Chapter 6

Inflection

Contents of this chapter

- What is inflection?
- Inflectional categories
- Inflection and derivation
- Ways of inflecting
  - Affixation, sometimes with stem alternation
  - Apophony / Ablaut
  - Root-and-pattern morphology
  - Reduplication
  - Suppletion

What is inflection?

- cf. "flexible". Bending a word to fit its position, i.e. inflection (inflexion) is a result of syntactic structure
  - a subject may require another inflection than a direct object (=government)
    - e.g. German; English (?)
  - a plural subject may require a plural verb (=concord/agreement)
- language-specific: some languages have hardly any inflection

German

- **Der alter Mann** steht neben …
  'The old man is standing besides …'

- Der Beruf des alten Mannes …
  'The profession of the old man …'

- Ich sehe den alten Mann
  'I see the old man'

- developments in Modern German? mistakes?

Place of morphology

- Since inflection is based on syntax, one could argue that the "inflectional component" of the grammar *follows* syntax
  - no new lexemes
  - psycholinguistic evidence: psycholinguistics

- Cf. derivation: formation of new lexemes: in the lexicon: before the syntax
- Cf. phonology: lexical vs. postlexical

Exponence

- Exponence = the role(s) (or function(s)) of a particular inflectional affix

  - Chinese -们 (simple exponence)
    - **only** plural [number]

  - Latin cant-o (cumulative exponence)
    'I sing'
    - -o indicates 1st [person], singular [number]; present [tense]; indicative [mood], active [voice]

Context

- <u>Context-free</u> inflection:
  - all forms take the same affix, e.g. –ing in English on verbs to make progressive forms
- <u>Context-sensitive</u> inflection:
  - form taken <u>depends on root</u>, e.g. plural in English, which has some variants, or past tense in English
  - or Bantu noun classes, all different plurals

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Context

Phonological realizations of the feature [PAST] in English

a.	Ablaut	ran, sat, won, drank, shone ...
b.	Suppletion	was, went ...
c.	Ø	hit, cut, put ...
d.	/-t/	sent, lent ...
e.	/-d/	helped [-t], shrugged [-d], wanted [-əd] ...

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Government and concord

- Government
  - After a particular preposition or verb, a special case may be required
    - e.g. German, either genitive, dative or accusative case

- Concord or agreement
  - Two units in the sentence must agree
    - Subject-verb agreement (he swim<u>s</u>)
    - Noun-adjective agreement (le<u>s</u> belle<u>s</u> dame<u>s</u>)

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German pre/postpositions

- Sie geht **den Fluss entlang**
  'She is walking along the river' (Acc.)

- **Mit der Bahn** fahren wir
  'We're going by train' (Dative)

- **Trotz des Wetters** fahren wir heute nach Hause (Genitive)
  'In spite of the weather we're driving home today'

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Inflectional categories

- What are factors that "bend" words?
  - number
  - case
  - tense
  - mood
  - evidentiality
  - ...
  - ○ gender
  - ○ person
  - ○ aspect
  - ○ voice
  - ○ negation
  - ○

- → All languages express these aspects; some do it with morphology (inflection)

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Inflectional categories
(nominal/verbal)

- Number
  - singular, plural, dual, trial, paucal (-k-)
    - Some languages: "I, we, we two" (pronouns)
    - Or special inflection on verb for "we two swim" or on nouns if there are two
    - Trial number in several Austronesian languages (only pronouns)
    - No language has "we four" (quadral)
    - paucal: distinction between relatively few and relatively many (e.g. Chinese [not in inflection]: 几 vs. 多少)

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-cont.

- Gender: nouns in grammatical category
  - typically: masculine, feminine, neuter
    - sometimes based on male/female, but not always (der Mann, die Frau, <u>das</u> Mädchen)
      - cognitive consequences? (Der Apfel = Hans/Eva, die Birne = Johanna/Jacobus)
  - categorization in other ways:
    - animate/inanimate
    - shape distinctions (African noun classes)
      - recall: different inflection systems
    - related: Chinese measure words?

