ENG 135: Pedagogical Grammar ❖ Spring 2009: TUE & FRI 13.30-15.00 @ E 002
Linguistics Section ❖ Department of English Studies ❖ University of Cyprus
Kleanthes K. Grohmann (Room M 104, Phone x2106, kleanthi@ucy.ac.cy)

January 23, 2009

CLASS 2–4: SOME ASPECTS OF ENGLISH GRAMMAR

OVERVIEW

- standard English and non-standard varieties
  - formal and informal styles
- descriptive and prescriptive approaches to grammar

> ℘ Standard English, dialect, accent — grammar, vocabulary, pronunciation

TERMINOLOGY

- components of grammar

> ℘ *form* (syntax, morphology), *meaning* (semantics), *sound* (phonology)
> *word classes* / *categories*: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, preposition…
> *grammatical terms*: subject and object, tense and aspect, clause types…

- tense
  - past tense = past tense?
- clause types
  - imperative = imperative?

> ℘ *general* (cross-linguistic, universal) and *language-particular* levels

LINGUISTICS

- some definitions
- explanation
- language phenomena
  - ambiguity, data, predictions
- induction and deduction
- explicitness, simplicity
- elegance, parsimony, economy
- doubt

> ℘ *experiments — hypotheses*
> regularities, patterns, general laws, order, explanation, predictions
> ℘ *readings, structure, compositionality*
> square brackets/–ing, structural attested, competence
> ℘ *empirical, theoretical, systematicity*

WORDS: PREDICTABILITY AND COMPLEXITY

- Simple words: a lot of English words cannot be analyzed into **meaningful smaller parts** (so-called ***morphemes***):
  – *cat*, *prize*, *reach*, *create*, *flash*, *at*, *through*…
- Unpredictable meanings: the meaning of a lot of English words is completely **unpredictable** (so-called ***arbitrariness*** of language):
  – *cat*, *prize*, *reach*, *create*, *flash*, *at*, *through*…
- Complex words: a lot of English words can be analyzed into meaningful smaller parts (i.e. ***morphemes***):
  – *deactivate, replay, caregiver, bottle-opener, lioness, understand, butterfly*, *watermelon*…
- Predictable meanings: the meaning of a lot of English words is **predictable** from the meaning of its parts (= ***compositionality***):
  – *deactivate, replay, caregiver, bottle-opener, lioness*…

DERIVATION AND INFLECTION

- We use **derivational** morphology to make *new words*.
- We use **inflectional** morphology to create *different versions of a word*; more precisely, to change the grammatical function of a word.
- Derivational morphemes attach **closer to the stem** than inflectional ones.
- Derivational morphology *may* **change the category** of what it attaches on, but inflectional morphology *cannot*.

English inflection on nouns: Number

- Plural number is the only kind of inflectional noun morphology in English.
- It attaches on the noun and, unlikely other Indo-European, Bantu and Semitic languages, adjectives and / or determiners show no agreement for number.
- Number (like past tense and the participle) has also *irregular* morphology: *child–children*, *sheep–sheep*, *fish–fish* (in most dialects).
- The different forms *–s* can take (/z/, /s/, /□z/) are the result of *phonological operations*.

English inflection on nouns: Tense

- Past tense is marked with *–(e)d*. Like with number, the different forms it can take (/d/, /t/, /□d/) are the result of phonological operations.
- Almost all the frequent verbs in English have irregular pasts and participles (*eat*, *ate*, *eaten*).
- When a native English speaker wants to form a past tense, s/he searches for a memorized (stored) irregular form (e.g. *ate*, *went*, *brought*) — see more on memorization below.
- If no such form is found, s/he applies the *–(e)d* rule.
- Can you link this with the fact that almost all the frequent verbs in English have irregular pasts?

