

Inflection II

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Ling 350

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Recap

“Inflection is the expression of morphosyntactic properties of lexemes.” (p.122)

- What are some examples?
- How is this different from what derivation does?
- Which is a word-formation process: derivation or inflection?
- Another way of asking this: which creates new lexemes?

Morpheme Ordering

- How do we know what order to put morphemes in?

Spanish: *Las gatas gordas.* “The fat female cats.”

L.a.s gat.a.s gord.a.s

the.F.PL cat.F.PL fat.F.PL

Remember: The asterisk * means that something is ungrammatical.

- How do we know that the number marker comes after the feminine marker? (Why not **lsa gatsa gordsa*? Or for that matter **sla sagat sagord*?)

Morpheme Ordering

- No hard and fast universal rule – differs language to language.
- Some languages have a template; here's one for Bemba, a Bantu language spoken in Zambia:

Negation—Subject marker—Tense—Aspect—Object marker—Stem—Final vowel

- And here's it in use:

ta-	tu-	aku-	laa-	ba-	bombel	-a
NEG	SUBJ.1PL	FUT	PROGR	OBJ	work	FINAL VOWEL

“We will not be working for them”

Morpheme Ordering


- There are some generalities.
- Number is generally closer to the root than case.
men's instead of **man'ses*
- Tense is generally closer to the root than person.
- Aspect is generally closer to the root than tense.
- That said, inflection is generally regarded as *flat* – it happens all at once – rather than something truly concatenative, like we see with derivation (as in *tranquil* --> *tranquil-ize* --> *tranquil-iz-er*)

Morpheme Ordering

- A more interesting question: In what order do inflection and derivation happen?
- Just how separate are these two processes?
- We'll review the two different perspectives introduced in the book: the SPLIT MORPHOLOGY MODEL and STRONG LEXICALISM.
- These models are contradictory: they cannot both be right.
- Before we can dive into these, we need to discuss syntax.

Syntax

- What is syntax?
- We talked about inflection encoding morpho**syntactic** features.
- Part of syntax, then, involves the roles that words play in a sentence. This can be distinct from their semantic roles, or even our intuition about what kinds of words they are.

A man and a woman are running on a dirt path outdoors. The man is on the left, wearing a white t-shirt and black shorts. The woman is on the right, wearing a black sports bra and leggings. They are both smiling and looking towards the right.

Running is fun.

A person wearing a white headscarf and dark clothing is sweeping a large, conical pile of rice with a broom. The pile is light brown and dominates the background. The person is in the foreground, and the ground is covered with a layer of rice.

All this rice is edible.

Split Morphology Model

“word-formation is pre-syntactic, inflection is post-syntactic”

derivation --> syntax --> inflection

Jerry hate s meet ing art ist s

Inflectional morphemes
have a blue background.

