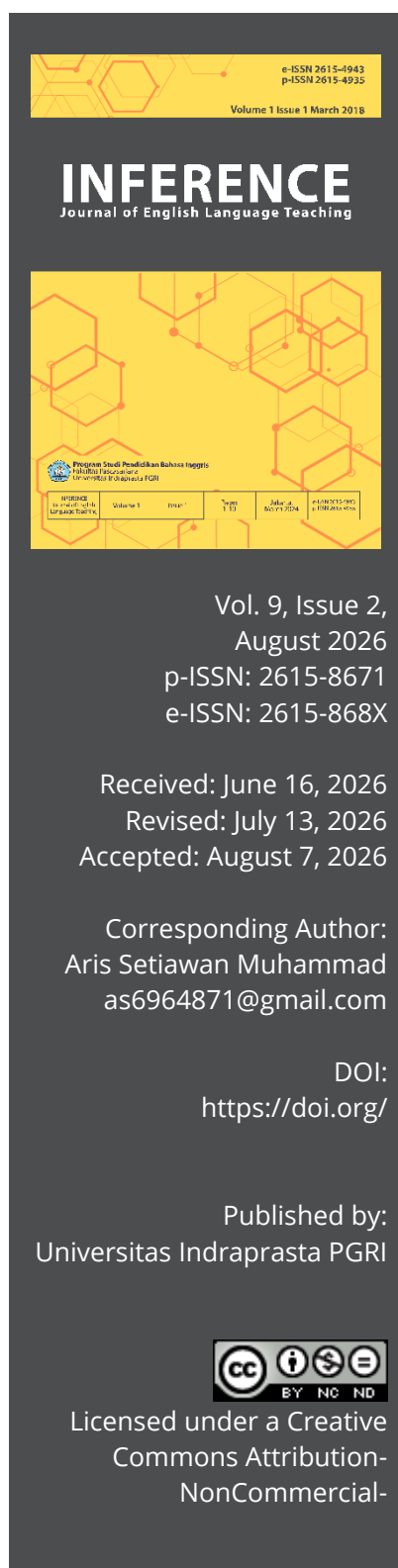




RESEARCH ARTICLE

CONDITIONED ALLOMORPH ANALYSIS IN DONALD TRUMP'S INAUGURAL SPEECHES TRANSCRIPTION: A MORPHOLOGICAL STUDY

Aris Setiawan Muhammad¹,
Intan Dwi Persada²,
Ria Dewi Hudayani³,
Ria Saparianingsih⁴,
Alyah Maspupah⁵

¹²³⁴⁵STKIP Bina Mutiara Sukabumi

e-mail: as6964871@gmail.com ¹

Abstract: This study aims to identify the types of conditioned allomorphs present in the official transcripts of Donald Trump's inaugural addresses and to determine the most frequently occurring type. The research is grounded in the importance of understanding morphological variation in English, particularly how morphemes alter based on phonological, grammatical, lexical, or suppletive conditioning. Employing a qualitative descriptive method, this study used a morphological analysis theory as proposed by Katamba (1993). The researcher served as the primary instrument in data collection and analysis. The data source consisted of two official transcripts of Donald Trump's inaugural speeches, delivered on January 20, 2025, retrieved from The American Presidency Project archive. The analysis revealed four major types of conditioned allomorphs: (1) Phonologically conditioned allomorphs (320 data or 80,60%), observed in past tense markers, plural suffixes, and negative prefixes; (2) Grammatically conditioned allomorphs (49 data or 12,34%), found in irregular past tense forms, third-person singular present tense verbs, and relative pronouns; (3) Lexically conditioned allomorphs (1 data or 0,25%), occurring notably in plural forms marked with -en; and (4) Suppletive allomorphs (26 instances or 6,80%), distributed among comparative adjectives, irregular verbs, auxiliary verbs, plural nouns, ordinal numbers, demonstratives, and possessive pronouns. The most dominant type was phonologically conditioned allomorphs especially the variant allomorph /-z/ appearing 145 times demonstrating variation in pronunciation based on the phonetic environment of the root word. These findings suggest that morpheme variation in English is primarily influenced by phonological and grammatical contexts, which frequently cause confusion and mispronunciation among language learners.

