

Chapter 4

Morphology: words and how they are formed

Learning Objectives

- Explain how words are created from a language's basic units of meaning and name what those units are called.
- Discuss and name the different types of languages, based on the different ways of creating words from morphemes.
- Analyze this statement: "Language is an open system of communication."
- List the ways that new words are formed as described in this chapter.
- Explain some of the ways that word meanings change over time.

Morphemes are the smallest units of meaning. This means that morphemes cannot be broken down further and remain meaningful.

Morphology is the study of the structure and classification of words and the units that make up words.

As discussed in the preceding chapter, phonology is the study of the sound system of language. The minimal unit of phonology is the phoneme. A phoneme conveys no meaning in itself. However, phonemes can be strung together in specific rule-governed ways to produce the meaningful units of language. These units are called **morphemes**. The study of the rules governing the formation and combination of morphemes is called **morphology**. Morphology is the study of how words are constructed out of morphemes. Or, put more formally, morphology is the study of the rules governing the internal structure of words.

The morpheme

Morphemes are the smallest recurrent meaningful units of a language. Here, *smallest* refers to the fact that a morpheme cannot be broken down further into other meaningful units. The word *cat* /kæt/ cannot be broken down further into other smaller meaningful units for which the separate parts equal the meaning of the original word (*cat*).

Cat does have the sound combination *at* in it. The meaning of the word *at* has nothing to do with the meaning of the word *cat*, and the leftover *c* has no meaning at all. So /k/ and /æt/ do not add up to the meaning *cat*. *Cat* is, therefore, a word made up of one morpheme. The word *cats* /kæts/ is different. This word can be broken down into two morphemes, *cat* and *-s*. *Cat* refers to a furry, four-legged feline animal, and *-s* means “more than one.” The individual meanings of the two morphemes add up to the meaning of the word *cats* (more than one cat).

From this discussion you can see that *morpheme* and *word* are not equivalent terms. *Cat* is a word, and so is *cats*; yet *cat* is one morpheme, and *cats* is two morphemes. And *-s* is a morpheme, but it definitely is not a word.

Cat and *-s* are two different types of morpheme. *Cat* can stand by itself as a meaningful unit; *-s* cannot. Because *-s* cannot stand by itself, that is, it must be attached to another

Box 4-1 Infixes and circumfixes

Different languages create words in different ways. Although it is relatively rare, some languages will alter meaning by inserting one morpheme into another. A morpheme inserted into a root is called an infix. Infixes are found in some languages of the Pacific Islands and parts of Asia. One of these languages is Tagalog, spoken in the Philippines. In Tagalog, the affix *-in-* can be added to a root morpheme to change it from present to past tense. A verb such as *sulat* (write) can be changed to *sinulat* (wrote). In another Philippine language, Bontoc, the infix *-um-* changes a noun or adjective into a verb. So, the adjective *fikas* (strong) changes to the verb *fumikas* (“he is becoming strong”). The use of infixes is common in Malayo-Polynesian languages such as Tagalog and Bontoc.

English generally does not use infixes. However, a process that leads to words with a morpheme or morphemes included within existing morphemes in-

volves the formation of certain new obscenities. The words *damn*, *fuckin(g)*, and *bloody* have been used as internal elements like infixes to form such words as *fandamntastic*, *absofuckinlutely*, *infuckincredible*, and *inbloodycredible* (British English). Since *damn* is not a bound morpheme, and the other elements mentioned include both free and bound morphemes, they are not actually infixes.

In some languages, affixes can enter a root at different places, in some cases surrounding the root. These affixes are sometimes called circumfixes. For instance, in Semitic languages, including Hebrew and Arabic, the root of most words can be reduced to three consonants. Bound morphemes, usually composed of one vowel, surround the consonants to complete the meaning of the word. The Arabic combination of the three consonants *ktb* has a general meaning dealing with the act or process of writing: *katab* (write), *kutib* (have been writing), *uktab* (being written), *aktub* (be writing), *kutubii* (bookseller), *kataba* (he wrote), *yak-tubu* (he writes), and so on. Some non-Semitic languages also use this principle. For instance, the root *latwy* in Polish means “easy.” The word *ułatwic’* means “to make easy.”

Circumfixes are rare in English, but in early modern English the progressive could be formed by *a-* preced-

ing the verb with *-ing* following it. So you have the familiar lines from the seventeenth-century “Wassail Song”:

Here we come a-wassailing
Among the leaves so green,
Here we come a-wand’ring
So fair to be seen.

A **bound morpheme** is a meaningful grammatical unit that cannot occur alone.

A **free morpheme** is a meaningful grammatical unit that can stand alone.

morpheme, it is called a **bound morpheme**. *Cat* and other morphemes that can stand alone are called **free morphemes**.

A **root** is a morpheme, usually but not always a free morpheme, that serves as a building block for other words and carries the main meaning of those words.

An **affix** is a bound morpheme that can be added to a root.

A **prefix** is an affix added to the beginning of a root.

A **suffix** is an affix added to the end of a root.

A **compound** is a word made up of two or more roots.

A **closed-form compound** is a compound word with no space or hyphen between the different roots.

The word *cat*, in addition to being called a free morpheme, may also be called a **root**. A root is a morpheme, usually but not always a free morpheme, that serves as a building block for other words. Words can be built by adding morphemes to the root. Added bound morphemes are called **affixes**. More specifically, affixes added before a root are called **prefixes**; those added after a root are **suffixes**. The *-s* in *cats* is a suffix. Affixes can also be infixes and circumfixes (see [Box 4-1](#)). In the word *predated*, *date* is the root, *pre-* is the prefix, and *-ed* is the suffix. Words do not have to be built by adding affixes to roots. Two or more roots can be added together to form what is called a **compound**. In English, adding two nouns, an adjective and a noun, two prepositions, a noun and a verb, and other combinations can form compounds. Some compounds are *schoolhouse*, *evergreen*, *into*, and *textbook*. These examples of compounds are **closed-form compounds**, which means that the individual morphemes are fused together. The individual morphemes do not have to be fused for a combination of morphemes to be

A **hyphenated compound** has a hyphen or hyphens between the different roots of the compound.

An **open-form compound** has spaces between its roots.

considered a compound word. There are also **hyphenated compounds** such as *father-in-law* and *eight-year-old*. A third type of compound is the **open-form compound**, in which there are spaces between the morphemes, as in *real estate* and *half brother*.

The **head of a compound** is similar to its topic, that is, the main, most general, or core meaning of the compound. The head also determines the grammatical function of the compound.

