

# Handout #6

## Morphemes

# Morphemes

- A **morpheme** is a minimal unit of grammar, i.e. the smallest bit of speech that has a meaning or grammatical function.
- A morpheme includes a phonological representation that tells you how it is pronounced, and a semantic representation that tells you what it refers to.
- It is minimal in that it can't be broken down further into meaningful units.

# Morphemes

- In the word *rewriting*, there are three morphemes: *re-*, *writ*, and *-ing*.
- *Writ(e)* is a **free morpheme**. It can stand alone as a word.
- It is a root. Every word must include at least one root.
- *Re-* and *-ing* are **bound morphemes**, which cannot stand alone as words.

# Morphological analysis

- To find the morphemes in a set of words, you look for correlations between the sounds and the meanings.
- If the words aren't English, the meanings are reflected in the glosses.
- A string of sounds has a particular meaning if presence of those sounds correlates with presence of that meaning.

# Turkish

(Bissantz and Johnson 1985: 131)

- deniz “an ocean”
- denize “to an ocean”
- denizin “of an ocean”
- eve “to a house”
- evden “from a house”
- evd3ikden “from a little house”

# Turkish

- denizdzikde “in a little ocean”
- elde “in a hand”
- elim “my hand”
- eller “hands”
- dişler “teeth”
- eldzike “to a little hand”

# Morphological analysis

- Compare the first word *deniz* to the second *denize*.
- They are identical in form except that the second has *-e* at the end.
- They are also identical in meaning, except that the second has the added meaning “to”.
- Therefore *deniz* means “an ocean”, and *-e* means “to”.
- There’s no reason yet to break them down further.

# Morphological analysis

- Now consider the third word, *denizin*.
- It differs from the previous words in form in that it has the sounds *-in* at the end.
- It differs in meaning from the previous words in that it has the meaning “of”.
- So *-in* must mean “of”.

# Morphological analysis

- Now consider the fourth word, *eve*.
- It is like the second word *denize* in that it ends with *-e* and has “to” in the gloss.
- It differs from that word in form in that it begins with *ev* rather than *deniz*.
- It differs in meaning in that it has “house” in the gloss instead of “ocean”.
- So *ev* must mean “house”.

# Turkish morphemes

<i>ocean</i>		<i>from</i>	
<i>house</i>		<i>plural</i>	
<i>hand</i>		<i>my</i>	
<i>tooth</i>		<i>of</i>	
<i>in</i>		<i>little</i>	
<i>to</i>			

# Swahili (Kenya, Tanzania)

(Bissantz and Johnson 1985: 135)

- atanipenda “he will like me”
- atakupenda “he will like you”
- atampenda “he will like him”
- atatupenda “he will like us”
- atawapenda “he will like them”
- nitakupenda “I will like you”
- nitampenda “I will like him”
- nitawapenda “I will like them”

# Swahili (Kenya, Tanzania)

- utanipenda “you will like me”
- utampenda “you will like him”
- tutampenda “we will like him”
- watampenda “they will like him”
- atakusumbua “he will annoy you”
- unamsumbua “you are annoying him”
- atanipiga “he will beat me”
- atatupiga “he will beat us”
- atampiga “he will beat him”

# Swahili (Kenya, Tanzania)

- ananipiga “he is beating me”
- anakupiga “he is beating you”
- anampiga “he is beating him”
- amekupiga “he has beaten you”
- amenipiga “he has beaten me
- amempiga “he has beaten him”
- alinipiga “he beat me”
- alikupiga “he beat you”
- alimpiga “he beat him”





# Swahili

- What order do the morphemes occur in?
- Translate the following:
  - \_\_\_\_\_ “I have beaten him”
  - \_\_\_\_\_ “I am annoying him”
  - *walikupenda* “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”
  - *nitawasumbua* “ \_\_\_\_\_ ”

# Luiseño (California)

(Bissantz and Johnson 1985: 132)

- noka:maj “my son”
- poka:maj “his son”
- ʔoka:maj “your (singular) son”
- pomka:maj “their son”
- noka:majum “my sons”
- ʔoki “your (singular) house”
- poki “his house”

# Luiseño (California)

- pomki “their house”
- ʔohu:kapi “your (singular) pipe”
- pohu:kapi “his pipe”
- tʃamhu:kapi “our pipe”
- pope:w “his wife”
- pompe:wum “their wives”
- tʃampe:wum “our wives”

# Reference

- Bissantz, Annette and Keith Johnson (1985). *Language Files* (3rd ed.). Advocate Publishing Group, Reynoldsburg, Ohio.