

# Morpheme Repair – A Distributed Morphology Perspective

(Roland Pfau, University of Amsterdam)

In spontaneous speech errors, an erroneous string is sometimes brought in line with grammatical constraints thanks to a post-error repair strategy (an “accommodation”; Garrett 1980). Such a repair may involve morphosyntactic features (e.g. gender in German), but it may also have an impact on the choice of derivational morphemes. For illustration of the latter, consider the examples in (1). In the English slip (1a), the exchanged element *care* appears with the appropriate derivational suffix, which, however, is not the one that would have surfaced in the intended utterance (Fromkin 1973). Similarly, in the self-corrected German slip in (1b), the stem *nahr* surfaces with a nominalizing suffix that is not part of the intended utterance.

- (1) a. *I think it's **care-ful** to measure with **reason***  
(intended: *it's reason-able to measure with care*)
- b. *nerv-e die Nahr-ung, äh, nähr-e den Nerv*  
nerve-IMP the.F food-NMLZ(F), er, feed-IMP the.M nerve(M)  
'Feed the nerv!'

I will offer an account for this type of “morpheme repair” couched within Distributed Morphology. However, I will depart both from accounts that argue that derivational morphemes are “functional roots” drawn from the Lexicon (Kihm 2005) and accounts that assume late insertion of derivational morphemes at PF (Harley & Noyer 1998; Marantz 2001). Actually, both views are problematic in light of German speech error data. First, a functional root account would have to assume that the Lexicon is accessed again after the error has taken place in order to select the appropriate morpheme. Second, German nominalizing suffixes are gender-relevant (cf. (1b), where the suffix contributes [+fem] which is copied onto the determiner), and consequently, morpheme insertion must precede feature copy, i.e. it cannot apply at PF. Instead, I will argue that derivational morphemes are inserted post-syntactically at the level of Morphological Structure based on the licensing environment of a root (e.g. [+d] in (1b)). In addition, I will discuss the complicating fact that for many roots alternative nominalizations are available, which suggests that the insertion of a derivational morpheme is further influenced by DP-internal functional structure.