A compound is categorized into a lexical category (part

of speech) depending on its head. (See the “Lexical categories (parts of speech)” section at the end of this chapter.) The **head of a compound** is similar to its topic—that is, the main, most general, or core meaning of the compound. The head also determines the grammatical category of the compound. In English, the head is usually the morpheme that is to the right of all other morphemes in the word. So in *schoolhouse*, *evergreen*, and *spoon feed*, the heads are *house*, *green*, and *feed*, respectively. In *schoolhouse*, both free morphemes are nouns, so the compound is therefore a noun. In *evergreen*, *ever* is an adverb and *green* is an adjective. The compound is an adjective because the head, *green*, is an adjective. In *spoon feed*, *spoon* is a noun and *feed* is a verb, so the compound is a verb. Although most English compounds are right-headed, some are left-headed, such as *secretary general*. *Secretary* is the head of the compound: a *secretary general* is a subtype of *secretary*. It could be argued that *-in-law* is the head of *father-in-law* if it is a subtype of *in-law*. On the other hand, if the word is a subtype of *father*, then *father* is the head of the compound. In many languages, such as Swedish, compounds are usually left-headed.

Different types of morphemes

Morphemes were previously defined as the smallest recurrent meaningful units of a language. There are two ways that morphemes can be meaningful. The first and traditional understanding of the concept of meaningfulness is that morphemes can refer to things, actions, or qualities and quantities of things or actions. *Cat* refers to a thing. *Five* as in *five cats* refers to a quantity, as does *-s*. Morphemes may not have a meaning in this sense but may simply have a grammatical function. In the word *honorary*, *honor* is a free morpheme with a definable meaning, but *-ary* would be hard to define. Its function is clear, however. It changes the noun *honor* into the adjective *honorary*. Compare this example to the word *inaccessibility* in [Exercise 1](#), Part A. What is the meaning or function of *-ity*?

Exercise 1 Morphemes, compound words, and parts of speech

Part A: free and bound morphemes

1. Place a plus sign (+) between morphemes in each word listed below.
2. Label each morpheme as bound (B) or free (F).
3. You may need to use a dictionary to figure out some divisions.
4. Don't be fooled by English spelling.

Example: Reading

= Read + ing F + B

a. telephone _____

b. infirm _____

c. farm _____

d. reformers _____

e. ranchers _____

f. actor _____

g. inaccessibility _____

h. ducklings _____

i. countess _____

j. boysenberry _____



Part B: compound words and lexical categories

The major classes of grammatical categories into which words (not morphemes) can be divided are

what most linguists call **lexical categories**. Many grammar teachers call these lexical categories the **parts of speech**. There are actually several different systems for classifying words. For the purposes of this exercise, we will use the traditional concept of parts of speech that classify each word into one of eight categories: noun, pronoun, adjective, verb, adverb, preposition, conjunction, and interjection. If you are unfamiliar with the traditional classification, see the “Lexical categories (parts of speech)” section later in this chapter.

Determine the lexical category of each root in each compound word listed. Then determine the lexical category of the entire compound.

Example: greenhouse	adjective/noun	noun
1. textbook	_____	_____
2. hot dog	_____	_____
3. beachcomber	_____	_____
4. bunkhouse	_____	_____
5. blacktop	_____	_____
6. into	_____	_____
7. forerunner	_____	_____
8. takeover	_____	_____
9. crybaby	_____	_____
10. workman	_____	_____

11. downshift _____

12. empty-handed _____



Lexical categories are major grammatical classes into which words (not morphemes) can be divided.

The **parts of speech** are a system of grammatical categories for classifying words according to their usage or function.

Types of bound morphemes

Derivational morphemes are bound morphemes that change the meaning or lexical category of a word.

A bound morpheme can be classified on the basis of the function it serves. The morpheme may change the word from one lexical category (part of speech) to another as with the *-ary* in *honorary*. Or it might change the meaning of the word altogether as with the *in-* in *infirm*. *Infirm* and *firm* are opposite in meaning. Morphemes that perform either of these functions (change the lexical category or the meaning of a form) are called **derivational morphemes**.

Inflectional morphemes are bound morphemes that do not change the essential meaning or lexical category of a word. They change grammatical functions (other than lexical category).

In the word *cats*, the general meaning of the word *cat* is maintained; the words *cat* and *cats* are both nouns. Morphemes that serve only a grammatical function and do not change the essential meaning or lexical category of a word are called **inflectional morphemes**. The *-s* in *cats* changes the singular (*cat*) to plural (*cats*). The *-s* is an inflectional suffix called a plural marker.

In the word *dreamed*, the *-ed*, like the *-s* in *cats*, is an inflectional morpheme. *Dream* and *dreamed* are both verbs,

and both refer to the same event. The *-ed* is an inflectional suffix called a tense marker.

In English, free morphemes greatly outnumber bound morphemes. This is not the case for all languages. Classical Greek, for instance, has few free morphemes. Of the bound morphemes that are found in English, most are derivational. In contrast, Latin, Russian, and Finnish are rich in inflectional forms.

There are only nine inflectional bound morphemes in English, and they are all suffixes, as listed below:

The plural marker (<i>-s</i>)	The pens are on the table.
The possessive (<i>'s</i> and <i>-s'</i>)	It was Andrew's car. They are the boys' toys.
The third person, present singular (<i>-s</i>)	He always comes home late.
The comparative (<i>-er</i>)	This milk is fresher than that.
The superlative (<i>-est</i>)	This is the freshest milk.
The progressive (<i>-ing</i>)	He is walking down the street.



The past tense (-ed)

She arrived late.

The past participle (-en)

Jim has beaten his
opponents.

Exercise 2 Derivational and inflectional morphemes

1. Place a plus sign (+) between each morpheme boundary and label each morpheme as free (F) or bound (B).
2. Label each bound morpheme as derivational (D) or inflectional (I).

Example: Deepen deep + en F + BI

a. Bill's _____

b. running _____

c. player _____

d. action _____

e. roughest _____

f. comes (as in
Here he comes.) _____

g. friendly _____

h. unfriendly _____



i. longer _____

j. lovable _____

k. judgment _____

l. banana _____

m. slowest _____

n. quicker _____

o. unhappy _____

p. semicircle _____

q. nobody _____

r. Aaron's (as in
It is Aaron's toy.) _____

s. broken _____

t. happily _____



Allomorphs

An **allomorph** is a variation of a morpheme.

Just as a set of allophones is the variations of a phoneme, a set of **allomorphs** is the variations of a morpheme. Al-

lomorphs of a morpheme are different phonetic forms for the same meaning. For instance, the meaning "more than one," which is usually expressed as the suffix -s in English, can actually be pronounced three different ways: /s/ as in *mats* /mæts/, /z/ as in *zoos* /zuz/, or /əz/ as in *churches* /tʃɜːtʃəz/. /s/, /z/, and /əz/ are said to be allomorphs of the plural morpheme -s.

Attaching one of the three allomorphs of the plural -s to a root is not a random process. Instead, it is rule governed. The rule, which follows the rule of the obligatory phonological process voice assimilation (see [Chapter 3](#)), is as follows:

- /s/ is used after a voiceless sound, except /s, ʃ, tʃ/.
- /z/ is used after voiced sounds, except /z, ʒ, ʃ/.
- /əz/ is used after a sibilant (/s, z, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, or ʒ/).

Morphophonemic rules are rules that specify which allomorph of a morpheme will be used in a specific phonetic environment.

The rules that specify which allomorph of a morpheme will be used in a specific phonetic environment are called **morphophonemic rules**. The term is used to show the

interrelationship between phonology and morphology.

