Morphology: Introduction

(1) **morpheme** — Minimal unit of *sound-meaning correspondence*; cannot be broken down into smaller parts that contribute consistent meaning

(a) Examples:

hoN	'book'	*taka-*	'high'	*tabe-*	'eat'
-zi-	'self'	*-teN-*	'turn'	*-sya-*	'vehicle'
-sa	'…-ness'	*-i*	'A(djective)-NONPAST'		

(b) Morphological segmentation — the process of analyzing words into their component morphemes

- Analysis procedure: Compare minimally different forms and look for how sound shape matches up with meaning
- Morphemes may be affected by phonological rules! → In carrying out morphological segmentation, we should allow for minor variation in sound shape

I. Classifying morphemes

(2) One dimension for classifying morphemes:

(a) **free** morpheme — Can be used alone as a word, with no further morphemes added

- Example: *hoN* 'book'
- Words are also free *forms* (by definition), but they may contain more than just one morpheme; example: *zi-teN-sya* 'self-turn-vehicle' (='bicycle')

(b) **bound** morpheme — Must be combined with (an)other morpheme(s) to form a word; cannot stand alone

- Examples: *taka-* 'high', *tabe-* 'eat', *zi-* 'self', *-sa* '…-ness', *-i* 'A-NONPAST'

(3) Another dimension for classifying morphemes:

(a) **root** — A lexical content morpheme (~open-class morpheme) that cannot be decomposed into smaller parts

- Examples: *hoN* 'book', *taka-* 'high', *tabe-* 'eat'

(b) **affix** — A prefix or suffix; a bound form that does not contain a root

(i) **derivational** affix — adds lexical meaning (creates a new word)

- Example: *-sa* 'A-ness' — more precisely, *-sa* is an affix that forms N(oun) from A(djectve), A(djectival)N(oun)

(ii) **inflectional** affix — adds grammatical meaning (tense, gender, number, ...)

- Example: *-i* 'A-NONPAST'

(4) How does the **root/affix** distinction line up with the **free/bound** distinction?

II. Some further considerations about morphology in Japanese

(5) What kinds of meaning actually get encoded with morphemes in Japanese?

For the Japanese speakers in the audience:

- Give a natural, plausible translation for the following English sentences.

(a)	I ate sushi.	(c)	Ayako ate sushi.	(e)	The student ate sushi.
(b)	We ate sushi.	(d)	Masahiko ate sushi.	(f)	The students ate sushi.

- How are **person** and **number** marked on verbs in Japanese?
- Languages vary as to what kinds of **grammatical meaning** are obligatorily expressed

(6) Side note: Some other interesting facts observed in (5)

(a) **Pronouns** are socially loaded and sometimes avoided

(b) The gender of given ("first") names can sometimes be predicted

(c) The agent of a transitive verb can be marked with *-ga* (SUBJECT marker) or with *-wa* (TOPIC marker) — more about this distinction in a few weeks

III. Morphology versus orthography (spelling)

(7) Important distinction: Is there a difference between a kanji character and a **morpheme**?

(a) What is the pronunciation of the Japanese word written like this? 湖

(b) How about this one? 今日

- How many morphemes are in the words in (a) and (b)?

(c) In some cases, kanji can give us clues about morphological structure

自転車	'bicycle'	電車	'electric train'	車庫	'garage, carport'
*zi-teN-**sya***		*deN-**sya***		***sya**-ko*	

- But: Are the Japanese forms *higasi* 東 and *too* 東 the same morpheme? (What would we say about *life* and *bio* in English?)

IV. Context: Big-picture issues in the study of Japanese morphology

(8) How many different **word classes** (also called lexical categories, "parts of speech") are there in Japanese?

- Is the inventory of word classes universal?

(9) One widely accepted proposal in morphology is that **derivational** affixes may change the word class of a form, but **inflectional** affixes never do

- Does data from Japanese bear on this claim?

(10) How do **morphology and phonology** interact in Japanese? Does evidence from morphology give us any further insight into the phonological categories and phonological rules of Japanese?