

Recovering grammar of words from documentation

Line Mikkelsen
Breath of Life, Washington DC, June 1, 2017

Worksheet based on Breath of Life final project by Kathleen Treppa and Tracey Treppa, Habematolel Pomo of Upper Lake, working on Eastern Pomo at Breath of Life at Berkeley in June 2016.

Step 1: Find 3-5 sentences with related words

Step 2: Write down each sentence like this

- a. Sentence
- b.
- c.
- d. Translation

Step 3: Look for what is the same in the sentences and ask what is the same in the translations of those sentences → that's a morpheme!

Step 4: Write morpheme on second line below where it is on the first line. If morpheme is part of a word, add a dash to separate the morpheme from the rest of the word.

Step 5: Write the meaning of the morpheme below it on the third line, including any dashes.

Step 6: Repeat steps 3-5 until you have found all the morphemes in the sentence.

Step 7: List morphemes (form, meaning and dashes).

Step 8: Organize the morphemes by type.

Step 9: Find some more sentences and repeat steps 2-8.

Example from Eastern Pomo:

a. wa xajáma.

b.

c.

d. We are swimming.

a. wa xajámhi

b.

c.

d. We were swimming.

a. wa xajámhiba.

b.

c.

d. We're all thru swimming.

a. bek xajámhiba

b.

c.

d. They're thru swimming.

a. bek xajámhi

b.

c.

d. They were swimming.

Here are three more Eastern Pomo sentences:

a. ha mí:pal ba'o^dlga

b.

c.

d. I'm calling him.

a. mi:ph mí:pal ba'o^dlga

b.

c.

d. He's calling him.

a. mi:ph wí: ba'o^dlga

b.

c.

d. He's calling me.

And here is **homework 2**:

Option 1 If you have documentation of your language with sentences with related words, try out the 8-step morpheme analysis.

It can be simple sentences with simpler words or more complex sentences with more complex words. Whatever is helpful to you where you are at with your language and is available in the documentation. Your LP can help you figure out what is a good set of sentences to work with.

If you get stuck or it goes wrong somehow, make a note of what got you stuck or why you think it didn't work.

Option 2 If you know sentences in your language with related words, try out the 8-step morpheme analysis on those sentences.

Option 3 If you know a long word in your language, try and figure out, maybe with the help of a dictionary or grammar, what all the morphemes (pieces) are and try to find related words that use some of the same morphemes.