Other allomorphs are based on other ways in which the same morpheme can be expressed differently. For instance, the morpheme spelled -ing can be pronounced /ɪn/ or /ɪŋ/. In this case, the choice of which allomorph to use is optional and indicates the speaker's level of formality.

Exercise 3 Allomorphs

1. Why are the sounds [p] and [p^h] called allophones of the phoneme /p/, but /s/, /z/, and /əz/ are not called allophones, but allomorphs of the plural morpheme?

2. Not taking into account irregular forms, the English past tense marker has three allomorphic shapes. From the list below, deter-

mine these three forms of the past tense marker and explain how they are distributed.

bagged	hugged	fished	roughed
crammed	moved	regarded	budged
dined	buzzed	pitched	unearthed
rapped	wanted	rowed	rated
piked	clouded	relied	belonged



3. Question 1 of [Exercise 3](#) in [Chapter 3](#) introduced the idea of allomorphs without actually labeling it as such. In that exercise, the prefix meaning *not* was shown to occur in at least three allophonic forms: /ɪn/, /ɪm/, and /ɪŋ/ (which are spelled as the allomorphs *in-* and *im-*). In [Chapter 3](#) this was used as an example of an obligatory phonological process based on place assimilation. There are other allomorphs of the prefix meaning *not*. List them with examples and give a reason for why they are used instead of *in-* and *im-*.
4. Languages that have gendered nouns have bound inflectional morphemes for each gender. Spanish nouns that refer to both males and fe-

males are an example of this. Examine the list of Spanish words below and state the simple rule that governs the distribution of the bound morphemes that indicate gender.

niño	"boy"	esposo	"husband"	doctor	"male doctor"
hija	"daughter"	niña	"girl"	professor	"male professor"
doctora	"female doctor"	esposa	"wife"	hijo	"son"
señora	polite form of address for a woman	profesora	"female professor"	señor	polite form of address for a man

Morphological typology

Typology is a branch of linguistics that studies the structural similarities of languages.

Typology is a branch of linguistics that studies the structural similarities of languages. Languages are placed in the same type if the features of that type characterize them. Sometimes languages that are not related historically or geographically can be placed in the same type.

Morphological typology is the study and classification of language based on how morphemes create words.

Morphological typology is the study and classification of language based on how morphemes create words. Classifying a natural phenomenon into a limited number of types is always artificial. The types we will discuss are ideals. In reality, most languages, English being a good example, combine two or more of the principles that we will discuss in the typology. Although different linguists derive slightly different classifications, we will describe a system based on two main types, with the second type having three subtypes.

An **analytic** (or **isolating**) language is a language in which most words are single morphemes.

One type of language is called **analytic** (or **isolating**). In a pure or ideal analytic language, every word would

be a single free (or root) morpheme, and there would be no bound morphemes. In reality, languages classified as analytic might have low but varying numbers of bound morphemes. In an analytic language, the meaning that would be conveyed in other languages by bound morphemes is usually carried by free morphemes. The order of morphemes (word order) alone conveys the grammatical function of the word—that is, whether the word is the subject, object, modifier, verb, and so on. Mandarin and Vietnamese are examples of languages that come close to the ideal analytic principle. An example from Mandarin is as follows:

Ta	chi	fan	le. /ta či fan lə/
He	eat	meal	Aspect ¹
<i>He ate the meal.</i> (This action is complete.)			

In this example, each morpheme represents one meaning. There are no inflectional or derivational bound morphemes.

A **synthetic language** uses bound morphemes to affect the meaning or mark the grammatical function of a free morpheme.

The second type of language based on the types and ways morphemes are used is called a **synthetic language**. A synthetic language uses bound morphemes to affect the meaning or mark the grammatical function of a free morpheme.

A **fusional language** (also called **inflectional language**) is one type of synthetic language in which one bound morpheme may convey several bits of information.

There are three synthetic language types. One is called a **fusional** or **inflectional language**. In a fusional language, one bound morpheme may convey several bits of information. For instance, in the Russian word *komnatu* (room) the *-u* is a bound morpheme (suffix) that conveys

the meaning as feminine and singular, and identifies the word grammatically as a direct object (accusative case).

An **agglutinating language** is a type of synthetic language in which each bound morpheme adds only one specific meaning to the root morpheme.

The second type of synthetic language type is called an **agglutinating language**. In an agglutinating language, each bound morpheme adds only one specific meaning to the root morpheme. For instance, in Hungarian, the word for *man* is *ember*. To express the possessive *my man*, the suffix *-em* is added. Unlike the suffix *-u* in Russian that added several bits of information, the suffix *-em* adds only the concept of possession to the root word. Because most bound morphemes in Hungarian add only one specific bit of information to the root word, Hungarian is classified as an agglutinating language.

A **polysynthetic language** is a synthetic language in which each word is the equivalent of a whole sentence in other languages.

In the third type of synthetic language, a **polysynthetic language**, each word is the equivalent of a whole sentence in other languages. In these languages, one word can be very long and made up of numerous morphemes. Inuktitut is a Native American polysynthetic language spoken in northern Canada. In Inuktitut, *qasuirsarvigssarsingit-luinarnarpuq* is one word! It means, “someone did not find a completely suitable resting place.” The morphemes are as follows: *qasu* (tired), *-irr* (not), *-sar* (cause to be), *-vig* (place), *-ssar* (for suitable), *-si* (find), *-ngit* (not), *-luninar* (completely), *-nar* (someone), *-puq* (third person singular).²

In reality, most languages combine the morphological principles mentioned earlier. They can be seen as occupying a place on a scale from mostly analytic to mostly synthetic. Some linguists suggest that each morphological structure within a language could be individually classified as analytic, fusional, agglutinating, or polysynthetic, as opposed to classifying the entire language by these terms.

Exercise 4 Morphological typology

1. Internet exercise: Using a search engine such as Google, explore the concept of “morphological typology.”
 - a. Construct a list of languages based on the morphological typology discussed earlier.
 - b. What are some problems with classifying language into four types based on the criteria discussed in this section?
 - c. Has English changed over the years (from Old English to modern English) in the way it uses bound morphemes?
2. English has been classified as an analytic (isolating) language. English displays the analytic pattern for some words, but also shows many characteristics of other language types.
 - a. The word *reformer* in “The reformer seemed to be winning support” falls into which typological pattern?
 - b. The word *her* in “Her grades were excellent” falls into which typological pattern?

- c. The English word *pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis* (a disease of the lungs) as in “Pneumonoultramicroscopicsilicovolcanoconiosis is a bad disease” falls into which morphological pattern?
- d. The word *will* as in “I will go to the store” falls into which typological pattern?

Closed classes of words (or **function words**) are types of words (such as prepositions and pronouns) the growth of which is very limited.

Certain categories of words show greater openness than others. That is, the numbers of words in **open classes of words** (also called **content words**) grow, whereas the number of words in **closed classes of words** (also called **function words**) does not usually grow. In English, new nouns, verbs, adjectives, and adverbs are always being formed. Yet new conjunctions, pronouns, or prepositions are rare.

