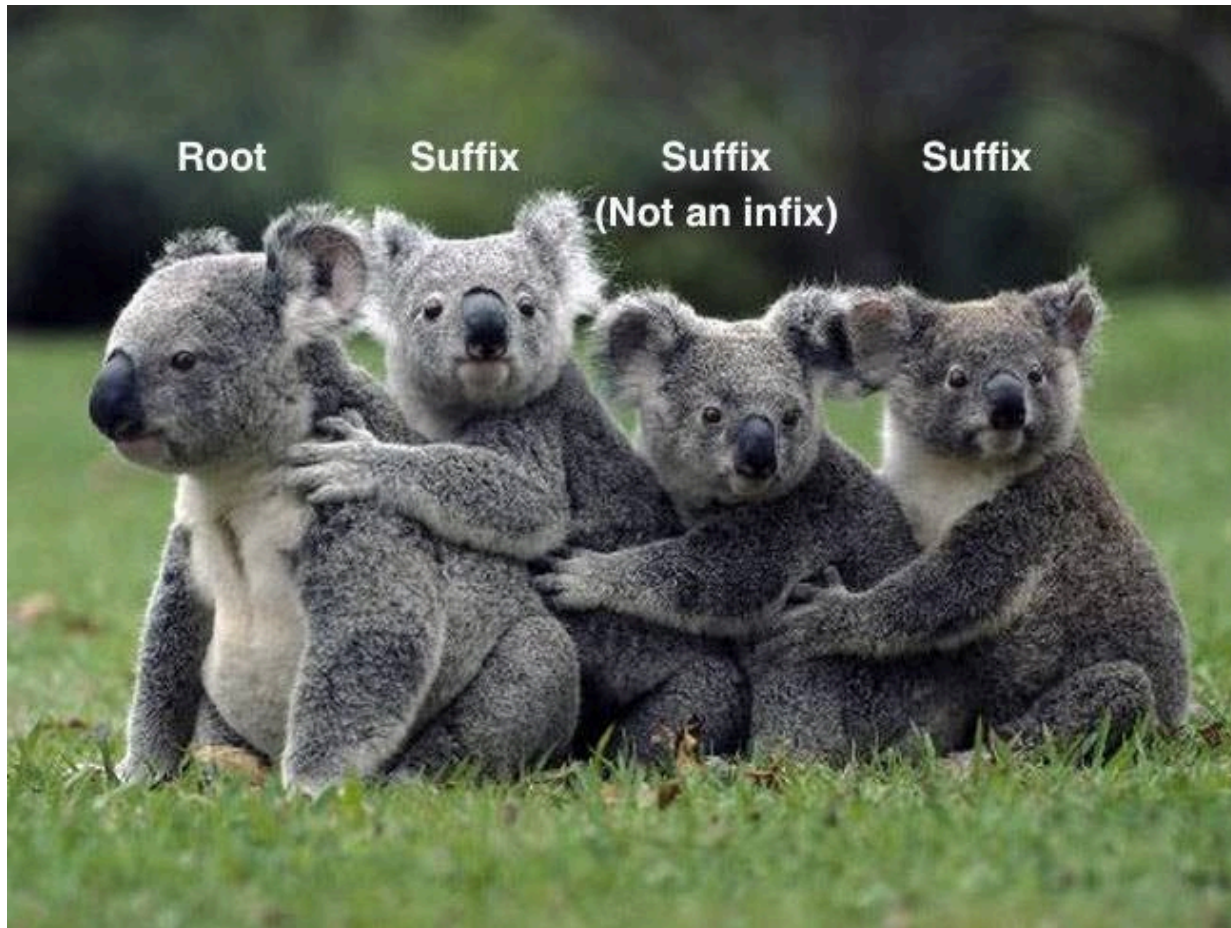# Morphology II

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2025/09/19 (updated: 2025-09-19)

Previously on 201

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- **root** (base)

- **affix** (morpheme that attaches to the base)

  - **prefix**

  - **suffix**

  - **infix** (rare in English)

  - **circumfix**

- **free vs. bound morpheme**
  - can appear as an independent word?

