

Morphology: Basic Notions 2

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LING 350: The Structure of Words

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Inflectional Paradigms

- We've talked about paradigms earlier. How did we define a paradigm last week?
- Another sort of paradigm — a very common one — is an inflectional paradigm.
- English inflectional morphology is generally quite underdeveloped, but we can still see such a paradigm below:

	SINGULAR	PLURAL	SING. POSS.	PLUR. POSS.
DOG	dog	dogs	dog's	dogs'
BOOK	book	books	book's	books'
HUMAN	human	humans	human's	humans'

This shows singular and plural forms of regular nouns.

Of course, there are plenty of irregular nouns as well (man-men, datum-data, sheep-sheep, etc.)

- English pronouns are *much* more richly inflected than our nouns are.

	Subject	Object	Poss. Det.	Poss. Pronoun
1p.s	I	me	my	mine
2p	you	you	your	yours
3p.s.m	he	him	his	his
3p.s.f	she	her	her	hers
3p.s.o	it	it	its	its
1p.p	we	us	our	ours
3p.p	they	them	their	theirs

Subject: I read a book.

Object: The man saw me.

Poss. Det.: This is my book.

Poss. Pro.: This book is mine.

Inflectional Paradigms

	SINGULAR	PLURAL	
NOMINATIVE	kot	kot-y	“cat, subject”
GENITIVE	kot-a	kot-ów	“of the cat”
DATIVE	kot-u	kot-om	“to the cat”
ACCUSATIVE	kot-a	kot-y	“cat, object”
INSTRUMENTAL	kot-em	kot-ami	“with the cat”
LOCATIVE	koci-e	kot-ach	“on the cat”
VOCATIVE	koci-e	kot-y	“o, cat”

Polish noun inflection of the word for ‘cat’, p.15

Lexicon

- So far, we've talked about the lexicon as your “mental dictionary.”
- This part of the chapter refines that definition a bit.
- What makes a lexicon different from an actual dictionary?



Lexicon is abstract, exists in the minds of language users.



Dictionary is a physical artifact, an attempt to put the lexicon in writing.

Lexicon

- What is the lexicon, as defined on p.16?

The set of lexemes of a language [...] to the extent that they are established, conventionalized units. (p.16)

- What's specified in each lexical entry?

The lexicon specifies the properties of each word, its phonological form, its morphological and syntactic properties, and its meaning.

This means that each language, or variety of a language, has its own lexicon. Your mental lexicon is a subset of this lexicon.

Lexicons are made up of lexical entries.

/swɪm/

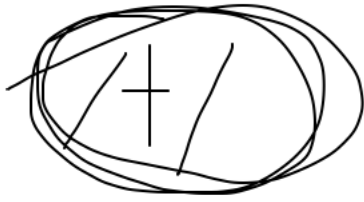
[x]_V

SWIM_{ACTIVITY}

/swɪmə/

[[x]_V er]_N

PERSON PERFORMING SWIM_{ACTIVITY}



stop	top	tree	butter	fountain
[t]	[t ^h]	[tʃ]	[ɪ]	[ʔ]

Phonemes – abstract representations of a speech-sound – are written between slashes. They're what's listed in your lexicon.

Phones, the sounds actually articulated and heard in the physical world, are written between square brackets.

Lexicon

- What's a “lexical norm”?
- What is blocking?
- The below terms are lexical norms in U.S. English. Can you think of other possible terms with equivalent meanings which are “blocked” by these existing terms?

ATM

watermelon

boardgame

videogame

dentist

cell phone

tablecloth

comic book

- Note that many established lexical norms have been and are being replaced. Blocking is not permanent, and is a misnomer.

Lexicon

A complex lexeme like NINISH is a well-formed lexeme of English, but need not be listed in the lexicon since it is completely regular, and there is no conventionalization involved. (p.16)

- What is lexicalization?
- Which of the following words do you think have been lexicalized? Which, like NINISH, are “completely regular” and involve “no conventionalization”?

catty

drinker

shopper

chewy

doglike

sportsmanlike

buttery

selection

corny

Discussion! (p.25 q.9)

Blending is quite popular as a means of creating new English words. Try to come up with some meaning for the following recent blends:

falloween

giraffiti

metrosexual

nicotini

pedlock

Why can't you be sure about their meanings if you happen not to know them?

Find these word meanings on wordspy.com.

Compounding:

bird + house = birdhouse

table + top = tabletop

Blending:

smoke + **f**og = smog

spoon + **f**ork = spork

For next time...

- Take quiz #1, to be shared with you soon
- Read part of chapter 2, pp. 27–41