



# LNG2211

# English Morphology

**Term 2/2022**

**Department of English**

**Faculty of Humanities and Social Sciences**

A low-angle, upward-looking photograph of several tall, modern skyscrapers with glass facades, set against a clear blue sky. The perspective creates a sense of height and scale. The image is framed by a thick yellow border that has a clipped-top corner on the right side.

# Week 4



# Key concepts

- Word form
- Lexeme
- Inflected word
- Inflectional morphology: regular vs. irregular
- Suppletion





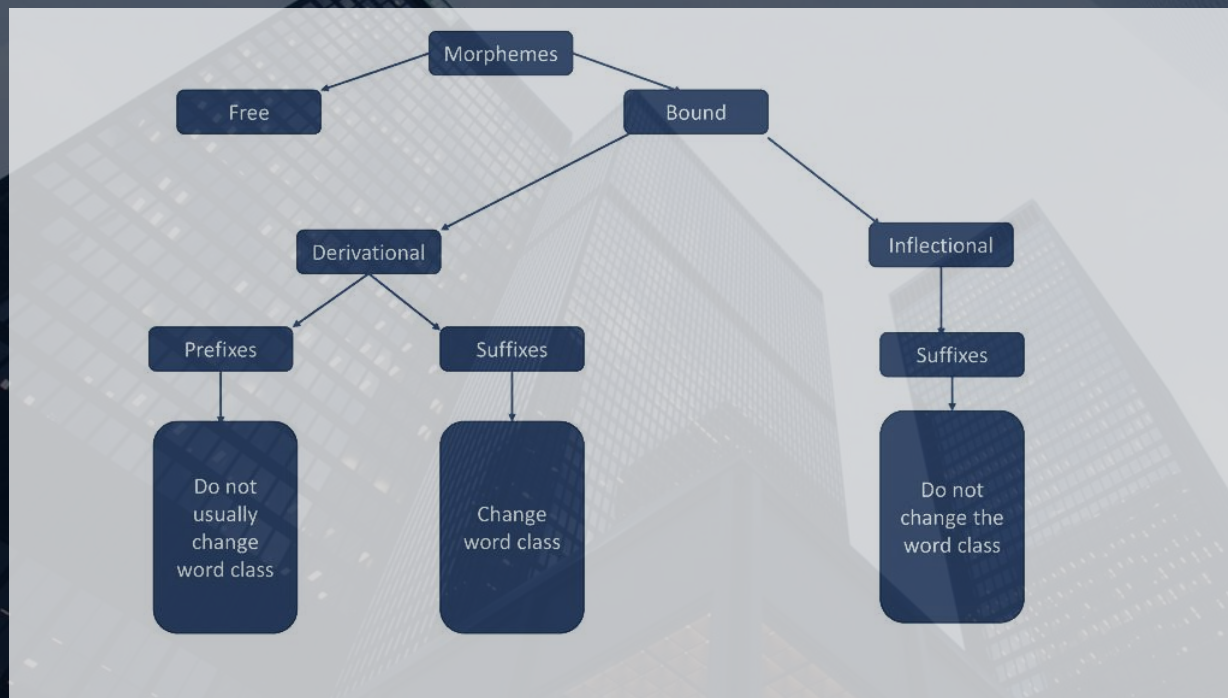
Andrew Carstairs-McCarthy

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# A word and its forms: inflection





# Inflection

- Some complex words have meanings that are so predictable that they do not have to be listed in a dictionary.
- A word need not be **lexical item** because they are only *grammatically conditioned variants* of a word that is *more basic*.







# Inflection

- (1) This pianist performs in the local hall every week.
- (2) Mary told us that this pianist performed in the local hall every week.
- (3) The performance last week was particularly impressive.

# Inflection

All these words contain a suffix:

*perform -s*

*perform -ed*

*perform -ance*

But how are they different?







