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3.3 Summary :

All attempts, presented throughout this paper, which center around morphophonemic changes endeavour to segment an irregular form into two, or more, morphemes in terms of independent forms or within paradigms without resorting to syntax ; thus, trying to assign a physical property to each morpheme. As a matter of fact , these attempts fail to show physical reality because of their recourse to mathematics, e.g., their use of ϕ , +, \pm , [], \rightarrow etc. '

The solution suggested in this study is to deal with irregular forms contextually by means of employing syntax . Semantics , on the other hand , is also responsible for assigning *cut*, for example , to past or present morpheme , or whether used with singular or plural noun . However , we feel that this criterion can yield a real value to irregular forms i.e., to assign a morphosyntactic property to each form .

Now, if the preceding verbs are replaced by *is* : *are* or *was* : *were*, the situation is clear without recourse to determiners, e.g.,

The sheep is running .

The sheep are running .

We know beforehand that *is*, for example, is never used unless accompanied by a singular subject. For this reason, it is better to use subject-verb concord in that the verb can tell us the identity of its subject .

As for past - tense morphemes that require a zero allomorph, we believe that there should be something in the sentence (or the environment as a whole) which could account for the preterit form (this 'something' could possibly be termed as "past - time - determiner"), e.g.,

A sheep cut a small plant with its white teeth in the zoo yesterday. "A" and "its" determine that *sheep* is singular ; and "yesterday" functions as a "past - time - determiner" - an adverb .

Now comes the question of segmentation . When linguists use a zero allomorph, they endeavour to prove that a given irregular form consists of two morphemes. Yet this zero, though logically and mathematically significant, shows no physical reality as contrasted, for example, with *book* vs. *books*. As syntax makes the situation very clear because reality is tangible, we hope it fulfils the requirements of assigning a noun syntactically used to singular or plural forms, or categorizing a verb implying a past allomorph to the past - tense morpheme .

Finally, we would rather employ an imaginary morpho-syntactic symbol such as (X), for these nouns and verbs. This symbol may stand for an allomorph, to mean that syntax determines the property of these forms. It is worth mentioning here that (X), syntactically and lexically speaking, has a morphological value, but it should never be considered a physical morpheme or compared with ϕ . This zero allomorph means an empty position that fits the requirements of comparable suffixes of the class-morpheme to which it belongs in reality, it does not, whereas this (X) should always be interpreted as a term referring to a *situational morpheme* ; it only becomes meaningful when it is part of a group of meaningful forms, i.e. sentence.

An obligatory transformational rule is applied :

past + cut \rightleftharpoons cut + past

cut + past \rightarrow cut (a morphophonemic rule).

We might sum this up with the following representations :

A. ([t] aild] + pl]) N

$\left\{ \begin{array}{l} \text{(vowel change) + r\delta n} \\ \text{tjild} \end{array} \right\} \text{N}$

[tʃildrən]N

B. [[]i:p) + p]] N

[]i:p] N

C. [[kʌt] + p] V

(kʌt) V (64)

3.2 Syntax Substituting for Zero Morphemes in Indicating Irregular Forms

As mentioned in 2.10 syntax is very important in identifying irregular forms. Syntax plays a great part in telling us which is which. Therefore, we suggest to abandon the idea of employing a zero allomorph in signalling the second allomorph of a given form. Just because the zero allomorph has no physical property, it is advisable and more reasonable to employ syntax as the sole determiner of unfolding the identity of such forms.

When a verb in the present - simple tense happens to occur in a sentence containing an irregular noun of this type, it would either be assigned to a singular form when it is inflected with -s or to a plural form as it lacks this -s. The verb is essential in determining what form the irregular noun has. For example, the following sentences are ambiguous :