Keywords: Allomorph; Morphology; Speech Transcription

**Analisis Allomorph Berkondisi dalam Transkrip Pidato
Pelantikan Donald Trump: Sebuah Studi Morfologis**

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Abstrak: Penelitian ini bertujuan untuk mengidentifikasi jenis-jenis allomorph bersyarat yang terdapat dalam transkrip pidato pelantikan Donald Trump serta menentukan jenis allomorph yang paling sering muncul. Latar belakang penelitian ini didasari oleh pentingnya pemahaman mengenai variasi morfemis dalam bahasa Inggris. Penelitian ini menggunakan metode deskriptif kualitatif dengan pendekatan analisis morfologi berdasarkan teori Katamba (1993). Peneliti bertindak sebagai instrumen utama dalam pengumpulan dan analisis data. Sumber data diperoleh dari dua transkrip resmi pidato pelantikan Donald Trump pada tanggal 20 Januari 2025, yang diakses melalui arsip The American Presidency Project. Hasil penelitian menunjukkan bahwa terdapat empat allomorph bersyarat dalam pidato tersebut, yaitu: (1) allomorph yang dikondisikan secara fonologis sebanyak 320 data (80,60%), yang ditemukan pada bentuk past tense, akhiran -s, dan negative prefix in- (2) allomorph yang dikondisikan secara grammatikal sebanyak 49 data (12,34%), ditemukan dalam bentuk irregular past tense, 3rd person singular present tense, dan relative pronouns. (3) allomorph yang dikondisikan secara leksikal sebanyak 1 data (0,25%), yang ditemukan khusus pada bentuk jamak dengan akhiran -en dan (4) allomorph yang dikondisikan suppletif sebanyak 27 data (6,80%), yang mencakup comparative degree, irregular past tense, auxiliary verb, plural noun, ordinal number, plural demonstrative dan possessive pronoun. Jenis yang paling dominan adalah allomorph fonologis, terutama /-z/ yang muncul sebanyak 145 kali dan menunjukkan variasi pelafalan sesuai dengan lingkungan fonetis kata dasarnya. Temuan ini mengindikasikan bahwa variasi bentuk morfem dalam bahasa Inggris sangat dipengaruhi oleh kondisi fonologis dan grammatikal. Hal tersebut kerap menimbulkan kebingungan serta kesalahan pelafalan di kalangan pelajar.

Kata kunci: Allomorph, Morphology, Transkrip Pidato

INTRODUCTION

Language serves as the primary means of human communication, enabling the transmission of ideas, emotions, and information. Within the field of linguistics, morphology plays a vital role in analyzing the internal structure of words and how those structures change based on contextual usage. A key concept in morphological studies is allomorph, which refers to the variation of a single morpheme into different forms depending on phonological, grammatical, lexical, or suppletive conditions. As proposed by Katamba (1993), these conditioned allomorphs demonstrate that a morpheme may appear in multiple surface forms while retaining the same meaning.

Phonologically conditioned allomorphs, for example, are determined by the sounds surrounding a morpheme. In English, the past tense morpheme -ed can be pronounced as [t], [d], or [ɪd] depending on the final phoneme of the root verb. Grammatically conditioned allomorphs occur due to changes in tense or agreement, such as the irregular past tense form slept from sleep. Lexically conditioned allomorphs, such as children from child, occur in specific lexical items and cannot be predicted by phonological or grammatical rules. Suppletive allomorphs, such as went from go, involve a complete change in form and must be memorized as exceptions within the morphological system.

The motivation behind this study stems from the fact that many English learners experience confusion when encountering varied word forms in spoken or written discourse. These variations often lead to mispronunciation or misunderstanding, especially regarding past tense verbs and plural nouns. This issue is exacerbated by a lack of awareness of the rules that govern the phonological and grammatical realization of morphemes. Furthermore, while allomorphy is well-documented in theoretical literature, there is still limited empirical research particularly in non-native English contexts that explores how conditioned allomorphs are manifested in real-life spoken English. In this research, the official transcripts of Donald Trump's inaugural speeches serve as the primary data source. These speeches are rich in morphological diversity and reflect spontaneous, naturalistic language use. Words

such as respected, blew, children, and went exemplify different types of conditioned allomorphs, providing concrete data for analysis.