Similarly, some morphemes are very productive and others are not. Bound morphemes such as *-ly*, *-able*, *-s*, *-ment*, *pre-*, and *in-* can be added to thousands of words, including new words. On the other hand, some forms are not productive. *Boysen-* is used in only one word in English and is unlikely to be used in many more. The inflectional morpheme *-en* as in *oxen* is also nonproductive. It is a historical oddity; new nouns formed in English would most likely be pluralized by *-s*, not *-en*.

How new words are formed

The concepts of openness and productivity, revisited

Open classes of words (or **content words**) are types of words (such as nouns, adjectives, verbs, and adverbs) that grow in number in a language.

Neologisms are newly formed words.

Neologisms (new words) are constantly being added to languages. A major principle of anthropology is that there are no inferior languages. For instance, a culture with less complex technology than another culture does not have a language with less complex grammar. However, it is true that technologically more complex cultures with high rates of technological innovation will generate more neologisms. They have more things to name. In the United States, there were 629,647 applications for patents in 2015. Each of those new things had to have a name (or some type of label). It is not just new material things that lead to neologisms. According to the American Dialect Society, the verbal form of the search engine Google, *to google*—meaning to search the Internet—was the 2001–2010 word of the decade. Like many neologisms, this word might not stand the test of time. You can check out what the word of each year is according to Oxford Living Dictionaries at: <https://en.oxforddictionaries.com/wordof-the-year>. Nine processes used to form new words are described in the following paragraphs.

Compounding

Compounding is creating a word with more than one root.

We have already discussed this process that involves combining roots. A *bunk* is a type of bed. When many bunks were put into one place with the primary function of providing a place to sleep, the word *bunkhouse* was formed. **Compounding** is a common way to label a new thing or activity. Other examples of compounding include *cross-trainer* (a sports shoe used for a wide range of athletic activities); *veggie burger*, which is also written as *veggieburger* (a vegetarian patty that can be substituted for the meat in a hamburger sandwich); and *mallrat* (a young person who hangs out at shopping malls).

Acronym formation

Acronyms are words that are formed from the first letter or letters of more than one word.

Acronyms are words formed from the first letter or letters of more than one word. Unlike initialisms, in which each letter is simply named (FBI is /ɛf bi ay/), acronyms are pronounced, as any word would be. Both acronyms and initialisms are abbreviations. So, since NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Admistration) is pronounced as /næsa/, it is an acronym. Acronyms are popular because they can be said faster, and remembered more easily, than the whole phrase they represent. Sometimes they represent the sentiment (or a characteristic) of a group or movement. This last fact is exemplified by an acronym such as MADD (Mothers Against Drunk Driving). These people are mad or angry. *Backronyms* are “after the fact” acronyms (see [Box 4-2](#)).

Box 4-2 Backronyms

The website [Wordsmith.org](http://wordsmith.org) e-mails to its subscribers “A.Word.A.Day”. The website defines the word *backronym* as a word that is reinterpreted as an acronym. That is, a word that was not originally formed as an acronym is then made into an acronym. The word *backronym* itself is a blending of *back* and *acronym* (see <http://wordsmith.org/words/backronym.html>).

Examples of backronyms include:

- PERL is a programming language. The letters of its name are now interpreted as Practical Extraction and Report Language.
- The USA PATRIOT Act has been “retrofitted” to be interpreted as Uniting and Strengthening America by Providing Appropriate Tools Required to Intercept and Obstruct Terrorism.
- The Apgar test is a five-faceted test for evaluating the health of newborns. It was originally an eponym, the test being named for its developer, Dr. Virginia Apgar. It has been rethought of as an acronym, with APGAR meaning Appear-

ance, Pulse, Grimace, Activity, and Respiration (see http://wordsmith.org/words/apgar_score.html).

- A backronym can even be formed for the word *acronym*. [Wordsmith.org](http://wordsmith.org) suggests that ACRO-
NYM could stand for A Contrived Result Of No-
menclature Yielding Mechanism.

As with all acronyms, backronyms are essentially mnemonic devices. In this case, a word made up to represent a word that was not an acronym reminds the user of what the word means or implies.

Foreign word borrowing

A cosmopolitan culture like ours is always coming into contact with other cultures. Through trade, travel, and conflict, words from one language enter other languages. Some of these words, such as the French *chauffeur*, are spelled the same in English as they are in the original language. Most have undergone some change, as exemplified by the Spanish *estampida*, which becomes *stampede* in English. Here is a small sample of words that English has

borrowed from other languages.

- French: *recipe, route, gopher, dime, camouflage, chowder, menu, boulevard*
- Italian: *solo, piano, balcony, costume, infantry, captain, pastel, allegro, casino*
- Spanish: *fiesta, pueblo, taco, plaza, guitar, bonanza, corral, pronto, rodeo, lasso, mosquito*
- Native American languages: *Massachusetts, Mississippi, Tallahassee, hickory, sequoia, succotash, caucus, totem, igloo, chipmunk, opossum*
- German: *sauerkraut, noodle, pretzel, dunk, kindergarten, waltz, loafer*
- Dutch: *yacht, coleslaw, cookie, waffle, freight, sloop, Yankee, Santa Claus*
- Yiddish: *schnook, klutz, oy vey, schlep*
- Arabic: *sofa, magazine, alcohol, mattress, algebra*
- Turkish: *yogurt, tulip, jackal*
- African languages: *tote, gorilla, zebra, gumbo, okra*
- Miscellaneous: *caravan* (Persian), *kimono* (Japanese), *tea* (Chinese), *dungarees* (Hindu), *ski* (Norwegian), *borscht* (Russian), *whiskey* (Gaelic), *trek* (Afrikaans)

Spanish has borrowed many words from Nahuatl, the language of the Aztecs. *Nopalli* has become *nopal* (cactus);

tecolotl is *tecolote* (owl); *pozolli* is *pozole* (hominy), and *tziictli* is *chicle* (chewing gum). Still other Nahuatl words melded into Spanish have in turn been melded into English. So *xocolatl* is *chocolate* in both Spanish and English; *coyotl* is *coyote* in both. *Tomatl* is *tomate* and *tomato*; *ahuactl* is *aguacate* and *avocado*. Spanish also borrowed many words from Arabic during the Middle Ages when the Moors ruled Spain; for instance, *alcalde* (mayor), *aceite* (oil), *arroz* (rice), and *arancel* (fee).

Modern Japanese has borrowed many English words in recent years, modifying them to fit the Japanese phonological system: *gorin-pisu* (green peas), *kissu* (kiss), *no-komento* (no comment), and *sarariman* (salaried man).

Arabic has borrowed from a variety of languages: *djeb* (pocket) from Turkish; *bortoqan* (orange) from Italian; *metro* (metro) and *madam* (madam) from French; and *dish* (satellite) from English.³

Clipping

Clipping is deleting a section of a word to create a shortened form.

