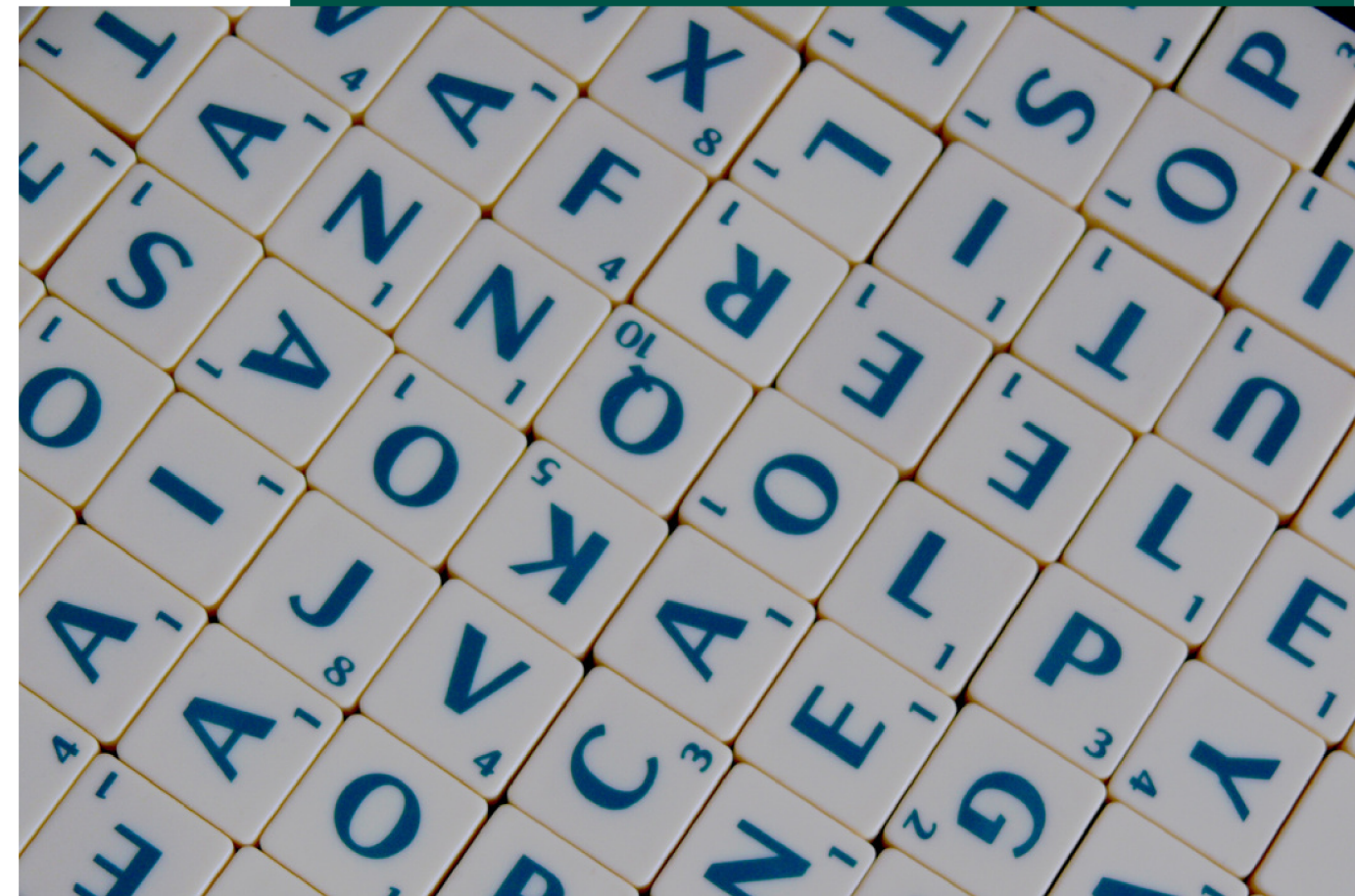# LNG1101
Introduction to Linguistics

Week 8 : Morphology
(A Word & Its Structure)

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"The limits of my language mean the limits of my world."

LUDWIG WITTGENSTEIN

A Word &
Its Structure

What is a word?

A word is the smallest free form found in language. Free form is an element that does not have to occur in a fixed position with respect to neighboring elements.