One of the most influential approaches comes from the generativist view pioneered by Noam Chomsky and continued in recent research such as by Berwick & Chomsky (2016) which states that language is the result of a “faculty of language” that is biologically embedded in the human brain. They believe in the existence of a universal grammar, a set of innate principles that allow humans to acquire language quickly and without explicit instruction.

This study is anchored in morphological theory, particularly the concept of conditioned allomorphy. dos Santos (2025) in his empirical study of the Kawahíva language, provides evidence that morphology functions both structurally and semantically within sentence organization. His research demonstrates that morphological structures not only create words but also influence syntactic order and semantic interpretation. Thus, morphology is not limited to the lexical level but plays an active role in sentence construction. This integrative perspective supports the notion that morphology interacts dynamically with other components of grammar, particularly syntax, and serves as a foundational element in the overall linguistic system. According to Blevins (2016), morphology is best understood not as a mere sum of small units, but as a network of interrelated forms that reflect language-specific patterns and syntactic functions. Morphology examines the internal structure of words and how meaningful units of morphemes combine and change under certain linguistic environments.

Hippisley (2016) notes that morphemes have significant theoretical implications. One such implication is the assertion that the semantic and grammatical content of a word form is determined entirely by its constituent morphemes. Thus, morphemes serve as the primary source of meaning and grammatical function in word formation.

A key phenomenon within morphological analysis is allomorphy, which refers to the appearance of a single morpheme in multiple surface forms depending on its phonological, grammatical, or lexical context. Bedar (2024) critiques models that treat phonologically conditioned allomorphy in isolation, contending that such forms are often intertwined with syntactic and grammatical factors. His study reveals that the distribution of allomorphs can be shaped not only by phonological environment but also by the syntactic position and grammatical category of the base word, highlighting a more intricate interface among morphology, phonology, and syntax than previously acknowledged in early generative models.

Katamba (1993) provides a foundational classification of allomorphs into four main types: phonologically conditioned, grammatically conditioned, lexically conditioned, and suppletive allomorphs. In phonologically conditioned allomorphs, the variant form of a morpheme is determined by the surrounding phonetic context. are determined by adjacent sounds. There are three conditions of morphemes that are considered phonologically conditioning, the negative prefix in-, the morpheme -ed in past tense marker and the morpheme -s or -es in plural morpheme, 3rd single present tense or even genitives. For example, when the base verb ends in an alveolar stop /t/ or /d/, the -ed morpheme is pronounced as [ɪd], as in mended /'mɛndɪd/ and painted /'peɪntɪd/. If the verb ends in a voiceless consonant other than /t/, the suffix is realized as [t], as in parked /pɑ:kt/ and missed /mɪst/. In contrast, when the final sound of the verb is a voiced consonant (excluding /d/) or a vowel, the -ed morpheme is realized as [d], for example in weighed /weɪd/ and cleaned /kli:nd/. These surface variants are not random but follow regular, rule-governed patterns of assimilation designed to facilitate smooth articulation. This observation is supported by scholars such as Danner (2015), Aliyu (2017), Davila (2018), Ahmed (2018), and Yaowaratana (2018), who highlight the systematic nature of allomorphic variation in English morphology in Royani et al. (2019).

The in- prefix also demonstrates phonological allomorphy, as analyzed by Katamba (1993). It appears as [ɪm] before labial consonants (/p/, /b/, /f/, /m/), as in impossible and imbalance; as [ɪŋ] before velar consonants (/k/, /g/), as in incompatible and ingrateful; and as [ɪn] elsewhere, typically before alveolar consonants (/t/, /d/, /s/, /z/, /n/) or vowels, as in inactive and ineffective.