As the word implies, **clipping** is snipping a section of a word to form a shortened form. *Gas* is clipped from *gasoline*, *phone* is clipped from *telephone*, and *gym* is clipped from *gymnasium*. A more recent example would be *app* for *application*. Some other examples of clipping are:

<i>stat</i>	from	<i>statistics</i>
<i>fan</i>	from	<i>fanatic</i>
<i>perm</i>	from	<i>permanent wave</i>
<i>exam</i>	from	<i>examination</i>
<i>dorm</i>	from	<i>dormitory</i>
<i>bus</i>	from	<i>omnibus</i>
<i>nark</i>	from	<i>narcotics agent</i>
<i>cords</i>	from	<i>corduroy + s</i>
<i>detox</i>	from	<i>detoxification</i>
<i>blog</i>	from	<i>weblog</i>



Blending

Blending is the process of taking two or more words (compounding), clipping parts off one or more of the words, and then combining them.

A **blend** is a word that is the result of the process of blending.

Words can also be formed from various combinations of the principles described earlier. **Blending** is the process of taking two or more words (compounding), clipping parts off one or more of the words, and then combining them. The new word is a **blend** carrying a bit of meaning from each of its parts. Blends are often used for results of technology, such as the words *nylon* and *betatron*. *Nylon* is formed by combining *vinyl* and *rayon*. *Betatron* is a combination of *beta ray* and *electron*. Blends can be a type of

abbreviation, as illustrated by the word *Amerind* (*American Indian*). It can be a playful way to form words, as exemplified by *mimsy*, which Lewis Carroll, author of the poem “Jabberwocky,” created from *miserable* and *flimsy*. Blends can be echoic, associating types of sounds as with *blurt* (*blow* and *spurt*). They can label things that are intermediate between two other things, such as the word *brunch* (*breakfast* and *lunch*). Other examples of blends are *sitcom* (*situation comedy*), *motel* (*motor hotel*), *telethon* (*television* and *marathon*), *Eurasia* (*Europe* and *Asia*), *carjacking* (*car* and *hijacking*), and *e-mail* (*electronic* and *mail*). Notice that in the last example *electronic* is clipped back to just *e*.

Derivation

Derivation is the process of forming a new word by adding a derivational affix to a word.

We say that a word has been formed by **derivation** if that word has been formed by adding a derivational affix. The

word *plane* serves as the root for *deplane*. The derivational affix *de-* is added to create this new word. Numerous affixes in English can be used in this productive way. Some of them are as follows: *re-*, *un-*, *dis-*, *in-*, *pre-*, *anti-*, *sub-*, *-ly*, *-ness*, *-er*, *-ity*, *-ation*, *-able*, *-ful*.

New affixes are rare, but occasionally a new affix is formed and then can be used to derive a new set of words. For instance, the prefix *cyber-* has become common. *Cyber-* has been combined with such words as *space*, *punk*, and *theft* to derive *cyberspace*, *cyberpunk*, and *cyber-theft*. The suffix *-gate* entered the language as a result of the Watergate scandal of 1972. The *-gate* was clipped off the word *Watergate*, the name of a hotel in Washington, DC, where burglars broke into the Democratic Party's National Committee offices. Since 1972, *-gate* has been used to label government scandals: for example, *Irangate* (in the Reagan administration), *Travelgate* and *Monicagate* (in the Clinton administration), and *Attorney-gate*, referring to the questionable firing of eight federal prosecutors in the Bush administration in 2006. There is even a word *gategate*. It refers to a minor 2012 scandal in the United Kingdom. Andrew Mitchell, a senior Member of Parliament, got into an argument with a police officer when Mitchell tried to leave the British prime minister's residence by bike through the main gate. He was asked to use the pedestrian exit. He allegedly said "f***ing plebs"

and other obscenities to the police officer, and this caused a scandal over class snobbery. The suffix has also been used for hundreds of scandals in areas other than politics. For example, in 2015 in the world of entertainment there was *Donutgate*; journalism had its *Mediagate* in 2012; for sports there was *Deflategate* in 2015; and for technology and business *Emissionsgate* occurred in 2015.⁴

Back-formation

Analogy is a process by which one form of a word (or other linguistic phenomenon) is used as the model for constructing another word or structure.

Back-formation is used to form a new word through the process of analogy by removing an affix or what appears to be an affix from that word.

The word *revise* can be used as the root to form the word *revision*. This is a derivational process. But sometimes an invented word looks like a derivational process even though the new word was not directly derived from any existing root. For instance, the word *television* was formed by combining *tele* (at a distance) and *vision* (something seen). *Television* was not derived from *televise*. However, *televise* was based on the fact that words like *revision* are formed from *revise*. An imitative process like this is called **analogy**; the words formed are analogous to those formed by following appropriate established rules. The term **back-formation** refers to the fact that *televise* was actually clipped from *television* rather than being the root for it. The word *televise* did not exist before the word *television*, and therefore could not be the root for *television*.

Other examples of back-formation are as follows:

<i>donate</i>	from	<i>donation</i>
<i>edit</i>	from	<i>editor</i>
<i>enthuse</i>	from	<i>enthusiasm</i>
<i>automate</i>	from	<i>automation</i>



In each of these cases, the word on the right existed before

the word on the left.

Eponyms: people's names

Eponyms are words formed from people's names.

People like to be remembered. One way to increase the likelihood of being remembered is to have something named after you. Proper names are used to label animals and plants (*Darwin's finches*); inventions (the *saxophone*, named for Antoine-Joseph "Adolphe" Sax); places (*Washington*, for George Washington, and *District of Columbia*, for Christopher Columbus); activities (*boycott* from Captain Charles Cunningham Boycott); and other people (see [Box 4-3](#)). Some other common words based on people's names are as follows:

- *Ponzi scheme* from Charles Ponzi (1882–1949), who created a fraudulent investment scheme.
- *Braille* from Louis Braille (1809–1852), who developed a system of printing for the blind.

- *Erotic* from Eros (Greek god).
- *Sadism* from Count Donatien Alphonse François de Sade (1740–1814), who wrote books describing sexual pleasure derived from inflicting physical or mental pain.
- *Sandwich* from John Montagu, the fourth Earl of Sandwich (1718–1792), who invented the sandwich when he insisted that roast beef between two pieces of bread be brought to him while he was gambling.
- *Guillotine* from Joseph-Ignace Guillotin (1738–1814), who invented the device for beheading convicted felons.
- *Kanye'd* from Kanye West (b. 1977), meaning to have a speech interrupted.
- *Mesmerize* from Franz Mesmer (1734–1815), a doctor who practiced hypnotism.
- *Dunce* from John Duns Scotus (1265–1308), a brilliant thinker whose followers revolted against Renaissance ideas. These “duns men” darkened Duns Scotus’s reputation.
- *Lynch* from Charles Lynch (1736–1796), a Virginia Justice of the Peace who condemned criminals to hang.

Box 4-3 The etymology of given names

One of the things that parents-to-be are often concerned with is the names of their children. Sometimes a child is named for one of the parents or for a deceased relative. Often a child is named for a famous person or fictional character. In other cases, the parents choose the name on the basis of what the name means. Many books that list prospective names for children give a brief history of the meaning of a name.

