

Why Cayuga words mean more

Endings and Prefixes, Part I

Gayogoho:nq[?] words often mean more than English words do. For example, the word ɛknɛhgwi[?] has the same meaning as an English sentence: “I will carry, move, or tote it”. Gayogoho:nq[?] words mean more because they have more meaningful sub-parts than English words do. These sub-parts are called ‘endings’ and ‘prefixes’.

Endings modify or add to the meaning of a word. For example, the word dagu:s can take an ending that means ‘big’.

dagu:s	<i>cat</i>	dagu:s go:wah	<i>big cat</i>
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The same ending occurs in the following words. Does the ending still mean ‘big’?

otrɛ [?] da [?]	<i>fly</i>	otrɛ [?] da go:wah	<i>horsefly</i>
gwa [?] yq [?]	<i>rabbit</i>	gwa [?] yq go:wah	<i>jackrabbit</i>
gahn [?] ya [?] se:s	<i>it has a long neck</i>	gahn [?] ya [?] se go:wah	<i>giraffe</i>
okdehatgi [?]	<i>dirty or ugly root</i>	okdehatgi [?] go:wah	<i>great distorted root (a herb)</i>
gayɛ [?] gwa:s	<i>it eats tobacco</i>	gayɛ [?] gwa sgo:wah	<i>tobacco worm</i>

... Yes, in most cases, the ending means ‘big’: otrɛ[?]da**go:wah** are bigger than otrɛ[?]da[?], and gwa[?]yq**go:wah** are bigger than gwa[?]yq[?]. However, examples like okdehatgi[?]**go:wah** show that the ending can also mean something like ‘great’, which is a meaning related to ‘big’.

It’s easy to find the endings and their meanings. All you have to do is compare a word that has the ending to the same word without the ending.

Meaningful sub-parts can also occur at the beginning of the word, in which case, they’re called ‘prefixes’. Can you identify the prefix and its meaning in these examples? The answer is on the next page.

No prefix		Mystery prefix	
hayɛ:twahs	<i>he's a planter</i>	dehayɛtwahs	<i>he's not a planter</i>
hoyɛ:twɛh	<i>he is planting</i>	dehoyɛtwɛh	<i>he isn't planting; he hasn't planted</i>
tgahe: [?]	<i>it is setting there</i>	detgahe: [?]	<i>it's not setting over there</i>
jodre:no:t	<i>it is singing again</i>	dejo:drɛ:no:t	<i>it is not singing again</i>

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No prefix

hayɛ:twahs *he's a planter*
hoyɛ:twɛh *he is planting*
tgahe:[?] *it is setting there*
jodrɛ:no:t *it is singing again*

Mystery prefix

dehayɛtwahs *he's **not** a planter*
dehoyɛtwɛh *he **isn't** planting; he **hasn't** planted*
detgahe:[?] *it's **not** setting over there*
dejo:drɛ:no:t *it is **not** singing again*