnɪkɔːn].

Historical Restructuring

Old French: naperon

English ~1400: napron

English ~1600: apron



Phonological Conditioning in Akan (Ghana)

- **Negation in Akan:**

Akan	Meaning
[mɪ pɛ]	'I like'
[mɪ **m**pɛ]	'I don't like'
[mɪ tɪ]	'I speak'
[mɪ **n**tɪ]	'I don't speak'
[mɪ kɔ]	'I go'
[mɪ **ŋ**kɔ]	'I don't go'

- **Homorganic nasal rule:** Change the place of articulation of a nasal to agree with place of articulation of the following consonant.

Nasal Homorganicity in English

- **[ɪm]** **im**-patient, **im**-balanced;
- **[ɪn]** **in**-sincere, **in**-tolerable, **in**-operable;
- **[ɪŋ]** **in**-correct, **in**-capable;
- **[ɪ]** **ir**-regular, **il**-licit.

- Why is the UR of this morpheme /ɪn-/, and not /ɪm-/, /ɪŋ/, or /ɪ-/?

➢ Answer: /ɪn-/ occurs before vowels, where there is no PoA to copy.

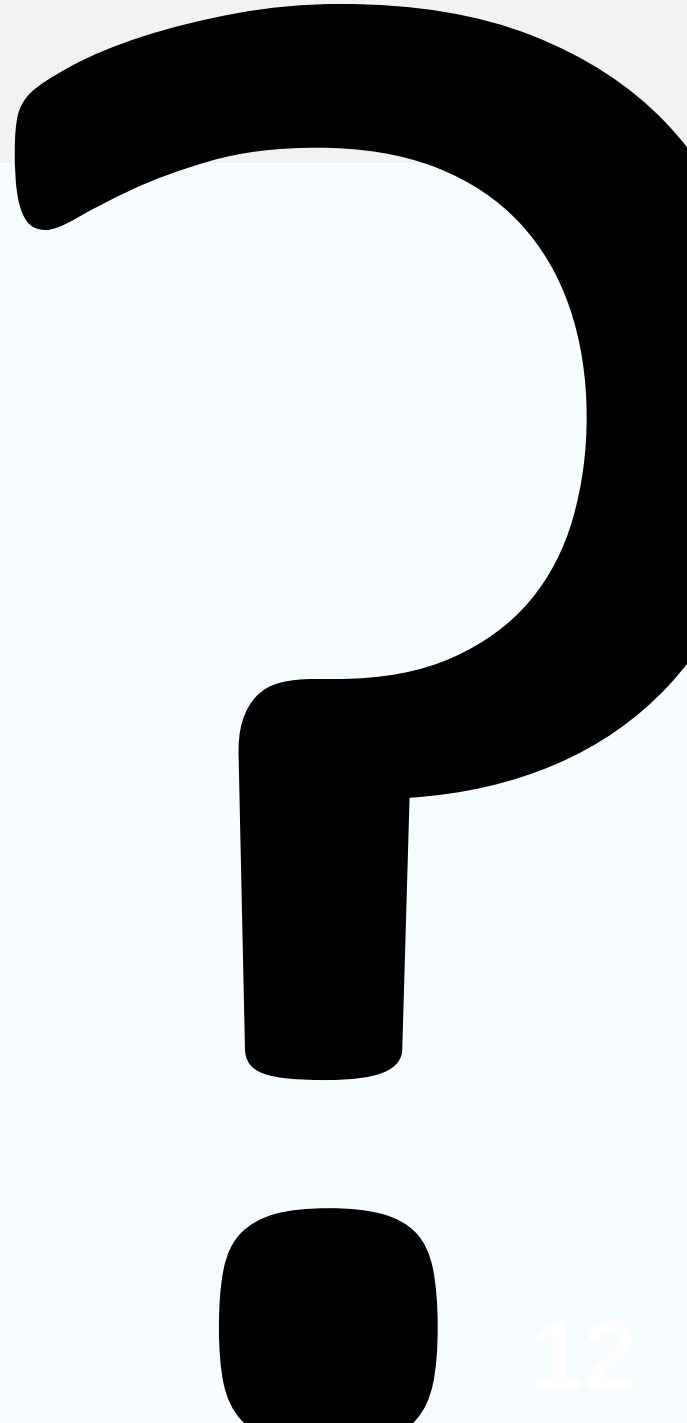
The Turkish Locative Suffix

Turkish	Meaning
lokanta	‘a restaurant’
lokanta-**da**	‘in/at a restaurant’
kapɨ	‘a door’
kapɨ-**da**	‘in/at a door’
randevu	‘an appointment’
randevu-**da**	‘in/at an appointment’

Turkish	Meaning
baʃ	‘a head’
baʃ-**ta**	‘in/at a head’
koltuk	‘an armchair’
koltuk-**ta**	‘in/at an armchair’
taraf	‘a side’
taraf-**ta**	‘in/at a side’

Question:

How are morphemes combined into words?



