Morphology

Introduction to Linguistics, Fall 2015

Department of Linguistics
Stanford University

October 21, 2015

Word formation

Do you know whether the following pairs of words are related or not? How? What does it mean for them to be related?

- cat-catalogue
- carefree-free
- casual-casualty
- nick-nickname
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Morphological relationships have to do with systematic connections between *form* and *meaning*.

Derivation

A new word can be **derived** from another by adding something to it:

- the new piece systematically changes (or adds to) the original
- derivation often moves words from one lexical class to another
- for example, the English suffix *"-ly"* generally attaches to an adjective and yields an adverb:
    - quick $\rightarrow$ quickly, clear $\rightarrow$ clearly, elegant $\rightarrow$ elegantly

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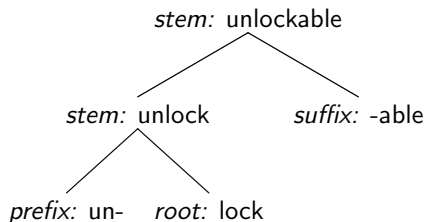
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What are **circumfixation** and **infixation**? (How did you know?)

Can you think of a (slangy) example of infixation in English?

Derivation and hierarchy

The input to a derivational process is called the **stem**. This gets
modified by **affixes**. The most basic content unit is the **root**.

```
                    stem: unlockable
                   /              \
          stem: unlock         suffix: -able
           /        \
   prefix: un-    root: lock
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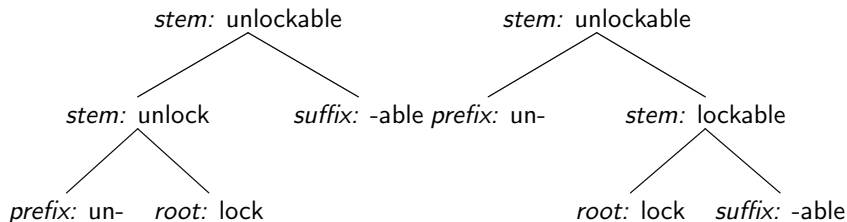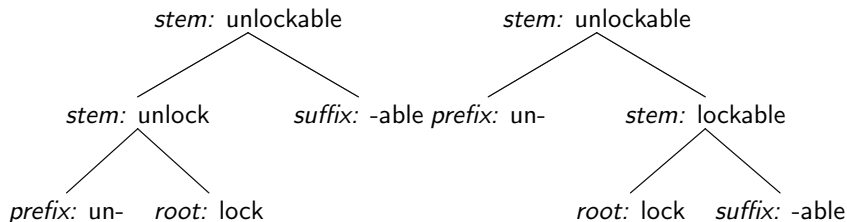
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Why is the top node also a stem?

Inflection

Inflectional processes are those which create different *forms* of a word, rather than different words:

- we wouldn't necessarily want to say *walk* and *walks* are different words, but we know (because of the *-s* ending) that they have different grammatical roles
- inflection usually does not change the lexical category of a word (can you think of an exception?)
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- some inflectional processes include ...
  pluralization, conjugation (person/number), comparative and superlative forms

Inflectional processes can sometimes be idiosyncratic in English

- Pluralization: *dog* + PL → *dogs*, but *child* + PL → *children*
- Tense: *walk* + PAST → *walked*, but *run* + PAST → *ran*

What is a morpheme?

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You can't break them down any farther.

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Morphemes can be either **free** or **bound**:

- ▶ free morphemes can stand alone (as words): roots like *lock*
  are an example of this
- ▶ bound morphemes are meaningful but cannot occur alone:
  what's an example?
- ▶ typically, free morphemes carry content, while bound
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    morphemes: *permit, submit, admit, remit, commit*

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What kind of a morpheme is *cran-* in *cranberry*?

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- **suppletion:** substitution of a root by a totally different form (with the same meaning)
  - German *sein*(=to be) has forms *bin, bist, ist, seid, sind* in the present tense

Morphological typology I

As you may have noticed by now, languages differ greatly in terms of their morphology:

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  - Hindi: *Kutta-ne phool khayi* vs. *Phool-ne kutta khaya* *ne* marks the subject of a transitive verb, and in this case the verb (*khaya/khayi*) agrees with the object. We could say *Phool kutta-ne khayi* (changing the word order of the first sentence) without causing any confusion.

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  - **polysynthetic** languages typically have very few free morphemes, and words may encapsulate whole sentences (such as the Yupik example below):

tuntu-	ssur-	qatar-	ni-	ksaite-	ngqiggte-	-uq
reindeer	hunt	FUT	say	NEG	again	3SG

    'He had not yet said again that he was going to hunt reindeer.'

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6. How would you say "I had bitten him" in Sierra Popoluca?
7. What does the Sierra Popoluca word *miwasne* mean?