

October 30, 2003

## CLASS 7: MORPHOLOGICAL STRUCTURE

We see structure everywhere, and given that word formation is the result of organized processes, it shouldn't come as a surprise to see **structure on the word level**. Just as phrase structure rules tell us which elements combine to form phrases on the sentence level, here too we have **rules**: the morphological rules that create word forms (morphemes basically: roots, bases, and affixes).

The **simplest structure** is that of a **simple word** giving its word class or category:

- (1) a.  $\begin{array}{c} \text{N} \\ | \\ \text{morphology} \end{array}$       b.  $\begin{array}{c} \text{V} \\ | \\ \text{kill} \end{array}$       c.  $\begin{array}{c} \text{A} \\ | \\ \text{black} \end{array}$       d.  $\begin{array}{c} \text{P} \\ | \\ \text{on} \end{array}$
- (2) a. [ morphology ]<sub>N</sub>      b. [ kill ]<sub>V</sub>      c. [ black ]<sub>A</sub>      d. [ on ]<sub>P</sub>

How do we then **derive new word forms**? By assuming that affixes have a category too, in other words: **all morphemes are heads** (recall discussion on the **lexical entry** for roots and affixes).

- (3) a.  $\begin{array}{c} \text{A} \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \text{N} \quad \text{-cal} \\ \text{morphologi} \end{array}$       b.  $\begin{array}{c} \text{N} \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \text{V} \quad \text{-er} \\ \text{kill} \end{array}$       c.  $\begin{array}{c} \text{V} \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \text{A} \quad \text{-en} \\ \text{black} \end{array}$
- (4) a. [ [ morphology ]<sub>N</sub> -cal ]<sub>A</sub>      b. [ [ kill ]<sub>V</sub> -er ]<sub>N</sub>      c. [ black ]<sub>A</sub> -en ]<sub>V</sub>

The same goes for **more complex derivations**, very similar to phrase structure rules

- (5) a.  $\begin{array}{c} \text{N} \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \text{A} \quad \text{-ism} \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \text{N} \quad \text{-al} \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \text{V} \quad \text{-(c)ation} \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \text{de-} \quad \text{V} \\ \text{mystifi-} \end{array}$       b.  $\begin{array}{c} \text{A} \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \text{un-} \quad \text{A} \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \text{N} \quad \text{-ful} \\ \text{grace} \end{array}$       c. \*  $\begin{array}{c} \text{A} \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \text{N} \quad \text{-ful} \\ / \quad \backslash \\ \text{un-} \quad \text{N} \\ \text{grace} \end{array}$
- (6) a. [ [ [ [ de- [ mystifi- ]<sub>V</sub> ]<sub>V</sub> -(c)ation ]<sub>N</sub> -al ]<sub>A</sub> -ism ]<sub>N</sub>  
 b. [ un- [ [ grace ]<sub>N</sub> -ful ]<sub>A</sub> ]<sub>A</sub>  
 c. \* [ [ un- [ grace ]<sub>N</sub> ]<sub>N</sub> -ful ]<sub>A</sub>

- **compounds**, too, can be represented this way — and **ambiguities** can be dissolved
- **bracketing paradox**: a derivational suffix attaches to a phrase, not to a word or root.

*Always bear in mind **rules & regularities** (i.e. which kind of affix goes with which word class).*

### Readings for next class:

📖 Carstairs-McCarthy 2002: Chs. 8-9 (pp. 85-113), including the exercises.