Example: English   girl, bed, water
          Thai   **เด็ก**, **บ้าน**, **ลิง**

Root VS Base/Stem

Affix, Root, Stem, Base

???

in *flexible* ity
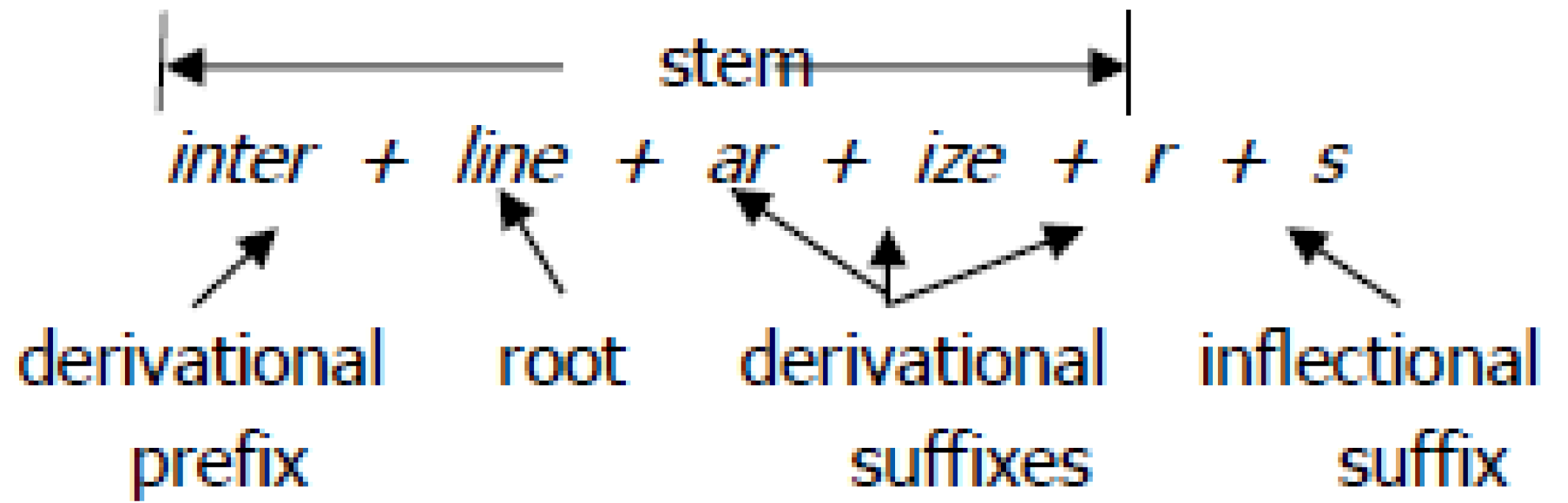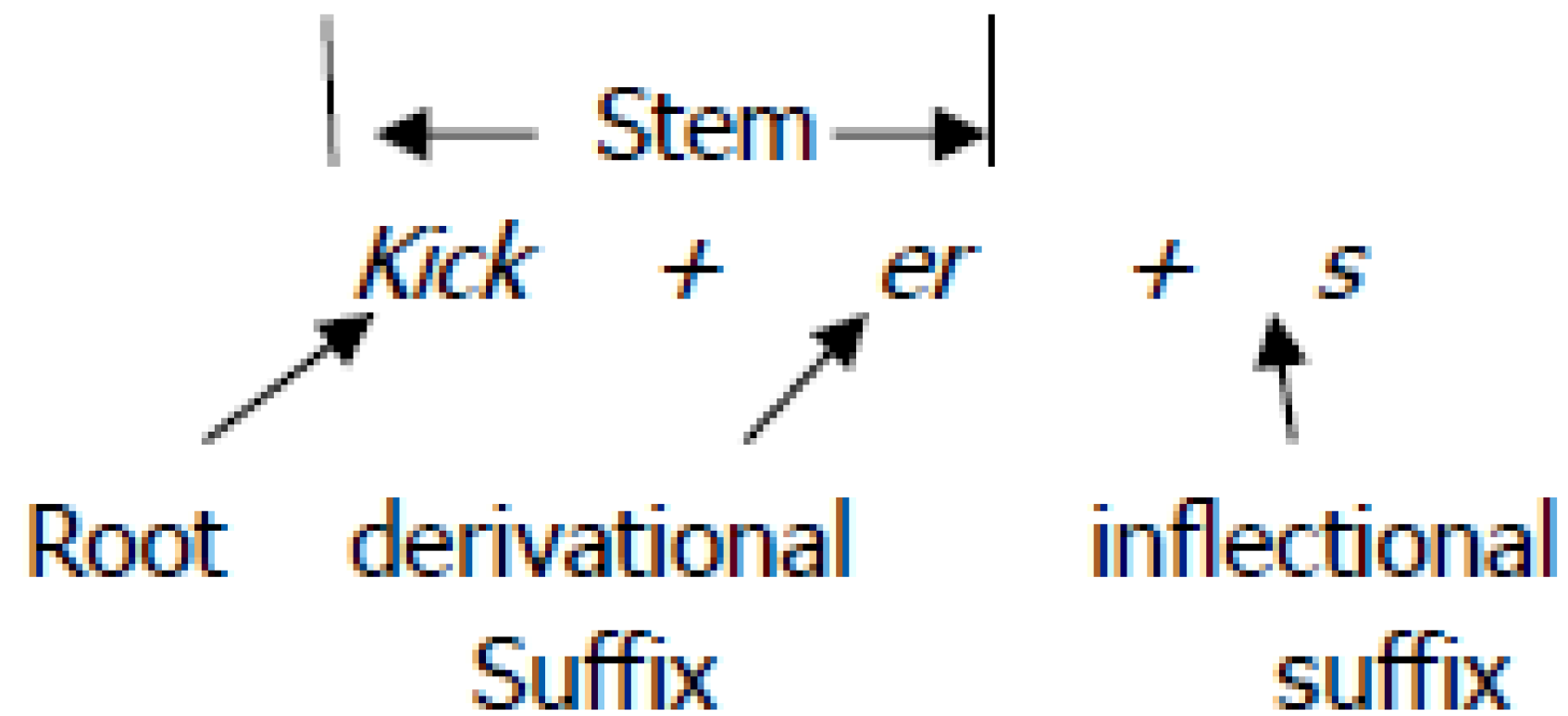in *flexible* ity
in *flexible* ity

