

MORPHOLOGY: TREES, AFFIX ORDER, AND DERIVATION VERSUS INFLECTION

Ling 201

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Morphology

Morphemes care about part of speech

- Let's talk about the morpheme “re-”, i.e. [rij] or [ri]
- These words are bad:
 - **resimple, recat, reblue, rehapp, reAngelOlsen, retwo**
- These words are good:
 - **redo, reanimate, reclassify, retie, reexcavate**
- What does this tell us about “re-”?
 - It can only appear as a prefix on a verb.
- We can write a morphological rule like this:
 - **Attach [rij] to the start of a verb to create a new verb.**
- **On the homework, you don't need to get fancy with the Right Hand Rule (you can, but don't make mistakes)**

Morphemes care about part of speech

- So we can't say "re-simple" because "simple" ain't a verb.
- But we can say this:
 - **resimplify**
- Why? We have "simple" and "re" in a single word, so shouldn't this be bad?
- No, since the re attaches to the verb "simplify"
- This is a verb because of the following rule for "-ify"
 - **Attach [ɪfaɪ] to the end of an adjective to create a verb.**
- The lesson here being...

Order matters

- The order you combine morphemes matters.
- You can't combine "re-" with "simple".
- For "re-" to coexist with "simple" in a word, you must first build a verb out of "simple".
- That's why we do the trees.
- Can somebody draw the correct tree for "resimplify"?
- Can somebody else draw the impossible bad tree for "resimplify" where the "re-" tries to attach to "simple" before the "ify"?

Comprehension question: Swahili

- Here's a verb in Swahili:
 - penda = like/love
- Swahili has a passive voice morpheme “-w-” which can be inserted before the last vowel in a verb.
 - pendwa = be liked/loved
- Swahili also has a prefix “m-” which can be stuck on a verb to create a noun meaning “one who verbs”:
 - mpenda = fan, enthusiast
- Draw a tree for the following word:
 - mpendwa = loved one, dear

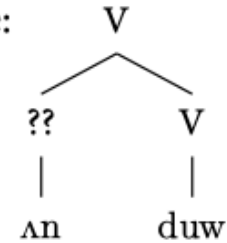


Homework Problem #1

You have a homework question like this

1

Show how the following words are composed by our morphological rules using the “tree” notation. Be sure that you label the parts of speech of every morpheme and word, to the extent that you can. So, for instance, for the word [ʌnduːw] the answer would be:



The “??” indicates that I cannot tell what part of speech “[ʌn]” belongs to, but I know it has a part of speech, and the “Vs” indicate that “[duːw]” and “[ʌnduːw]” are verbs.

1. [ʌnsɪŋkəbəl]
2. [ɪsɪlɒbɪnɛs]
3. [ʌnɪjθɪŋkəbəl]

How do you know you have the correct tree?

- For this question, you have to draw some trees.
- How do you know you have the right tree?
 - (1) Can every branching node be a word?
 - (2) Think through the meanings node-by-node
- For the homework, (2) is really crucial.
- The prefix “un” can attach either to a verb or to an adjective.
- To get the right tree, you have to think about the meaning to see which it’s attaching to!

(2) Getting the right meaning

- For the homework, (2) is really crucial.
- *un-* can attach to a verb or an adjective
- So the rules give multiple ways of building some words:
 - *un + verb + able*
- To know which way is the actual one for a particular word, you have to think about its meaning.
- The basic principle: the meaning of a morpheme applies to the meaning of whatever it attaches to

(2) Getting the right meaning

- With *un-*, you should know the following:
 - When *un-* attaches to an adjective, it means “not having that quality”.
 - When *un-* attaches to a verb, it means “to reverse the effects of that action”.
- I can't really tell you more than that about *un-* without giving away the answer to the homework.
- So let's look at an analogous example.

Thinking about meaning

- You can (usually) stick a bunch of words together to create a compound word:
 - breakfast, newspaper, watermelon, etc...
- The order these combine in affects meaning.



Inflectional vs. Derivational

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- Let's go through these in detail.

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 - The past tense morpheme is inflectional
 - The [rij] morpheme is derivational

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- Here's a flowchart to guide your thinking:
 - Affix changes part of speech → conclude it's derivational
 - Affix doesn't change the part of speech → it could be derivational or inflectional (so try another test)

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 - *-ed* is inflectional since it's very productive.
- Consequently, you can't attach *-er* to a past tense verb to mean "one who used to verb".
 - **cookeder, *jumpeder, *composeder, *purreder*