

Università di Cagliari



Corso di Laurea in Economia e Gestione Aziendale Economia e Finanza

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Instructions



- This lesson will teach you how words are formed by 1 or more **morphemes**, the smallest units of discourse.
- It will explain how we can build different classes of words (nouns, adjectives, verbs, adverbs) by adding an affix (a prefix or a suffix) to a base morpheme.



The main branches of grammar

Two domains: MORPHOLOGY and SYNTAX

Morphology deals with the structure of words (inflectional endings and the way words can be built from smaller units of language).

Syntax, instead deals with the structure of sentences

The word MORPHOLOGY comes from the Greek *morphe* = form + *logos* = word

The word SYNTAX comes from Latin *syntaxis* and earlier from Greek *syn*+*assein* = together + arrange= arrange together!!!!



MORPHOLOGY

English Morphology - Word Languages

English is not an **inflecting language**. It is **analytic**, or relatively uninflected.

Across the centuries, English words have lost their inflective forms, they have slowly **simplified toward invariable** forms.

On the contrary, synthetic languages like Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Russian, and German have maintained inflected variable forms.

Modern English

In English only nouns, pronouns, and verbs are inflected. Adjectives have no inflections, aside from the determiners "this, these" and "that, those." English is the only European language to employ uninflected adjectives:

English: "the tall man" - "the tall woman"

Italian: "la donna alta" - "l'uomo alto"

SIMPLE INFLECTION

NOUNS	ADJECTIVES	PRONOUNS	VERBS
singular	No inflection	singular persons	Present tense
Plural (-s)	No inflection	plural persons	Past simple tense
			Present perfects
			Future tenses
			Present continuous
			Etc. etc.

MODERN ENGLISH



CHARACTERISTICS

- (1) simplicity of inflections
- (2) flexibility of function
- (3) openness of vocabulary

Modern English

Simplification of inflections

- ◆ the Modern English word *ride* has only 5 forms: *ride, rides, rode, riding, ridden,*
- ◆ the corresponding word *ridan* in Old English had 13 forms,
- ◆ the corresponding word in Modern German *reiten* has 16 forms.

MODERN ENGLISH

Flexibility of function

→ consequence of the loss of inflections.

Words formerly distinguished as nouns or verbs in their forms are now used as both nouns and verbs.

"planning a table" or "tabling a plan"

"booking a place" or "placing a book"

"lifting a thumb" or "thumbing a lift"

MODERN ENGLISH



Flexibility of function

Look at the example of the word **ROUND** which has 5 uses:

Adjective.....

Noun

Verb

Adverb

Preposition.....

MODERN ENGLISH

Openness of vocabulary

- free admission of words from other languages
- Adoption without change or
- Adaption with slight change of any word needed to name new objects or denote new processes.

- ready creation of compounds and derivatives.

Like French, Spanish, and Russian, English frequently forms scientific terms from Classical Greek word elements.

MODERN ENGLISH

Openness of vocabulary

Free admission: voyage, calumet, prairie, coyote, cafeteria, canyon, marina, boss, kiosk (no change); criterion -a; pizza; spaghetti; pasta, pesto ...

Ready creation: e-mail, e-commerce, spam, database; underground ...

Adaptations (with slight change): Physics; Philosophy; parliament; urban ...

MODERN ENGLISH

Openness of vocabulary

The **admission of words** from various world languages has consequently increased the number of words denoting the same meaning.

**FAMOUS, WELL-KNOWN,
DISTINGUISHED, EMINENT, NOTORIOUS,
INFAMOUS**

ROYAL, REGAL, SOVEREIGN, KINGLY

MORPHOLOGY



A branch of grammar which studies the Structure of Words. It describes the properties of such diverse words as:

YES

HORSES HORSE - S

TALKING TALK – ING

UNHAPPINESS UN- HAPPI – NESS

ANTI-DIS-ESTABLISH-MENT-ARI-AN-ISM

MORPHOLOGY



Many words, such as *boy, a, yes, person, elephant, problem*

**CANNOT BE BROKEN DOWN INTO
GRAMMATICAL PARTS**

These words are made only of a BASE form (also called ROOT or STEM).