In English morphology, the morpheme *-s* appears across three grammatical categories: plural nouns (e.g., *cats*), third person singular present tense verbs (e.g., *runs*), and genitive (possessive) constructions (e.g., *John's*). According to Katamba (1993), this morpheme exhibits three phonologically conditioned allomorphs: /s/, /z/, and /ɪz/. The rule operates as follows: /ɪz/ is selected after a sibilant sound, which includes alveolar and alveo-palatal fricatives and affricates such as /s/, /z/, /ʃ/, /ʒ/, /tʃ/, and /dʒ/. Examples include *beaches* /'bi:tʃɪz/. /s/ is chosen after a non-strident voiceless consonant, which includes /p/, /t/, /k/, /f/, and /θ/. Examples include *cups* /kʌps/, *carts* /kɑ:ts/, and *leeks* /li:ks/. /z/ appears elsewhere, specifically after voiced segments, which include all vowels and consonants such as /b/, /d/, /g/, /m/, /n/, /ŋ/, /l/, /r/, /w/, and /j/. Examples include *rooms* /ru:mz/, *mugs* /mʌgz/, and *shoes* /ʃu:z/.

Grammatically conditioned allomorphs emerge from syntactic or morphological rules, often reflecting tense or grammatical function. Huddleston & Pullum (n.d.), in *The Cambridge Grammar of the English Language*, categorize English irregular verbs into several classes, each illustrating unique allomorphic shifts. For instance, Class 1 verbs like *burn* → *burnt* and *keep* → *kept* involve consonant reduction and vowel shortening. Class 2 verbs (e.g., *drink* → *drank* → *drunk*, *find* → *found*) are marked by vowel alternation. Class 3 verbs adopt the *-en* suffix (*take* → *taken*, *see* → *seen*), while Class 4 includes irregular transformations such as *bring* → *brought* or *make* → *made*. These examples reflect grammatical conditioning, as the choice of allomorph depends on tense (past or participle) rather than sound patterns.

Lexically conditioned allomorphs are associated with specific lexical items. According to Katamba (1993), lexically conditioned allomorphs represent the most arbitrary type, as their occurrence highly depends on specific lexical entries. He provides examples from English plural form such as *child* → *children*, where vowel changes or suffixes cannot be explained through any consistent phonological pattern. While, suppletive allomorphs involve complete replacement of form, as in *good* → *better*. A more recent pedagogical perspective is provided by Harmer et al. (2025), who explored suppletion in the context of English language teaching. In their study of morphological irregularities in Jeremy Harmer's *The Practice of English Language Teaching*, they highlight that suppletive allomorphs frequently occur in core functional vocabulary items such as main verbs (*go* → *went*) and evaluative adjectives (*bad* → *worse*). They argue that awareness of suppletion is crucial in language education because such forms cannot be taught using regular morphological rules.

Lieber (2009) emphasizes the systematic and rule-governed nature of allomorphy in her morphological framework. She explains that phonological allomorphs are predictable based on assimilation rules, whereas grammatical and lexical allomorphs reflect paradigmatic relations in a language's morphology. She also distinguishes between predictable and unpredictable allomorphy, the latter often requiring memorization due to the absence of clear conditioning rules.

The aims of this research are two: (1) to identify the types of conditioned allomorphs present in the transcripts of Trump's inaugural addresses, and (2) to determine which type appears most frequently. By focusing on this objective, the study seeks to contribute both theoretically and practically to the field of linguistics and English language education. It is hoped that the findings will offer insights for educators, learners, and researchers, especially in improving pronunciation, understanding morphological variation, and enhancing pedagogical approaches to teaching morphology in English. In sum, the theoretical foundation of this study integrates morphological theory and phonological conditioning, providing a comprehensive framework for analyzing conditioned allomorphy in natural language data.

RESEARCH METHOD

This study employed a qualitative descriptive approach with a morphological analysis framework. The research aimed to analyze the types and distribution of conditioned allomorphs in the official transcripts of Donald Trump's inaugural speeches. A qualitative design was chosen because the study focused on descriptive interpretation rather than statistical generalization.

Conditioned allomorph analysis in Donald Trump's inaugural speeches transcription: a morphological study

Aris Setiawan Muhammad¹, Intan Dwi Persada², Ria Dewi Hudayani³,
Ria Saparianingsih⁴, Alyah Maspupah⁵
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The primary data sources were two transcripts of Donald Trump's inaugural addresses delivered on January 20, 2025. These transcripts were retrieved from the official archive of the American Presidency Project (www.presidency.ucsb.edu). The units of analysis were individual words or morphemes that demonstrated allomorphic variation.