For instance, the name *Aaron* comes from the biblical name *Aharon*. Its origin is either Hebrew or Egyptian. If its origin is Hebrew, then it means either *exalted* or *high mountain*. Aaron was the older brother of Moses.

The name *Andrew* is from the Greek name *Andreas*, which derives from *aner*, which means *man* (possessive form: *andros*, “of a man”). *Andrea* and *Andriana* are feminine names derived from *Andrew*.

Sometimes the popular media turns one variant of a name into the most common version of that given name. *Heidi*, the nickname for *Adelheide* (from the German word for *noble*), was popularized by the book

of the same name. *Lucy* (from the Latin word for *light*), a variant of *Lucille*, was made popular in the 1950s by the television show *I Love Lucy*.

You can look up the history and meaning of your name on the website “Behind the Name” at www.behindthename.com.

Trade names

New words are invented to label new products. Sometimes the word is formed based on processes we have already discussed. A *Ford* is a car named after Henry Ford. Other times, brand names are invented without reference to existing words. *Xerox* is a good example of this.

Trade names sometimes become so widely used that they become the generally used term for the product. This happened to the word *Xerox* for several decades. *Aspirin* was originally the trade name for the Bayer Company’s brand of acetylsalicylic acid. *Jell-O* was the trade name for General Foods’ brand of gelatin dessert. *Kleenex* was the trade name for Kimberly-Clark’s facial tissue. These trade names came to mean the products themselves. So, even today, what you call your *aspirin* might be

manufactured by Johnson & Johnson, your *jell-o* by Royal Foods, and your *kleenex* by Scott Paper. Also, *Google*, mentioned earlier, used as a noun can refer to any Internet search engine, and used as a verb it can refer to doing an Internet search. The same is true of the word *Mapquest*.

There are additional processes by which words are formed. However, this listing should give you a good feel for the numerous ways new words enter a language. This openness makes language a flexible tool. Without openness, it would be hard to imagine how human culture could exist.

Exercise 5 Word openness

1. Find ten additional examples of words formed by each of the processes described in this chapter.

-
-
-
-
2. Examine each of these foreign words and try to determine what English word was formed from them. Take a guess and then check your guess in [Appendix B](#).

- a. squunck
- b. taifung
- c. sonare

3. There are thousands of acronyms used in English, and acronym formation is one of the most productive processes generating new words. Why do you think acronyms are so popular?

4. What do the following words have in common: *knockout*, *weekend*, *supermarket*, *jeep*, *nylon*, and *Ford* (the car)?

5. *Swindle* came into the English language as a back-formation from *swindler*. Explain this process, using *swindle/swindler* as your example.

6. In the discussion of the use of proper names to form new words, we said that it was common to label plants, animals, inventions, places, and activities in this way. What other things are commonly named for people?

7. List five acronyms that express the sentiment or represent a characteristic of a group of people.

The meaning of words can change

In Middle English, spoken between about 1100 and 1500 CE,⁵ the word *butcher* meant one who slaughters goats. In modern English, this word has been generalized (broadened) to mean “one who slaughters and/or prepares any type of meat.” At one time, the word *girl* meant a young person of either sex. The meaning of *girl* has become more specific (narrowed), and now is used to label a young human female. The meaning of some words has totally changed. The word *silly* used to mean happy; however, its meaning has degenerated (become negative instead of positive). The word *nice* used to mean ignorant; however, its meaning has been elevated (become positive instead of negative). In some English varieties, the word *bad* can mean good. This represents a reversal in meaning.

Etymology is the study of the history of words.

The study of the history of words is called **etymology**. An etymology dictionary lists words and gives their history. Below is an entry from an online etymology dictionary.

accomplish —c. 1380, from O.Fr. *acompliss-*, stem of *acomplir* “to fulfill,” from V.L. *accomplere*, from L. *ad-* “to” + *complere* “fill up.” (see *complete*.) *Accomplished* “fully versed” is 16c.⁶

This entry gives the history of the word *accomplish*. It says that the first use of the word was about (c. means *circa* or about) 1380 CE. It was taken from Old French elements, which in turn came from Vulgar Latin (V.L.), the everyday Latin of Rome. This word has a relatively simple history. Many words have gone through numerous transformations over time in both form and meaning. We will return to this topic in [Chapter 14](#).

Exercise 6 Etymology

1. Words are not only formed anew, but existing words also change in meaning. Words can become more generalized, more specialized, take on negative connotations (degenerate), take on positive connotations (elevate), or reverse in meaning. Consult an etymological dictionary

and determine what types of changes have occurred to the words listed below.

Example: *ghetto* is from the Italian word *ghetto*, which was the name of the Jewish area of ancient Venice (originally *getto*). There are different ideas on its pre-Italian origin. One of those is that it comes from the Yiddish word *get*, meaning a divorce or “deed of separation” (see www.etymonline.com for other information). Another possible origin is from Hebrew (see Matityahu Clark, *Etymological Dictionary of Biblical Hebrew*, New York: Feldheim, 1999, 36). It has been generalized to mean the area of a city in which the population is predominantly one minority group (most often African American).

royalty _____

wife _____

bird

potluck

testimony

crude

knave

hussy

liquor

botulism

pleasant

pen

queen

2. Using an etymological dictionary, give a detailed history of the changes that have taken place in three of the words listed in Part 1 of this exercise.

Lexical categories (parts of speech)

There are several ways to classify words. Traditionally, English teachers divide words into eight parts of speech or lexical categories. However, the eight parts of speech

are arbitrary categories that are not relevant to many languages or do not adequately represent the lexical differences of morphological units found in many languages. Although there are problems with this system (see Ben Yagoda's book on the subject, which is listed under "Suggested reading"), it is a good jumping-off point to introduce students to the primary functions of words within sentences. [Table 4-1](#) summarizes the traditional parts of speech and adds the lexical category determiner, which is not one of the traditional categories. (A more detailed discussion of dividing words into word types can be found at: www.polysyllabic.com/?q=book/export/html/56.)

TABLE 4-1 Lexical categories

Noun (N) Nouns are the names of persons, places, attitudes, ideas, things, qualities, or conditions. They can be used as the subject of sentences, the object of the verb, or the object of a preposition. In English they can occur after articles <i>a</i>, <i>an</i>, and <i>the</i>. Many can be inflected to show number (-s) or to show possession (-'s).		
Subtypes	Examples	
Proper nouns	Named person, place, activity, idea, or thing	<i>John Smith, California, Pico Boulevard</i>
Common nouns	Unlike proper nouns, these refer to a class of persons, ideas, or things.	<i>man, state, street</i>
Common nouns can further be classified in the categories below.		
Concrete noun	tangible object	<i>cow, tree, noise</i>