The deer ran away

I saw the sheep

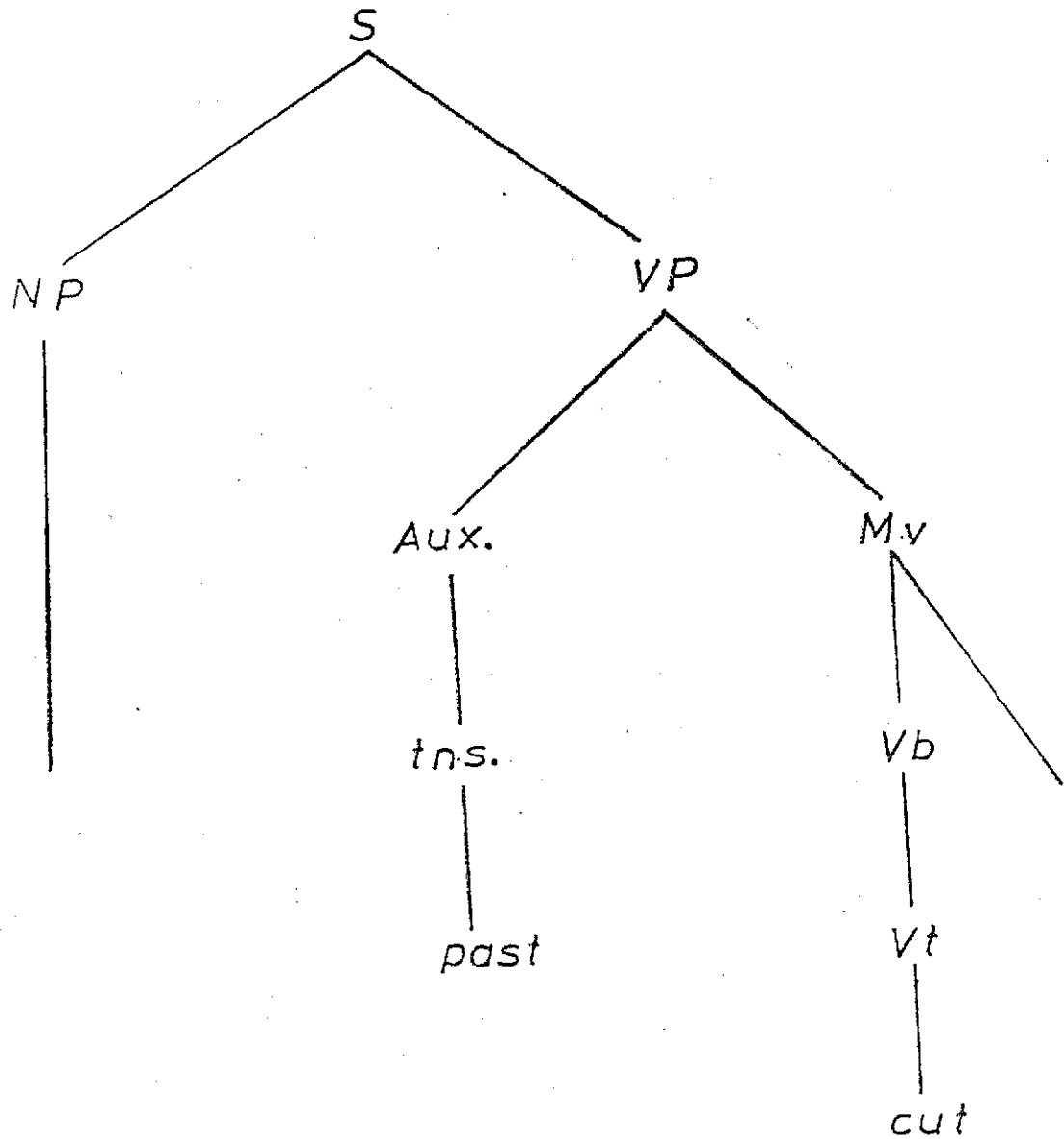
Yet, if certain determiners are introduced before these nouns we can tell which is singular or plural, e.g.,

64. Cf. PH. Matthews, *Morphology- An Introduction to the Theory of Word-Structure* (London: Cambridge University Press, 1974) Chapter XII.

deer + pl. → deer
 sheep + pl. → sheep .
 fish + pl. → fish

As for irregular verbs, such as *cut*, *hit*, *put*.. etc., a tree diagram just as simply as that of irregular nouns will make **this** clear , e.g.,