Experimental evidence for the derivational-inflectional distinction

- Recall that compounding is an instance of derivational morphology: it makes new words, after all. (See also below.)
- Experimental evidence for that came from a simple but ingenious experiment with puppets and very young children by Peter Gordon ('Level-ordering in lexical development'. *Cognition* 21: 73–93, 1985).
- Prediction: because derivation (hence, compounding, as well) is 'inside' inflection (see below), compounds are formed out of non-inflected words.
- In Gordon's experiment, children spontaneously produced *mouse eater*, *mice eater*, and *rat eater* but not **rats eater* (which adults equally dislike).
- In other words, compounding, a derivational process, applies 'before' plural forming, an inflectional process.
- That's why inflected forms such as *rat–s* cannot be part of a compound.
- But isn't *mice* a plural form as well? Why can it appear inside a compound?

English derivation: Three-and-a-half examples

When people say that "English is morphologically poor" or even that "English has no morphology", they usually only consider inflectional morphology. English derivational morphology is extremely rich and versatile — that is why it is so easy to make new words in English. Let us look at just three or four examples of derivation in English, and how they work.

Compounding is very productive.

- A root of any category can be the first member of a compound:

verb:	*draw-bridge*
noun:	*dog-house, sky-high*
adjective:	*dark-room, red-hot*
?:	*cran-berry, huckle-berry*.

- Compounds can have idiosyncratic meanings:

green house	*greenhouse*
black bird	*blackbird*
dark room	*darkroom*

Zero derivation (also known as ***conversion***) is also massively productive.

water, wine, bread
table, chair, desk
book, note, pen

– do we actually need to say that a morphological process is involved here?

- Its outcomes do not always have a predictable meaning! (See also above.)

Let's now look at the ***derivational suffix*** *–ful*:

–ful attachment is of limited productivity:

**water-ful* **please-ful*

–ful can certainly *not* be attached on already derived forms:

**honest-y-ful* **joy-ous-ful*

–ful can attach on both noun and verb stems.

verb:	*hate-ful, forget-ful*
noun:	*bucket-ful, truth-ful*

–ful attachment can have idiosyncratic interpretations:

bucketful	'as much as would fit in a bucket'
truthful	'filled with truth'

Keeping the above in mind, consider now **another derivational suffix**: *–ness*

- *–ness* attachment is fully productive — unless pre-empted by *–ity*.

  fresh-ness *judicious-ness*

- *–ness* can *also* be attached on already derived forms:

  quirk-i-ness *job-less-ness* *forget-ful-ness*

- *–ness* can attach only on adjectives:

  verb: **hate-ness*, **forget-ness*
  noun: **stress-ness*, **truth-ness*

- *–ness* attachment has one predictable interpretation: 'noun'.

MEMORIZATION VS RULE APPLICATION IN MORPHOLOGY

- It seems that morphology avails itself of two competing mechanisms: ***memorization*** and ***rule application***.
- Forms such as *mice* (meaning MOUSE+plural), *went* (meaning GO+past) are memorized, just like ordinary words are memorized.
- So, forms like *mice* and *went* are **not** morphologically complex.
- If retrieval of a memorized form, like *mice*, is not possible, then the rule applies.
- For example, if the plural of MOUSE is required, then a memorized type, *mice*, can be retrieved.
- On the other hand, if the plural of CAT is required, then a memorized type is not available, hence the /–z/ rule applies giving *cat–s*.
- Crucially, because memorized (= *irregular*) forms are learned, they must be frequent enough.
- That is why English irregular verbs, for instance, are among the most common ones: *be*, *catch*, *go*, *come*, *see*, *bring*, etc.

<u>More readings on morphology</u> (optional):

Andrew CARSTAIRS–MCCARTHY. 2007. *An Introduction to English Morphology: Words and Their Structure.* Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press.

Heidi HARLEY. 2007. *English Words: A Linguistic Introduction.* Malden, MA: Blackwell. (Panagiotidis: "An exciting introduction to English morphology.")

Steven PINKER. 1999. *Words and Rules: The Ingredients of Language.* New York: Basic Books. (Panagiotidis: "An exciting introduction to the dual model of morphology, i.e. memorization vs. rule-application.")

ALLOMORPHY

- ***Allomorphy*** is the phenomenon of two different forms expressing the same morpheme in different environments (see below).
- We can roughly divide allomorphy into two types: one being the result of the *phonological* environment and one being purely *morphological*.

