

Morphology problem set

24.900 — Introduction to linguistics

February 7, 2005

1 Morphological segmentation of English

Segment the following words into the morphemes they are composed of. For each morpheme, give the part of speech of the stem(s) and the derived word, and indicate whether the affix is derivational or inflectional. Discuss any cases where the correct segmentation isn't totally clear to you.

1. inconsequentially
2. grammarians
3. counterexample
4. mismatches
5. lady-like
6. lioness
7. manhood
8. misheard
9. Pavlovian
10. distasteful
11. ungrammaticality
12. Newfoundlander
13. undoes
14. vaccinating
15. absentmindedness

2 Mēbengokre morphology

- Examine the following words from Mēbengokre, a Jê language from central Brazil, and answer the questions that follow (the transcriptions and translations are slightly simplified). Note that Mēbengokre has two kinds of first person plural: one which includes the hearer, and other which excludes him/her. The former is indicated in the glosses as *inclusive*; all the rest are exclusive forms. There is one slight twist in this problem. (Hint: What's special about the morpheme that marks the past tense of *hit* and *put* in English?)

1	aratēmmã	'you (few) will go'	6	inōrōri	'while I sleep'
2	arnōrō	'they (few) sleep'	7	mēibojmã	'we (many) will arrive'
3	tēmkadjy	'(s)he's about to go'	8	mēakabēn	'you (many) speak'
4	ariboj	'we (few) arrive'	9	babojkadjy	'we (two, inclusive) are about to arrive'
5	mēkabēnri	'while they (many) speak'	10	anōrōmã	'you (singular) will sleep'

- Give the Mēbengokre morphemes for the following:

- go
- arrive
- sleep
- speak
- FUTURE
- while
- be about to
- PRESENT

- Fill in the following table with the corresponding forms:

I	we two (incl.)	you (singular)	he/she
we (few)		you (few)	they (few)
we (many)		you (many)	they (many)

Can some or all of these be broken down further into person and number morphemes?

- What is the order of morphemes in the Mēbengokre verb? Assume that PRESENT, FUTURE, *while* and *be about to* are all TENSE morphemes.
- What is the English translation for the Mēbengokre word *kabēnkadjy*?
- How would you say *they (many) are about to sleep* in Mēbengokre?

3 Persian plural allomorphy

Look at the following examples of plural formation in Farsi. How many allomorphs for the plural morpheme are there? In what contexts is each of them chosen?

<i>singular</i>	<i>plural</i>	<i>gloss</i>
zæn	zænan	woman
mærd	mærdan	man
bæradær	bæradæran	brother
gæda	gædajan	beggar
dana	danajan	sage
pesær	pesæran	boy
bænde	bændegan	slave
næmajænde	næmajændegan	representative
xahær	xahæran	sister
irani	iranijan	Iranian
doxtær	doxtæran	daughter

4 English *-ing*

The suffix *-ing* in English is ambiguous between a derivational and an inflectional use (actually, there are at least two ways that it can function derivationally, but only one is presented here). On the basis of the following contrasts, write a paragraph about what *-ing* does as a derivational affix and what it does as an inflectional affix. If in your speech there is any difference in the pronunciation of the stem according to what type of *-ing* is affixed, note it.

- (1) a. It is *twinkling* intermittently.
b. It lasted only for a *twinkling*.
- (2) a. Do you have any *kindling* to start the fire?
b. His statements were quickly *kindling* the audience's fury.
- (3) a. Was that *lightning*?
b. The sky is already *lightening*.