**Roundtable on Derivation in Algonquian**
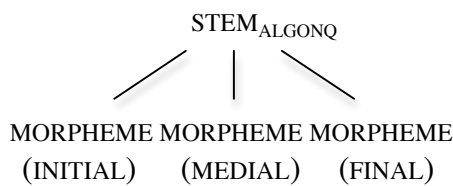**43rd Algonquian Conference**

PART 2: Introduction to Linguistics (from just about any introductory textbook):
- Syntax: how words go together to form sentences
- Morphology: how morphemes go together to form words
- Definition of the morpheme: The minimal unit of meaning or function
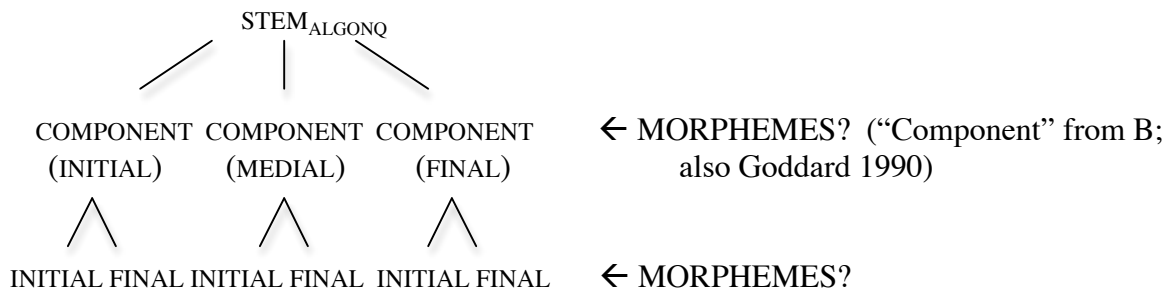- Stem: The word without any inflectional affixation

Typical stem:[1]

```
              STEM
           /    |    \
MORPHEME MORPHEME MORPHEME
  (AFFIX)     (ROOT)      (AFFIX)
```
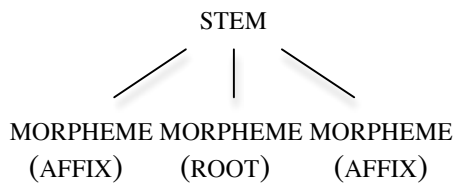
Typical Algonquian stem:

```
            STEM_ALGONQ
           /    |    \
MORPHEME MORPHEME MORPHEME
  (INITIAL)   (MEDIAL)   (FINAL)
```

But… "Many of the roots, medials, and finals that appear in stems are themselves derivative rather than single morphemes" (Bloomfield 1962:72)

So Algonquian stems have this potential structure:[2]

```
               STEM_ALGONQ
            /      |      \
COMPONENT COMPONENT COMPONENT     ← MORPHEMES?  ("Component" from B;
 (INITIAL)    (MEDIAL)    (FINAL)           also Goddard 1990)
   /\           /\           /\
INITIAL FINAL INITIAL FINAL INITIAL FINAL     ← MORPHEMES?
```

- The "components" can't be the morphemes because then they wouldn't be the **minimal** unit of meaning (or function).
- But if the lowest level is composed of morphemes, what's a "component"?

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[1] I'm going to ignore further internal structure in what follows.

[2] I'm glossing over lots of things here; most notably that derived "components" may be composed of other than an initial + a final, but let's just leave it that way for the sake of simplicity.

PART 4: Heresy?
- Where do you draw the line between synchronic and diachronic analysis?
  - And how do you make that decision?
  - (It's probably not an either/or distinction; it's probably a cline)
- Are things that look alike always the same thing?

Possible solution:
- What if we said the "components" (initials, medials, and finals – I, M, Fs) are really the morphemes? – the minimal units of meaning/function
- Then we could say that the morphemes (I, M, Fs) are HISTORICALLY derived from other units, but should not be analyzed as synchronically composed of those pieces
- Part of the cycle of grammaticalization?
    "Today's morphology is yesterday's syntax"?

What arguments could we bring in favor of this?
- Productivity
  - Speakers of the still-robust dialects of Ojibwe readily create new words using I, M, Fs but do not create new I, M, Fs (RV, pc)
- Idiosyncrasy of meaning?
- Lack of transparency?
- Variation in form?
  - B 1962:421-422: "In the derivation of deverbal suffixes, initial <u>ae</u>, <u>o</u>, <u>m</u>, <u>n</u>, and <u>w</u> of the underlying form are normally dropped... In a few cases, an initial <u>ae</u>, <u>m</u>, <u>n</u>, or <u>w</u> of the underlying stem or root is irregularly retained... Both <u>m</u>, <u>n</u>, or <u>w</u> and a following <u>a</u> or <u>ae</u> drop in a few cases... Initial <u>nae</u> is replaced by <u>a</u> and there are other discrepancies... Initial <u>waē</u> is replaced by <u>a</u>... (etc.)" (Erosion!)
- Implausibility / Lexicalization
    tomā̄ēhkomā̄ēhsiw 'monkey'
    LB 1962:246: "literally 'creature which seeks lice'"
    [tom-[[aehkomā̄ē -hsī] -w]] (contains N final -aehkomā̄ēhsīw)
    initial- -medial- -final -final
       ?   louse   AI   N

    'louse' *ehkuah* (LB 1975); *akuah* (contemporary speakers)
    -hsī either abstract AI final or 'burn'

    LB 1962:406:
    medial -aehkw- 'louse', deverbal from the noun *ehkuah*
    variant forms:
    -aemaehkw-
        (in cīqcekomā̄ēhkosow 'he nuzzles himself, snouts over himself' (to catch lice))
    -aemaehkomā̄ē-
        (given as -aehkomā̄ē- in 'monkey', see above)
    So: *ehkuah* ~ -aehkw- ~ -aemaehkw- ~ -aemaehkomā̄ē- ~ -aehkomā̄ē-