



# Università di Cagliari

Corso di Laurea in

**Economia e Gestione Aziendale**

**Economia e Gestione dei Servizi Turistici**

**Economia e Finanza**

Luisanna Fodde / Olga Denti /

Caterina Cambosu /

M. Antonietta Marongiu

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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**, deals with the structure of sentences, with how words combine to make 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

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

It underwent diachronical  
**simplification**

# English Morphology - Word Languages



During the course of hundreds of years, English words have been slowly **simplified** from the inflected variable forms found in Sanskrit, Greek, Latin, Russian, and German (synthetic languages), **toward invariable** 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."

# Modern English



English is the only European language to employ uninflected adjectives:

"the tall man," "the tall woman,"

Italian, *la donna alta, l'uomo alto.*

# MODERN ENGLISH

English has two other basic characteristics:

- A) flexibility of function
- B) openness of vocabulary

**Flexibility of function:** Words with no form difference can be used as nouns or verbs (due to the loss of inflections over the last five centuries)

"planning a table"      or      "tabling a plan"

"booking a place"      or      "placing a book"

"lifting a thumb"      or      "thumbing a lift"

# MODERN ENGLISH



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

Adjective.....

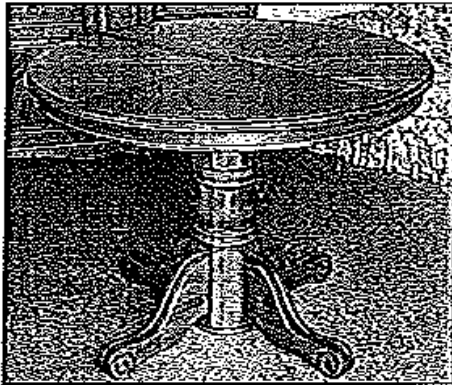
Noun .....

Verb .....

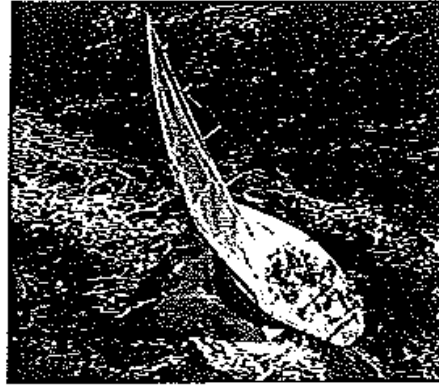
Adverb .....

And preposition.....

# MODERN ENGLISH



A round table.



The yacht rounded the buoy.



It's your round.



Round the corner came a fire engine.

Walking round to the shops.

# Modern English

As for verbs, if the Modern English word *ride* is compared with the corresponding words in Old English and Modern German, we find that English now has only five forms (*ride, rides, rode, riding, ridden*), whereas Old English *ridan* had 13, and Modern German *reiten* has 16 forms

# MODERN ENGLISH



**Openness of vocabulary** implies both:

- **free admission** of words from other languages,
- the **ready creation** of compounds and derivatives.

# MODERN ENGLISH



## Openness of vocabulary: **BORROWINGS**

English **adopts** (without change) or **adapts** (with slight change) any word really needed to name some new object or to denote some new process.

Like Italian, French, Spanish, German and Russian, English 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; datum -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**

**vs.**

**WELL-KNOWN**

**DISTINGUISHED**

**vs.**

**EMINENT**

**INFAMOUS**

**vs.**

**NOTORIOUS**

**REGAL**

**vs.**

**ROYAL**

**SOVEREIGN**

**vs.**

**KINGLY**

# Morphology

M. studies the Structure of Words.  
It describes the properties of such diverse words as:

**YES**

**HORSES HORSE - S**

**TALKING TALK – ING**

**UNHAPPINESS UN- HAPPY – 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, all we can do is to describe the meaning of these words, and how they are pronounced or spelled (number of syllables, pattern of vowels and consonants)

# Morphology



Words can be constructed out of elements, or **MORPHEMES**, the smallest meaningful elements.