- **derivational morpheme**
  - change core meaning even part of speech

- **inflectional morpheme**
  - add some grammatical nuance

- **homophone**
  - same sound, different meanings

- **allomorph**
  - same meaning, different sounds

- **simple word vs. compound word**
  - one root = simple
  - more than one = compound

Previously on 201

- **root** (base; **build**, **flower**)

- **affix** (morpheme that attaches to the base)

  - **prefix** (**un**-do)

  - **suffix** (walk-**ed**)

  - **infix** (rare in English)

  - **circumfix** (**em**-bold-**en**)

- **free vs. bound morpheme**
  - can appear as an independent word?
  - **blue**berry vs. **cran**berry

- **derivational morpheme** (piano --> pian-**ist**)
  - change core meaning even part of speech

- **inflectional morpheme** (jump --> jump-**ed**)
  - add some grammatical nuance

- **homophone** (fast-**er**, teach-**er**)
  - same sound, different meanings

- **allomorph** (**magic**, **magic**-ian)
  - same meaning, different sounds

- **simple word vs. compound word**
  - one root = simple (inter-**nation**-al)
  - more than one = compound (**sawhorse**)

More Terms

Compounding vs. Affixation

compounding: combining two or more roots into a single word

German: *Donaudampfschiffahrtsgesellschaftskapitän*

Roots: *Donau- dampf- schiff- fahrts- gesellschafts- kapitän*

Meaning: Danube- steam- ship- travel- company- captain
'captain of the Danube Steamship Company'

Then the following word in Kazakh is **NOT** compounding:

Kazakh: *Qanaghatdandiralmaghandiqdaringizben*
Root: *Qanaghat-*
- Suffixes: *-dan -dir -al -ma -ghan -diq -dar -ring -iz*
Meaning: VBL CAUS CAP NEG ASP NML PL 2.Poss FRM
'Your (*pl, formal*) being not able to make (me) feel content'

More Terms

Reduplication

full reduplication: repeat **ALL** of a morpheme

- Indonesian plural
  - *orang* 'person' → *orang-orang* 'people'
- Chinese intensified adjective:
  - $k^hai^{55}ṣin^{55}$ 'happy' → $k^hai^{55}k^hai^{55}$ $ṣin^{55}ṣin^{55}$ 'very happy'

partial reduplication: repeat **PART** of a morpheme

- Tagalog future
  - *bili* 'buy' → ***bi**-bili* 'will buy'
- Kazakh intensified adjective:
  - *tætti* 'sweet' → ***tæp**-tætti* 'very sweet'

More Terms

Alternation, Suppletion, Zero-derivation

alternation: changing one ore more sounds within the morpheme (not the whole morpheme)

- allomorphy is technically a type of alternation, one in which there is no difference in meaning
- g**oo**se / g**ee**se; r**i**ng / r**a**ng / r**u**ng

suppletion: an **inflected** form is phonetically very different from other forms of the same word

- go / went; good / better / best

zero-derivation: change a word's part of speech **without adding anything** at all

- 'I ❤️ (heart) Linguistics!'

A Little Practice

Identify the **morphological processes** involved in each of the following words.

affixation (prefixation, suffixation), **compounding**, **reduplication**, **alternation**, **suppletion**

- feed → fed

- leaf → leaves

- peace → peaceful

- foot, ball → football

- good → best

- chair, woman → chairwomen

- back, pack → backpacks

- like → like-liked

- go → underwent

- ox → oxen

Order of Affixation

unbelievable vs. renewable

- How many morphemes does each have?

- What is the root?

- Is there a prefix or suffix?

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  - Is it un + believable or unbelieve + able?
  - Is it renew + able or re + newable?