In these cases we can only describe the meaning of these words, and how they are pronounced or spelled (number of syllables, pattern of vowels and consonants)

MORPHOLOGY



The smallest morphologically meaningful unit in a word is a MORPHEME.

MORPHOLOGY studies the way morphemes work in a language.

When there is a clear sequence of elements, it is easy to analyse words **HORSE-S, SUCCESS-FUL**.

Other languages (eg. AGGLUTINATING L.) have long sequences of morphemes: ANGYAGHLLANGYUGTUQ (Eskimo for "He wants to acquire a big boat")

MORPHOLOGY



English does not have many words of that type.

ANTI-DIS-ESTABLISH-MENT-ARIAN-ISM

Agglutinating and inflecting languages, like
LATIN, TURKISH, ESKIMO, ALL AMERICAN
INDIAN LANGUAGES, make widespread use of
morphological variations.

WORD FORMATION



AFFIXES are meaningful, dependent elements added both before and after the base form:

1. **PREFIXES** precede the base form;
2. **SUFFIXES** follow the base form.

WORD FORMATION

There are four (4) processes of word formation in ENGLISH:

1. Prefixation

DIS-OBEY

2. Suffixation

KIND-NESS

3. Conversion

INCREASE (v+n)

4. Compounding

DATA-BASE

There are also some less usual ways like
CLIPPINGS (ad, flu); ACRONYMS (NATO);
BLENDS (brunch; fantabulous)

WORD FORMATION

1. PREFIXES in English have a purely LEXICAL (or derivational) role. They allow the construction of new words, changing the meaning of their base form (root-stem): *un-; de-; anti-; super-*
2. SUFFIXES in English are of 2 kinds:
 - a) DERIVATIONAL (LEXICAL) s. change the meaning of the base form (*-ness; -ship; -able*);
 - b) INFLECTIONAL s. are purely GRAMMATICAL (*plural, past, possessive*).

THE MORPHEME



Inflectional Morphology studies the way in which words vary (inflect) in order to express grammatical contrasts:

SINGULAR/PLURAL; PAST/PRESENT

Derivational or Lexical Morphology studies the principles governing the construction of new words:

DRINKABLE → DRINK; DISINFECTABLE → DIS-INFEC

Types of Morphemes



INFLECTIONAL morphemes express a grammatical contrast (comparative, superlative, plural, past, possessive, 3rd person singular);

DERIVATIONAL or **LEXICAL** morphemes build new items of vocabulary, combining different elements, both to change word class and to change meaning:

IN-DESCRIBE-ABLE

WORD FORMATION

Inflectional suffixes, or morphemes, always occur at the very end of a word, and follow the derivational suffixes, if there are any:

GRACE- s; -d;

GRAC-IOUS; GRAC-IOUS-LY;

GRAC-IOUS-NESS; GRACE-LESS;

GRACE-LESS-NESS-ES;

Blends

camcorder (camera + recorder) clash (clap + crash) cosmeceutical
(cosmetic + pharmaceutical) ; docudrama (documentary + drama)
electrocute (electricity + execute); emoticon (emote + icon)
faction (fact + fiction); fanzine (fan + magazine)
flirtationship (flirting + relationship) glimmer (gleam + shimmer)
Globish (global + English); infotainment (information + entertainment)
moped (motor + pedal); pornacopia (pornography + cornucopia)
pulsar (pulse + quasar); sexcapade (sex + escapade) ;
sexploitation (sex + exploitation)
sitcom (situation + comedy) slanguage (slang + language)
smash (smack + mash) sportscast (sports + broadcast)
stagflation (stagnation + inflation) staycation (stay home + vacation)
telegenic (television + photogenic)
textpectation (text message + expectation) workaholic (work + alcoholic)

TYPES OF SUFFIX

This table shows the commonest English suffixes, though not all the variant forms (e.g. *-ible* for *-able*). The list of inflectional categories is complete; the list of derivational suffixes has been limited to 50.