Affixation

- Affixes are **selective** (“choosy”).

- Examples:
  - -**able** only attaches to verbs: doable, *blueable
  - -**ly** only to adjectives: happily, *doly
  - -**un** only to verbs and adjectives: undo, unhappy, *undesk
  - **-anti** only to nouns: antimissile, *antido, *antihappy

Compounding

- Compounding combines **two roots** with each other.

  These can be nouns, verbs, or adjectives.

- Examples:
  - Noun-Noun: wristwatch, bookshelf
  - Adj-Noun: blackboard, greenhouse
  - Adj-Adj: bittersweet
  - Noun-Verb: spoonfed

Truncation

- Stems can undergo **partial deletion** to signal semantic modification or grammatical function.
- Examples from Koasati (Muskogean, Louisana):

Koasati	Meaning
mis**ip**-li-n	‘wink (sg)’
mis-li-n	‘wink (pl)’
akocof**ot**-li-n	‘jump down (sg)’
akocof-fi-n	‘jump down (pl)’
acit**ii**-li-n	‘tie sth. (sg)’
acit-li-n	‘tie something (pl)’

- Truncation also happens in English: **web**log → blog, **a**fro → fro

Linearity

- Morphemes are usually combined in a linear sequence.

  This process is called **(linear) concatenation**.

- In concatenated words, morphemes are pronounced

  one after another (i.e., not at the same time).

- Example:
  - un+lock+able is [ʌnlɔkəbl], not *[lʌ̈ʷmɲl̃]

Hierarchy

- Complex words have **hierarchical structure**:
  - Words consist of smaller groupings of morphemes, which themselves consist of smaller groupings of morphemes, etc., down to the root.
- Examples:
  - [un[[lock] able]] ‘can’t be locked’ = un+(lockable)
  - [[un [lock]]able] ‘can be unlocked’ = (unlock)+able

Heads and Grammatical Category

- When two items are combined, one is the **head** of the new item.
- Words have a **grammatical category**, determined by their head.
- Examples - English obeys the “right-hand head rule”:
  - un-lock-**able** → adjective
  - un-**tie** → verb
  - black-**board** → noun
  - bitter-**sweet** → adjective
  - spoon-**feed** → verb

Non-concatenative morphology

- **Non-concatenative morphology** is exponed by changes to the stem other than adding to the linear sequence.

- Examples:
  - m**ou**se (sg.) - m**i**ce (pl.); t**oo**th (sg.) - t**ee**th (pl.);
  - sw**i**m (pres.) - sw**a**m (past); sp**i**n (pres.) - sp**u**n (past).

  - English **ablaut** is limited to inflectional morphology, and only arguably productive nowadays.

Mutation in Welsh

In some languages, the initial consonant or a stressed vowel of a word change to expone a morphological feature. This is called **mutation**.

/tad/	‘father’
[ə tad]	‘the father’
[ə n̥ad]	‘my father’
[də dad]	‘your father’
[i θad]	‘her father’
[i dad]	‘his father’

Templates in Egyptian Arabic

Semitic languages like Arabic use **templatic morphology**,

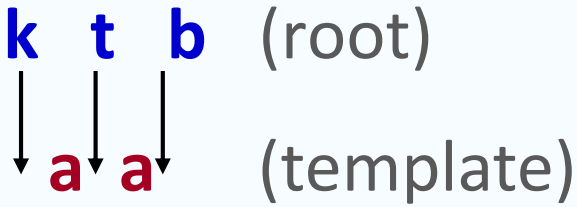
where a **root** is combined with a **template** to form a word.

Form	Meaning
katab	‘he wrote’
baktib	‘I write’
iktib	‘write!’
kaatib	‘writer’
maktuub	‘written’

Table 1. Root: **k-t-b**; ‘write’

Form	Meaning
daras	‘he studied’
badris	‘I study’
idris	‘study!’
daaris	‘student’
madruus	‘studied’

Table 2. Root: **d-r-s**; ‘study’



Summary

- Morphemes can be in **complementary** or **contrastive** distribution.

- Morphemes may have multiple realisations.

  The choice of **allomorph** depends on its context.

- Multi-morphemic words consist of more than one morpheme.

  Complex words often have hierarchical and linear structure.

- Non-concatenative morphology involves non-linear modification.