Phonological allomorphy

- Regular plural number morpheme in English: /-z/. It is devoiced after a voiceless consonant (e.g. /t/ as in *pet–s* or /k/ as in *book–s*) and an *epenthetic* 'schwa' /□/ is added after sibilant consonants (/□z/ as in *bus–es*). /z/, /s/, and /□z/ are hence the plural number *allomorphs*.
- Regular past tense morpheme in English: /d/. It is devoiced after a voiceless consonant (/k/ as in *crack–ed*) and an *epenthetic* 'schwa' /□/ is added after dental consonants (/□d/ as in *want–ed*). /d/, /t/, and /□d/ are hence the past tense *allomorphs*.

Morphological allomorphy

- The two allomorphs are often not chosen according to the phonological environment.
- Consider the derivational morphemes *–ity* and *–ness* that turn adjectives into nouns.
- *–ity* attaches on adjectives slightly modifying them: *electri**c*** (/k/) – *electri**c**ity* (/s/), *gr**a**ve* (/ei/) – *gr**a**vity* (/a/); *–ness* does not change the adjective it attaches on: *sweet–ness*, *bleak–ness*, *callous–ness*.
- *–ness* is more productive than *–ity* and indeed can take over from *–ity* when a stored form containing it is not retrievable: #*stupid–ness* instead of *stupid–ity*.
- So: types with *–ity* are memorized (cf. the pair *simple-simpli**c**ity*), *–ness* being the rule.

FUNCTIONS, CATEGORIES, AND WORDS

Function (subject, object) vs. *Category* (NP, VP)

Word vs. *Lexeme*

Parts of speech	noun	N – NP	
		meaning:	denotation
		inflection:	singular / plural
		function:	head of NP (subject, object)
		differences:	common / proper N, pronoun
	verb	V – VP	
		meaning:	determinant of situation
		inflection:	primarily tense (past, present)
		function:	head of VP (predicate)
		subclasses:	lexical vs. auxiliary V
	adjective	A – AP	
		meaning:	expression of properties
		inflection:	gradability, comparison
		function:	attributive vs. predicative
	determinative	D – DP	
		meaning:	(in)definite determiner
		function:	determiner, demonstrative…
		differences:	term ‘determinative’
	adverb	Adv – AdvP	
		relation:	derived from adjectives (some)
		function:	modifier
	preposition	P – PP	
		meaning:	spatio-temporal relations
		function:	head of PP (dependents)
		differences:	membership extension (later)
	coordinator	???	
		function:	coordinate 2+ expressions
		differences:	distinct primary category
	subordinator	???	
		function:	introduce embedded clauses
		differences:	distinct primary category
Prototypes	core members of a class (part of speech) / category		

THE STRUCTURE OF PHRASES

Phrases consist of a head and its dependent(s). Every phrase has one and only one head, but there may be more than one dependent (which depends on the type of head, i.e. the lexical — semantic and / or morphosyntactic — properties of the head specify how many and what kind of dependents it takes).

Complement	related closely to the head (lexically specified / required) most often obligatory (if left out, its meaning is understood) object = complement of transitive predicate (direct / indirect) predicative complement = object of copula *be* (and few others)
Modifier	related less closely to the head (aka "adjunct") always optional (modifiers are never obligatory)
Determiner	found only inside NPs (marking it definite or indefinite) can be expressed by genitive NPs (or else by determinatives)

ON SENTENCES AND CLAUSES

Sentence	clause (clausal sentences, compound sentences) coordination (coordinated clauses, coordinator)
Clause	subject (noun, noun phrase) – predicate (verb, verb phrase)
Phrase	head, dependent(s) — noun phrase (NP), verb phrase (VP)

MORE ON CLAUSES

Polarity	positive vs. negative (negative clauses, negation at large)
Clause type	canonical: declarative – statement (interrogative – question etc.)
Subordination	embedded under a main clause predicate (plus other types)
Coordination	coordinated clauses (but other phrases can be coordinated too)

We'll see how much of the above we'll actually be able to cover this semester. However, we definitely won't have time to deal with the interesting topic of *information packaging* (ENG 236?) or *word structure* (ENG 235!). *Combinations of non-canonical features* will be interspersed throughout (and also in ENG 235).

Reading for next class: chapter 2, section 1 from Haegeman 2006 (pp. 68–92)