Inflectional suffixes

noun plural, e.g. *-s* (p. 201)
genitive case, e.g. *'s* (p. 202)
3rd person singular, e.g. *-s* (p. 204)

past tense, e.g. *-ed* (p. 212)
contracted negative *-n't*
(pp. 205, 212)

contracted verbs, e.g. *'re*
(p. 205)

objective pronoun, e.g. *him*
(pp. 203, 210)

-ing form or present
participle (p. 204)

-ed form or past participle
(p. 204)

-er comparison (pp. 199, 211)

-est comparison (pp. 199,
211)

Derivational suffixes

Abstract-noun-makers
(p. 209)

-age frontage, mileage

-dom officialdom, stardom

-ery drudgery, slavery

-ful cupful, spoonful

-hood brotherhood,
girlhood

-ing farming, panelling

-ism idealism, racism

-ocracy aristocracy

-ship friendship,
membership

Concrete-noun-makers

-eer engineer, racketeer

-er teenager, cooker

-ess waitress, lioness

-ette kitchenette, usherette

-let booklet, piglet

-ling duckling, underling

-ster gangster, gamester

Adverb-makers (p. 211)

-ly quickly, happily

-ward(s) northwards,
onwards

-wise clockwise, lengthwise

Verb-makers (p. 212)

-ate orchestrate, chlorinate

-en deafen, ripen

-ify beautify, certify

-ize/-ise modernize,
advertise

Adjective-/noun-makers (p. 211)

-ese Chinese, Portuguese

-(i)an republican, Parisian

-ist socialist, loyalist

-ite socialite, Luddite.

Nouns from verbs

-age breakage, wastage

-al refusal, revival

-ant informant, lubricant

-ation exploration,
education

-ee payee, absentee

-er writer, driver

-ing building, clothing

-ment amazement,
equipment

-or actor, supervisor

Nouns from adjectives

-ity rapidity, falsity

-ness happiness, kindness

Adjectives from nouns

-ed pointed, blue-eyed

-esque Kafkaesque

-ful useful, successful

-ic atomic, Celtic

-(i)al editorial, accidental

-ish foolish, Swedish

-less careless, childless

-ly friendly, cowardly

-ous ambitious, desirous

-y sandy, hairy

Adjectives from verbs

-able drinkable, washable

-ive attractive, explosive

THE MORPHEME

Morphemes are not the same as syllables:
POSSESS, STUDY have only 1 morpheme
(BASE FORM – ROOT-STEM) but 2 syllables.

The meaning or grammatical structure of
these 2 words cannot be simplified any
further.

POSSESS-ION; POSSESS-ED; RE-POSSESS-ED

Types of Morphemes



INFLECTIONAL morphemes express a grammatical contrast (comparative, superlative, plural, past, possessive, 3rd person singular);

DERIVATIONAL or **LEXICAL** morphemes build new items of vocabulary, combining different elements, both to change word class and to change meaning:

IN-DESCRIBE-ABLE

Types of Morphemes



FREE MORPHEMES can operate freely in the language, occurring as separate words:
study ; go; yes

BOUND MORPHEMES cannot occur on their own (anti-; -ation; -ment; -s; -ed).

As we have seen, bound morphemes can be
INFLECTIONAL or DERIVATIONAL

Inflections: adjectives

Adjective quality is expressed by inflections.

Comparisons

- to the same degree
- to a higher degree
- - to a lower degree

The base form of the adjective is the ABSOLUTE FORM:
big, happy

Adding –er produces the comparative form;
Adding –est produces the superlative form.

Inflections: adjectives

There are no inflectional ways of expressing the same or lower degrees. These notions are expressed syntactically (as in Italian)

As big as; less interested than

The least interested of all

There is also a syntactic – or periphrastic – way of expressing higher degree:

More beautiful than

The most beautiful of all

Inflections: nouns

VARIABLE NOUNS (most nouns) have a singular and plural form.

Regular plural form: nouns add an *-s*

A few hundred nouns have an irregular plural form: *feet; children; wives; women*

INVARIABLE NOUNS do not show a contrast between singular and plural:

jeans, economics, sheep

EXCEPTIONAL PLURALS

There are several groups of native English words which display exceptional plural forms. Although we cannot say why these particular words did not follow the regular pattern, it is at least often possible to see why they have their distinctive form by referring to the types of plural formation found in Old English or Germanic (p. 8).

