

Università di Cagliari



Lingua Inglese 1 Corso di Laurea in Lingua e Comunicazione

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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* (μορφή) = form, structure+ *ology*, meaning the study of, the science of

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



Morphology studies the structure and form of *words* or *morphemes*.

What is a word?

Smallest independent units of language

Independent:

- ✓ do not depend on other words.
- ✓ can be separated from other units
- ✓ can change position.

Example:

The man looked at the horses**s**.

s is the plural marker, **dependent** on the noun *horse* to receive meaning.

Horses is a **word**: can occur in other positions or stand on its own



Morphology studies the structure and form of *words* or *morphemes*.

A *morpheme* is the smallest word unit.

It may have a meaning or a grammatical function

The system of *morphemes* constitutes the lexicon of any language

MORPHOLOGY



Words can be easily broken down into meaningful parts:

KIND-NESS;

UN-LIKE-LI-HOOD;

DIS-LIKE

LIKE-S

GO-ES

Morphology

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

**CANNOT BE BROKEN DOWN INTO
GRAMMATICAL OR MEANINGFUL PARTS**

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

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

Morphology

MORPHEMES, the smallest meaningful elements. They can be independent (i.e. words) or dependent.

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

ANTIDISESTABLISHMENTARIANISM

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

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-POSS

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).

Bound morphemes can be **INFLECTIONAL** or **DERIVATIONAL**

TYPES OF MORPHEMS



Bound morphemes are also called **AFFIXES** (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

PREFIXES in English have mostly a purely LEXICAL role. They allow the construction of new words, changing the meaning of their base form (root-stem):

un-; de-; anti-; super-

SUFFIXES in English are of 2 kinds:

DERIVATIONAL (lexical) s. change the meaning of the base form (*-ness; -ship; -able*);

INFLECTIONAL s. are purely grammatical (*plural, past, possessive*).

MULTIPLE AFFIXES: UN-LIKE-LI- HOOD

Types of morphemes

Thus, words are usually formed by a base to which affixes are added.

When the base cannot be reduced, as in the case of a word like *kind* in the word *kindness*, such morphemes are called ROOTS and they are FREE.

Bound morphemes are mainly used to **modify** the form of words or to **create** new words.

The functions described above pertain to the major branches of morphology:

The branches of Morphology

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

Generally speaking, **verbs** inflect according to mood, tense, person and number.

Nouns and **adjectives** according to gender and number.

The **English language** carries out its inflectional processes with the addition of a limited number of morphemes to indicate grammatical changes.....

Inflectional Morphology

Morpheme –s:

- a. Plural of nouns: cat (free m.) + s (bound m.) = *cats* (inflected term);
- b. Possessive: girl + 's= *The girl's shirt*;
- c. Third p. sing.: run + s= *runs*.

Morpheme –ed:

Simple past and past p. of regular verbs.

Morpheme –ing: present participle of verbs.

Morpheme –er & -est:

comparative and superlative of adj's and 1-syllable advs.

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

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

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*

Derivational Morphology



Derivational morphology studies the way in which bound morphemes (**prefixes** and **suffixes**) are combined in order to form new words.

Derivational Morphology

Prefixes are bound morphemes added at the beginning of a word. When they are added to free morphemes, prefixes express various kinds of meanings (Cfr Pinnavaia: 43-44; Nelson: 123-124).

While prefixes change the meaning of words, they hardly ever change the grammatical value of a word:

To style, to restyle (v.); democratic, antidemocratic (adj.)

Derivational Morphology

The few prefixes that may change the grammatical value of a word are:

a- (from verb to adjective/adverb/preposition):

TO STRIDE – ASTRIDE; TO BOARD – ABOARD

be- or en- (from noun to verb):

FRIEND – BEFRIEND; FLAME-ENFLAME

Prefixes

anti-	against, opposed to	<i>anti-depressant, anti-nuclear, anti-war, anti-Western</i>
de-	to reverse something	<i>decriminalise, de-activate, de-commission, deform</i>
dis-	reverse of	<i>disagreement, disapprove, dislike, disqualify</i>
	remove something	<i>disambiguate, disarm, disenfranchise, dislodge</i>