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believ-able vs. un-**believe**

re-**new** vs. **new**-able

Order of Affixation

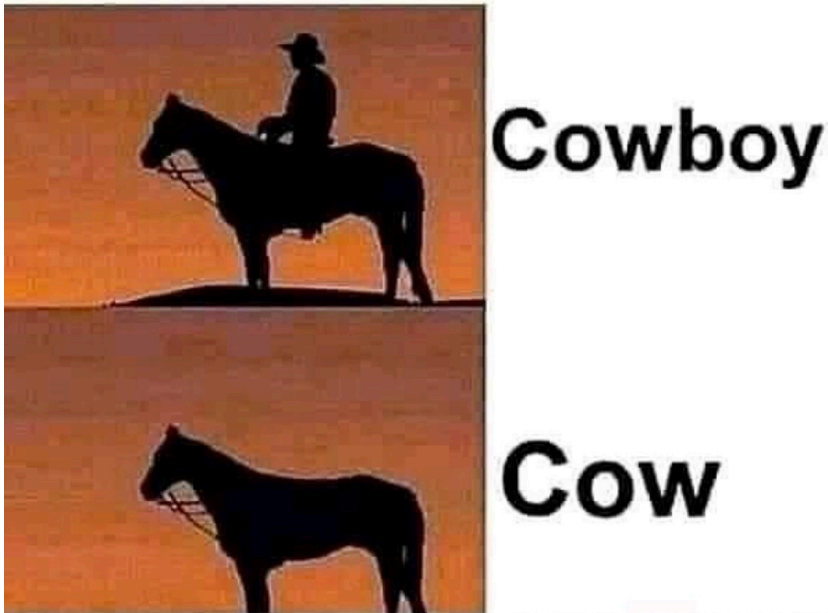**ORDER OF AFFIXATION**: the order in which you add affixes to a root

It does play a role in the morphology of a word:

- different words have different orders of affixation (un + believable / renew + able)

- order of affixation is part of our mental grammar

- to **test** the order: we **add** an affix and see if it makes a real word

- also, to **test** the order: we try to **understand** what the word means

  - If the definition involves some **smaller** combination of the root and an affix, it suggests that that affix is added first (un-[**believ**-able])

- Neither of these tests works 100% of the time, so you should try a combination of them

Hierarchical Structure

- Order of affixation is somehow connected to the **meaning** of a word
- The fact that we can't add affixes in any old order suggests that words have a **hierarchical structure** We can visualize this structure with a **tree diagram**.
- We start at the bottom with the root and build upward, adding affixes until we get to the full word at the top
- An alternative is **labeled bracketing**, which is more compact but perhaps less intuitive:

[Adj un [Adj [V believe] able]]

[Adj [V re [Adj new]] able]
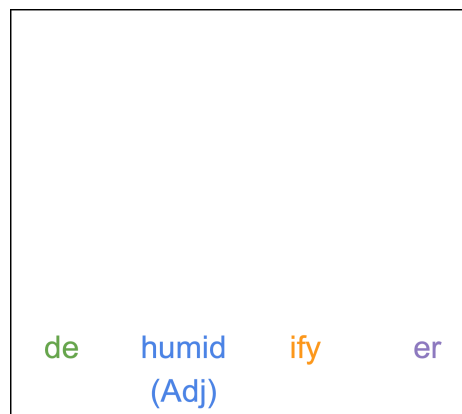
How to draw a morphological tree

De-humid-ify-er

1. Identify the word's morphemes and write them out separately in one row
2. Identify the root (or roots) and label its **part of speech**
3. Look at the morphemes immediately before and after the root. **Which one is added first**? Draw lines upward connecting them, and label the new word's part of speech
4. This new word becomes the base you'll keep building off of. **Repeat step 3** using this new base instead of the root, and continue until you have no unconnected morphemes left