Root: the morpheme that carries the major component of the word's meaning and which belongs to a lexical category.

(1) English: "replace" is a root of "ir-replace-able".

Base/Stem: any form to which can be added an affixation.

(2) English: "replace" is a base/stem of "replaceable".
         "replaceable" is a base/stem of "ir-replace-able".

Stem

Kick + *er* + *s*

Root · derivational Suffix · inflectional suffix

stem

inter + *line* + *ar* + *ize* + *r* + *s*

derivational prefix · root · derivational suffixes · inflectional suffix

Compare Root VS Base/Stem

(1) English brightened:

  root "bright" + suffix "-en"   = brighten

  base "brighten" + past suffix "-ed" =brightened

(2) Thai **ความสวยงาม**

  root"**สวย**" + bound morpheme "**งาม**" = **สวยงาม**

 base "**สวยงาม**" + prefix "**ความ-**"   = **ความสวยงาม**

Word's Meaning is Unpredictable

A word is just a building-block of sentences with a meaning that is unpredictable. There is no reason matching between a word and its meaning.

English land (noun): the solid part of the surface of the Earth.
(Merriam-Webster's Dictionary)

Thai   แผ่นดิน (นาม) พื้นดินของโลก
(พจนานุกรม ฉบับราชบัณฑิตยสถาน)

Since the meanings of words are unpredictable,
they needed to be listed in dictionaries.
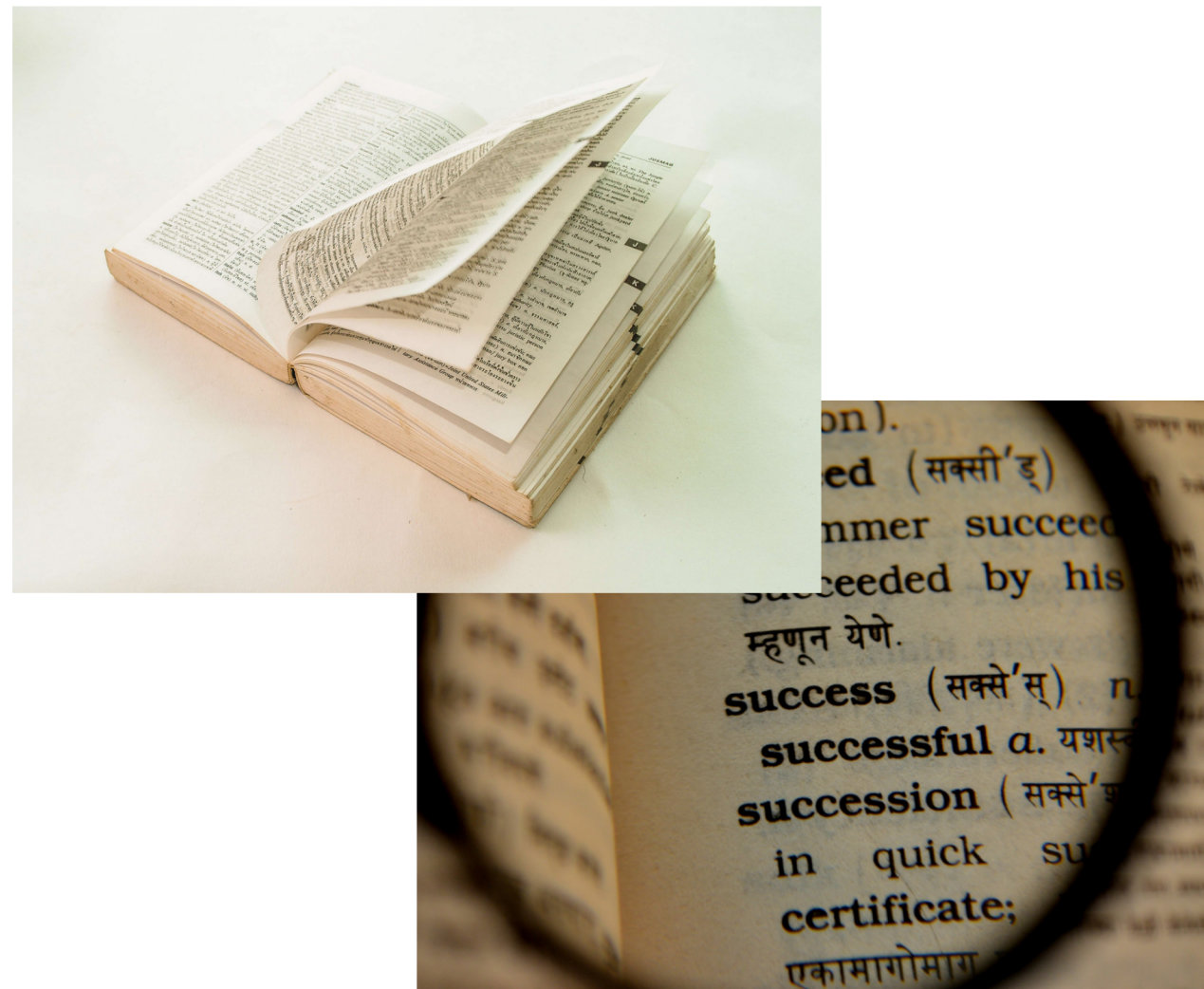
There are some larger words that being composed of two or more words may have a meaning that is not predictable from the meanings of the words that compose it.

