LING9640A: Morphology

Time: Friday 9-12
Room: AHB 2R09
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Description
Morphology is the study of the internal structure of words, of the processes by which words are created, and of the relation of words and word-parts to meanings and to syntax. This course will survey some of the important phenomena which have been noted in the course of recent morphological research and the major approaches which have been proposed to deal with them. Where possible readings will be taken from the primary linguistic literature focussing on key articles and monographs. We will be exploring a shift from a lexicon-based to a syntax-based theory of morphology, but in order to do this, we will (i) develop a common vocabulary to discuss morphological structure, and (ii) explore ways that theoretical constructs can be used to represent morphological structures. The overall take home message should be that all theories are works in progress and closely tied to the datasets that they can explain.

Course objectives
By the end of this course, a student should be able to
- understand basic concepts of morphology
- see morphological patterns in language data
- apply basic morphological concepts to language data
- understand two different approaches to morphological data
  - Lexicalism
  - Distributed Morphology (morphology is syntax)
- construct analyses for language data using both of these approaches
- read and understand primary morphological literature
- transfer this understanding through article summaries and data presentation

Evaluation
5 reading summaries (5 X 5%) 25% INDIVIDUAL
2 problem sets (2x5%)10% INDIVIDUAL
Oral presentation 5% INDIVIDUAL
Final paper 30% INDIVIDUAL
Participation 5% INDIVIDUAL
3 blog posts (3 X 5%) 15% GROUP
Problem set and answer sheet 10% GROUP
Reading summaries
You must (i) list three main ideas of the article and, for one of these, (ii) give the relevant piece of data for this idea, and (iii) walk through the data and show how the data point supports the idea. To be submitted via OWL on the morning of the relevant class.

Problem sets
There will be two take-home assignments. They will include datasets with a series of questions requiring the application of the tools being discussed in class.

Oral presentation
A presentation of your final paper (15 minutes).

Final paper
A paper on a topic related to the course material. 15 pages, double-spaced.

Participation
This grade will reflect your participation in class activities, including giving feedback on the blogs and the problem sets.

Adopted language
You will be divided into group of three to “adopt” a language and will be asked to apply what you learn in class to the material in your grammars.

Blog posts
Each group will write posts to put on the class blog related to three issues that come up in class. The task is to find data in the grammar that has been adopted by the group that exemplifies that issue (possible topics: constituency, bound roots, inflectional morphology, derivational morphology, argument structure, phonological domains, root suppletion, reduplication, compounding, etc.). These blogs posts will be shared the class for feedback, and the blog will only be posted once these comments are incorporated.

Problem set and answer key
Each group will create one Problem Set using data from their grammar, as well as an Answer Sheet for this Problem Set.

Textbook
Introduction to Morphology, Mark Baker and Jonathan Bobaljik
Please be aware that Baker and Bobaljik (available on OWL) is a draft, which the authors have kindly made available for our class use. Naturally there may be typos, errors or incomplete parts. Critical typos will be announced in class or posted on the class web page. It is your responsibility to keep abreast of these announcements.

A note on reading primary literature: Reading an article is a very different exercise from
reading a textbook. The reading has to be done slowly, often with pencil and paper. Try drawing the structures that are being discussed, try to find counterexamples to the claims that are being made, imagine explaining the ideas to a classmate who hasn’t read the paper (this is close to what you will be doing in the reading summaries). Because each paper is written within its own theoretical context and era, there will often (always?) be things that you do not understand completely, but you still should be able to follow the outline of the arguments and understand how the data points support the claims.

**Readings (preliminary list)**


**Languages and grammars:**


This outline is subject to minor changes.