

Morphology III

FSEM CORE S119: Language as Human Nature

Fall 2025

Prof. Forrest Davis

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Warm-up

1. Discuss with your neighbor the highlight of your homecoming weekend
2. Consider the following data from Hungarian, a Ugric language spoken by roughly 14 million people. What morphemes represents 'house', 'wine', 'a/an', and 'his/her'?

Word	Meaning	Word	Meaning
[hɔz]	'house'	[bor]	'wine'
[ɛjhɔz]	'a house'	[ɛjbor]	'a wine'
[hɔzɔ]	'his/her house'	[borɔ]	'his/her wine'

Logistics

- No class Thursday
- Report 2 posted, due Oct 3

Learning Objectives

- Articulate the basic aspects of morphological analysis
- Identify morphemes in a non-English language

Summary: We extend our work on morphophonemic analysis to full morphological analysis in non-English languages. In small groups, you tackle a variety of practice problems to drive home key concepts from morphology.

Morphological Analysis

WITH THE TOOLS WE HAVE LEARNED SO FAR in this class, we can identify allomorphs, describe their meaning, and analyze their distribution in a unfamiliar language. We will go through an example together via some slides.

Practice with Assigned Small Groups

FIND YOUR SMALL GROUP OF 2 PEOPLE and work on the following problems. Please engage with each other and feel free to ask me questions if you get completely stuck.

The example data here is taken from a variety of sources, including Seth Cable's Introduction to Linguistic Theory materials taught at University of Massachusetts Amherst, Tomonori Nagano's Introduction to Linguistics at LaGuardia Community College, and Norvin Richards's Introduction to Linguistics materials at MIT.

Practice Problems

1. Examine the following data from Swahili, a Bantu language spoken by approximately 97 million people. Give the morpheme for person (first, second, third person), present progressive (X is Ving), past progressive (X was Ving), future (X will V), and 'read'.

Word	Meaning
[ninasoma]	'I am reading'
[unasoma]	'You are reading'
[anasoma]	'She or he is reading'
[nilisoma]	'I was reading'
[ulisoma]	'You were reading'
[alisoma]	'She or he was reading'
[nitasoma]	'I will read'
[utasoma]	'You will read'
[atasoma]	'She or he will read'

Practice Problems

2. Consider the following data from Farsi, a western-Iranian language spoken by around 130 million people.

[xaridam]	'I bought'
[xaridi]	'you (<i>sing</i>) bought'
[xarid]	'(he) bought'
[naxaridam]	'I did not buy'
[namixaridand]	'they were not buying'
[naxaridim]	'we did not buy'
[mixarid]	'(he) was buying'
[mixaridid]	'you (<i>plural</i>) were buying'

- (a) Give the Farsi morphemes for I, they, you (*sing*), not, we, was/were +ing, you (*pl*). (Hint -id designates past tense)
- (b) How would you save the following in Farsi
- They were buying
 - You (*sing*) did not buy
 - You (*plural*) were buying
- (c) How might you say the following in Persian?
- They do not buy
 - We are buying

Practice Problems

3. Examine the following data from Lardil, a Tangkic language spoken by 65 people. The core contrast is between Nominative and Accusative case. In English, this contrast is marginal, appearing only with pronouns. For example, in *he saw him running* 'he' is nominative and 'him' is accusative. What are the morphemes for nominative and what are some rules that govern them? Note, this is tricky, and you may not be able to account for all of the patterns we are seeing (especially with respect to accusative).

Nominative	Accusative	Meaning
mela	melan	'seawater, beer'
barnga	barngan	'stone'
katha	kathan	'nest'
wunda	wundan	'stingray species'
wunda	wunin	'rain'
belda	belin	'tip'
dalda	dalin	'curve'
yaka	yakin	'fish'
birrka	birrkin	'string'
lelka	lelkin	'head'
kanda	kandun	'blood'
nguka	ngukun	'water'
ngawa	ngawun	'dog'
karda	kardun	"woman's child" also "man's sister's child"
ngalu	ngalukin	'story'
wangal	wangalkin	'boomerang'
thalkurr	thalkurrkin	'kookaburra'
kundul	kundulkin	'umbilical cord'

Lardil is a critically endangered language spoken by the Lardil people on Mornington Island (which is broadly within the islands of Queensland in northern Australia). It was deliberately destroyed by forced assimilation and relocation programs initiated by the Australian government, a practice common to many settler-colonial projects, including North America. The last fluent speaker of the traditional form of the language died in 2007.

Before Next Class

- Reading and pre-class quiz for Tuesday Sep 30
- Make progress on Report II