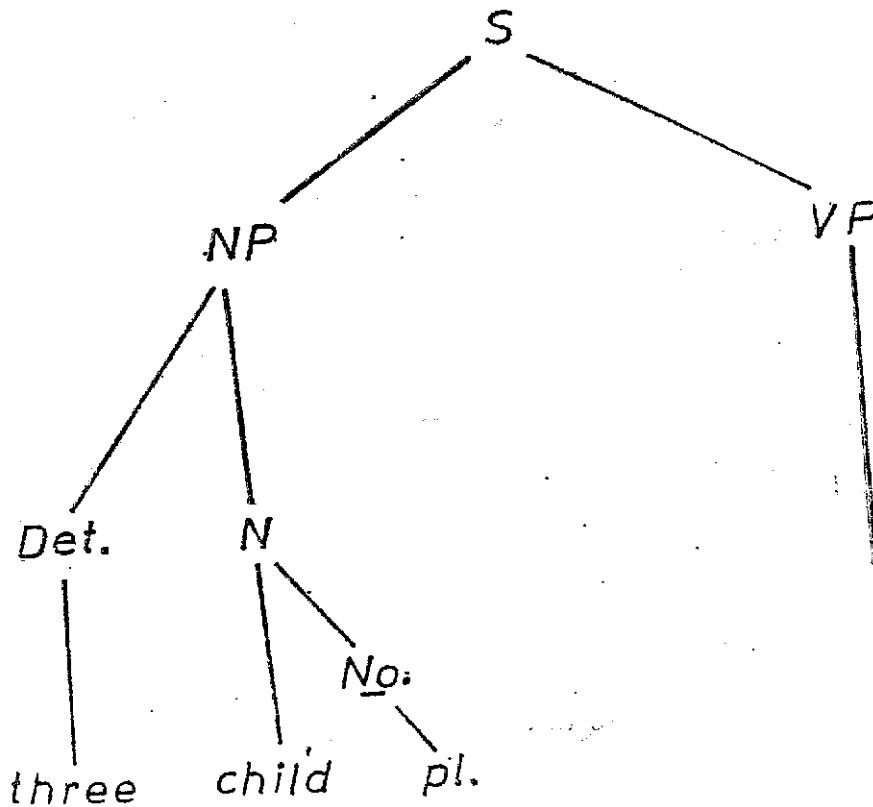
Ali cut his leg yesterday



3. SYNTAX AND MORPHEMES

3.1 Transformational Generative Grammar and Morphological Irregular Forms :

Transformational Grammar, as far as we know, extensively utilises deep and surface structures to account for irregular forms in English morphology. Hence, each irregular form (and , of course, any other form) is contextually analysed. For example, *children* in *Three children have been playing in the garden*, would play the following part in this tree diagram :



Then, the appropriate morphophonemic rule is applied :

child + pl. → children

Also, for *deer*, *sheep*, *fish* etc., the same process is followed :

hand, Nida says that "the immediate constituents of *kept* are the nuclear /k...p/" plus the changes of /i:/ in *keep* into /e/ of /kept / *kept* plus the suffix /-t/. (59) Again, we believe that the idea of employing discontinuous allomorphs in describing English morphology is not sound (60).

2.10 Zero Allomorphs

The zero allomorph, previously symbolised as ϕ , is widely employed by linguists who think that it "refers to a significant absence of suffix" (61). Among the nouns that form their plural forms by adding a zero morpheme are: *sheep, deer, swine, bear, antelope, bass, pike, carp, perch, quail and grouse*.

Elson and Pickett state that "Hockett, for example, describes English *sheep : sheep, deer : deer* and the like as "used syntactically as singular or plural" but show no shape of change" (62). The following section will make this point clearer as it is devoted to syntax and morphemes.

Some of the verbs that form their preterits by adding a zero morpheme are: *put, bet, hurt, cut .. etc.* (63).

59. Cf. Nida, *op. cit.*, P. 110

60. See the reasons stated in 2.4

61. Cf. Stageberg, *op. cit.*, p. 124.

62. Elson and Pickett, *op. cit.*, p. 49.

63. For the treatment of zero allomorph, cf. Gleason, *op. cit.*, p. 75, Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 139, Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, p. 239, Robins, *op. cit.*, p. 205, Stryker, *op. cit.*, p. 18, Francis, *op. cit.*, 190, Hall, *op. cit.*, p. 135, Pei, *op. cit.*, pp. 62, 63, Elson and Pickett, *op. cit.*, p. 49 and William Branford, *The Elements of English, An Introduction to the Principles of the Study of Language*, (London: Routledge and Kegan Paul, 1967), p. 119.

wife / waif / > wives / waivz /

knife / naif / > knives / naivz /

calf / ka:f / > calves / ka:vz /,

/f/ is changed into /v/ and that requires the voiced plural suffix, /z/ (53) .

What concerns us here is that we have a second allomorph of the base:

/laiv-/, /louv-/, /waiv-/, /naiv-/ and /ka: v-/ which only appears before the plural suffix (54) .

The suffix /θ/ by which nouns are derived from adjectives requires vocalic change, e.g.,

wide / waid/ width/ wid θ /

long/ lɔ : η/ length / leη θ / (55) .

Some verbs form their preterits by changing both the nucleus and the final consonant of the base before the suffix /-t/, e.g.,

leave / li : v / left / left /

lose/ lu:z / lost / lɔ st / (56)

In *stand: stood*, we have /əθ > u / as an allomorph of the past morpheme with the loss of / n / (57)

Hockett and Nida seem to maintain the employment of the “discontinuous” allomorphs in treating irregular forms. Hockett states that the second allomorph of *sell* is /s.'..l/ which never occurs unless accompanied by the past-tense morpheme. Thus, /s.'..l/ + /ou/ + /d/ yields /sould/sold. (58) On the other

53. Cf. Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, pp. 212-3 .

Stageberg, *op. cit.*, p. 125 .

Hill, *op. cit.*, p. 139 and Stryker, *op. cit.*, p. 17.

54. Cf. Hill. *op. cit.*, p. 139 .

55. Cf. Bloch and Trager, *op. cit.*, p. 63 .

56. *Ibid.*, p. 57 .