Prefixes

extra-	beyond	<i>extraterrestrial, extra-curricular, extra-mural, extra-sensory</i>
il-, im-	not	<i>illegal, illegible, illegitimate, impatient, impossible, impolite</i>
in-, ir-		<i>inappropriate, inconceivable, intolerant, irregular, irrelevant, irresponsible</i>
inter-	between	<i>international, inter-racial, intergalactic, interwoven</i>
mis-	to do something badly or incorrectly	<i>miscalculate, misconstrue, miskick, misunderstand</i>
non-	not	<i>non-European, non-resident, non-stick, non-white</i>

Prefixes

post-	after	<i>post-1945, postgraduate, post-colonial, post-war</i>
pre-	before	<i>pre-1914, pre-war, predetermined, pre-set</i>
pro-	in favour of	<i>pro-life, pro-democracy, pro-Europe</i>
re-	to do something again	<i>re-apply, re-design, re-introduce, repaint</i>
un-	reverse of remove something	<i>unclear, undemocratic, unnecessary, unusual, undress, unleash, unmask, unscrew</i>

Derivational Morphology

SUFFIXES are bound morphemes added at the end of a base/word to create a new word.

They generally modify the grammatical class of the word they are attached to.

Certain suffixes are associated with certain word classes.

For instance, **-able** appears at the end of many adjectives:

REASONABLE, REMARKABLE, BELIEVABLE

Derivational Morphology

The suffix **-ist** is used to create many nouns, including:

ECONOMIST, PHYSICIST, SPECIALIST

Suffixes can be classified according to their function:

nominal, verbal, adjectival, and adverbial suffixes

or:

nominalizers, verbalizers, adjectivizers and adverbializers.

(Cfr. Piannavaia: 44-45; Nelson: 124-125)

1 Noun suffixes:

-age	<i>blockage, drainage, postage, spillage</i>
-al	<i>betrayal, dismissal, recital, removal</i>
-dom	<i>freedom, kingdom, martyrdom, officialdom</i>
-ee	<i>absentee, employee, refugee, trainee</i>
-er/-or	<i>actor, blender, defender, eraser, teacher</i>
-ism	<i>ageism, favouritism, racism, terrorism</i>
-ist	<i>artist, cyclist, motorist, perfectionist</i>
-ity	<i>opportunity, publicity, responsibility, severity</i>
-ment	<i>embarrassment, environment, equipment, government</i>
-ness	<i>coolness, dryness, smoothness, willingness</i>
-ship	<i>citizenship, dictatorship, hardship, relationship</i>
-tion	<i>demonstration, ignition, migration, recreation</i>

Suffixes

2 Adjective suffixes:

-able	<i>achievable, profitable, reasonable, remarkable</i>
-al	<i>accidental, industrial, musical, physical, whimsical</i>
-ful	<i>grateful, hopeful, successful, tuneful, useful</i>
-ish	<i>amateurish, childish, feverish, foolish, ghoulish</i>
-less	<i>careless, homeless, hopeless, painless, restless</i>
-like	<i>apelike, childlike, godlike, starlike</i>
-y	<i>cloudy, creepy, funny, rainy, sleepy</i>

Suffixes

3 Verb suffixes:

-ate	<i>adjudicate, congratulate, hyphenate, populate</i>
-en	<i>broaden, deafen, ripen, sadden, tighten, widen</i>
-ify	<i>amplify, beautify, clarify, classify, identify, purify</i>
-ise/-ize	<i>economise, modernise, popularise, realise, terrorize</i>

4 Adverb suffixes:

-ly	<i>brilliantly, carefully, slowly, smoothly, terribly</i>
-wards	<i>afterwards, backwards, onwards, upwards</i>
-wise	<i>anticlockwise, clockwise, health-wise, relationship-wise</i>

Morphemes and allomorphs

Allomorphs are variant forms of morphemes, simply the phonetic representation of a morpheme - how the morpheme is said.

This distinction occurs because the morpheme can remain the same, but the pronunciation changes.

An example of this is the plural morpheme in English **'-s'**.

'-s' is the morpheme, but we have some phonological variations or **allomorphs**:

Cats - '-s' morpheme is pronounced /s/

Dogs - '-s' morpheme is pronounced /z/

Houses - '-s' morpheme is pronounced /ɪz/

Morpheme and allomorphs

Another example of this is the morpheme *-a-* indicating the indefinite article, which is formed by two morphs, phonetic and orthographic:

A: a dog; an: an apple.

In both examples the different phonetic realization, and at times the orthographical ones, depend from a single, well-known morpheme, which has a series of grammatical functions.