How to draw a morphological tree
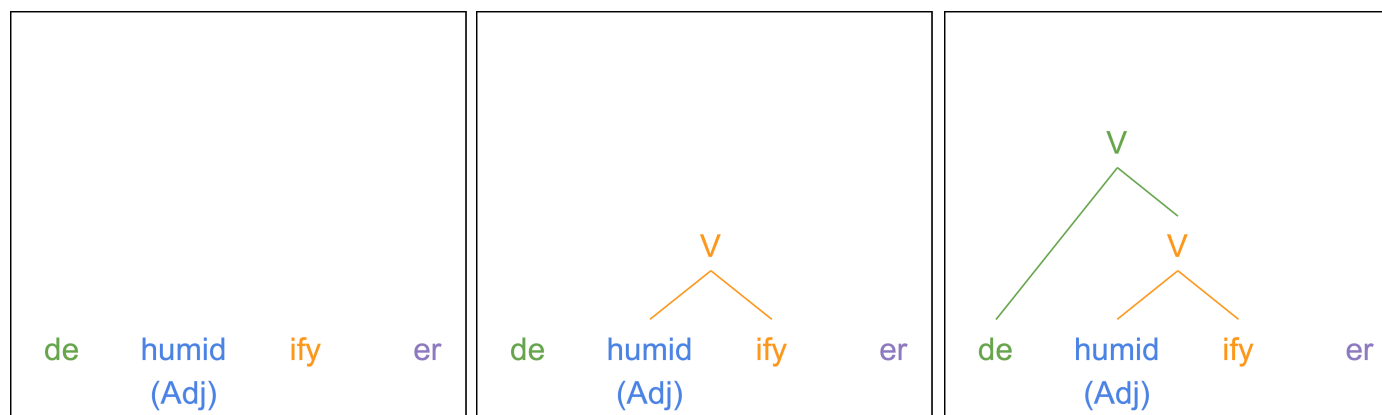
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de   humid   ify   er
(Adj)

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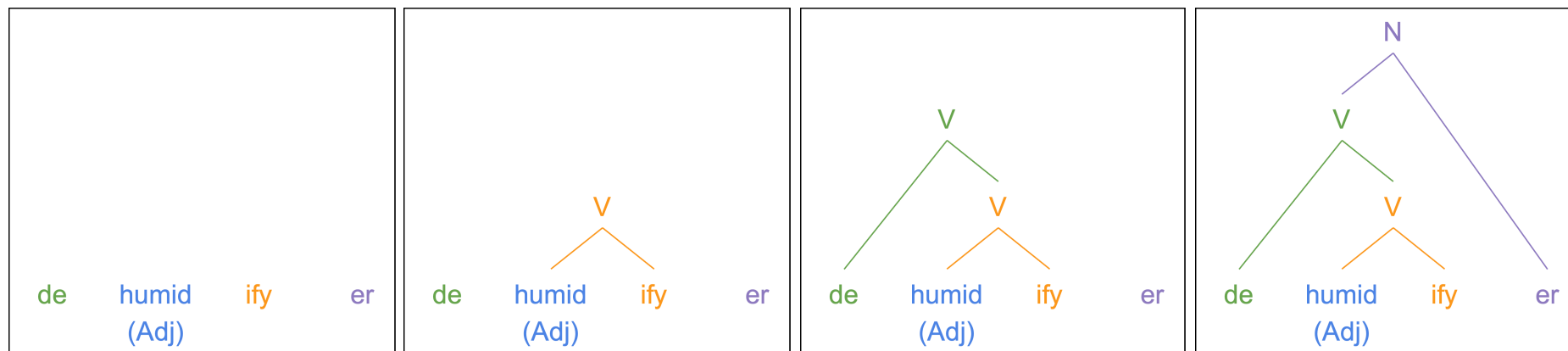
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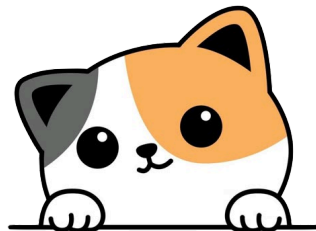
Practice: Hierarchical structure

Draw a **tree** or give **bracket labeling** for the following words:

