

LING 21000: Morphology

Assignment 3

1 Northern Pomo

Examine the data below from Northern Pomo (spoken until 1994 in Lake County, California); [t] is an alveolar stop, [ʈ] is a dental stop, [ʔ] is a glottal stop, [s̺] is a voiceless palatal fricative, [ʔ̺] is a glottal stop, [C̺] is a voiceless palatal plosive, [h] following a consonant indicates aspiration.

1.1

- List the subject and object forms of the personal pronouns, pointing out any partial regularities you see in the forms.
- List the noun stems and affixes on nouns, indicating how subject and object are encoded.
- Identify the pattern(s) of morphological MARKEDNESS¹ for Northern Pomo subjects and objects.

misa? ma:dal sipun	‘Your maternal grandfather kissed her.’
mow misa:l sipun	‘He kissed your mother-in-law.’
mow kaweyo bila	‘He bought a horse.’
?a mowal sipun	‘I kissed him.’
bitananya? citnam Cabane	‘The bear killed the bird.’
mow kaweyonam bila	‘He bought the horse.’
man ConTo sipun	‘She kissed John.’
liSina: To sipun	‘Caterpillar-head kissed me.’
phow liSina:To paban	‘They hit Caterpillar-head.’
?a misa?al paban	‘I hit your maternal grandfather.’
citnamya? ma:dal kane	‘The bird bit her.’
hayunamya? bitanam kane	‘The dog bit the bear.’
daSoyanamman To ba?ole	‘The young woman called me.’
mow daSoyanamma:dal ba?ole	‘He called the young woman.’
ma: kawayabanammowal paban	‘You (pl.) hit the boy.’
xanamya? hayunam da:lama	‘The water covered the dog.’
cunamya? xalenam didale	‘The arrow split the tree.’
miSa: ya:l paban	‘Your mother-in-law hit us.’
Con phowal sipun	‘John kissed them.’
mow cunam bila	‘He bought the arrow.’
ya: ma:l paban	‘We hit you (pl.).’
ma To ba?ole	‘You (sg.) called me.’
kawayabanammow miTo ba?ole	‘The boy called you (sg.).’

¹For example, in English question words we would say that the object form *whom* is marked relative to the subject form *who*, because the object form bears a suffix *-m*.

1.2

Given your analysis from §1.1, how can you explain the additional data below?

man kawinam sipun	‘She kissed the baby.’
man kawinammowal sipun	‘She kissed the baby.’
kawinamya? ma:dal sipun	‘The baby kissed her.’
kawinammow ma:dal sipun	‘The baby kissed her.’
hayunammow ma:dal sipun	‘The (pet) dog kissed her.’
man hayunammowal sipun	‘She kissed the (pet) dog.’

2 Mushunguli

Mushunguli is a Bantu language spoken in southern Somalia, closely related to Tanzanian Chizigua. Using the data below, identify all morphemes and note any phonological processes. Be sure to account for any affix ordering. Ignore tone. Unless you don’t want to ignore tone.

Transcription Note: j=[j], y=[j] , ng=[ŋ], ny=[ɲ], sh=[ʃ], ch=[tʃ], z= [ð], long vowels are represented by two adjacent vowels, high tones are represented by an acute accent, all unmarked syllables are low, only contour high-low sequences are marked. Phonological downstep is marked by ”!”.

wadú!múúla	‘they are cutting’	kúloonga	‘to say’
wáfiisa	‘you.SG are hiding’	cháfiisa	‘we are hiding’
kútooa	‘to hit’	chiwahisaaba	‘we are counting them’
chakonyééka	‘we are being bent’	amdirifiisha	‘he is teasing him’
ahá!ngálísáánya	‘s/he is carrying lots of things’	kúpiika	‘to cook’
chiwahisaaba	‘we are counting them’	adú!múúla	‘s/he is cutting’
wachitooa	‘they hit us’	wáfiisa	‘you.SG are hiding’
kapíriika	‘s/he jumped’	kupíriika	‘you.SG jumped’
chihákí!kiísha	‘we made sure’	anidirifiisha	‘s/he is teasing me’
sikuguluusa	‘I chased you.SG.’	mwákí!kiísha	‘you.PL made sure’
kufikiíri	‘to think’	kúloona	‘you.SG said’
walabúúnya	‘you.SG are chewing’	kúùja	‘to eat’
mwáfiisa	‘you.PL are hiding’	wá!lóonga	‘they said’
nadirifiísha	‘I am teasing’	sípiika	‘I cooked’
chahisáába	‘we are counting’	kupiríika	‘to jump’
kumtooa	‘you.SG hit him/her’	kulabúúnya	‘to chew’
cháája	‘we are eating’	náfiisa	‘I am hiding’
sipíriika	‘I jumped’	káàja	‘he ate’
mwáája	‘you.PL are eating’	m!piika	‘you.PL cooked’
afiísa	‘s/he is hiding’	chiúja	‘we ate’
kúfiisa	‘to hide’	kuwatooa	‘you.SG hit them’
namhisabaani	‘I am counting you.PL’	wafiisa	‘They are hiding’
mwadumúúla	‘you.PL are cutting’	wadumúúla	‘you.SG are cutting’
kúufa	‘to die’	kapíriika	‘s/he jumped’
nafikiíri	‘I am thinking’	chihákí!kiísha	‘we made sure’
wahákí!kiísha	‘they made sure’		
wachiguluusa	‘they are chasing us’		

3 Why agree?

We have seen that much of inflectional morphology deals with agreement: verbs and their arguments often agree with regard to various features such as person, number and gender (etc); nouns and their modifiers often agree with regard to the same features. However we also know that agreement is not necessary within a language, as many languages, such Vietnamese, have no agreement at all² – or any inflectional morphology at all. Why then is agreement a trait of so many languages at all, if it is not necessary?

One hypothesis is that we want communication systems to have some redundancy in case information is lost over a noisy channel: we might imagine that agreement allows hearers to recover information from the speaker that gets lost in transmission somehow. However, if this is the case do you expect agreement to be more or less optional depending on the confidence that the speaker has that the hearer can receive the utterance – agreement seems quite obligatory and strict in most languages that have it? Furthermore, why do we find in language contact scenarios that the pidgins that arise tend to have lost the agreement morphology from the source languages? – shouldn't this be an environment where it's guaranteed that more information is lost in transmission?

Do you think that this hypothesis is a good explanation for why agreement exists? If so, how can we account for these discrepancies? If not, what might an alternative hypothesis be? Is it a functionalist one?

²One might argue that the classifier system in Vietnamese is something like agreement; but even if so, ignore it for now.