Morphological Characteristics

1. Morphology

There is a linguistic unit that is smaller than word called morpheme.

\[ \text{Morpheme} \colon \text{the smallest meaningful unit of which words consist.} \]

\[ \text{a wug} \quad \text{two ______} \]

\(-s\) is a morpheme attached to nouns to mean [plural].

\textit{wug} is also a morpheme. It is a root to which other morphemes attach. Some words consist of only a root morpheme such as \textit{dog}, \textit{cat}, \textit{eat}, and \textit{sleep}. However, many words consist of more than one morpheme. Other morphemes are divided into two kinds: inflectional morphemes, which create new forms of a word and derivational morphemes, which create new words. The English plural \(-s\) is an example of inflectional morphemes.

1.1 Inflectional morphemes

**Inflectional morphemes** attach to a stem and create a new form.

French: person, number, and gender agreement on verbs

- \textit{Vous parlez.} “You talk.”
- \textit{Nous parlons.} “We talk.”

Icelandic: Case inflection

- stráknir “the boys (Subject)”
- strákana “the boys (Object)”

1.2 Derivational morphemes

**Derivational morphemes** attach to a word and create a new word.

For example, \textit{-ness} and \textit{un-} in English are derivational morphemes.

\[
\begin{array}{llll}
\text{A.} & \text{happy} & \text{happiness} & \text{kind} & \text{kindness} & \text{friendly} & \text{friendliness} & \text{sick} & \text{sickness} \\
\text{B.} & \text{happy} & \text{unhappy} & \text{important} & \text{unimportant} & \text{employed} & \text{unemployed} & \text{known} & \text{unknown} \\
\end{array}
\]

**Exercise 1** Breakdown the following words into morphemes.

- nationalistic
- reusable
- computerization

2. Inflectional Morphemes in Polynesian

As noted in the early grammars, inflectional morphemes are extremely limited, almost non-existent in Polynesian languages.
Generally, verbs do not agree with the subject in person, number, or gender.

Tongan

a. ‘Oku nofo ‘a e tamasi’i.
   PRS stay SUBJ the boy ‘The boy stays.’

b. ‘Oku nofo ‘a e tamaiki.
   PRS stay SUBJ the children ‘The children stays.’

There are few exceptions: some verbs show number agreement.

Tongan

a. ‘Oku ‘alu ‘a e tamasi’i.
   PRS go SUBJ the boy ‘The boy goes.’

b. ‘Oku ō ‘a e tamaiki.
   PRS go-pl SUBJ the children ‘The children go.’

Reduplication

TON
tu’u ‘to stand’
kata ‘to laugh’

SAM
milo ‘to twist’
taa ‘to strike’

Consonant gemination

NUK
seni ‘to sleep’
huge ‘to open’

TUV
kai ‘to eat’

paakaalaga ‘to shout’

Verbs do not inflect for tense. (Tense is indicated by an independent lexical item.)

Tongan

a. ‘Oku nofo ‘a e tamasi’i.
   PRS stay SUBJ the boy ‘The boy stays.’

b. Na’e nofo ‘a e tamasi’i.
   PST stay SUBJ the boy ‘The boy stayed.’

Nouns do not inflect for number. (Plurality is indicated by an independent lexical item.)

Hawaiian

a. he puke
   INDEF book ‘a book’

b. he mau puke
   INDEF PL book ‘books’

Case

Nouns do not inflect for Case. (Case is indicated by an independent lexical item.)

Maori

a. I kai te wahine.
   PST eat the woman ‘The woman ate.’

b. Kua whai koe i te wahine.
   PST chase you OBJ the woman ‘You chased the woman’

Passive

–Cia is seemingly productive in Eastern Polynesian languages (C = consonant).

Tahitian

inu ‘to drink’
vavahi ‘to split’
taparahi ‘to kill’

inuhia ‘to be drunk’
vavahia ‘to be split’
taparahia ‘to be killed’
Hawaiian  | inu  | ‘to drink’  | inuhia  | ‘to be drunk’
| ku’i   | ‘to hit, punch’ | ku’ia   | ‘to be hit’
| hopu   | ‘to catch’    | hopuhia | ‘to be caught’

### 3. Derivational morphemes in Polynesian

#### Reciprocal prefix

The prefix *fe-/he-* attaches to a verb and adds the reciprocal meaning ‘each other’.

