

# 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.

*Though I use bracketing in this solution, just hyphenating is enough for now.*

1. [in[consequential]<sub>A</sub>]<sub>AIY</sub>]<sub>Adv</sub> *all derivational*
2. [[[grammar]<sub>N</sub>ian]<sub>NS</sub>]<sub>N</sub> *-s is inflectional*
3. [counter[example]<sub>N</sub>]<sub>N</sub> *derivational*
4. [[mis[match]<sub>N</sub>]<sub>NEs</sub>]<sub>N</sub> *-es is inflectional*
5. [[lady]<sub>N</sub>-like]<sub>A</sub> *derivational*
6. [[lion]<sub>N</sub>ess]<sub>N</sub> *derivational*
7. [[man]<sub>N</sub>hood]<sub>N</sub> *derivational*
8. [mis[heard]<sub>V</sub>]<sub>V</sub> *derivational*
9. [[Pavlov]<sub>N</sub>ian]<sub>A</sub> *derivational*
10. [dis[[taste]<sub>N</sub>ful]<sub>A</sub>]<sub>A</sub> *derivational*
11. [[un[[grammat]<sub>N</sub>ical]<sub>A</sub>]<sub>A</sub>ity]<sub>N</sub> *derivational*
12. [[Newfoundland]<sub>N</sub>er]<sub>N</sub> *derivational*
13. [[un[do]<sub>V</sub>]<sub>VEs</sub>]<sub>V</sub> *-es is inflectional*
14. [[[vaccin]<sub>N</sub>at]<sub>V</sub>ing]<sub>V</sub> *-ing is inflectional if a participial ending*
15. [[[absent]<sub>A</sub>[mind]<sub>N</sub>ed]<sub>A</sub>ness]<sub>N</sub> *there's composition here; the rest is derivation*

## 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*?)

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 *tēm*
- arrive *boj*
- sleep *nōrō*
- speak *kabēn*
- FUTURE *-mã*
- while *-ri*
- be about to *-kadjy*
- PRESENT  $\emptyset$

- Fill in the following table with the corresponding forms:

I i-	we two (incl.) ba-	you (singular) a-	he/she $\emptyset$
we (few) ari-		you (few) ara-	they (few) ar-
we (many) mēi-		you (many) mēa-	they (many) mē-

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

*Yes. The person affixes are i-, a-, and  $\emptyset$ , while the number affixes are  $\emptyset$  (for singular), ar-, mē-.*

- What is the order of morphemes in the Mēbengokre verb? Assume that PRESENT, FUTURE, *while* and *be about to* are all TENSE morphemes.

*Number–Person–Stem–Tense*

- What is the English translation for the Mēbengokre word *kabēnkadjy*?  
*He's about to speak.*
- How would you say *they (many) are about to sleep* in Mēbengokre?  
*mēnōrōkadjy*

### 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

*There are three allomorphs for the plural morpheme: -an, -jan, -gan. The first is used with consonant-final stems; the latter two are used with vowel-final stems, with -gan appearing after /e/, and -jan elsewhere.*

### 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.

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

*As a derivational affix, -ing transforms a verb into a noun with a more or less idiosyncratic meaning (in these cases; note that -ing can also function as a very productive nominalizer with*

*the meaning ‘the activity of V-ing’, in which case it behaves phonologically just like the participial ending — see below).*

*As an inflectional affix, -ing is the ending of the present participle, used, v.g., in the progressive: is lightening. In the speech of some people, words in which the -ing affix is a participial ending have one more syllable with respect to those where -ing is a nominalizing suffix of the type exemplified above. This is actually reflected in the orthography in lightening, but seems to happen in the other cases as well (i.e., [twɪnkəlɪŋ], [kɪndəlɪŋ]).*