# Inflection

All these words contain a suffix:

- |                      |                                          |
|----------------------|------------------------------------------|
| <i>perform -s</i>    | dependent on the grammatical context     |
| <i>perform -ed</i>   | dependent on the grammatical context     |
| <i>perform -ance</i> | NOT dependent on the grammatical context |



# Inflection

All these words contain a suffix:

*perform -s*

Subject-Verb Agreement

(4) \*This pianist *perform* in the local hall every week.

(5) \*These pianists *performs* in the local hall every week.

# Inflection

Example (4) and (5) are unacceptable because they violate the grammatical rule of English: Subject-Verb Agreement

(4) \*This pianist **perform** in the local hall every week.

(5) \*These pianists **performs** in the local hall every week.



# Inflection

(2) Mary told us that this pianist performed in the local hall every week.

*perform -ed*

Past tense

# Inflection

(3) The *performance* last week was particularly impressive

*perform -ance* NOT dependent on the grammatical context

(6) \*The *perform* last week was particularly impressive



# Inflection

(7) The performer last week was particularly impressive

(8) The concert last week was particularly impressive

*perform -ance* NOT dependent on the grammatical context

# Inflection

*perform -s*

dependent on the grammatical context

*perform -ed*

dependent on the grammatical context

*perform -ance*

NOT dependent on the grammatical context



# Inflection

*perform -s*

variant of the verb *perform*

*perform -ed*

variant of the verb *perform*

*perform -ance*

NOT variant of the verb *perform*

# Inflection

Part of speech?

*perform -s* \_\_\_\_\_

*perform -ed* \_\_\_\_\_

*perform -ance* \_\_\_\_\_



# Inflection

*perform -s*      verb

*perform -ed*      verb

*perform -ance*      noun

# Inflection

*perform -s*

inflection

*perform -ed*

inflection

*perform -ance*

derivation



# Inflection



(9) These pianists *perform* in the local hall every week.

Is the verb *perform* in (9) inflected?

# Inflection

Inflected words (word forms): *performs, performed, perform*  
[written in italics]

Lexeme: **PERFORM**

[written in small capitals]



# Inflection

Lexeme refers to a single word and all of its forms.

For example

Lexeme: **GO**

Inflected words (word forms): *go, goes, going, went*

# Inflection

Lexeme refers to a single word and all of its forms.