The way morphemes operate in a language provides the subject matter of **MORPHOLOGY**

# Morphology



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

In many languages (AGGLUTINATING L.), it is quite normal to have long sequences of morphemes:

ANGYAGHLLANGYUGTUQ (Eskimo for "He wants to acquire a big boat")

# Morphology



English has not many words of that type.

**ANTI-DIS-ESTABLISH-MENT-ARIAN-ISM**

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

# THE MORPHEME

A **morpheme** is the smallest unit of a sentence with an independent function.

**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



**FREE MORPHEMES** can operate freely in the language, occurring as separate words (BASE FORM – ROOT-STEM) :

study ; go; yes

**BOUND MORPHEMES** cannot occur on their own (anti-; -ation; -ment; -s; -ed), can be **DERIVATIONAL** or **INFLECTIONAL**

# **BOUND MORPHEMES**

**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.

# **BOUND MORPHEMES**

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 | DATABASE       |

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

# BOUND MORPHEMES

**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*).

# BOUND MORPHEMES

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

IN-DESCRIBE-ABLE

UN-DESIR-ABLE

**INFLECTIONAL** morphemes express a grammatical contrast (comparative -ER, superlative -EST, plural -S, past -ED, possessive 'S, 3rd person singular -S)

# DERIVATIONAL SUFFIXES

## Abstract-Noun-Makers

- age** frontage, mileage
- dom** officialdom, stardom
- ery** drudgery, slavery
- ful** cupful, spoonful
- hood** brotherhood, girlhood
- ing** farming, paneling
- 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

# DERIVATIONAL SUFFIXES

## Adverb-makers

- ly** quickly, happily
- ward(s)** northward(s), onward(s)
- wise** clockwise, lengthwise

## Verb Makers

- ate** orchestrate
- en** deafen, ripen
- ify** beautify, certify
- ize/-ise** modernize, advertise

## Adjective/Noun-Makers

- ese** Chinese, Portuguese
- (i)an** republican, Parisian
- ist** socialist, loyalist
- ite** socialite, Luddite

# DERIVATIONAL SUFFIXES

## Nouns from Verbs

- age** breackage 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

# DERIVATIONAL SUFFIXES



## 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** saridy, hairy

## Adjectives from Verbs

- able** drinkable, washable
- ive** attractive, explosive

# BOUND MORPHEMES

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;**

# INFLECTIONAL SUFFIXES

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Noun plural <b>–s</b>	superlative comparison <b>–est</b>
Genitive case <b>`s</b>	comparison <b>–er</b>
3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular <b>–s</b>	past tense <b>–ed</b>
contracted negative <b>–n't</b>	contracted verbs <b>`re</b>
present participle <b>–ing</b>	past participle <b>–ed</b>

# Inflections: adjectives

**Adjective** quality is expressed by **inflections**.

Comparisons can be to the same degree, to a higher degree or to a lower degree:

The base of the adjective is called 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

Most nouns – VARIABLE NOUNS -have a singular and plural form. In the regular plural form, nouns simply add an –s;

INVARIABLE NOUNS do not show a contrast between singular and plural: JEANS, ECONOMICS, SHEEP

There are only a few hundred nouns with an irregular plural form:

FEET; CHILDREN; WIVES; WOMEN

## 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** is 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* >

# Blends



camcorder (camera + recorder)

clash (clap + crash)

cosmeceutical (cosmetic + pharmaceutical) ;

docudrama (documentary + drama)

electrocute (electricity + execute);

emoticon (emote + icon)

Globish (global + English);

moped (motor + pedal);

sitcom (situation + comedy)

slanguage (slang + language)

smash (smack + mash)

sportscast (sports + broadcast)

telegenic (television + photogenic)

workaholic (work + alcoholic)

# THE MORPHEME

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

DRINKABLE – DRINK; DISINFECTABLE; DIS-INFECT

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

SINGULAR/PLURAL; PAST/PRESENT