1. disappearance

2. silliness

3. unthinkable

4. overgeneralisation
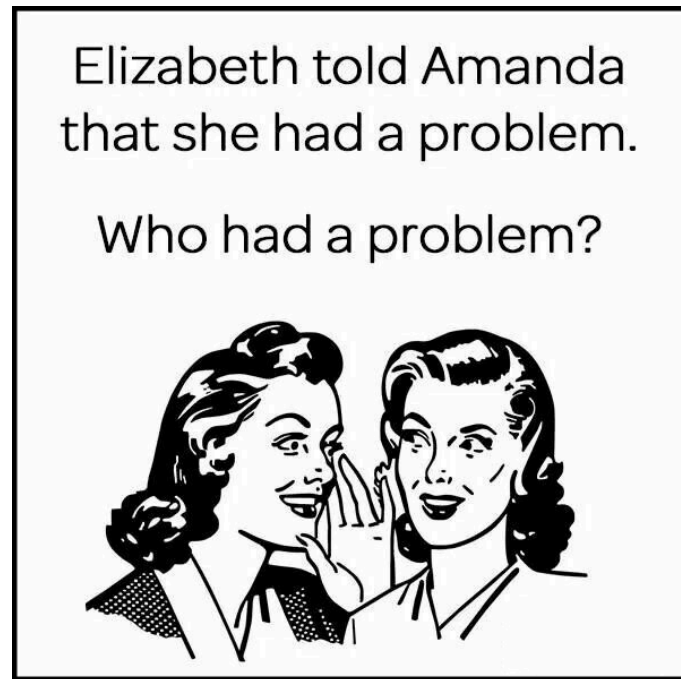
5. internationalism

HINTS

- find the root and move outward/upward

- mark the part of speech at every step

- If adding an affix makes a non-word, try adding another affix instead

- If adding an affix makes something that seems unrelated to the overall word's meaning, try adding a different affix instead
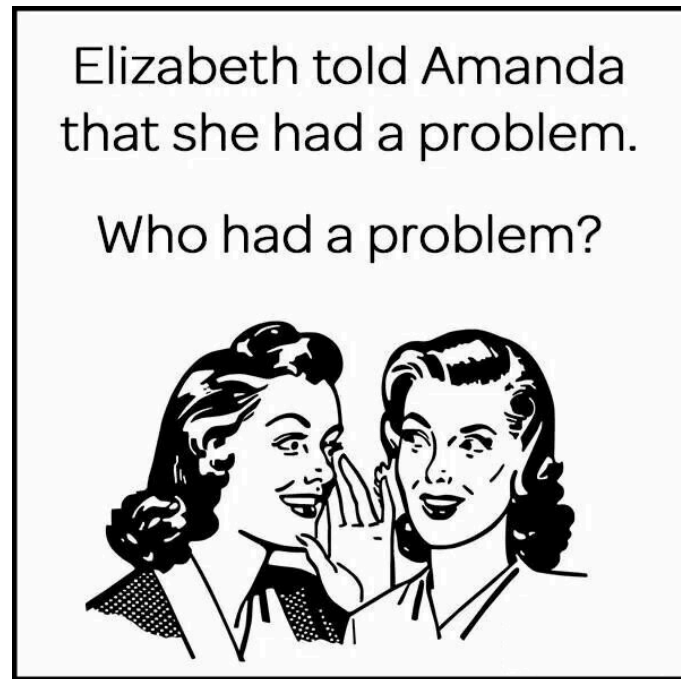
Undoable

- What does **undoable** mean?
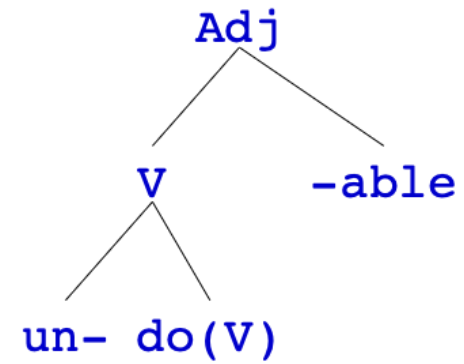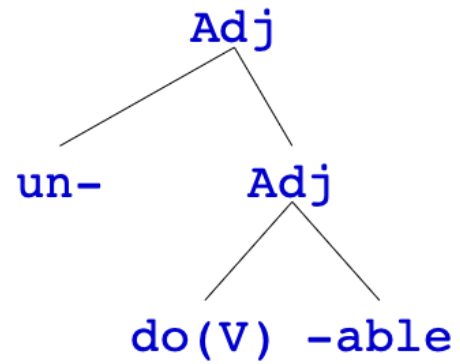
- *undo + able* vs. *un + doable*

Elizabeth told Amanda that she had a problem.

Who had a problem?

Undoable

- What does **undoable** mean?

