Li8 Supervision assignment 4:
The Great Daghestanian Case Hoax

Due 6 February

Stem inventories

Grammatical descriptions often classify inflectional paradigms in terms of stem variation. For example, descriptions of Finnish distinguish 1- and 2-stem paradigms. 1-stem paradigms contain a single 'basic form', which realizes the nominative singular and underlies the remaining forms of the paradigm. 2-stem paradigms contain a 'basic stem', which again realizes the nominative singular, along with an 'inflectional stem', which underlies the other forms of the paradigm. The paradigm of TALO 'house' in Table 1 illustrates the 1-stem pattern, since the nominative singular form *talo* provides the base for other case forms. The paradigm of KIELI 'language' illustrates the 2-stem pattern, since nominative the singular form *kieli* contrasts with the form *kiele*, which provides the base for other case forms.

	Sing	Plu
Nominative	talo	talot
Genitive	talon	talojen
Partitive	taloa	taloja
Illative	taloon	taloihin
Inessive	talossa	taloissa
Elative	talosta	taloista
Allative	talolle	taloille
Adessive	talolla	taloilla
Ablative	talolta	taloilta
Translative	taloksi	taloiksi
Essive	talona	taloina

	Sing	Plu
Nominative	kieli	kielet
Genitive	kielen	kielten
Partitive	kieltä	kieliä
Illative	kieleen	kieleen
Inessive	kielessä	kielessä
Elative	kielestä	kielistä
Allative	kielelle	kielille
Adessive	kielellä	kielillä
Ablative	kieleltä	kieliltä
Translative	kieleksi	kielinä
Essive	kielenä	kielinä

Table 1: 1- and 2-stem noun paradigms in Finnish

Inspection of the case endings in Table 1 reveals additional patterns: (i) an initial *-s* occurs in Inessive *-ssa* and Elative *-sta*, and (ii) an initial *-l* occurs similarly in Allative *-lle* and Adessive *-lla* and Ablative *-lta*. However, these patterns are not regarded as synchronically relevant. No standard description recognizes forms such as *talos-* or *talol-* as stems, or treats endings such as *-ssa* or *-lla* as internally complex case endings. Instead, each of the endings in Table 1 is classified as realizing distinct case/number combinations.

Although these analytic principles appear to yield appropriate results when applied to Finnish, they are also implicated in what has come to be known as 'The great Daghestanian Case Hoax', according to which languages like Tabasaran have upwards of 48 cases. The analytic choices presented by Daghestanian languages are illustrated by the forms of WAS 'son', JAS 'daughter' and CER 'fox' in Tables 2–5. (The tables list 16 of the 24 forms of these items; the remaining 8 forms do not exhibit any new patterns.)

Tasks

1. Analyze the forms in each of the series in Tables 2–5 into stems and inflectional markers. Identify any patterns that generalize across different nouns, and any patterns that generalize across different series.

2. On a Finnish-type analysis, this language has 16 cases. What is the smallest number of cases that can be assigned to the language?

3. What is the smallest number of stems that can be assigned to each of the nouns? What is the largest number of stems that can be assigned (assuming that any stem must underlie at least two forms)?

4. Write a short essay that provides answers to the following questions, and evaluates the proposed answer against alternatives:

   (a) How many cases are there in this language?

   (b) How many stems are associated with each of the nouns?

References

Comrie, B. & Polinsky, M. (1998). The great Daghestanian case hoax. In Siewierska, A. & Song, J. J. (eds.), *Case, Typology and Grammar*, Benjamins, 95–114.

Spencer, A. J. (2012). Identifying stems. *Word Structure* **5**, 88–108.

	Sing	Plu	Sing	Plu	Sing	Plu
C1	was	wasal	jas	jasal	cer	curdul
C2	wasas	wasaz	jasał	jasaz	caraca	curduz
C3	wasasul	wasazul	jasałul	jasazul	caral	carduzul
C4	wasase	wasaze	jasałe	jasaze	caraje	curduze

Table 2: Series 0

	Sing	Plu	Sing	Plu	Sing	Plu
C5	wasasuda	wasazuda	jasałda	jasazda	carada	curduzda
C6	wasasude	wasazude	jasałde	jasazde	carade	curduzde
C7	wasasudasa	wasazudasa	jasałdasa	jasazdasa	caradasa	curduzdasa
C8	wasasudasan	wasazudasan	jasałdasan	jasazdasan	caradasan	curduzdasan

Table 3: Series 1

	Sing	Plu	Sing	Plu	Sing	Plu
C9	wasasuq	wasazuq	jasałuq	jasazuq	caraq	curduzuq
C10	wasasuqe	wasazuqe	jasałuqe	jasazuqe	caraqe	curduzuqe
C11	wasasuqa	wasazuqa	jasałuqa	jasazuqa	caraqa	curduzuqa
C12	wasasuqan	wasazuqan	jasałuqan	jasazuqan	caraqan	curduzuqan

Table 4: Series 2

	Sing	Plu	Sing	Plu	Sing	Plu
C13	wasasuł	wasazuł	jasałuł	jasazuł	carał	curduzuł
C14	wasasułe	wasazułe	jasałułe	jasazułe	carałe	curduzułe
C15	wasasuła	wasazuła	jasałuła	jasazuła	carała	curduzuła
C16	wasasułan	wasazułan	jasałułan	jasazułan	carałan	curduzułan

Table 5: Series 3