Idiom: a multiword construction that is a semantic unit whose meaning cannot be deduced from the meanings of its constituents, and has a non-productive syntactic structure.

Example:

English   keep tab on = pay close attention to, monitor carefully

bite the bullet = to get something over because it is inevitable

break a leg = good luck

call it a day = stop working on something

Collocation: a series of words or terms that usually co-occur. Collocations can be in a syntactic relation, lexical relation, or they can be in no linguistically defined relation.

Example:

English   make decision

save the time

crystal clear

Too many cooks spoil the broth (proverb)

Word VS Lexical Items

Words are the building blocks for phrases and sentences.

Examples:

English   reads   book   compete

read   books   competitive

reading   competition

Lexical Items are words whose meanings are unpredictable, so they must be listed in dictionaries.

Example:

English   read   "look at and comprehend the meaning of written or printed matter."

readable   "one whose contents are interesting and entertaining, not one whose text is printed or written legibly." Ex: Of Mice and Men is a highly readable novel.

Example

A word : dog

A lexical item:
It's raining **cats and dogs.**

Word's Structure

There are two tools for analyzing word's structure:
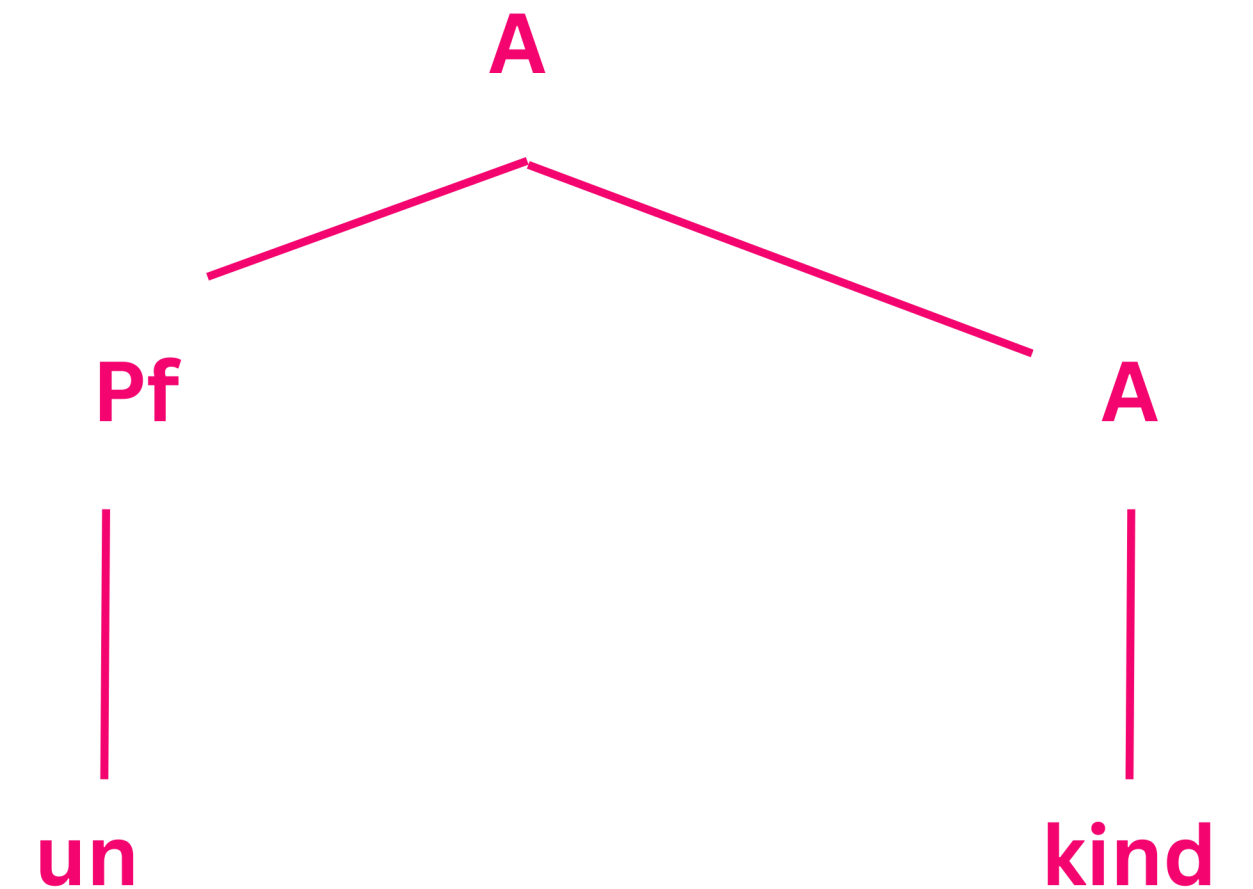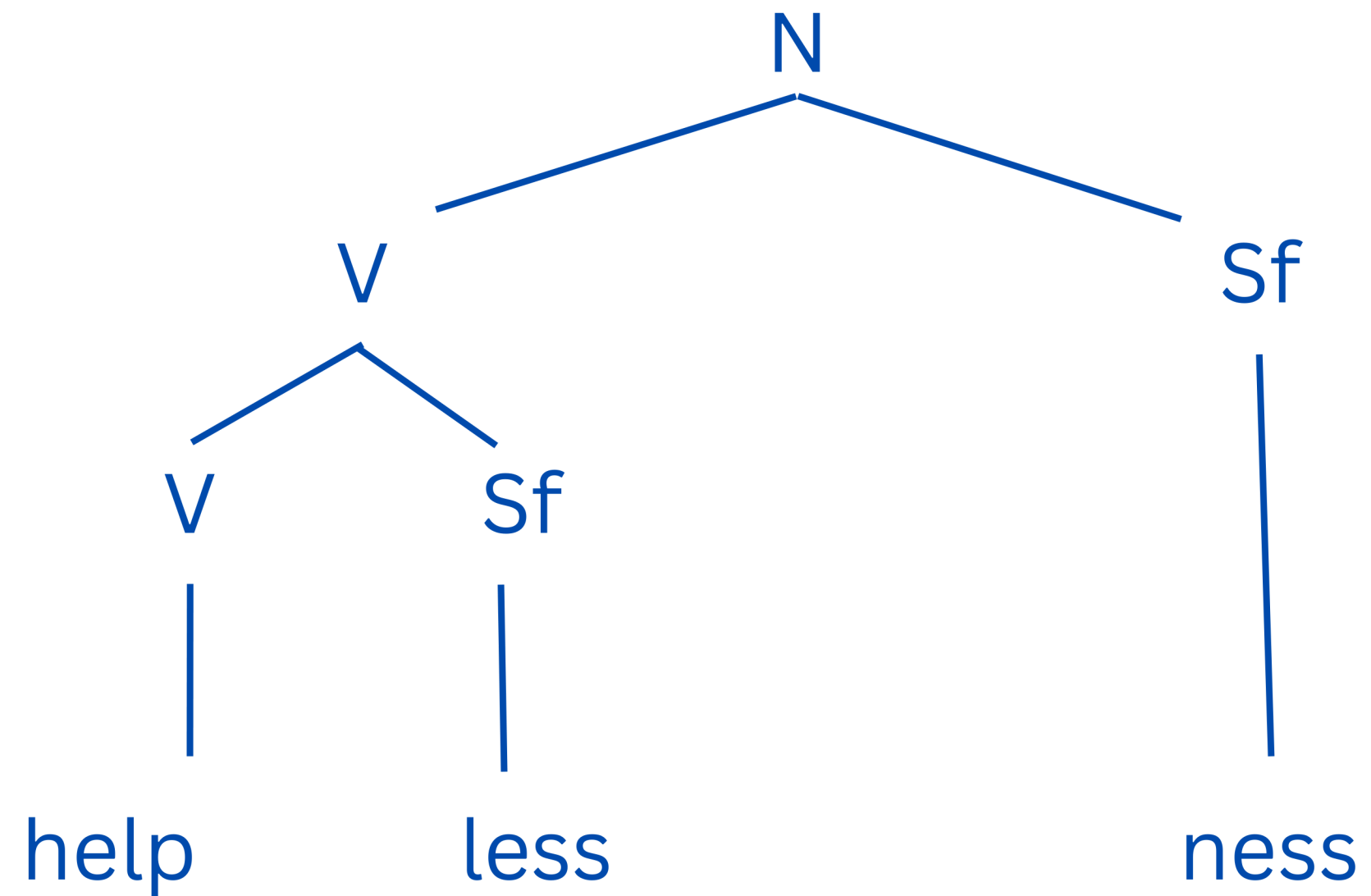
Tree Diagram

Labeled Bracketing

Tree Diagram

Tree diagram: Trees can be drawn from the top-down or from the bottom-up.

