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### Missing players: Phonology and the past-tense debate

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#### Abstract

The proposition that the mental lexicon is a “dual route” system, advanced by Pinker and others to account for regular and irregular morphology, overlooks the important fact that morphological regularity correlates inversely with phonological regularity: “regular” past-tense *beeped* being phonologically *irregular* (exceptional syllable), while “irregular” past-tense *kept* is phonologically just regular.

I argue that the correlation, which is general, can only be captured under a single “rather than “dual” architecture, and an associational “rather than rule based “ theory of morphology. Where word-to-word associations are strong, morphology looks regular and phonological alternations are inhibited, making phonology look irregular. In a system in which regularities are attributed to “rules”, rules should be able to coexist with other rules, and morphological and phonological regularities should correlate directly rather than inversely.



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## Keywords

Lexicon; Memorization; Optimality; Phonology; Morphology; Regularity; Rules; Underlying representation

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