57. Cf. Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, p. 216 .

58. Cf. Hockett, *op. cit.*, pp. 271, 272 in *A Course in Modern Linguistics*.

added to the suppletive form /wen -/ to classify it as an allomorph of the past morpheme (48). If it were so, why is it /t/ and not /d/ as the phoneme preceding it is voiced? We think it would have been better to say that *went* is "realized" as "go + ed" (49) or that *went* is a "portmanteau morph" than to complicate matters since /n/ requires /d/.

Though Stageberg accounts for the total change as "suppletion" yet it is misleading to segment *went* into two physical constituents as he does, i.e., /went/ = /go > wen + /t/ (50). Also, Robins does the same and states that the case is just like *walked* /wɔ : k/ + /-t/ (51) while it is not, because *walk* can be a free form whereas /wen-/ can not.

English monosyllabic adjectives regularly form the comparative and the superlative degrees by adding the suffixes /-δr/ and /-δst/, respectively. We might say that partial suppletion is embodied in *good* > bet+er in the comparative and > be + st in the superlative. A complete suppletion is to be found in *bad* > bad + er > worse > worst (52). Again, we state that such treatment is only "realized" because there is no way of suffixation.

2.9 Consonantal and Vocalic Changes

A set of nouns form the plural of its members by changing the final consonant of the stem in the singular and adding the plural suffix which goes hand in hand with this "final consonant", i.e., whether it is voiced or voiceless. For instance, in the following forms :

life / laif / > / lives / laivz /
loaf / louf / > / loaves / louvz /

-
48. Cf. Stageberg, *op. cit.*, p. 135, Bloch and Trager, *op. cit.*, p. 58, Harris, *op. cit.*, p. 114, and Francis, *op. cit.*, p. 220.
49. Cf. John Lyons, *Introduction to Theoretical Linguistics*, (London : Cambridge University Press, 1968), p. 187.
50. Cf. Stageberg, *op. cit.*, p. 135.
51. Cf. Robins, *op. cit.*, pp. 207-268.
52. Cf. Bloch and Trager, *op. cit.*, p. 53, and Lyons, *loc. cit.*

the allomorphs of the plural morpheme are in complementary distribution. Therefore, none of these allomorphs could be a suppletive alternant for its member in the same class or to the class itself.

Some other linguists have no choice as to be in favour of /-ðn/or/-rðn/.(43) They simply state that each of the preceding analysis is possible, yet Robins makes it clear that "a choice must be made—in a description of English Grammar." (44).

Incidentally, the solution we suggest instead here is identical with that of Palmer's, who states:

"It is reasonable to regard /tʃ aɪld/ in the singular and /tʃ ɪld/ in the plural as allomorphs of the same morpheme, and it is equally reasonable to identify the /ðn/ of *children* with the /ðn/ of *oxen*. What then can we say of the /r/? It is an "empty" morph, since it belongs to no morpheme at all"(45)

2.3 Suppletive Alternation

Though we find sometimes a suppletive form phonemically, partially or completely different from the free base, yet "the paradigm requires that we assign it to the same morpheme, and describe the morphophonemic change that takes place as suppletion."(46) The analysis, here, will be restricted to a few forms that are recurrent in the analysis of various linguists. On the one hand, some linguists would say that suppletion "is a complete change in the form of a stem, as when *went*, *was* are used as the past forms of *go*, *be*; *worse* is the suppletive comparative of *bad* (47) On the other hand, Stageberg, Bloch and Trager, Harris, and Francis regard the /t/ of *went* as the suffix

43. Cf. Robins, *op. cit.* p. 204, and Elson & Pickett, *op. cit.*, p. 50

44. Robins, *op. cit.*, p. 204.

45. Palmer, *op. cit.*, p. 115

46. Francis, *op. cit.*, p. 220

47. Pei, *op. cit.*, p. 63, cf. Bloomfield, *op. cit.*, p. 239, Bloch and Trager account for this complete difference with some other alternative which follows, *op. cit.*, p. 58.

7. *take* and *took* are different (single) morphemes. This means that the two morphemes have ' no partial phonetic semantic resemblance ' yet we find their consonantal framework the same and *took* has a clear semantic relation to *take* because they are the members of "take - paradigm."

2.7 Irregular Sequential Suffixes

The "sequential suffix "- as opposed to a "non- sequential suffix" which has early been rejected in this study - refers to a suffix appearing at the end of a given form. Our concern will be merely based on the plural suffixes occurring in *oxen* and *children*. To assign the plural suffix /- ðn/ in this pair of words as an allomorph to the plural morpheme, two things are required: complementary distribution and semantic similarity. Some linguists, such as Hill, Harris, Francis and Stryker, are in favour of taking / - ðn / as in *children* the plural allomorph to match it with / ðn/ in *oxen*; they would say that the morpheme {child} has two allomorphs : /tʃ aild/ and /tʃ ildr/ (41).

