

## Understanding English Grammar: A Linguistic Introduction

### *Additional Exercises for Chapter 4: Morphology*

#### 1. Nasal Assimilation

The following table lists some English adjectives in a broad phonetic transcription, and in the standard spelling. The forms on the right consist of the forms on the left plus a prefix. The prefixes have various allomorphs, either *in-*, *ɪŋ-*, *im-*, *ɪl*, or *ɪl*. (Note: *ŋ* represents a "velar nasal" consonant, such as the last sound in *sing*; *ɹ* represents the "English r-sound," such as the first sound in *relax*).

a.	sɛnsɪtɪv	'sensitive'	ɪnsɛnsɪtɪv	'insensitive'
b.	ækjʊəɾ	'accurate'	ɪnækjʊəɾ	'inaccurate'
c.	ɹæʃənəl	'rational'	ɪɹæʃənəl	'irrational'
d.	ɹɛɡjʊlə	'regular'	ɪɹɛɡjʊlə	'irregular'
e.	kŋɡruəs	'congruous'	ɪŋkŋɡruəs	'incongruous'
f.	pɔsəbəl	'possible'	ɪmpɔsəbəl	'impossible'
g.	lɒdʒɪkəl	'logical'	ɪllɒdʒɪkəl	'illogical'
h.	dəskɹɪ'bəbəl	'describable'	ɪndəskɹɪ'bəbəl	'indescribable'
i.	tɔləɾənt	'tolerant'	ɪntɔləɾənt	'intolerant'
j.	ɹəs'pɔnsɪbəl	'responsible'	ɪɹəs'pɔnsɪbəl	'irresponsible'
k.	lɪɡəl	'legal'	ɪllɪɡəl	'illegal'
l.	vɛɹɪəbəl	'variable'	ɪnvɛɹɪəbəl	'invariable'
m.	ɡlɔɹɪəs	'glorious'	ɪŋɡlɔɹɪəs	'inglorious'
n.	mɛzʊəɾəbəl	'measurable'	ɪmmɛzʊəɾəbəl	'immeasurable'
o.	lɪtəɾəɾ	'literate'	ɪllɪtəɾəɾ	'illiterate'
p.	bælənst	'balanced'	ɪmbælənst	'imbalanced'

For these stems, what determines which allomorph appears? Describe as explicitly as possible the condition or conditions under which each allomorph appears.

## 2. Phonosemantics

In the first column below is a list of potential English verbs whose meanings may be derived from their sounds.

A. Match each verb with its probable translation, given to the right in random order.

Phonosemantic verbs	Possible meanings in random order
a. to badump	1. to grin and giggle at the same time
b. to kitiwiti	2. to put something together out of random parts
c. to gloop	3. for one's leg suddenly and involuntarily to bend, causing one to almost fall.
d. to snerfle	4. to ride over a small hard object
g. to gringle	5. to take something apart randomly
h. to hapillate	6. to drink something quickly and noisily
i. to combobble	7. to try unsuccessfully not to smile
j. to discombobble	8. to get something tangled up in one's bicycle spokes.
k. to crink	9. to act in an extremely joyous manner
l. to smimble	10. to look through papers, or other small identical items, like cards or socks at very close range, such that one's nose is almost touching the items.

B. Now, try to invent five more phonosemantic verbs. Give them meanings, and use each one in an example sentence.

### 3. Derivational vs. Inflectional Morphology

(This exercise is inspired by Graham Thurgood -- <http://www.csuchico.edu/~gthurgood/>)

Divide each underlined word in the following sentences into its component morphemes and label each morpheme as a root (R), a derivational affix (D), or an inflectional suffix (I). Hint: Some underlined words may consist of only one morpheme.

Example: screwdrivers screw-drive-er-s  
   R     R   D I

- a. They reconsidered their decision.
- b. The chairman was understandably upset, and uncharacteristically restless.
- c. I must confess to disliking the man.
- d. He is arrogant and conceited,
- e. quite pretentious about his magical knowledge.
- f. Now Annie Horniman virtually supports him.
- g. He expanded the materials in the documents to create the initiation rites.

## 4. Types of words and morphemes

(This exercise is inspired by Graham Thurgood -- <http://www.csuchico.edu/~gthurgood/>)

Try to think of words and sentences that meet the following criteria. When presenting sentences, please label each word as "lw" if it is a Lexical Word or "gf" if it is a Grammatical Functor. When presenting words with more than one morpheme, please put hyphens between the morphemes like this: screw-drive-er-s.

The first example is done for you:

- a. A sentence of 7 words: 4 lexical words and 3 grammatical functors

This sentence has seven word-s in it.  
gf lw lw lw gf gf

- b. A sentence of 6 words: 4 lexical words and 2 grammatical functors
- c. A word that has one syllable and 2 morphemes
- d. A word with 2 syllables, and 3 morphemes
- e. A word with one morpheme and three syllables
- f. A word with one lexical root, one inflectional morpheme and one derivational morpheme
- g. A word with two lexical morphemes only
- h. A sentence with 8 words, all of which have only 1 morpheme each.
- i. A sentence of any length with all of the words having two morphemes.
- j. A sentence of 4 words in which the first word has 1 morpheme, the second word has 2 morphemes, the third word has three morphemes and the 4th word has 4 morphemes.
- k. A sentence of at least 3 words, all of which are grammatical functors (yes, this is possible -- a special prize for the longest sentence of this type!).
- l. An English word with more than one inflectional morpheme.

## 5. Derivational Patterns

(This exercise is inspired by Graham Thurgood -- <http://www.csuchico.edu/~gthurgood/>)

Write a formula of the form  $X+Y \rightarrow Z$  to describe the derivational process represented by each set of three words below. Your formula should mention the kind of stem the process applies to on the left of the arrow and the meaning adjustment expressed on the right of the arrow. The first example is done for you:

- a. happiness, faithfulness, friendliness

ADJECTIVE+ness  $\rightarrow$  ABSTRACT NOUN indicating the quality described by ADJECTIVE

- b. unhappy, untie, unfaithful

- c. greenish, smallish, sixish

- d. reuse, reconnect, reanalyze

- e. hopeless, friendless, senseless

- f. morality, sensitivity, responsibility

- g. baggage, luggage, signage

- h. victimize, colonize, alphabetize

- i. impressive, conclusive, disruptive

- j. misspell, mistrust, misanalyze

- k. really, dreamily, carefully

- l. dirty, dreamy, funny

How do the following forms affect your formula for the last set?

- m. happy, silly, nasty