The sampling technique was purposive, selecting only those morphemes that matched the four types of conditioned allomorphs as categorized by Katamba (1993): phonologically conditioned, grammatically conditioned, lexically conditioned, and suppletive. The researcher served as the main instrument in data selection and analysis, supported by a documentation sheet for recording and categorizing data.

Data collection involved close reading of the speech transcripts, followed by identification of morphemes exhibiting different surface forms. Each identified allomorph was cross-checked for its conditioning environment whether phonological, grammatical, lexical, or suppletive.

Data analysis was conducted using a deductive-inductive method. First, data were classified according to the theoretical framework. Then, the frequency of each allomorph type was calculated to determine the most dominant category. Descriptive interpretation was applied to explain how and why specific allomorphs appeared in the discourse, supported by examples from the text.

RESULTS AND DISCUSSION

This study identified four types of conditioned allomorphs in the official transcripts of Donald Trump's inaugural speeches. The researcher collected a total of 396 allomorphic data items, which were then classified and quantified as follows:

Table 1
The Result of Each Speech that Uses Allomorphs found in Trump's Inaugural Speeches

No	Allomorphs	Speech 1	Speech 2	Total
1.	Phonological Conditioning	183	137	320
2.	Grammatical Conditioning	28	21	49
3.	Lexical Conditioning	1	-	1
4.	Suppletion	20	6	26
	Total	232	164	396

The data in Table 1 indicate that phonologically conditioned allomorphs were the most dominant, comprising 80.60% of the total findings with 320 total data (183 in the first speech, 137 in the second). These allomorphs include variations in the past tense marker -ed (e.g., respected /rɪ'spektɪd/), plural morphemes -s/-es (e.g., citizens /'sɪtəzənz/), and negative prefixes in- (e.g., impossible). These are allomorphs whose forms are determined by the phonological environment surrounding the morpheme. The types of phonologically conditioned allomorph that found in trump's inaugural speeches such as /-ɪd/, /-d/, /-t/, /ɪm-/, /ɪŋ-/, /-ɪz/, /-s/, /-z/. These allomorphs can be classified on these three morphemes, for instance: 1) The past tense morpheme -ed is realized as /ɪd/, /d/, /t/ depending on the final sound of the base verb. /-ɪd/ appeared 36 times, used after base verbs ending in /t/ or /d/. /-d/ occurred 58 times, a realization of the past tense morpheme -ed following voiced consonants other than /d/. Lastly, /-t/ appeared 23 times, used after voiceless consonants in past tense verbs. 2) The negative prefix in- becomes /ɪm-/, /ɪn-/, /ɪŋ-/, depending on the following sound. /ɪm-/ occurred 5 times, a variant of the negative prefix in- before bilabials. /ɪn-/ occurred 0 times, usually before an alveolar consonant. And /ɪŋ-/ appeared 2 times, a rare variant also derived from the negative prefix in-. 3) The regular plural morpheme, 3rd single present tense, and genitives are realized as /ɪz/, /s/, /z/ based on the final of the word. /-ɪz/ appeared 22 times, occurring after sibilant sounds. /-s/ occurred 29 times, used in environments with voiceless consonant. And /-z/ appeared 145 times, used

when preceded by voiced consonants. This supports Katamba (1993) assertion that phonological context plays a crucial role in morpheme realization.

Grammatically conditioned allomorphs made up 12.34% of the data. These include irregular verbs like 'blew' (from blow) and relative pronouns such as 'whose' (variant of who). Grammatically Conditioned Allomorphs appear due to grammatical context such as tense, aspect, or subject agreement. A total of 49 data were found (28 in the first speech, 21 in the second), which can be classified into these morphemes include: 1) Irregular past tense and past participle forms: 47 data like keep → kept, win → won, take → taken, bring → brought. 2) 3rd person singular forms: 1 data like have → has. 3) Pronoun case changes 1 data like who → whom. These findings demonstrate that grammatical context, such as tense and agreement, also contributes to allomorphic variation, albeit less frequently. Lieber (2009) refers to these as unpredictable allomorphs due to their irregular morphological behavior.

