

Linguistic Essentials

Parts of Speech and Morphology

Linguists group words of a language into *syntactic* or *grammatical* categories, also known as *parts of speech*.

Open or *lexical* categories are most common, have many members

Example: Children eat sweet candy.

Nouns: refer to things (children, candy)

Verb: expresses action (eat)

Adjective: describes properties of nouns (sweet)

Closed or *functional* categories only have a few members

Example: prepositions and determiners

Contains words such as *of*, *on*, *the*, *a*

Parts of Speech and Morphology

Various parts of speech for a word are listed in a *dictionary* or *lexicon*.

Often we want to *tag* words of a sentence's with their POS (parts of speech).

Word categories are often related by *morphological processes*

For example, adding an s turns *dog* (singular) into *dogs* (plural)

Many unknown words are morphologically related to known words

Modelling morphology is especially important in highly inflected languages like Finnish

Major types of morphological processes:

Inflection: systematic modifications of a root form using prefixes and suffixes; does not change word class or meaning significantly, but may de

Morphological Processes

Inflection: systematic modifications of a *root form* using *prefixes* and *suffixes*

Does not change word class or meaning significantly

All inflectional forms of word are grouped as a single *lexeme*

Derivation: more change of syntactical category, often changes meaning

Derivation of *wide* into *widely* changes adjective into adverb

Less systematic: for example, *difficultly* is not an English word

Other derivations: *-en* suffix transforms adjectives to verbs

-able suffix turns verbs into adjectives

-er suffix turns verbs into nouns

Compounding: combine two or more words into a new word

Example: *downtown*, *overtake*

Some compounds are written as two words, but mean one thing: *tea kettle*, *disk drive*

Nouns

Nouns refer to entities in the world.

Examples: dog, tree, house

Nouns can usually be pluralized by adding an s suffix

Words that don't follow this pattern, like *women*, are *irregular*

Some languages have *case inflections*

In some languages, nouns are inflected depending on whether they are subjects or objects.

English has cases, but not many case inflections

Genitive case: the 's in *student's* indicates possession

's is a *clitic* or *phrasal affix*, not an inflection

Pronouns

Pronouns: a small class of words which refer to an object based on context.

Pronouns are inflected based on whether they are subjects or objects.

Nominative or subject case: I, he, she

Accusative or object case: me, him, her

Possessive pronouns:

“A friend of *mine*”

Reflexive pronouns refers to self:

Mary saw herself in the mirror. Herself is reflexive, refers to Mary.

Mary saw her in the mirror. Her is not reflexive, cannot refer to Mary.

Reflexive pronouns are often referred to as *anaphors*.

Determiners and Adjectives

Determiners describes a reference of a noun.

Articles are a subcategory; articles include *the*, *a*

Other determiners include *this*, *that*

Adjectives describes properties of nouns.

Attributive or adnominal use: *Red* rose, *long* journey, *trendy* magazine

Predicative use: The rose is *red*.

In some languages, adjectives are inflected to *agree* with nouns.

Other modifiers of adjectives:

Comparative (richer, trendier)

Superlative (richest, trendiest)

Some use periphrastic forms (more intelligent, most intelligent) instead of -er and -est suffixes

Base case (rich, trendy) is called the *positive* form.

Verbs

Describe actions (*threw* a stone), activities (*walked* along a river), and states (*have* two hands).

Morphological forms:

Base form: walk

Third singular present tense: walks

Gerund and present participle: walking

Past tense and past / passive participle: walked

Special verbs: *modal auxiliaries*

Examples: have, should, may, ill

Modals lack some forms of verbs.

Verb Tenses

The base form (walk) is used in:

The present tense: I *walk*

The *infinitive*: I like *to walk*.

The bare infinitive: She helped me *walk*.

Third singular person has different tense form: He *walks*.

The *-ing* suffix is used in:

The *progressive*, which indicates a current action: I am *walking*.

The gerund, where verb is treated as a noun: *Walking* is fun.

The *-ed* form is used in:

The past tense: She *walked*.

The present perfect: She has *walked*.

The past perfect: She had *walked*.

Irregular and Synthetic Verb Forms

Some verbs are *irregular* and have different forms.

She *drove* the car.

She has *driven* a car before.

Some features of verbs can be indicated:

Morphologically or synthetically: for example, the suffixes *-s*, *-ed*, *-ing*

Using *auxiliaries* (extra words) to form *verb groups*

Present and past perfect are formed with *have*

Progressive is formed with *be*

Also called periphrastic forms

Adverbs, Prepositions, and Particles

Adverbs modify:

Verbs: she *often* travels

Other adverbs or adjectives: *very* fast.

These latter adverbs are called *degree adverbs* or *qualifiers*.

Prepositions are small words which express spatial relations:

In the glass, *on* the table

Particles are prepositions which can form *phrasal verbs* with verbs:

Don't *give up*.

She *ran up* a bill.

I'm *putting* this *off*.

Conjunctions and Complementizers

Conjunctions combine words.

Coordinating conjunctions relate two words, usually of the same category.

She bought *or* leased.

He *and* I.