# Infixes really are (underlyingly) prefixes/suffixes: Evidence from allomorphy on the fine timing of infixation

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# The project

**Allomorphy** ≈ Many-to-one correspondence of form to meaning/function[1]

(1) English PL: gorilla-**[z]**, bat-**[s]**, midge-**[ɨz]**, child-**[rən]**, moose-**[∅]**

**Infixation** ≈ One form interrupts the linear integrity of another form[2]

(2) Leti (Blevins, 1999): **-ni-** (NOM) + **kakri** ('cry') = **k<ni>akri**

**Infixation x Allomorphy** ≈ What crosslinguistic patterns emerge in cases where a morpheme has multiple allomorphs, at least one of which is infixal?

⇒ *The answer gives us a uniquely informative window into questions of derivational timing at the morphosyntax-phonology interface*

[1] See, e.g., Carstairs 1987; Inkelas 1990; Mascaró 1996, 2007; Bobaljik 2000, 2012; Paster 2006, 2009; Veselinova 2006; Bonet et al. 2007; Bye 2008; Embick 2010; Bermudez-Otero 2012; Bye and Svenonius 2012; Pak 2016; Scheer 2016; Kalin 2020b

[2] See, e.g., Ultan 1975; Moravcsik 1977; McCarthy and Prince 1993a,b; Hyman and Inkelas 1997; Blevins 1999; Moravcsik 2000; Halle 2001; Horwood 2002; Yu 2007; Wolf 2008; Samuels 2009; Bye and Svenonius 2012; Blevins 2014; Harizanov 2017

# For example...

**Hunzib** (Northeast Caucasian)

(3) Verbal plural morpheme (*suppletive allomorphs*)[3]

a. **-baa** / V:__

b. **-á-** / elsewhere

(4) a. ʔãqáa (be.thirsty) + VPL → ʔãqa-**báa**

b. miyaw-dáa (mew-IDEO) + VPL → miyaw-da-**báa**

(5) a. áhu (take) + VPL → ɑ<**á**>hu

b. čáx (write) + VPL → ča<**á**>x

c. ék (fall) + VPL → e<**yá**>k

d. šóše (bandage) + VPL → šo<**wá**>še

= *non-suppletive allomorphy*

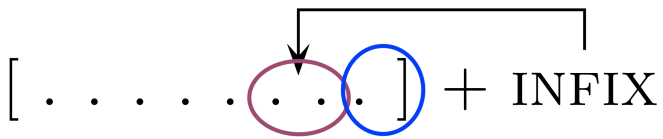
[3] van den Berg 1995; Kalin 2020a

# Sample: 51 case studies, from 42 languages

| **Family** | # | **Languages and countries** |
|---|---|---|
| Afro-Asiatic | 4 | Bole, Mupun (Nigeria); Jebbāli (Oman); Turoyo (Turkey) |
| Algic | 1 | Yurok (United States) |
| Austro-Asiatic | 5 | Bahnar (Vietnam); Jahai (Malaysia); Katu (Lao PDR); Mlabri (Thailand); Nancowry (India) |
| Austronesian | 14 | Ambai, Ambel, Biak, Leti, Muna, Toratán, Sundanese, Wamesa, Wooi (Indonesia); Ida'an Begak (Malaysia); Nakanai (Papua New Guinea); Paiwan, Puyuma, Saisiyat (Taiwan) |
| Cochimí-Yuman | 1 | Yuma (United States) |
| Huavean | 1 | Huave (Mexico) |
| Kra-Dai | 1 | Thai (Thailand) |
| Mayan | 1 | Tzeltal (Mexico) |
| Movima (isolate) | 1 | Movima (Bolivia) |
| Muskogean | 3 | Alabama, Choctaw, Creek (United States) |
| Niger-Congo | 3 | Eton (Cameroon); Kichaga, Kimatuumbi (Tanzania) |
| Northeast Caucasian | 3 | Budukh (Azerbaijan); Hunzib, Lezgian (Russia) |
| Salish | 2 | Nxa'amxcin, Upriver Halkomelem (United States) |
| Torricelli | 1 | Yeri (Papua New Guinea) |
| Uralic | 1 | Estonian (Estonia) |

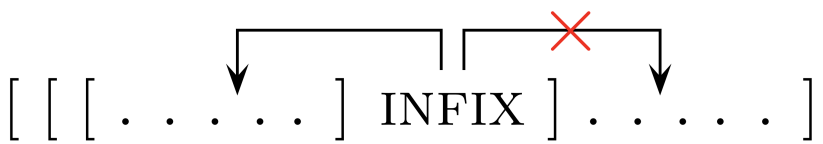
# Core findings

1. Differential behaviors of **suppletive** and **non-suppletive** allomorphy:

(6) 


| | **Suppletive allomorphy** | **Non-suppletive allomorphy** |
|---|---|---|
| *Conditioned at the stem edge?* | Yes | No |
| *Conditioned in the infixed enviro.?* | No | Yes |
| *Anti-optimizing alternations possible?* | Yes | No |

2. **Infixation** is **INWARD** — infixes look for their "pivot" in material that is structurally *more embedded* than the morpheme being exponed

(7) 

# Major implications

**A.** Morphemes—*even those exponed by infixes*—are linearized with respect to their stems (as a prefix or suffix) prior to being exponed.

⇒ **Infixation is "indirect"**—infixal exponents displace from a prior stem-external position to a stem-internal position.[4]

**B.** Exponent choice proceeds from the bottom of the morphosyntactic structure up and is interleaved with at least some phonology, including infixation.[5]

**C.** At any given node, exponent choice *precedes* phonology/infixation.

⇒ Even in optimizing cases, **the choice among suppletive allomorphs is not made in/by the phonology**.[6]

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[4] **In line with:** Anderson 1972; Moravcsik 1977; Halle 2001; Horwood 2002; Plank 2007; Embick 2010; Bye and Svenonius 2012, *i.a.*; and **contra:** Inkelas 1990; Cohn 1992; McCarthy and Prince 1993a; Zoll 1996; Yu 2007; Wolf 2008, *i.a.*

[5] **In line with aspects of:** Kiparsky 1982; Bobaljik 2000; Wolf 2008; Embick 2010; Inkelas 2014; Myler 2017; Kastner 2019.

[6] **In line with:** Halle and Marantz 1993; Trommer 2001; Paster 2006; Kalin 2020b; Rolle 2020; Stanton 2020, *i.a.*; and **contra:** McCarthy and Prince 1993a,b; Booij 1998; Mascaró 2007; Nevins 2011; Bermudez-Otero 2012; de Belder 2020, *i.a.*

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