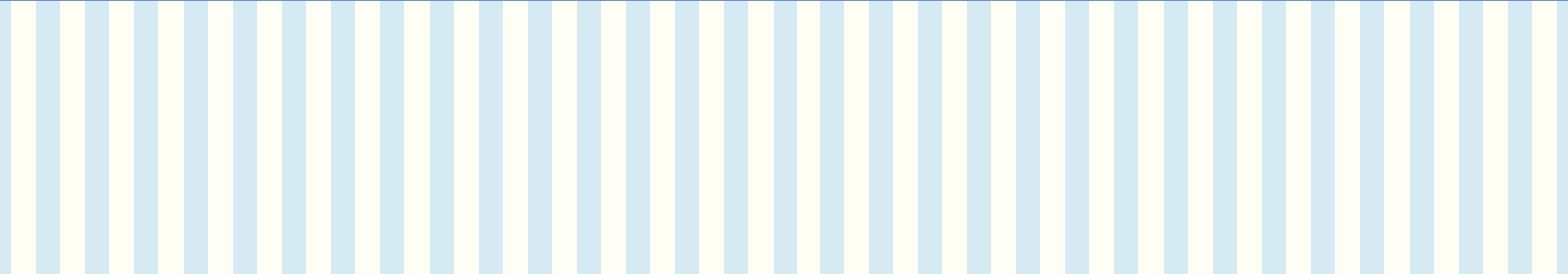


MORPHOLOGY



Morphology could be described as the study of word structure:

- how words are structured
- how new words are made
- their component parts, including affixes of various types
- the types of grammatical information they can express (number, case, tense, aspect)
- how they interact with phonology and syntax (phrase and sentence structure)

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But what is a word?

A common definition: A word is the smallest free form in a language.

But what about in Chukchi?

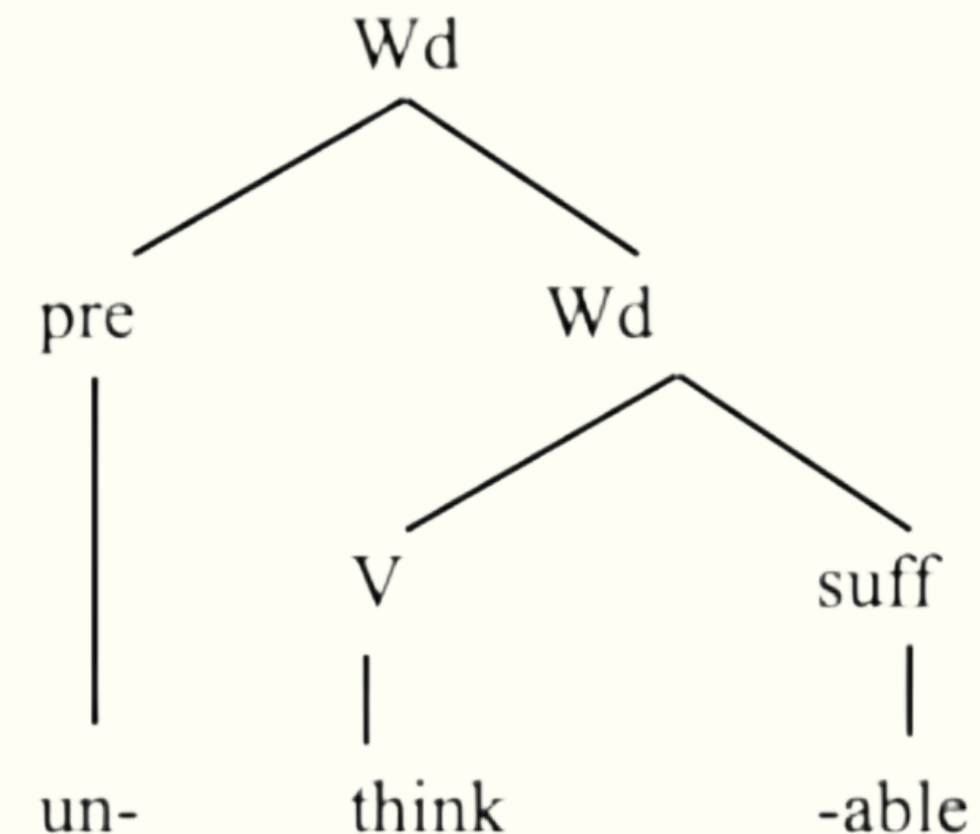
təmejnəlevtəpəytərkən 'I have a fierce headache' ('I am big-headaching?')

tə	-mejŋə	-levtə	-pəyt	-ərkən
1SG.SUB	big	head	ache	IMPERF

But what is a word?