Abstract noun	intangible thing, idea, concept	<i>love, liberty, admiration</i>
Count nouns	can be pluralized, can be modified by a numeral, and can have certain relevant determiners before it such as <i>each</i> and <i>several</i>	<i>dog, car, house</i>
Mass nouns	refer to substances of which any quantity is not differentiable and generally cannot be pluralized	<i>butter, water, flour, gravel</i>
Collective nouns	refers to a group of things	<i>mob, flock, herd</i>
Pronouns (Pro) Subtypes	Pronouns replace a noun or another pronoun	Examples
Indefinite	no specific reference	<i>any, anybody, anyone, all, each, everyone, everybody, either, neither, none, no one, some, someone, etc.</i>
Reflexive	object pronouns that refer back to the subject	<i>myself, yourself, himself, herself, itself, ourselves, yourselves, themselves</i>
Intensive	used for emphasis and have same form as reflexive pronouns	'I <i>myself</i> helped <i>myself</i> to dinner.' The first <i>myself</i> is intensive and second is reflexive.
Personal	refers to a specific person or thing	<i>I, you, she, he, it, we, you, they, me, him, us, them, mine, yours, hers, his, its, theirs, ours</i>
Demonstrative	indicates which one (of a group of items) is being referred to	<i>this, that, these, those</i>
Interrogative	used to ask a question	<i>who, whom, which, what</i>
Relative	links one phrase or clause to another phrase or clause	<i>who, whom, which, whoever, whomever, whichever, whatever</i>
The students, <i>who</i> attended all of		



the classes, did well on the test.		
Adjective (Adj)	Adjectives modify a noun or pronoun; they identify a characteristic or a quality of a noun or pronoun. In English, they occur before the noun or after verbs like <i>is</i>. They can be inflected for degrees such as comparative (<i>faster</i>) and superlative (<i>fastest</i>). Traditionally, English teachers place adjectives into two categories: descriptive and limiting. As we will see, linguists usually do it a little differently.	
	Subtypes	Examples
	Descriptive	qualifies or modifies a noun or pronoun <i>good, happy, wonderful, ugly</i>
	Limiting (also called articles)	Linguists place articles into the next category discussed below called determiners. They will be described in that category.
Determiner (Det)	The lexical category determiner is not one of the traditional parts of speech. Generally, what linguists call determiners are called adjectives by English teachers. There are differences between 'common adjectives' and determiners; determiners cannot take the comparative ending <i>-er</i> as in <i>faster</i>, or the superlative ending <i>-est</i> as in <i>fastest</i>. Linguists use the category determiner for words (or affixes) that specify something about a noun.	
	Subtypes	Examples
	Articles	The indefinite articles (<i>a, an</i>) indicate that the noun they refer to has not been identified previously; the definite article (<i>the</i>) refers to a previously referred to noun. See Chapter 6 for more discussion of this concept. <i>a, an, the</i>
	Demonstrative pronouns	<i>this, that, these, those</i>
	Qualifiers	<i>all, three, many, and some</i>
Verbs (V) Verbs express an action, an occurrence, a condition, or a state of being. They can be a single word or a		



group of words and, in English, they can be inflected for tense, person, number, voice, and aspect.		
Subtypes	Examples	
	Transitive	takes an object Bruce <i>built</i> a house.
	Intransitive	does not require a direct object Diane <i>retired</i> .
	Ditransitive	It takes more than one object, i.e., a direct object and an indirect object. Netta <i>gave</i> Kassem a present.
	Linking or copulative verbs	They cannot form a complete assertion (predication) by themselves and do not take a direct object. They link the subject to a noun (predicate noun) or an adjective (predicate adjective). My mother <i>is</i> an artist. He <i>remains</i> a good person. That pie <i>smells</i> good. (Other linking verbs are <i>be, become, look, appear</i> , and verbs of the senses such as <i>taste, feel</i> , and <i>sound</i> .)
	Auxiliary verbs	Also simply called auxiliaries, or helping verbs, there are several subtypes of auxiliary verbs. Some are used to form various tenses. Jamie <i>is working</i> very hard.
		Modals are auxiliary verbs that express mood or attitude. <i>may, can, should, must</i>
		Auxiliaries may also express the duration of an action, state, or event. I <i>have</i> always helped him.
		Auxiliaries are also used to express voice (see Chapter 5) He <i>was missed</i> .
	Phrasal verbs	They are compound verbs; a base verb is combined with a particle and/or a preposition. He <i>stood by</i> his statement. (prepositional phrase verb)



She <i>brought</i> that <i>up</i> again. (particle phrase verb 'up' is the particle) Can you <i>put up</i> with this behavior? (particle 'prepositional phrase verb)		
Adverb (Adv)	Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives, or other adverbs. Like adjectives, certain adverbs can have positive, comparative, and superlative degree (<i>fast, faster, fastest</i>).	
Subtypes	Examples	
Manner adverb	<i>carefully, helpfully, noisily, well</i>	
Time adverb	<i>today, tomorrow, yesterday, soon, now, later</i>	
Place adverb	<i>here, inside, there, somewhere</i>	
Frequency adverb	<i>often, usually, sometimes, absolutely, rarely, never</i>	
Direction adverb	<i>away, towards, forward</i>	
Degree adverb	<i>absolutely, rarely, never</i>	
Preposition (Prep)	Prepositions usually introduce a phrase that ends in a noun or pronoun (called the object of the preposition). They show a relationship between the object and another word or words in the sentence.	
Subtypes	Examples	
Normal word order	used in declarative sentences	Jack went to the store <i>for</i> Sue.
Modified word order	used in <i>wh</i> -question formation	Who did Jack go to the store <i>for</i> ?
Single word prepositions	<i>for, on, up, about, at, below, by, in</i>	
Complex prepositions	<i>according to, because of, in front of, on account of, instead of</i>	
Conjunction (Conj)	Conjunctions connect words or groups of words.	
Subtypes	Examples	
Coordinating conjunctions	connect equal elements	<i>and, or, nor, but, for, and, so</i> It is Bill <i>and</i> Mary's savings account.
Correlative conjunctions	connect equal elements, but occur in pairs	<i>either . . . or, neither . . . nor, etc.</i> Either I will have to go to the store, or you will have to go.

Subordinating conjunctions	connect unequal elements; for example, a dependent and independent clause	<i>Because</i> you didn't study, you flunked the test.
Interjection (Interj)	Interjections are not a vital part of the sentence grammatically. They can be removed and not alter the grammatical structure of the sentence. They are used to express feelings.	
		Examples
		<i>Oh</i> , do you really mean that? <i>well, goodness sakes, heavens, good heavens</i> , many swear words, etc.

(Note: A word's lexical category depends on its function in a sentence. So, a word such as round can function as any one of six lexical categories. See <http://dictionary.reference.com/browse/round>.) Also, note that this table is not meant to be a comprehensive list of all subtypes of the main lexical categories, and that there are alternative ways of dividing these main lexical categories into their subtypes as well as other variations in defining and categorizing word types.