Using the top down method: start with the base word label, in this case A for adjective, then split off each major division. In this case there is just one prefix, Pf, and an adjective, A. Once the parts are labeled, the word parts can be filled in underneath.
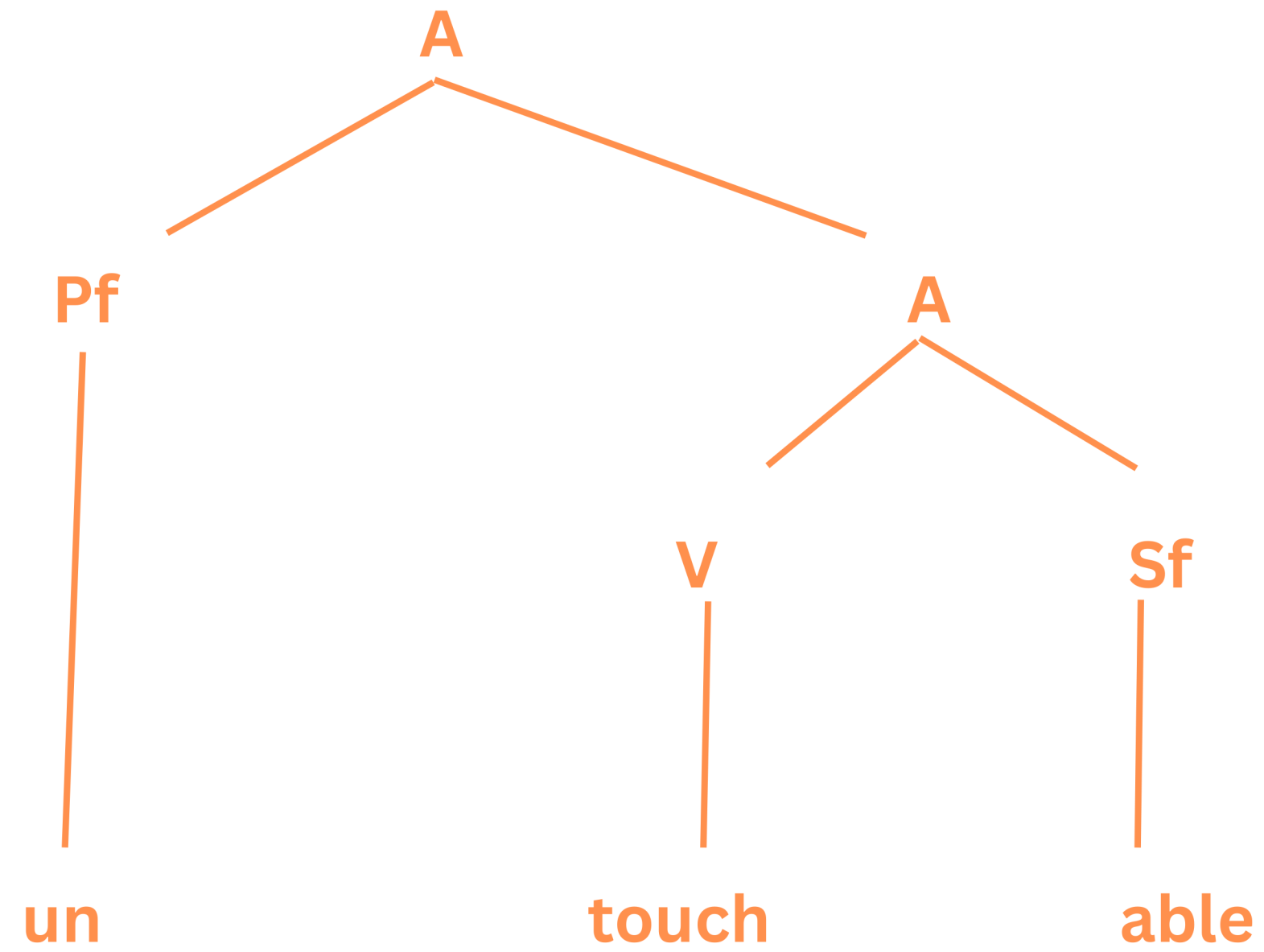
Example
One affixation: Unkind