Bloch and Trager, Bloomfield and Stageberg believe that the suffix in *children* is /-r ðn/ so as, it seems, to match /tʃild -/ with /tʃ aild/. Besides, they would match /- r ðn/ in *children* with / -r ðn / of *brethren*. Strangely enough, all consider / - ðn / of *oxen* and / - r ðn/ of *children* and *brethren* as suppletive forms to the normal plural morpheme.(42) We believe that this treatment is, to a certain extent , incorrect because suppletion takes place within the same paradigm whose elements are closely related . Also , as early stated,

41. Cf. Hill. *op .cit* p. 141, Francis., *op cit.*, pp. 188, 190 Harris, *op cit.*, pp. 110, 113 & Shirley L. Stryker, " *Applied Linguistics : Principles and Techniques*, " *English Teaching Forum*, (*Washington: The Information Center Service of the United States Information Agency. Vol. vII. No. 5 1969*) , p. 13

42. Cf. Stageberg, *op cit.* , pp. 102, 135, Leonard Bloomfield, *Language*, (*London: The Company Printing Works, 1935*), p. 215, and Bloch and Trager, *op. cit .*, p. 59 .

representing the morpheme sequence [man] +[s]; and “/tuk/ is a “ portman-teau ” morph, one that belongs simultaneously to two morphemes : *take* and *-ed*” (38). Thus, we find it reasonable to segment each irregular form as containing two morphemes. Hence, the given irregular form would certainly fall within each constituent having both meanings, e.g., *went* is a ‘portman-teau morph’ of *go + ed* .

2.6 Summary (39)

The pair *take :took* will be taken as a model here to summarize what has previously been described :

1. *take* is one morpheme, *took* is two , i.e.,
 $took / tuk/ = /teik / + /ei \rightarrow u/$.
2. *take* is one morpheme, *took* is three , i.e.,
 $took / tuk/ = /teik/ + /ei \rightarrow u/ + \phi$.
3. *take* is one morpheme, *took* is two (functioning as “portmanteau morph”, thus: *took / tuk /* is a “ portmanteau morph ” of *take + ed*)
4. *take* is one morpheme, *took* is two, i.e.,
 $took/tuk/ = /t...k/ + the infix/u/ as an allomorph of the past morpheme$
5. *take* and *took* are each two morphemes sharing the root $/t...k/$, *take* has an infixed non- existent allomorph of the present morpheme $*\{-X-\}$ (40) and *took* has the infixed $/u/$ as the allomorph of the past morpheme .
6. *take* is one morpheme; *took* is two, *took*, as a morphologically conditioned morpheme, consists of two allomorphs $/tuk/$ which is an allomorph of *take* and a zero allomorph of the past morpheme .

38. Cf. Frank Palmer, *Grammar*, (England : Penguin Books LTD., 1971), pp. 116 ,113.

39. This Summary is based on Palmer's *Grammar* ,pp. 117 -119.

40. The mark(*) means that the allomorph is imaginary or non-existent.

like English without recourse to replacives ” by describing *geese* / gi:s/ as containing a root / g..s/ and the infix/i:/as an allomorph of the plural morpheme,yet we think that we can not find any possibility , as such, because it does not go with the above-mentioned definition of “infix”. He adds that the singular would have the infix {u:} as “an allomorph of a single morpheme*{X}”(34) which we believe is not possible in English morphology,at least.Hockett,on the other hand, follows the same line of infixation : “*sing* /siŋ/ is represented by / s.'..ŋ /, into which fit infixed representations of certain inflectional morphemes, to yield *sang*, *sung* . ”(35) .

To reject the idea of infixation , as such,we illustrate the following examples: *took* has the discontinuous root/ t..k/ plus the infix/u/. Obviously, the root /t...k/ would be considered as the second allomorph of the base /teik/ *take*.If some linguists think so, why, then, is it not possible to infix the vowel of *talk* into the discontinuous root /t..k/? It is clear enough that the consonantal framework of *take* and *talk* is the same. Consequently, this sort of analysis-infixation - could not be adopted .One should never be misled by morphological analyses of other languages . Arabic is a good example of languages containing discontinuous roots . For instance , from the root /k..t..b/ *to write*,we can get many new words through the process of infixation, e.g.,/k a :tib/*writer*,/ kutub/*books*,/kita: b/ *book* and /katab/ *he wrote*.

Thus, it would be quite impossible to talk of such instances of pure infixation in English..

2.5 Portmanteau Morphs (36)

A “portmanteau” morph is a form belonging simultaneously to two (or, theoretically, more) morphemes, and has simultaneously the meanings of both.(37) For example, *men* is regarded as a single “ portmanteau morph,”

34. Cf. Gleason, *loc. cit.*

35. Hockett,*op. cit.*, p. 271 .

36. The “morph” here is to be taken as an “allomorph”; it is not the same “morph” defined by Francis, *op cit.*, p. 170 .

