The Acquisition of English Morphophonology

**Morphemes**
- The smallest units that carry meanings
- Hat, run, big, give
- Hatband, runner, biggest, giving
- Hat-band, runn-er, bigg-est, giv-ing

**Morphemes**
- Free morpheme
- Bound morpheme
  --- inflectional morpheme
  -s (3ps), -ed, -ing, -en, -s (pl), -s, -er, est
  --- derivational morpheme
  change meaning or parts of speech
  un-happy: not
  happi-ness: adjective → noun

**How many morphemes?**
- impossibility
- catsup
- hopeful
- spacious
- classroom
- dishonesty
- overgeneralization
- restrain

**plural allomorphs**

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th></th>
<th>A</th>
<th>B</th>
<th>C</th>
<th>D</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>Cab</td>
<td>Cap</td>
<td>Bus</td>
<td>Child</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bag</td>
<td>Cat</td>
<td>Bush</td>
<td>Ox</td>
<td></td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>Bar</td>
<td>Back</td>
<td>Buzz</td>
<td>mouse</td>
<td></td>
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<tr>
<td>spa</td>
<td>cuff</td>
<td>Garage</td>
<td>criterion</td>
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<td>can</td>
<td>faith</td>
<td>Match</td>
<td>sheep</td>
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</tr>
<tr>
<td>call</td>
<td></td>
<td>badge</td>
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<tr>
<td>boy</td>
<td></td>
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</tbody>
</table>

**Plural morphophonemic rules**
1. insert a schwa before the plural morpheme when a regular noun ends in a sibilant.
2. Change the plural morpheme to voiceless when a voiceless sound precede it.
Derivational allomorphs

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>verb</th>
<th>noun</th>
<th>verb</th>
<th>noun</th>
</tr>
</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>inflate</td>
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<td>abrade</td>
<td>abrasion</td>
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<td>relate</td>
<td>relation</td>
<td>invade</td>
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<td>pollute</td>
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<td>delude</td>
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<tr>
<td>promote</td>
<td>promotion</td>
<td>corrode</td>
<td>corrosion</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Recognition of allomorphic relations

- Do English speakers apprehend these relationships?
- If English speakers do sense correspondence between such pairs, do they know the rules?

Speakers may indeed apprehend many of the less regular relationships between allomorphs.
However, speakers do not have to extract the patterns in order to become competent users of English.

Stress in morphophonology

<table>
<thead>
<tr>
<th>declare</th>
<th>declaration</th>
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</thead>
<tbody>
<tr>
<td>method</td>
<td>methodical</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>normal</td>
<td>normality</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>vain</td>
<td>vanity</td>
</tr>
<tr>
<td>south</td>
<td>southern</td>
</tr>
</tbody>
</table>

Development of morphophonology

- Children being learning some of the regularity governing the choice among English allomorphs fairly early.
- Some aspect of English stress appear not to be mastered until 12 years old or so.
- Some nonproductive regularities are still being learned well into adolescence.

Myerson’s (1975) study (p.107)

- increasing ability over the ages 8-17 to deal with three types of allomorphonology
  1. The change from alveolar stop to palatal fricative when –ion is added
  2. The shift in stress when –ity or ical are added to words like stupid (stupidity).
  3. The changes in vowels associated with stress shift
Contrastive or emphatic stress

- I want the black book, not the green book.
- I want the black book, not the black notebook.
- Kindergarteners were able to produce emphatic stress correctly.

Compound and phrase stress

- light house keeper
- greenhouse vs. green house
- white house vs. white house
- hotdog vs. hot dog
- red sox vs. red socks

Acquisition of compound and phrase stress

- Atkinson-King (1973)
  1. Imitation --kindergartener
  2. Preference—3rd grade
  3. Produce 2 labels correctly when present with paired pictures
  4. Produce the label distinguishably when given only one of the pictures