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Gender/Language

- Vigliocco, G., Vinson, D. P., Paganelli, F., & Dworzynski, K. (2005). Grammatical gender effects on cognition: implications for language learning and language use. *Journal of Experimental Psychology: General,* 134(4), 501-520.
- PDF on <u>Google Scholar</u>

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Gender systems

- masculine–feminine
  - e.g. French
- masculine–feminine–neuter
  - e.g. German
- animate–inanimate
  - e.g. Proto-Indo-European, Basque
- common–neuter
  - e.g. Danish, (Dutch)
        http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_gender

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Case

- Case: grammatical function
  - nominative, genitive, dative, accusative, ablative, instrumental, vocative, ... (Finnish has 15)

  - English: distinction between nominative and dative/accusative (=oblique) **only in pronouns** (I vs. me; he vs him, etc.): lost the rest (OE was more like German)
    - also genitive –s: remnant of genitive case. Now best analysed as a clitic
      - https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/English_possessive#History

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Person, Tense

- Person
  - 1, 2, 3
    - interacts with number (sg, pl, ...) and formality

- Tense
  - present, past, future (immediate/remote)
    - interacts with aspect
    - English: present=non-past. Why?
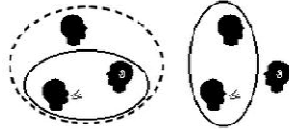
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Person

- Special pronouns in English:
  - y'all / you guys / yous   plural
  - thou (Bible, Shakesp.)   singular
  - ye (Bible)   plural

- women vs. zanmen in C. ?

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1/2/3 person

	Include addressee?	
	YES	**NO**
Include speaker? YES	we (incl.)	we (excl.)
NO	you	he/she

Past tenses in Latin

- Hodiernal past: earlier today
- **Matutinal past**: this morning
- Prehodiernal: before today
- **Hesternal:** yesterday or early, but not remote
- Prehesternal: before yesterday
- Remote past: more than a few days/weeks/months ago (conception varies)
- Historical past: shows that the action/state was part of an event in the past
- **Ancestral past**, legendary past
- General past: the entire past conceived as a whole
- Anterior tense (relative past tense)

http://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Grammatical_tense

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Aspect, Mood, Voice

- Aspect
  - perfective/imperfective
    - e.g. Russian, other Slavic languages, Irish
    - recall BE + after + V-ing in Irish English
    - Chinese: particles like 了 and 着 (zhe)

- Mood = Attitude towards action
  - may/must/should (English: uses auxiliaries; but inflectional affixes are used in other languages)

- Voice
  - active/passive (Eng. construction; other languages use affixes (e.g. 被 [bei] particle / 'converb')

- Evidentiality
  - whether action was experienced directly, hearsay, etc.

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Mood

indicative, interrogatory, imperative, emphatic, subjunctive, progressive, injunctive, optative, potential. Infinitive is a category apart from all these finite forms, and so are gerunds and participles. Some Uralic Samoyedic languages have more than ten moods; Nenets has as many as **sixteen**. The original Indo-European inventory of moods consisted of indicative, subjunctive, optative, and imperative.

French: *Jean **mangerait** s'il avait faim*.

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Evidentiality

- Actually, it is raining
- Apparently, it is raining
- Reportedly, it is raining
- It must be raining
- I hear that it's raining

- Expressed by morphology: Japanese, Tibetan, etc.
- Quechea:
  - para-sha-n-si
  - It is raining-SI
  - =Speaker was told that it is raining

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Evidentiality

- Eastern Pomo (Native American, CA) has four evidential suffixes that are added to verbs:

nonvisual sensory   pʰa·békʰ-**ink'e** "burned" [speaker felt the sensation]

inferential   pʰa·bék-**ine** "must have burned" [speaker saw circumstantial evidence]

hearsay (reportative)   pʰa·békʰ-**le** "burned, they say" [speaker is reporting what was told]

direct knowledge   pʰa·bék-**a** "burned" [speaker has direct evidence, probably visual]