Exercise 7 Lexical categories

1. Determine the lexical category of the underlined words as well as the subtype of the lexical category.

Example: Honesty is the best policy.

a b

a. abstract noun b. descriptive adjective

A. Some of the boats sank.

a b

a. _____ b. _____

B. Some people never learn.

a b

a. _____ b. _____

C. According to Steve, the road ends one mile down the highway.

a b c

a. _____ b. _____

c. _____

D. The boxer won that round.

a b

a. _____ b. _____

E. The round house looked strange.

a b

a. _____ b. _____

F. He rounded the piece of wood.

a b

a. _____ b. _____

G. The piece of wood will become round.

a

a. _____

H. He turned round.

a

a. _____

I. He went round the river.

a

a. _____

J. The crowd became noisy, and the police surrounded them.

a b c

a. _____ b. _____

c. _____

K. Who said that you could appoint yourself?

a b c d

a. _____ b. _____

c. _____ d. _____

L. That speech would touch anyone who heard it.

a b

a. _____ b. _____

M. Jack will either go to the party or stay home.

a b c

a. _____ b. _____

c. _____

N. Oh no, the guests are already arriving.

a b

a. _____ b. _____

O. The sand at the beach is contaminated.

a b c

a. _____ b. _____

c. _____

2. Examine the uses of the word round in D through I. What can be concluded from these examples?

Summary

Morphology is the study of the rules governing the internal structure of words and the interrelationships that

exist among words. The basic unit of morphology is the morpheme, of which there are two main types, bound and free. Bound morphemes can be derivational or inflectional. Derivational morphemes, when added to a word, change the meaning or part of speech of the word. Inflectional morphemes serve grammatical functions, such as changing a singular noun to a plural.

Languages can be classified on the basis of how they use morphemes. In analytic languages, words are single morphemes. In synthetic languages, bound morphemes are attached to root morphemes to change meaning or mark grammatical function.

Three kinds of synthetic language types were discussed: inflectional, agglutinating, and polysynthetic. In reality, most languages mix the typological principles to various degrees.

Morphemes may have different phonemic shapes. The phonemic shape that is used depends on the sound characteristics of the morphemes being combined. Because both morphology and phonology are involved in these subconscious decisions, the study of them is called morphophonemics.

New words are constantly entering languages. The processes of compounding, blending, acronym formation, foreign word borrowing, clipping, derivation, back-formation, using proper names, and using trade names are

some of the more common ways that new words are formed.

Words can be divided into types and subtypes depending on their meaning, how they function in a sentence, how they are inflected, and other criteria. One system of doing this, dividing words into the lexical categories, is described in [Table 4-1](#).

¹Aspect indicates whether an action is complete or not, continuous, a one-time action, ongoing, etc. Aspect and tense are distinctive linguistic concepts. See [Chapter 8](#) for more on aspect.

²Nancy Bonvillian, *Language, Culture, and Communication*, 4th ed. (Upper Saddle River, NJ: Prentice Hall, 2003), 21.

³John T. Elkholy and Francine Hallcom, *A Teacher's Guide to Linguistics* (Dubuque, IA: Kendall Hunt Publishing, 2005), 4, 120.

⁴See https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/List_of_scandals_with_%22-gate%22_suffix for an extensive list of the use of *-gate*.

⁵CE, an abbreviation for Common Era, is used in place of AD; and BCE, an abbreviation for Before the Common Era, is used in place of BC.

⁶From www.etymonline.com.

Suggested reading

- Aronoff, M., and Kirsten Fudeman, *What Is Morphology?*, 2nd ed., Malden, MA: Wiley-Blackwell, 2011.
- Barnhart, Robert K., and Sol Steinmetz, eds., *Chambers Dictionary of Etymology*, Edinburgh: Chambers, 1999.
- Bauer, L., *Introducing Linguistic Morphology*, 2nd ed., Washington, DC: Georgetown University Press, 2004.
- Coates, Richard, *Word Structure*, London: Routledge, 2000.
- Crystal, David, *Words, Words, Words*, New York: Oxford University Press, 2007.
- Haspelmath, M. and Andrea D. Sims, *Understanding Morphology*, 2nd ed., Oxford: Routledge, 2010.
- Lieber, R., *Introducing Morphology*, 2nd ed., Cambridge: Cambridge University Press, 2016.
- Yagoda, Ben, *When You Catch an Adjective, Kill It: The Parts of Speech, for Better and/or Worse*, New York: Broadway Books, 2007.

Websites

Cambridge Dictionary: <http://dictionary.cambridge.org>.

This is an online dictionary that also gives the meaning of idioms.

Dictionary.com: <http://dictionary.reference.com>. This is an online dictionary and thesaurus, with other reference resources.

Morphology: <http://link.springer.com/journal/11525>.

This is a journal on morphology.

Online Etymology Dictionary www.etymonline.com.

This site provides an online etymology dictionary.

Oxford Dictionaries: www.askoxford.com. This is an online dictionary that also features word games and sections on global English, the world of words, and word origins.

Wordsmith: <http://wordsmith.org>. This site sends its subscribers a word a day with interesting definitions and trivia about the word's origin.

Review of terms and concepts: morphology

1. The meaningful units of language are called _____.

2. The unit /k/ in *cat* is a _____.
3. How many morphemes are in the word *schäöl-houses*? _____
4. In *schoolhouses*, *school* is a _____;
house is a _____; and *-s* is a _____.
5. Derivational morphemes can serve two functions.
What are they? _____
6. What do inflectional morphemes do?

7. There are _____ inflectional morphemes in English.
8. English would be characterized as a highly inflected language. This statement is _____ (true or false).
9. Variations of a morpheme are called _____.
10. Different allomorphs are used for strictly stylistic reasons. This statement is _____ (true or false).
11. To say that an affix is productive means that _____.
12. Are pronouns an open or closed class of words?

13. Based on morphological typology, what are the two general types of language? _____ and _____
14. What are the names of the three types of synthetic language and how do they differ from each other?

15. What are the nine ways, mentioned in the text, of forming new words and how do they differ from each other?

16. What are the lexical categories listed in the text?
Give a definition of each.

End-of-chapter exercises

1. *The* and *an* are called articles. Each has two common allomorphic forms. What are these forms and how are they distributed? Is there any rela-

tionship between the allomorphs and how they are spelled?

2. The following data are from Cebuano, a Philippine language. How is the name of a language derived from the name of an ethnic group? ⁷

1a. [bisaya]	"a Visayan"	b. [binisaya]	"the Visayan language"
2a. [inɿlis]	"an Englishman"	b. [ininɿlis]	"the English language"
3a. [tagalog]	"a Tagalog person"	b. [tinagalog]	"the Tagalog language"
4a. [ilokano]	"an Ilocano"	b. [inilokano]	"the Ilocano language"
5a. [sibwano]	"a Cebuano"	b. [sinibwano]	"the Cebuano language"



3. What process was used to create each of the following words?

a. photo _____

b. remake _____

c. scuba _____

d. blackbird _____

e. radar _____

f. pizza _____

g. Pyrex _____

h. sideburns _____

i. sculpt _____

j. coke _____

k. mishap _____



4. In the following sentences, identify the lexical category and subtype of each lettered word.

a. The boy went to the market.

A B C D E F

b. He will not be able to go to the party next year.

G H I J K L M N O P Q R

c. Several friends of mine like this book.

S

T

U



d. Several of my friends like this.

V

W

X



²Maria Victoria R. Bunye and Elsa Paula Yap, *Cebuano Grammar Notes* (Honolulu: University of Hawaii Press, 1971).