- Seven nouns change their vowel (a process known as *mutation*, or *umlaut*, p. 19): *man* > *men*, *foot* > *feet*, *goose* > *geese*, *mouse* > *mice*, *woman* > *women*, *tooth* > *teeth*, *louse* > *lice*. The change does not take place when there is a derived sense, as when *louse* refers to a person (*you louses!*) or *mouse* to a character (*we've hired three Mickey Mouses this month*).
- Four nouns add *-en*, in two cases changing the vowel sound as well: *ox* > *oxen*, *aurochs* > *aurochsen*, *child* > *children*, *brother* > *brethren*. The use of *-n* as a plural marker was a feature of an important class of Old

English nouns. Several other family words showed this ending in Middle English, such as *doughtren* ('daughters') and *sustren* ('sisters'), both found in Chaucer.

- A few nouns change their final fricative consonant (p. 243) as well as adding */z/*. Some change */-f/* to */-v/*, as in *wives*, *loaves*, and *halves*. The spelling reflects a change which took place in Old English, where */f/* was voiced between vowels (the plural of *hlaf* 'loaf' was *hlafas*). Some change */-θ/* to */-ð/*, as in *paths*, *booths*, and *mouths*. *House* is unique, with */-s/* changing to */-z/* in *houses*.

In several cases, usage is uncertain: *dwarf*, *hoof*, *scarf*, and *wharf* will be found with both */-fs/* and */-vz/*, and spelled accordingly (e.g. both *scarfs* and *scarves*); *truth*, *oath*, *sheath*, *wreath*, and (especially in American English) *youth* will be found with both */-θs/* and */-ðz/*, but both spelled in the same way, *-ths* (much to the frustration of the foreign learner). Exceptions to the exceptions include *still lifes* and the Toronto ice-hockey team, the *Maple Leafs*.

Inflections: nouns

Cases

Only 2 cases left in Modern English:

- A common case (no ending)
- A genitive case (adding 's to the sing. form)

Choice of *genitive* use is based on gender and style

Personal nouns and the higher animals (now also name of nations, companies, institutions) take the genitive form;

Inanimate nouns take the *of + genitive*

Inflections: verbs



The form of REGULAR LEXICAL verbs are regulated, i.e. they are predictable;

The forms of IRREGULAR VERBS are unpredictable.

Only 300 irregular verbs in English (surviving from strong verb classes in Old English).

Regular verbs appear in 4 forms:

base (also called infinitive); *-s*; *-ing*; *-ed*

Irregular verbs have 3 forms in common with reg. v. and may appear in 5 instead of 4 forms

THE IRREGULAR VERBS

There are two main features of irregular lexical verbs, both of which pose routine problems for young children and foreign learners (p. 428):

- Most irregular verbs change the vowel of the base to make their past or -ed participle forms. This process is known as vowel *gradation* (p. 21): *meet* > *met* (not **meeted*), *take* > *took* (not **taked*).
- The -ed ending is never used in a regular way, and is often not used at all, as in *cut*, *met*, *won*: *I have cut* (not **I have cutted*), *It was won* (not **It was winned*).

Using these features, it is possible to group irregular verbs into seven broad classes.

Class 1

About 20 verbs whose only irregular feature is the ending used for both their past and -ed participle forms: *have* > *had*, *send* > *sent*.

Class 2

About 10 verbs whose past tense is regular, but whose -ed participle form has an -n ending, as well as a variant form in -ed: *mow* > *mown* or *mowed*, *swell* > *swollen* or

Class 3

About 40 verbs which have the same ending for the past and -ed participle forms, but this is irregular; they also change the vowel of the base form: *keep* > *kept*, *sleep* > *slept*, *sell* > *sold*.

Class 4

About 75 verbs which have an -n ending for the -ed participle form, and an irregular past form; they also change the vowel of the base form: *blow* > *blew* > *blown*, *take* > *took* > *taken*, *see* > *saw* > *seen*.

Class 5

About 40 verbs which have the same form throughout, as in *cut*, *let*, *shut*: *I shut the door* (now), *I shut the door* (last week), *I have shut the door*.

Class 6

About 70 verbs which have no ending, but use the same form for both past tense and -ed participle; they also change the vowel of the base form: *spin* > *spun*, *sit* > *sat*, *stand* > *stood*.

Class 7

About 25 verbs, forming the most irregular type. There is no ending; the past and -ed participle forms differ; and the vowels change with each form: *swim* > *swam* > *swum*, *come* > *came* > *come*, *go* > *went* >