37. Charles F. Hockett, “Problems of Morphemic Analysis”- *Readings in Linguistics*, 2nd . Ed.by Martin Joos. New York: American Council of Learned Societies, 1958), p. 236.

more non-sequential suffixes such as { - i: - } in *geese, feet, teeth*, { -ai- } in *mice, lice* , and { -i- } in *women*, (28) . We find it unnecessary to account for these items as containing “a non-sequential suffix” because, since we talk of suffixation, we mean that there is an inflectional or derivational ending . Yet we may say that the difference of syllable nucleus functions in some ways **LIKE** the suffix for the sake of clarity only. Hence, we may state at last that such a difference in phonemes is “a special type of morphemic element called a replacive . ”(29)

Some linguists find it quite possible to talk of infixation in treating this phenomenon. Hockett believes that the noun- plural morpheme in *men* is represented by “infix /e/.”(30) Hill would also analyse this { -e- } as an infix (31), yet he states that instances of infixes defined as the following are not found in English :

“infix ” is a term reserved for affixation added within the boundaries of a segmental morpheme without the replacement of any material . (32)

Since addition is blocked, infixation would be impossible and it should not be suggested that “the plural of *feet*” is the infix { - i:- } as Elson and Pickett suggest,(33) Gleason states that it is “possible to describe a language

28. *Ibid.*, p. 141 .

29. Cf. H.A. Gleason, *An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics*, (Revised Ed . New York : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1961) , p. 74.

30. Cf. Charles F. Hockett, *A Course in Modern Linguistics*, (New York: The Macmillan Company, 1938), p. 280.

31. Cf. Hill, *op.cit.*, p. 140.

32. *Ibid.*, p. 141 .

33. Cf. Benjamin Elson and Velma Pickett, *An Introduction to Morphology and Syntax*, (Santa Ana, California : Summer Institute of Linguistics, 1962), p. 47.

should describe *feet* as consisting of only two morphemes : the stem and the replacement".(21).

Practically speaking, there is no reason to account for a zero allomorph as long as the vocalic change has by itself a morphological significance. Perhaps, Francis' account for a zero allomorph could be more reasonable. He simply states that the zero allomorph of *men*, for example, has the plural position in the paradigm.(22) Also, he states that we have a change of syllabic nucleus in /teik/ → /tuk/ with the addition of a zero allomorph of the past morphems. (23)

2.4 Infixation, Discontinuous Roots and Non-Sequential Suffixation Operating As Allomorphs .

When replacive morphemes take place, a discontinuous allomorph or the consonantal framework of the stem often results, e.g., the replacement of /u/by/i:/gives us the allomorph/f...t/.(24) In *men*, for example, Hill states that the plural morpheme is shown by "an internal vowel change." (25) He shows this by saying that *men* "contains a second allomorph of the base which consists of the consonantal framework only (and that this kind of allomorph) appears only with the suffix {-e-} -."(26) The only reason Hill gives for treating the vowel of *men* as a suffix is that this sort of vowel "has the property of occurring in non-sequential order, since it always replaces the stressed vowel (or vowel nucleus) of the base." (27) He illustrates some

21. Eugene A. Nida, *Morphology: The Descriptive Analysis of Words*, 9.

(2nd. Ed. Ann Arbor: The University of Michigan Press 1949) p. 54

22. Cf. Francis, *op. cit.*, 191.

23. *Ibid.*, p. 220.

24. Cf. Nida, *op. cit.*, p. 53 .

25. Hill, *op. cit.* .. p. 140 .

26. *Ibid.*, p. 141 .

27. *Ibid.*, p. 140 .

not. Robert A. Hall also places these allomorphs "under some category of inflection" (17) which he does not account for and which seems to be incorrect because they are merely "replacive allomorphs", not "additive".

2.2 Minus Plus Allomorphs (18)

Harris utilizes \pm features in the analysis of irregular forms. He states that in words such as *took* we have two morphemes: *take* and $/ei/ \sim /u/$ (19) 'past time' - a combination of negative and additive sequences : dropping $/ei/$ and adding $/u/$. Similarly, in *men*, we have the negative additive morpheme: $/\partial\varrho/ \sim /e/$ 'plural' (20). The idea of adding a morpheme to the stem does not seem to be that sound because this would mean that irregular forms can be inflected and this is by no means the case in English though there are few instances of inflection. We may conclude from Harris's treatment that the only thing he means is "replacement", though he uses \pm features.

2.3 Two Allomorphs Functioning As One Unit

By this we mean that vocalic change is one allomorph to which a zero allomorph is added to account for "replacive" allomorphs. Irregular forms are believed to consist of three morphemes (1) the stem, (2) the replacement (the determining factor in such analysis) and (3) the zero suffix. Thus *feet* would be: $/f\text{ut}/$ $/f\text{oot}/ + /u \rightarrow i:/ + \phi$ Nida states that :

"if it were not for the occurrence of such forms as *sheep, deer, grouse and salmon* with structural zeroes and no other overt differences, we

17. Cf. Hall, *op. cit.*; p. 153 .

18. "Minus Plus " is associated with the works of Zellig S. Harris.