Another definition: The word is the unit of syntactic arrangement: syntactic rules act on words to build sentences.

But words have a rule-driven internal hierarchical structure, just as phrases and sentences do, so it's not clear that this criterion reliably discriminates between the former and latter sets.



But what is a word?

Words are minimal free forms that are acted upon by syntactic rules.

Levels of Structure

There are (at least) these levels of structure in language:

- phonological
- morphological
- syntactic
- semantic?

Phonological: Around 35 phonemes (in English) + set of rules for their arrangement
→

Morphological: Many thousands of morphemes (roots, affixes, etc.), + set of rules
→

Syntactic: Thousands of morphemes + set of rules => Infinite number of possible productions.

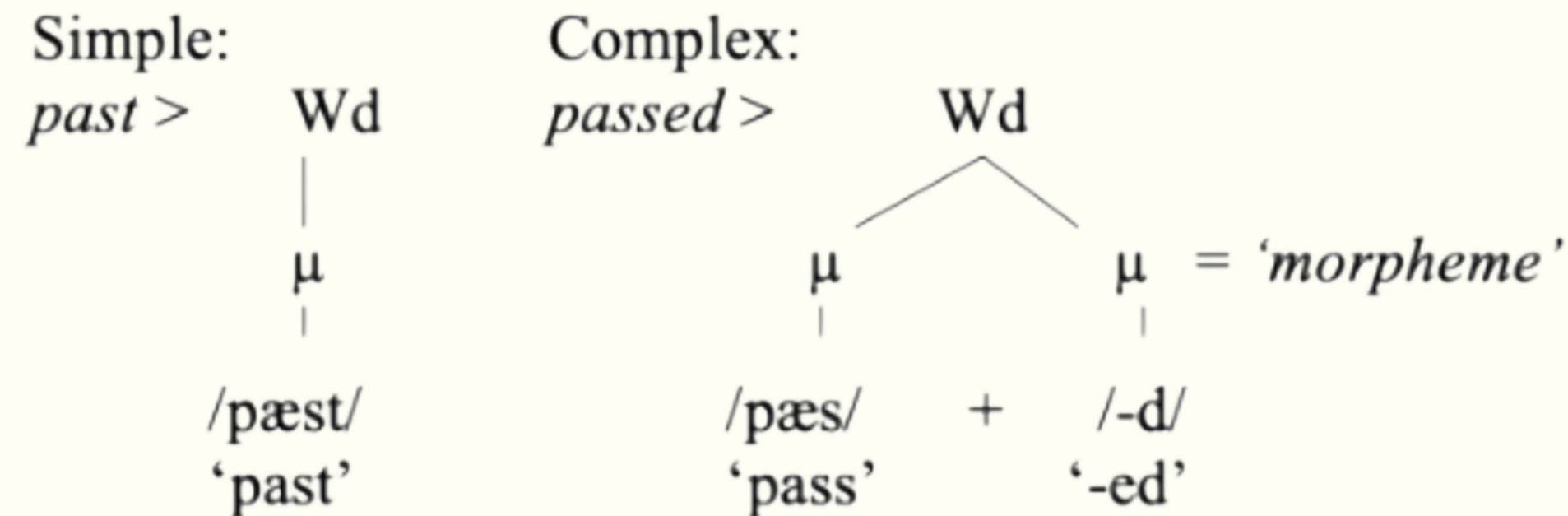
Levels of Structure

Morphological structure differs from phonological structure

past, passed: both words have the same phonological structure:

past → /pæst/ *passed* → /pæst/

But different morphological structure:



Morphological structure not flat, but hierarchical.

