**LECTURE 3**

**Free and bound morphemes**

**Morphemes are further categorized into two classes: free morphemes and bound morphemes. A free morpheme is one that can be uttered alone with meaning as an independent word in a phrase. For example, in reply to “what are you going to do now?” you might answer “Eat.” The word ‘eat’ is a free morpheme. A bound morpheme, unlike the free, cannot be uttered alone with meaning. It is always annexed to http://www.uobabylon.edu.iq/spaw2/plugins/core/lib/theme/spaw2/img/tb_separator.gifone or more morphemes to form a word as, for example, the plural morpheme –s, which can only occur attached to nouns.**

**The morphemes in the word ‘*helpfulness’,* do not all have the same status. *Help*, *-ful* and *-ness* are not simply strung together like beads on a string. The core is ‘help’ then ‘ful’, then ‘ness’. There are two reasons for calling *help* the core of this word. One is that *help* supplies the most precise and concrete element in its meaning, shared by a family of related words like *helper*, *helpless*, *helplessness* and *unhelpful* that differ from one another in more abstract ways. Another reason is that, of the three morphemes in *helpfulness*, only**

***help* can stand on its own – that is, only *help* can, in an appropriate context, constitute an utterance by itself. That is clearly not true of *-ness*, nor is it true of *-ful*. This simply means that *help* is a free morpheme whereas both *-ful* and *-ness* are bound ones.**

**Bases**

**Another classification of morphemes puts them into two classes: bases and affixes. A base morpheme is the part of a word that has the principal meaning. The underlined morphemes in these words are bases: denial, lovable, re-enter. Bases are very numerous, and most of them in English are free morphemes; but some are bound, like –sent in *consent, dissent*, and *assent*. A word may contain one base and several affixes.**

**The underlined parts in the following words are free bases: womanly, endear, failure, friendship, befriend, unlikely, prewar, and subway. Bound bases are those bases to which it is sometimes hard to attach a precise meaning. A good number of bound bases in English come from the Latin and Greek, like the**

**–sent- in ‘sentiment’, ‘sentient’, ‘consent’, ‘resent’.**

**As a short summary, then, we can say that words fall into two general classes: simple and complex. Simple words are single free morphemes that cannot be broken down further into recognizable or meaningful parts. Complex words consist of two or more morphemes in combination.**

**Do exercises: 8.4, 8.5, and 8.6 in your text-book.**