Lexically conditioned allomorphs were rare, with only one example found (0,25%): children (from child). This rarity reflects Katamba (1993) claim that lexical allomorphy is highly item-specific and not rule-governed. According to Bybee (2010), such forms tend to be memorized individually, especially when they do not follow productive morphological patterns.

Suppletive allomorphs, which made up 6.80%, include examples like 'went' (past form of 'go') and 'better' (comparative of 'good'). These forms exhibit complete replacement rather than phonological modification and are stored in the mental lexicon due to their high frequency and communicative necessity (Bybee, 2010). A total of 26 instances were found (20 in the first speech, 6 in the second). The types of suppletive allomorphs that found in trump's inaugural speeches can be classified into these categories include: 1) Irregular past tense forms: 2 data like go → went → gone. 2) Comparative and superlative: 4 data adjectives such as good → better → best, and many → more → most. 3) Irregular plural nouns: 4 data like person → people, foot → feet, man → men, woman → women (weak suppletion). 4) Possessive pronouns: 7 data such as he → his → him, we → our → us, where the possessive form does not resemble the base pronoun phonologically. 5) Demonstrative determiners: 2 data like that → those, this → these which change entirely in form to indicate number. 6) Auxiliary verb: 6 data such as be → is, are, am, was, were. 7) Ordinal to cardinal shift: 1 data, for example one → first.

In sum, the findings align with the theoretical framework proposed by Katamba (1993) and further supported by Lieber (2009) and Bybee (2010). The predominance of phonologically conditioned allomorphs confirms the systematic nature of morphophonemic rules in English. The data also reveal the importance of considering frequency and usage patterns in understanding how English learners process and produce morphological variants. These results suggest that instruction on phonologically triggered variations, especially for past tense and plural forms, should be emphasized in English language education to reduce learner confusion and mispronunciation.

A closer look at the data also suggests that the strong dominance of phonologically conditioned allomorphs may be connected to the nature of political speech itself. Public speeches are typically crafted to sound clear, smooth, and accessible for a wide audience. Because of this, speakers tend to rely more on regular and predictable morphological patterns, forms that follow consistent sound-based rules and are easy to produce quickly. These patterns, such as the regular plural -s or the past tense -ed, occur frequently in everyday English and therefore become more automatic in spoken language. This is in line with Bybee's (2010) usage-based perspective, which argues that the more often a form is used, the more deeply entrenched it becomes in a speaker's linguistic system. In this context, the high frequency of phonologically conditioned allomorphs in Trump's speeches reflects not only linguistic rules but also the demands of delivering a fluent and comprehensible political message.

On the other hand, grammatically conditioned, lexically conditioned, and suppletive allomorphs appear much less frequently, suggesting that these forms serve more specific purposes in the speeches. Many of these allomorphs such as went, better, or those are not chosen for stylistic reasons but because the meaning of the sentence requires them. Their presence often marks moments in the speech when the speaker needs to express comparison, refer to the past, or highlight contrast. In these cases, the irregular forms play a functional role in supporting the message being delivered, aligning with Lieber's (2009)

argument that irregular morphology persists due to its communicative value. Therefore, the distribution of allomorph types in the speeches not only illustrates how English morphology works but also shows how speakers strategically use different forms to meet rhetorical and communicative goals.

CONCLUSIONS

This study investigated the occurrence and classification of conditioned allomorphs in the official transcripts of Donald Trump's inaugural speeches. A total of 396 allomorph data were identified and categorized into four types: phonologically conditioned (80.60%), grammatically conditioned (12.37%), suppletive (6.57%), and lexically conditioned (0.25%). The most dominant type was phonologically conditioned allomorphs, particularly the variant /-z/ in plural and possessive forms, and /-id/ in past tense markers. These findings confirm that English morpheme realization is highly influenced by phonological environments, as suggested by Katamba (1993) and Lieber (2009).

Moreover, the study shows that allomorph variation in natural speech may cause confusion and mispronunciation among English learners, especially when phonological conditioning rules are not explicitly taught. Suppletive and lexically conditioned forms, although less frequent, also pose challenges due to their unpredictable nature. The presence of these forms in authentic spoken texts illustrates the complexity and richness of English morphology.

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