

Task [2]

Just like words can be put together according to syntactic rules to form new phrases and sentences, there are elements smaller than words, **morphemes**, that can be combined to create new words in a systematic way. As an example take the English words *baker* and *singer* and their definitions:

baker = someone who bakes

singer = someone who sings

A quick comparison of the form and meaning of the two words reveals that they could be analyzed as morphologically complex. They both consist of a verb (*bake* and *sing* respectively) and a morpheme meaning "someone who does the verb action" (the *-er* part). A morpheme attaching to something to form a more complex word is called **an affix**. The part to which an affix attaches is called **the stem**. If the stem is morphologically simple (it is not possible to divide it into more parts), it is called **the root** of the word. In our example *sing* is the stem with which the affix *-er* combines and, at the same time, it is the root of the word *singer*. However, sometimes a stem can be morphologically complex. In the word *bakers* the plural affix *-s* combines with the stem *baker* which itself consists of the root *bake* and the affix *-er*, like below:

[bake -er] -s

Affixes can only attach to stems belonging to particular categories. For example, the plural affix *-s* can only combine with nouns. Notice that some affixes change the category of the stem (like *-er*) and some don't (like plural *-s*).

bake [Verb] => baker [Noun] => bakers [Noun]

Based on our examples we could create a small inventory of some of the English morphemes. The first table contains affixes and the other contains roots.

AFFIX	STEM CATEGORY	STEM+AFFIX CATEGORY	MEANING/FUNCTION
-er	Verb	Noun	someone who performs the action of the Verb
-s	Noun	Noun	plural number

ROOT	CATEGORY
bake	Verb
sing	Verb

EXERCISE 1

Morphological analysis of words in different languages is an essential skill of a linguist. Now imagine that you are studying an unknown language. Working with an English speaking informant you managed to obtain a few words with their rough English translations. Analyze the data below and create an inventory of roots and affixes of this (fictional) language in two tables, like for the English examples above. Express the meaning of the roots and the affixes in English.

EXERCISE 2

Translate the following words into English. HINT: Start by identifying the root of each word and its category.

1. bakakromarf [Noun] =
2. borofmatar [Verb] =
3. kikomburkro [Verb] =
4. romorfarotar [Verb] =
5. koframtar [Verb] =
6. bibaka [Noun] =
7. gatokorf [Noun] =
8. kibakakromarf [Noun] =
9. bigorkorf [Noun] =

Author: mgr Piotr Gulgowski

KEY AND SCORE

SCORE

Exercise 1: 1 point for each complete entry in both tables; 0.5 point for a partially correct entry; 19 points in total (10 from the affix table + 9 from the root table)

Exercise 2: 1 point for each correct answer; 10 points in total (9 + 1 extra)

Total score: 29 points

ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 1

AFFIX	STEM CATEGORY	STEM+AFFIX CATEGORY	MEANING/FUNCTION
-marf	Verb	Noun	someone who performs the action of the Verb
-korf	Verb	Noun	the object/result of the action of the Verb
-tar	Adjective	Verb	to become like the Adjective
-raf	Noun	Verb	to use the Noun as a tool
-kro	Noun	Verb	to produce Noun-things
bi-	Noun	Noun	large
ki-	Noun	Noun	small
bo-	Adjective	Adjective	very
ko-	Adjective	Adjective	slightly
ro- -ro	Adjective	Adjective	not at all

ROOT	CATEGORY	MEANING
baka	Noun	hammer
krom	Noun	knife
kombur	Noun	computer
gor	Verb	to build
gato	Verb	to paint
argata	Verb	to write
morfa	Adjective	blue
rofma	Adjective	green
fram	Adjective	expensive

ANSWERS TO EXERCISE 2

- [baka-kro]-marf [Noun] = a producer of hammers
- [bo-rofma]-tar [Verb] = to become very green
- [ki-kombur]-kro [Verb] = to produce small computers
- [ro-morfa-ro]-tar [Verb] = to become not-blue
- [ko-fram]-tar [Verb] = to become slightly expensive
- bi-baka [Noun] = a large hammer
- gato-korf [Noun] = a painting (something that was painted)
- [[ki-baka]-kro]-marf [Noun] = a producer of small hammers
ki-[[baka-kro]-marf] [Noun] = a small producer of hammers
(any of the two answers is acceptable; extra point for giving both)
- bi-[gor-korf] [Noun] = a large building