19. The symbol (\sim) means ' alternation.'

20. Zellig S. Harris "Morpheme Alternant in Linguistic Analysis" *Readings in Linguistics*, (2 nd Ed. by Martin Joos, New York: American Council of Learned Societies, 1985) p. 110 .

The following examples are allomorphs resulting from vowel change in nouns :

man / mən / → *men* / men /
woman / wʊmən / → *Women* / wɪmɪn /
goose /gu:s/ → *geese* /gi:s /
mouse /maʊs/ → *mice* /maɪs /
foot /fʊt / → *feet* /fi:t/

Thus, the allomorphs of the plural morpheme in the preceding nouns are, respectively :

/ə/ → e/

/u → i/ + /ə → i/ (14) . Here, it should be noted that two vowel changes account for the plurality of *Woman* .

/u : → i/

/au → ai /

/u → i :/

So far, we have found in the pairs just listed and analysed that the difference in a given couple of words "lies in the vowel timbre, which really plays the part of a morpheme since it indicates, by itself, the morphological value of the word " (15) .

It is to be noted here that there is no need to place these vocalic changes within categories of inflection because we are not adding anything . J . Vendryes states that we may use the term " internal inflection " which denotes that "vocalic ablaut(apophony) plays the same part as a flexional element added to the word" . (16) We can not say that vocalic change is "inflection" proper because no such instances are found in English. Moreover, this would, more or less, turn English into an inflectional language which is, generally speaking,

14. Cf . Stageberg , *op . cit .* , . p . 125 ,

15. J. Vendryes, *Language: A Linguistic Introduction to History, Translated by Paul Radin, (New York: Alfred A. Knopf, 1925)* , p. 76

16. *Ibid.*, p. 77 . For the definition of " apophony" see Introduction.

2. ALLOMORPH CLASSIFICATION

2.1 Vocalic Change

Two or more words semantically related may differ in form when they contain vowels or diphthongs differing from those of the base. We may say, therefore, that these forms are derived from the base in the same paradigm in one way or another by a simple vocalic change, e.g., /siŋ/ *sing* : /sɒŋ/ *sang* and /sʌŋ/ *sung*. Thus, we state that /i/ → /ɒ/ (→ meaning “changed into” or “replaced by”) yielding an allomorph of the past-tense morpheme. This criterion is widely followed by linguists. For instance, Stageberg gives us many examples, of which the followings are some vowel changes in verbs (13).

spin : spun = /spʌn/ = /spin/ + /i → ʌ/
see : saw = /sɔ:/ = /si:/ + /i: → ɔ:/
begin : began = /bɪgɒn/ = /bɪgɪn/ + /i → ɒ/
bite : bit = /bɪt/ = /baɪt/ + /ai → i/
give : gave = /geɪv/ = /gɪv/ + /i → eɪ/
grow : grew = /gru:/ = /grəʊ/ + /ou → u:/
ride : rode = /rəʊd/ = /raɪd/ + /ai → ou/
grind : ground = /graʊnd/ = /graɪnd/ + /ai → au/
take : took = /tu:k/ = /teɪk/ + /ei → u/
speak : spoke = /spəʊk/ = /spi:k/ + /i: → ou/

13. Cf. Norman C. Stageberg, *An Introductory English Grammar*, (New York : Holt, Rinehart and Winston, Inc., 1965, p. 103 Also, see Robins, *op. cit.*, p. 211.

classes to which they are clearly assigned. That does not mean we can not classify or let these exceptions belong to certain paradigms. [The only thing is that they do not follow a regular pattern of distribution, yet we can describe them in general terms as exceptions or irregular forms (12).

When Descriptive Linguistics came into existence, these irregular forms were categorized into secondary separate systems. Such classification has been worked on by linguists who treat any natural human language on the basis of a handful of sub-systems within a large system. Yet since 1920 some of these sub-systems have not been successfully worked out by modern linguists. For instance, the treatment of irregular forms synchronically in English morphology is a problematic phenomenon for linguists. However, this study will discuss some of these exceptions with a simultaneous presentation of the various treatments employed by a good number of well-known linguists so as to make the reader familiar with as many analyses as possible.