A

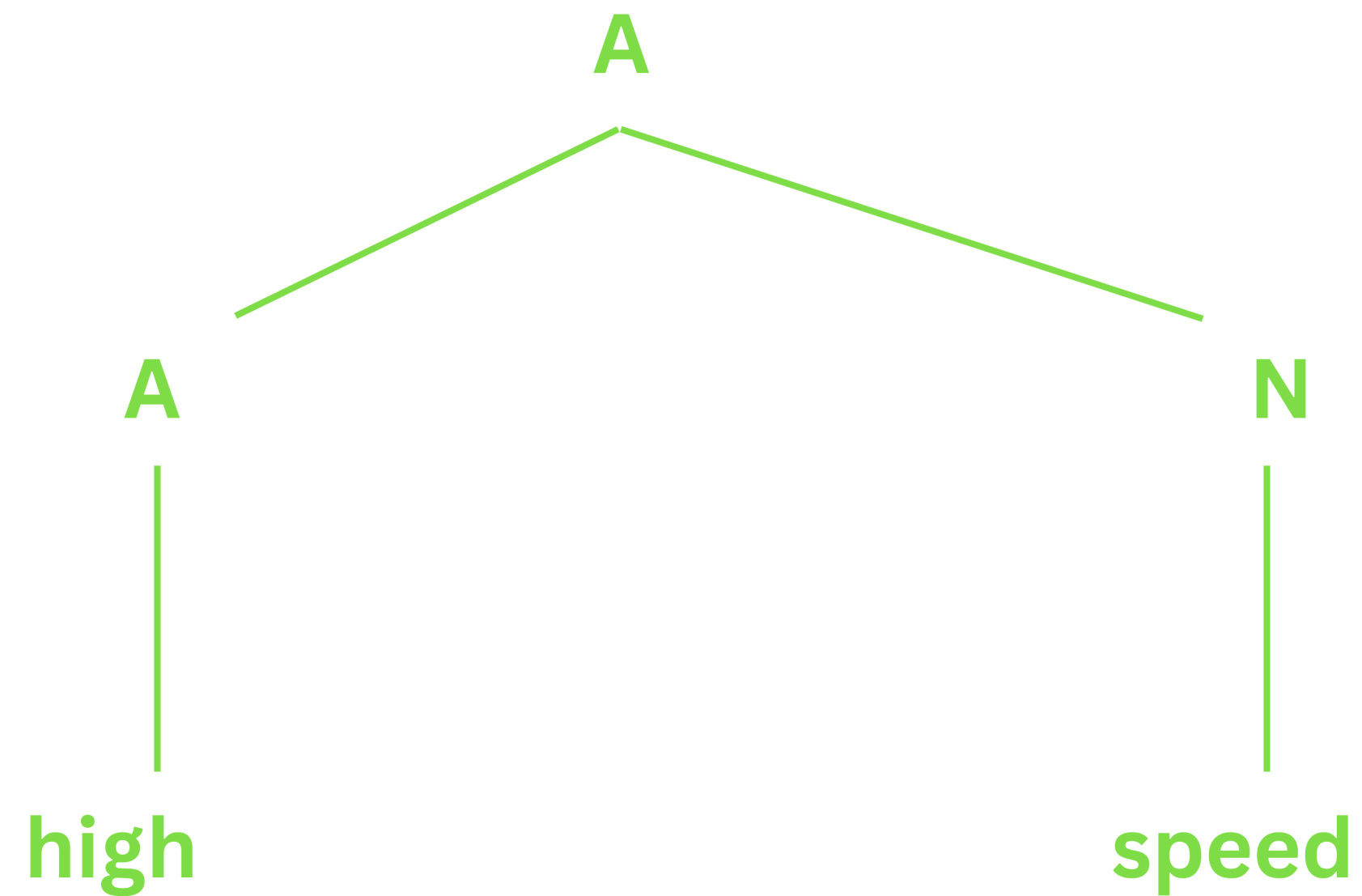Pf   A

un   kind

Multiple affixation: helplessness

```
              N
            /   \
           V      Sf
          / \      |
         V   Sf    |
         |    |    |
       help  less ness
```

untouchable

Compound word: high speed

```
              A
             / \
            /   \
           A     N
           |     |
         high   speed
```