Morpheme and Allomorphs

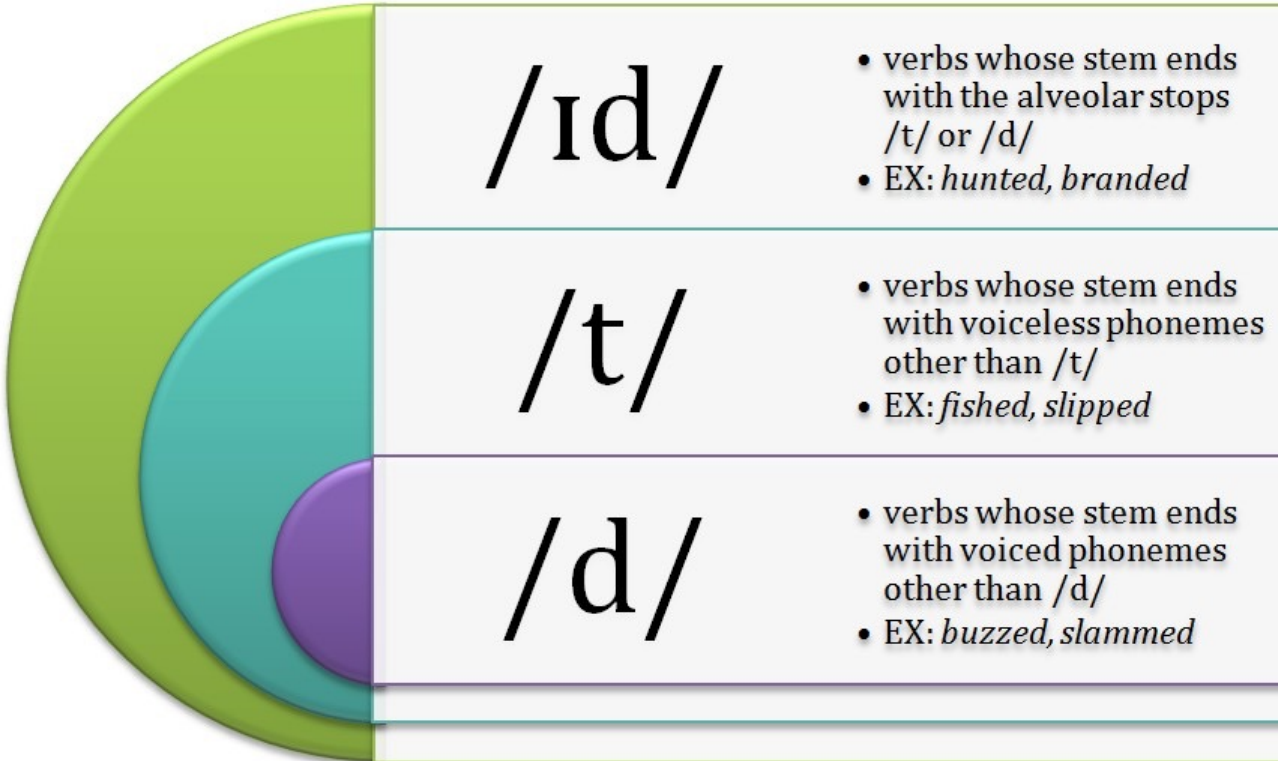
Allomorphs are the varieties of a morpheme, which is closely related to the morph. The morph is just how you pronounce or write the morpheme, the **allomorph is the variation in pronunciation**.

So, the morpheme **'-s'** (plural) has three allomorphs with the morph /s/, /z/, and /ɪz/. CATS, DOGS, HOUSES

They are all **semantically identical**, i.e. they cannot be used to differentiate the meaning of a word.

Morpheme and Allomorphs

Another example is the variation in pronunciation of the –ED suffix for the past tense and past participle.



/ɪd/	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• verbs whose stem ends with the alveolar stops /t/ or /d/• EX: <i>hunted, branded</i>
/t/	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• verbs whose stem ends with voiceless phonemes other than /t/• EX: <i>fished, slipped</i>
/d/	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• verbs whose stem ends with voiced phonemes other than /d/• EX: <i>buzzed, slammed</i>

MORPHOLOGY



Bibliographical references:

The Cambridge Encyclopedia: Chapter 14

Pinnavaia L.: pp. 42-48

Nelson G.: 123-125.

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*.

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* >

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