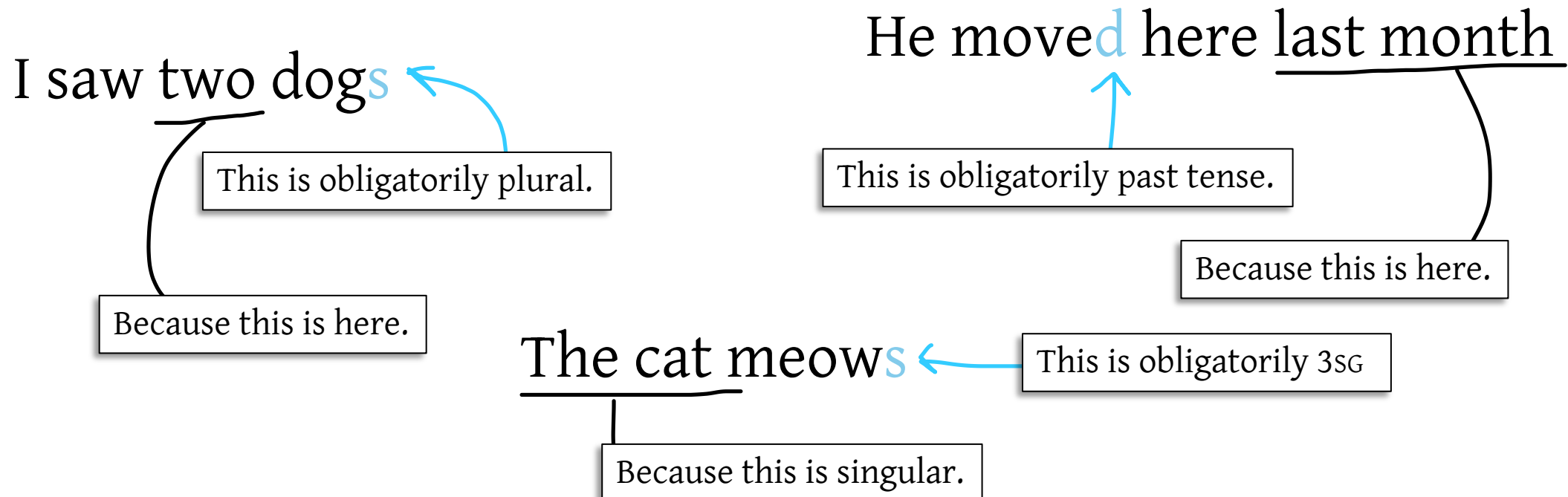
art and *-ist* combine to make *artist* before anything else. This is derivation.

The lexemes are then arranged in order. This is syntax.

Then the morphosyntactic properties of the lexemes are marked. This is inflection.

Split Morphology Model

- In this model, word-formation (derivation) builds the words that get put into sentences and phrases (syntax).
- Inflection comes later, identifying the syntactic role played by the words. This is called **agreement**.



Strong Lexicalism

- There is another model, called strong lexicalism.
- In this model, inflection and derivation occur *before* syntax.

morphology --> syntax

- We string together already-inflected, morphologically-sound words.

hate s meet ing art ist s Jerry

Strong Lexicalism

- There is another model, called strong lexicalism.
- In this model, inflection and derivation occur *before* syntax.

morphology --> syntax

- We string together already-inflected, morphologically-sound words.

hate s meet ing art ist s Jerry

Strong Lexicalism

- This explains why we have:

He moved here



Nothing in this sentence demands that this be in past tense.

Je suis heureuse



Nothing else in this sentence indicates the speaker's gender.

It's feminine because the (hypothetical) speaker is a woman.

This kind of thing is very well established in languages that mark gender on their adjectives, and in e.g. Arabic where verb forms reflect the speaker's sex as well.

Strong Lexicalism

- Moreover, inflected forms of words sometimes feed derivation, showing that these two steps must be mutually accessible.

Preparedness

This is an idiosyncratic form of bracket notation meant to highlight just what the inflection is doing.

Giftedness

[[[V] ed]_{PAST} ness]_N

Connectedness

These words show inflection happening *before* derivation.

Lovingly

[[[V] ing]_{PROG} ly]_{ADV}

Running

[[[V] ing]_{PROG}]_N

Summary

- There is far more evidence in favor of the strong lexicalist position than the split morphology model, and it is thus the model that the textbook (and we) stick to moving forward.

For next time...

- April 18th will be our last meeting before spring break. I'll introduce the extra credit process then.
- Read pp. 125–133 (stop before section 6.2).
- Writing Assignment #3: Pick any noun or verb in English and its translation into another language of your choice. Create a paradigm for each of these words (2 paradigms in total) in which you identify what morphosyntactic categories are marked on it in each of those languages, and identify how its corresponding morphosyntactic features are marked. In a paragraph, make note of any differences in terms of morphosyntactic categories. (For example, English “child” and Italian “ragazzo” differ in that the Italian noun marks for gender, while the English doesn't.)