Words are assembled from their component pieces, or morphemes,
in a specific order.

If we look closely, we can figure out what that order is.

redeveloper

This word seems to consist of a free morpheme, in this case a verb:

develop

and two bound morphemes, in this case a prefix and a suffix:

re-

-er

Affixes do not attach to just any word, but to specific categories of words

re- likes to attach to verbs. But the result is still a verb

re-

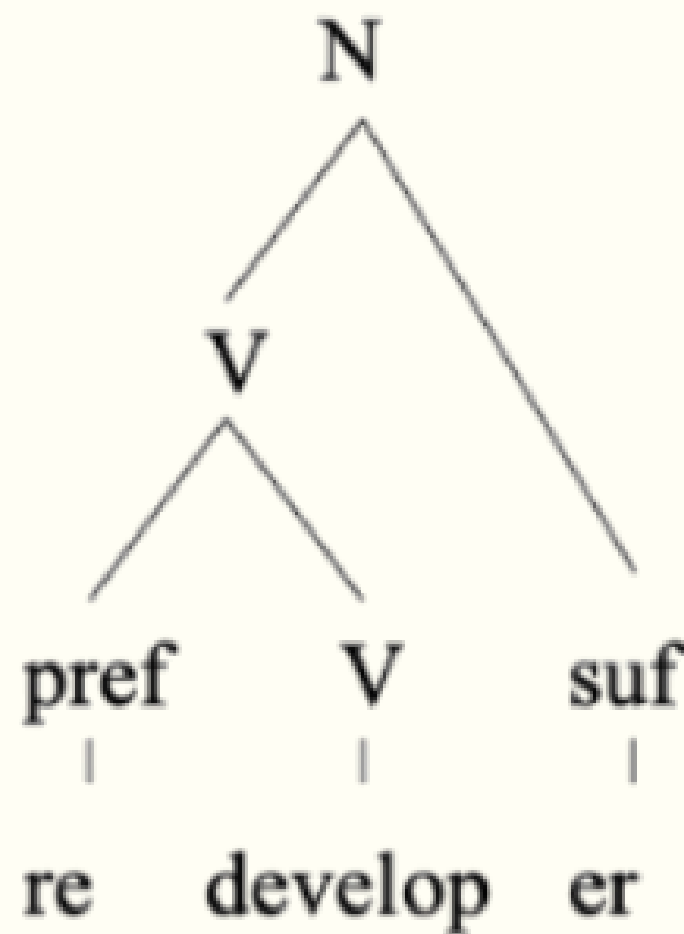
- re + heat (V) → reheat (V)
- re + attach (V) → reattach (V)
- re + build (V) → rebuild (V)

-er is added to verbs, BUT the result is a noun

-er:

- run (V) + -er → runner (N)
- mine (V) + -er → miner (N)
- play (V) + -er → player (N)

So, re- can only attach to develop, a verb. It cannot attach to developer, a noun. That means that -er must attach after re- does.



A similar tree can be drawn for any complex word.

What about:

undecided

untied (is this the same un- ?)

unlockable (is this one ambiguous?)

premeditation

unremarkable

insubstantial

inside

exfoliate

Morphemes & Allomorphs

Morpheme: Unit of language which has both phonological form and identifiable meaning. Cannot be broken down into smaller meaningful units.

Allomorph: surface form of a morpheme. Similar relationship to morphemes as allophones to phonemes: one is the psychological representation of the linguistic unit, the other is its physical manifestation.

One example:

/In-/ → [ɪŋ] before a velar C

[ɪm] before a bilabial C

[ɪ] before a liquid C

[ɪn] elsewhere

Morphemes & Allomorphs

Allomorphy is often predictable and rule-driven (just as allophones are generally the predictable, rule-driven realizations of phonemes):

What allomorphs of the English past tense suffix are there? Consider:

buzzed brewed budded

bussed bayed butted

But sometimes it's an idiosyncratic, unpredictable feature of the morpheme:

What about the English verb 'be: how many allomorphs?

Other examples of allomorphy, either in English or another language?