The aim of any linguist who has treated irregular forms in English morphology has been to segment each of such forms into more than one morpheme, usually two, as our coming examples shall reveal the case. This paper aims at establishing each irregular form on the same basis, but following a different criterion, i.e., whether the second morpheme really exists or is equal to zero. Moreover, it comments on certain linguists' procedures so as to show diversifications in the treatment of these forms worked out by some twenty of the outstanding modern linguists in order to make the reader aware of the fact that there is no one clear-cut solution to the problem. However, we want to draw the reader's attention to the fact that what each of these linguists has in mind is that the various criteria adopted by them hold the same spirit, i.e., describing these forms synchronically, without resorting to Historical Linguistics as a guide.

12. Cf Francis, *op. cit.*, P. 192 and Robert Henry Robins, *General Linguistics : An Introductory Survey*, (London: Longmans, Green and Co. L TD, 1964), p.269 .

Francis states that morphophonemics is a branch of linguistics that “deals with the variations in the phonemic structure of allomorphs which accompany their grouping into words . ” (8).

Paradigm a set of more or less modified forms semantically similar and having one base . When all forms are not present in this set we say that these sporadic forms constitute a partial paradigm .Pei states that a paradigm is “an example of a declension or conjugation showing a word in all its possible inflected forms, e.g., boy, boys’ boys, boys’.” (9)

Suppletion:an extreme kind of morphophonemic change,in which apart or the whole, base is replaced by another combination of phonemes . Hence, we have partial suppletion, e.g., *worse :worst* and complete suppletion in *go : went* .(10)

Discontinuous Root: a root containing no vowels or diphthongs, e.g., /k..t..b/ write as in Arabic .

Apophony or Ablaut : a syntactically conditioned phonetic change showing “vowel variations” (11) e.g., / kataba/ *he wrote* opposed to/ kutiba / *being written* in Arabic , where the first /a/ and the second/ a/ are respectively changed into /u/and/i /in the passive .

1.2. The Problem of Irregularity

The idea of *irregularity* has come down to us from Traditional Grammar; any element or form that deviates from a regular pattern or system has been treated as an *exception*. Irregular forms are those which behave strangely and differently from the majority of the regular forms belonging to large

8. Francis, *op. cit.*, p. 210 . Also, see Hall,*op.cit.*,p.138.and Bernard Bloch & George L.Trager, *Outline of Linguistic Analysis*, (Baltimore: Linguistic Society of America, 1942), p. 57 .

9. Mario Pei, *Invitation to Linguistics : A Basic Introduction to the Science of Language* . (London: George Allen & Unwin L T D , 1965), p. 99

10. Cf. Bloch & Trager, *op. cit.*, p. 58, and Francis, *op .cit .*,p. 218 .

11. Cf WinfredPhilipp Lehmann, *Historical Linguistics: An Introduction* (New York: Holt, Rinehart and Winston, 1962) p. 105 .

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Basic Definitions (1)

Morph : a meaningful group of phones which can not be subdivided into smaller meaningful units . A morph occurs only once and then it is gone (2).

Allomorph or Morphemic Alternant: a class of phonemically and semantically identical morphs (3) .

Morpheme : a smallest syntactic unit consisting of allomorphs similar in meaning and in complementary distribution or mutually exclusive ,i.e., each morpheme is environmentally conditioned and can not be replaced by some other allomorph. It is worth mentioning here that it is not necessary for a morpheme to be " a combination of phonemes " as Francis puts it (4) and " a recurrent sequence of phonemes " as Hill states (5) or " smaller than a word " as Fowler believes (6) because it can be a word, a phoneme or a zero.

Morphophonemics: the study of phonemic changes governing morphemes, it shows the inter -relation of phonemes to morphemes. That is why is considered "intermediate between the morphemic and phonemic levels." (7)

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- 1 . *Special terms employed by individual linguists will be explained hereafter.*
 - 2 . *W. Nelson Francis, The Structure of American English, (New York: The Ronald Press Company 1958) , p. 170*
 3. *Ibid.*
 4. *Ibid., p. 173 .*
 5. *Archibald A. Hill, Introduction to Linguistic Structures from sound to Sentence in English (New York: Harcourt, Brace & World Inc; 1958), p. 89.*
 6. *Roger Fowler, An Introduction to Transformational Syntax (London: Routledge & Kegan Paul, 1971), p. 18 .*
 7. *Cf. Robert A. Hall, Jr., Introductory Linguistics, (Philadelphia Chilton Company , 1964) , p. 144 .*

ABSTRACT

This article, which clarifies certain complexities and ambiguities governing morphological irregularities in English, falls into two main parts. The first part deals with allomorph classification, an argumentation and a compact presentation of various linguists' views on the behaviour of irregular forms. The second part shows the capability of syntax to identify irregular forms and reveal the function of these forms in utterances. A summary at the end of the second part relates that syntax is, perhaps, a good criterion of solving the problem of irregularity in English morphology in that it assigns a morphosyntactic property to each irregular form.

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SUB-SYSTEMS IN ENGLISH MORPHOLOGY

**A CONCISE STUDY OF
MORPHOLOGICAL IRREGULARITIES**

By

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