



香港浸會大學
HONG KONG BAPTIST UNIVERSITY



An Animated and Narrated Glossary of
Terms used in Linguistics
presents

Root and Stem (morphology)



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Breaking things up

anti disestablishmentarianism

There's something special about the piece "establish". It is the smallest unit in the entire word that provides the core meaning. This the **ROOT**.

Slide 2 



Compositionality

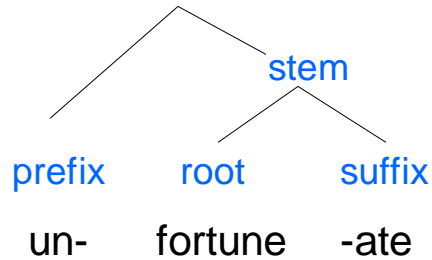
Consider these:

fortune

fortunate

unfortunate

**unfortune* WHY?



Slide 3



Root and Stem

- Root

In concatenative morphology, the root is the unit that provides **the core meaning** and to which affixes may be attached.

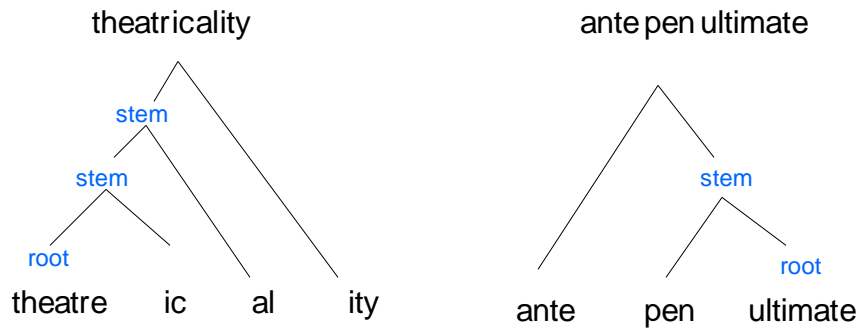
- Stem

In concatenative morphology, the stem is the unit to which affixes are attached.

Slide 4



Example



Note: *Theatre* and *ultimate* here are also stems, since all roots are potential stems.

Slide 5



Root with Infix

Tagalog

sulat “write”

sumulat “to write”

sulat

um

Slide 6



Free or bound

- Not all roots and stems are free morphemes

E.g. *geography*

geo + graphy

Slide 7 



The End

Wee, Lian-Hee and Winnie H.Y. Cheung (2009)
An animated and narrated glossary of terms used in Linguistics.
Hong Kong Baptist University.