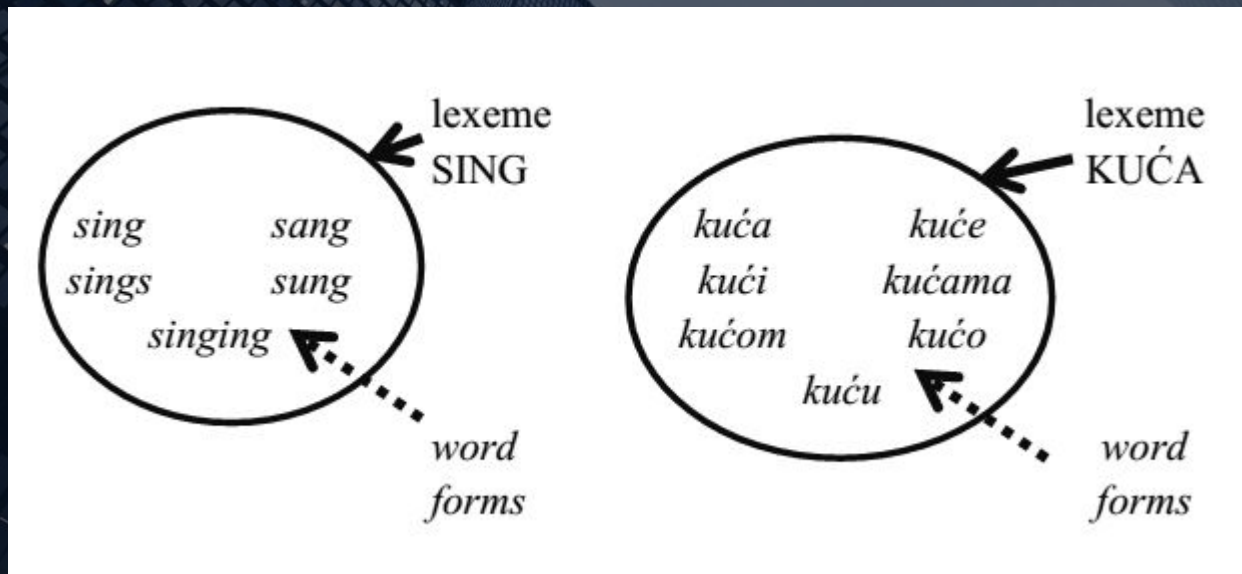
For example

Lexeme: **SING**

Inflected words (word forms): *sing, sang, sung, sings, singing*



# Inflection



# Suppletion

The process of replacement of whole form by completely different form.

Present tense	Past tense
<i>be (is/am/are)</i>	<i>was/were</i>
<i>go</i>	<i>went</i>



# Inflection

Lexeme: PIANIST

Inflected words (word forms):

Lexeme: TELL

Inflected words (word forms):

# Regular vs. Irregular inflection

Lexeme: CAT

plural form: *cats*

Lexeme: PIANIST

plural form: *pianists*



# Regular vs. Irregular inflection

Regular rule of forming plurals

suffix -s

# Regular vs. Irregular inflection

Lexeme: CHILD

plural form: \_\_\_\_\_

Lexeme: TOOTH

plural form: \_\_\_\_\_



# Regular vs. Irregular inflection

Lexeme: CHILD

plural form: *children*

Lexeme: TOOTH

plural form: *teeth*

# Regular vs. Irregular inflection

Lexeme: **ox**

plural form: \_\_\_\_\_

Lexeme: **FORMULA**

plural form: \_\_\_\_\_



# Regular vs. Irregular inflection

Lexeme: **ox**

plural form: *oxen*

Lexeme: **FORMULA**

plural form: *formulae*

# Regular vs. Irregular inflection

Lexeme: CACTUS

plural form: \_\_\_\_\_

Lexeme: MAN

plural form: \_\_\_\_\_



# Regular vs. Irregular inflection

Lexeme: CACTUS

plural form: *cacti*

Lexeme: PHENOMENON

plural form: *phenomena*

# Regular vs. Irregular inflection

Lexeme: DEER

plural form: *deer*

Lexeme: SHEEP

plural form: *sheep*



# Regular vs. Irregular inflection

Lexeme: FISH

plural form: *fish*

Lexeme: TROUT

plural form: *trout*

# Inflection

Consider the following examples:

(12) *A deer* was visible through the tree.

(13) *Two deer* was visible through the tree.



# Inflection

Consider the following examples:

(12) A *deer* was visible through the tree.

(13) Two *deer* was visible through the tree.

How can we tell whether they are singular or plural?

# Inflection

Consider the following examples:

(12) A *deer* was visible through the tree.

(13) Two *deer* was visible through the tree.

How can we tell whether they are singular or plural?

According to the syntactic context.



# Regular vs. Irregular inflection

Zero-plural (zero suffix)

Lexeme: DEER

plural form: *deer*

Lexeme: SHEEP

plural form: *sheep*

# Regular vs. Irregular inflection

There are a few nouns that exist only in a plural form:

(14) a. Those scissors belong in the top drawer.

b. Your pants have a hole in the seat.

(15) a. \*Those scissors belongs in the top drawer.

b. \*Your pants has a hole in the seat.



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Consider the following examples:

(16) I saw a cat in the garden.

(17) I saw (some) cats in the garden.

(18) \*I saw cat in the garden.

Why (18) is unacceptable?

**Well done!**  
**Congratulations!**





Unit completed!



# Questions?

We can discuss in class or  
contact me via **LINE** or **Email**





See you next  
week!