holiday car trip

N
├── N
│   └── holiday
└── N
    ├── N
    │   └── car
    └── N
        └── trip
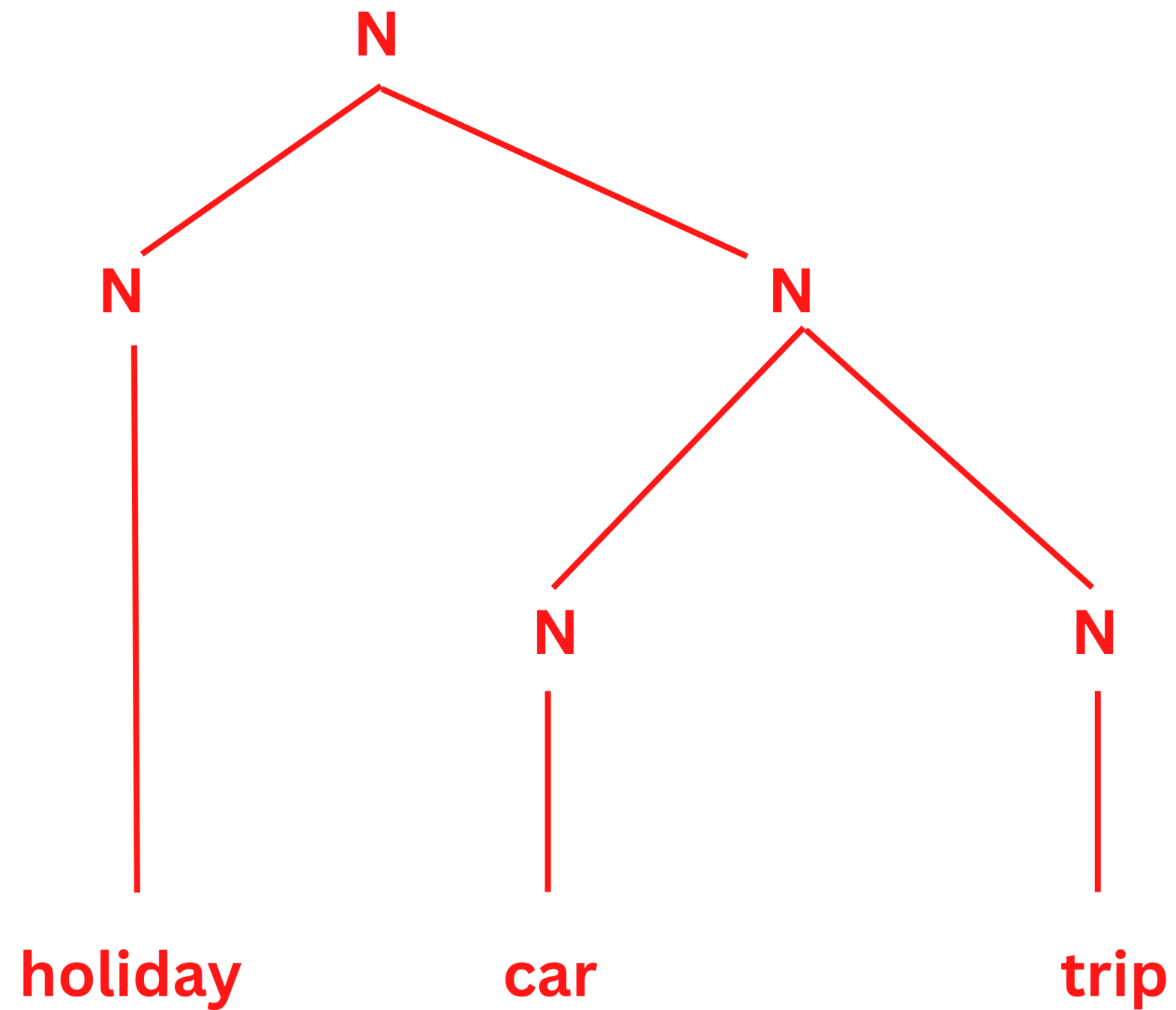
Labeled Bracketing

Labeled Bracketing uses square brackets with labels in subscript.
One pair of brackets corresponds to each node of the tree diagram.

A Labeled Bracketing examples:

unkind:

[A [PF un] [A kind]]

- The label A means adjective.
- The label PF means prefix.

This shows that the prefix un- attaches to an adjective, kind, to make a new adjective.

helplessness:

[N [A [V help] [Sf less]] [Sf ness]]

This shows that a suffix, -less, attaches to a verb, help, to make a new adjective, helpless. A suffix, -ness, attaches to an adjective, helpless, to make a noun, helplessness.

Mismatches Between Meaning and Structure

Nuclear physicist "someone who is an expert in nuclear physics"
; not "a physicist who is a nuclear."

A Labeled Bracketing: [N[N nuclear] [N physicist]]
Bracketing paradox: [N[N nuclear physic] [Sf ist]]

French historian : 1. "historian who is French"
2. "an expert in French history (not necessarily a French person)"

Meaning 1: [N[N French] [N historian]]
Meaning 2: [N[N French histori-] [Sf an]]

Sudmuk C, Ph. D. A Word and Its Structure

Syllable

A syllable is a unit of organization for a sequence of speech sounds. It is typically made up of a syllable nucleus (most often a vowel) with optional initial and final margins (typically, consonants). Syllables are often considered the phonological "building blocks" of words.

C

CC-

V

-CCC

A syllable is a group of one or more sounds. The essential part of a syllable is a vowel sound (V) which may be preceded and/or followed by a consonant (C) or a cluster of consonants (CC or CCC). Some syllables consist of just one vowel sound (V) as in eye/ai/, owe/əu/.

Example

English: one syllable: boy, house, sell, strong, in, an
            two syllables: amuse, repeat, back-bone, lovely
            three syllables: landlessness, sister-in-law
            four syllables: untidiness, untruthfully

Reading List

(Page 103-118)

Any Questions?

Thank you
We can discuss in class or contact me via email

See you next week!