- **Tongan**
  - ‘ofa  ‘to love’  fe’ofa’aki  ‘to love each other’
  - tokoni  ‘to help’  fetokoni’aki  ‘to help each other’
  - talanoa  ‘to talk’  fetalanoa’aki  ‘to talk to each other’

- **Nukuoro**
  - ilō  ‘to know’  heilō  ‘to know each other’
  - dae  ‘to arrive at’  hedae  ‘to meet up with’

#### Resultative prefix

The prefix *ma-* attaches to a verb to create an adjective, which has a resultative meaning.

- **Niuean**
  - fuke  ‘to open’  mafuke  ‘opened’
  - fuli  ‘to turn over’  mafuli  ‘overturned’
  - haku  ‘to scratch’  mafaku  ‘scratched’

- **Tongan**
  - hae  ‘to tear’  mahae  ‘torn’
  - hua  ‘to pour out’  mahu  ‘spilt’
  - foa  ‘to break’  mafa  ‘broken’

#### Nominalization

The suffix –*(C)anga* attaches to a noun verb to derive a noun.

- **Tuvaluan**
  - aafu  ‘misty’  afusaga  ‘steam, vapour’
  - inu  ‘to drink’  inumaga  ‘casual bush refreshment’
  - lii  ‘to bind’  liitaga  ‘bandage’

- **Samoan**
  - nofo  ‘to sit’  nofoaga  ‘place to sit’
  - tupu  ‘to grow’  tuupulaga  ‘generation’
  - galue  ‘to work’  galuega  ‘work, labour’

#### Adjectives

The suffixes –*ngofua/nogfie, -ngata’a/ngataa* attach to a verb and derive an adjective.

- **Tongan**
  - tala  ‘to tell’  talangata’a  ‘disobedient’
  - fa’i  ‘to do’  faingata’a  ‘difficult’

- **Tuvaluan**
  - konaa  ‘drunk’  konaagogie  ‘get easily drunk’
  - inu  ‘to drink’  inugataa  ‘undrinkable’
  - kau  ‘to partake’  kaugataa  ‘disobedient’
Desiderative

Maori  inu  ‘to drink’  hiainu  ‘thirsty’
       kai  ‘to eat’  hiakai  ‘hungry’
       moe  ‘to sleep’  hiamoe  ‘sleepy’

Samoan  moe  ‘sleep’  fiamoe  ‘sleepy’
       poto  ‘smart’  fiapoto  ‘want to be smart’
       sili  ‘best’  fiasili  ‘to be proud’

Kapinga  gai  ‘to eat’  hiigai  ‘hungry’
       mada  ‘to look’  himada  ‘want to look’
       tobo  ‘to lick’  hiitobo  ‘want to lick (things)’

4. Reduplication

Polynesian languages have a unique morphological phenomenon called **reduplication**.

Reduplication: a process whereby all or part of a word is repeated and that repetition carries with it a grammatical function or some semantic information.

Complete reduplication

Māori  paki  ‘pat’  pakipaki  ‘clap’
       kimo  ‘wink’  kimokimo  ‘blink, wink repeatedly’

Tahitian  hi’o  ‘look at’  hi’ohi’o  ‘stare at’
       parau  ‘converse’  parauparau  ‘talk a lot’

Partial reduplication

Samoan  ‘ai  ‘eat’  ‘a’ai  ‘eat (pl)’
       tū  ‘stand’  tutū  ‘stand (pl)’
       galue  ‘work’  galulue  ‘work (pl)’

Tongan  havili  ‘strong wind’  havilivili  ‘gentle wind, breeze’
       poto  ‘smart’  potopoto  ‘reasonably smart’

Exercise 2  The function of reduplication varies from language to language and even within the same language. What is the function of reduplication in the above examples?