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Negation

- or: polarity
- negative/positive (affirmative)

- This is a house / This is no house
- I don't see anybody (?nobody)

- Japanese
  - *taberu* ("eat") and *tabe**nai*** ("do not eat")
- Welsh: verb mutation + -ddim added

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Inflection vs. derivation

- Inflection does not change core lexical meaning or the lexical category of a word
  - slurp-slurps vs. organize-organization

- Inflection is determined by the syntax
  - I slurp vs. he slurps

- Inflection is generally more productive than derivation
  - he stips [new word] vs. *awfulize

- Inflectional affixes tend to occur more outward to the root than derivational affixes
  - deriv-ation-s

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Similarities

- Both inflection and derivation are expressed by similar means (e.g. affixes, reduplication, etc.)
- Some affixes have characteristics of both inflection and derivation

- Continuum between the two kinds?

- Essay topics: Is English –ly (warm<u>ly</u>) inflectional or derivational? How about comparative –er?

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Ways of inflecting

- **Affixation** and stem alternation
  - affixes very common
  - sometimes stem changes shape
    - e.g. Latin **perfective** stems
    - am- (impf.) ama:v- (perf.)   'love'

- Apophony (or: internal change, Ablaut)
  - = vowel changes within a root
    - e.g. English "strong" verbs
    - swim – swam – swum

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Note on English verbs

- Essay topic: examine the history / variation / regularization of strong verbs in English
  - e.g. spell-spelt/spelled-spelt/spelled
  - speed-sped/speeded-sped/speeded, etc.
    - drag-drug, strike-struck

- Take into account word frequency and the effect of neighbouring verbs
  - do frequent verbs change more? or less?
  - are there more verbs that sound the same and undergo the same process?

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spelt, spelled BrE

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Root-and-pattern

- Semitic languages: different **CV-patterns** associated with inflectional categories (cf. Ablaut)

  - Arabic "broken plural"

  - nafs – nufuus   'soul' sg vs pl
  - jundub – janaadib   'locust' sg vs pl

Reduplication

- Plural formation by means of reduplication
  - e.g. Indonesian full reduplication or Ilokano partial reduplication
    - Indonesian
      - kuda-kuda   'horses'
      - perubahan-perubahan   'changes'
    - Ilokano
      - pus-pusa   'cats'
    - iconic: double form=plural meaning
      - Essay question: is full reduplication always iconic?

Suppletion

- High-frequency forms sometimes have <u>suppletive</u> forms
  - go - *goed (went)
  - one – *oneth (first)
  - have – he *haves (has)
  - etc.

- Historical explanation
- Cross-linguistically common

Syncretism

- when a single inflected form corresponds to more than one morphosyntactic feature
- Dutch *play*:

  ik speel   wij spel - en
  jij speel -t   jullie spel- en
  hij speel-t   zij spel- en
  - -t, -en express both person and number

Typology

- Languages differ to what extent they use (inflectional) morphology

  →

  analytic   synthetic
  isolating   inflective/agglutinating   fusional   polysynthetic

  - Vietnamese: hardly any inflection
  - Hungarian / Latin: inflection
  - Greenlandic, Nootka: whole sentences as one (phonological) word

Polysynthetic

- Nootka example:
  inikwihl-minih'isit-a
  'several small fires were burning in the house'

- cf. noun-incorporation; next chapter
  - cf. compounds like "car-dealer": "car" incorporated (moved?) from *deal* __

Conclusion

- Words are "bent" in many different ways to make them function in language
- Inflectional categories include person, number, tense, aspect, etc. etc.
- Some inflections express one meaning, sometimes meaning for different categories is combined (e.g. Tense-Aspect-Mood, TAM)
- Inflection can be distinguished from derivation; sometimes discussion is possible
- Ways of inflecting include affixation, apophony, root-and-pattern and suppletion
- Languages differ in the extent to which they use inflection

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Homework

- Read chapter 6 especially carefully; note down any questions

- Please prepare exercises **1-5, 10, 12** ☺

- New words always welcome!

  - Thank you~

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