

plays is attributable to the difference in lexical meaning between /bɔɪ/ and /gɜ:ɪ/. Likewise, the difference in grammatical function between *play-s* (present tense) and *play-ed* (past tense) is responsible for the difference in meaning between *The girl plays* and *The girl played*.

DEFINITION: The **morpheme** is the smallest difference in the shape of a word that correlates with the smallest difference in word or sentence meaning or in grammatical structure.

The analysis of words into morphemes begins with the isolation of **morphs**. A morph is a physical form representing some morpheme in a language. It is a recurrent distinctive sound (phoneme) or sequence of sounds (phonemes).

Study the data in [2.6] and identify the morphs:

- | | |
|----------------------------|------------------------|
| [2.6] a. I parked the car. | e. She parked the car. |
| b. We parked the car. | f. She parks the car. |
| c. I park the car. | g. We park the car. |
| d. He parks the car. | h. He parked the car. |

The morphs are:

Morph	Recurs in
/aɪ/ 'I'	[2.6a] and [2.6c]
/ʃi:/ 'she'	[2.6e] and [2.6f]
/hi:/ 'he'	[2.6d] and [2.6h]
/ðə/ 'the'	in all the examples
/kɑ:/ 'car'	in all the examples
/pɑ:rk/ 'park'	<i>park</i> is found in all the examples, sometimes with an <i>-ed</i> suffix, sometimes with an <i>-s</i> suffix and sometimes on its own
/t/ '-ed'	suffixed to park in [2.6b, e, h]
/s/ '-s'	suffixed to park in [2.6d, f]

For our next example, we shall perform an analysis similar to the one we have just done for English on data from a less familiar language. Now study the data in [2.7] which are taken from Luganda and list all the morphs. (Although Luganda is a tone language, tone is omitted for simplicity's sake as it is not relevant here.)

[2.7] tulilaba	kitabo	'we will see a book'
tuligula	katabo	'we will buy a little book'
baalaba	bitabo	'they saw books'
tulilaba	butabo	'we will see little books'
balilaba	kitabo	'they will see a book'
tulilaba	bitabo	'we will see books'
baatunda	butabo	'they sold little books'
baligula	bitabo	'they will buy books'
baagula	katabo	'they bought a little book'
tutunda	bitabo	'we sell books'

- Hints:**
- The word meaning 'book' appears in all the sentences but in some it is singular and in others plural.
 - 'Book' sometimes refers to a normal size book, and in other cases to a *little* book.
 - We have three different verbs.
 - The verbs are in different tenses.
 - The verbs have different subjects.

The answer to [2.7] is given in [2.8].

- [2.8] -tabo 'book', tu- 'we', ki- 'singular' (normal size) noun prefix
 -laba 'see', ba- 'they', bi- 'plural' (normal size) noun prefix
 -gula 'buy', -li- 'future', ka- 'singular' (small size) noun prefix
 -tunda 'sell', -a- 'past', bu- 'plural' (small size) noun prefix

In [2.8], each different morph represents a separate morpheme. But this is not always the case. Sometimes different morphs may represent the same morpheme. For instance, the past tense of regular verbs in English which is spelled *-ed* is realised in speech by /ɪd/, /d/ or /t/. The phonological properties of the last segment of the verb to which it is attached determine the choice:

- [2.9] It is realised as:
- /ɪd/ if the verb ends in /d/ or /t/
 e.g. /mend/ ~ /mendɪd/ /peɪnt/ ~ /peɪntɪd/
 'mend' 'mended' 'paint' 'painted'
 - /d/ after a verb ending in any voiced sound except /d/
 e.g. /kli:n/ ~ /kli:nd/ /weɪ/ ~ /weɪd/
 'clean' 'cleaned' 'weigh' 'weighed'
 - /t/ after a verb ending in any voiceless consonant other than /t/
 e.g. /pɑ:k/ ~ /pɑ:kt/ /mɪs/ ~ /mɪst/
 'park' 'parked' 'miss' 'missed'