- *undo + able* vs. *un + doable*

Elizabeth told Amanda that she had a problem.

Who had a problem?

- This is an example of a word with an **ambiguous structure**

- Depending on the structure you assign it, it has a **different meaning**

- both meanings are acceptable

- The **meaning** of words is directly affected by their morphological structure

- That's why **structure** is very important:
  - Without knowing the structure, we wouldn't know how to put together the meanings of a word's different morphemes to create the full word.

Undoable

Practice: Ambiguous Structures

Are the following words ambiguous? If yes, provide **labeled bracketings** for both readings and explain what each reaching means. If no, explain why not.
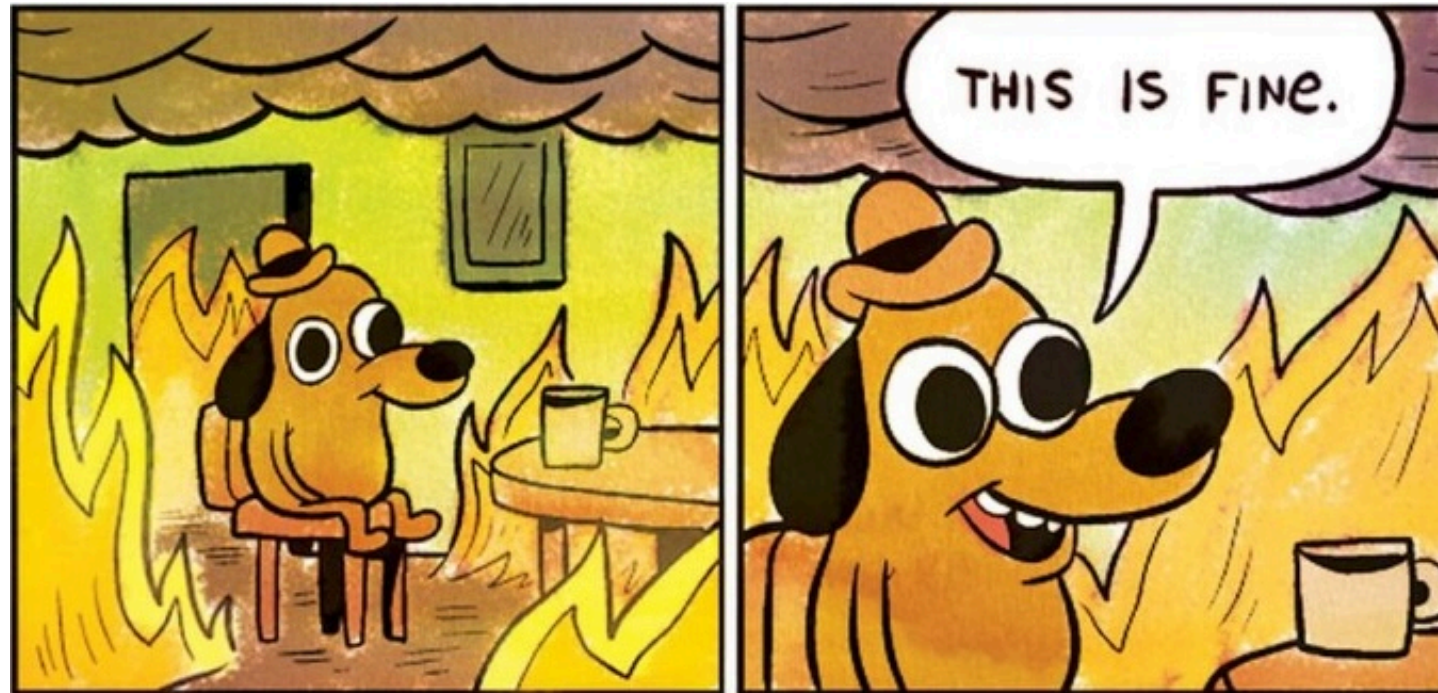
1. immeasurable

2. unwrappable

3. unbearable

HOMEWORK I is due this Sunday

HOMEWORK II will be published during this weekend, you have one week to submit

Syntax reading 1 by next Wednesday

Slides created via the R package **xaringan**.