

The Study of Language

Fourth edition

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human life (its function), and also that you are ready to ask the kinds of questions that professional linguists ask when they conduct their research.

This revised edition is designed to make your learning task easier and more interesting:

- Topics are split into manageable subtopics.
- Learning is active with Study Questions at the end of each chapter, as a way for you to check that you have understood some of the main points or important terms introduced in that chapter. They should be answered without too much difficulty, but to support you a set of suggested answers is available in the Study Guide online.
- Tasks at the end of chapters give you an opportunity to explore related concepts and types of analysis that go beyond the material presented in the chapter. The online Study Guide again supports your learning with analysis, suggested answers and resources for all these tasks. The Discussion Topics and Projects found at the end of each topic provide an opportunity for you to consider some of the larger issues in the study of language, to think about some of the controversies that arise with certain topics and to try to focus your own opinions on different language-related issues.
- To help you find out more about the issues covered in this book, each chapter ends with a set of Further Readings that lead you to more detailed treatments than are possible in this introduction.

Origins of this book

This book can be traced back to introductory courses on language taught at the University of Edinburgh, the University of Minnesota and Louisiana State University, and to the suggestions and criticisms of hundreds of students who forced me to present what I had to say in a way they could understand. An early version of the written material was developed for Independent Study students at the University of Minnesota. Later versions have had the benefit of expert advice from a lot of teachers working with diverse groups in different situations. I am particularly indebted to Professor Hugh Buckingham, Louisiana State University, for sharing his expertise and enthusiasm over many years as a colleague and friend.

For help in creating the first and second editions, I would like to acknowledge my debt to Gill Brown, Keith Brown, Penny Carter, Feride Erkü, Diana Fritz, Kathleen Houlihan, Tom McArthur, Jim Miller, Rocky Miranda, Eric Nelson, Sandra Pinkerton, Rich Reardon, Gerald Sanders, Elaine Tarone and Michele Trufant.

For feedback and advice in the preparation of the third and fourth editions, I would like to thank Jean Aitchison (University of Oxford), Linda Blanton (University of New

Glottals

There is one sound that is produced without the active use of the tongue and other parts of the mouth. It is the sound [h] which occurs at the beginning of *have* and *house* and, for most speakers, as the first sound in *who* and *whose*. This sound is usually described as a voiceless **glottal**. The “glottis” is the space between the vocal folds in the larynx. When the glottis is open, as in the production of other voiceless sounds, and there is no manipulation of the air passing out of the mouth, the sound produced is that represented by [h].

Charting consonant sounds

Having described in some detail the place of articulation of English consonant sounds, we can summarize the basic information in the accompanying chart. Along the top of the chart are the different labels for places of articulation and, under each, the labels –V (= voiceless) and +V (= voiced). Also included in this chart, on the left-hand side, is a set of terms used to describe manner of articulation which we will discuss in the following section.

	Bilabial		Labiodental		Dental		Alveolar		Palatal		Velar		Glottal	
	–V	+V	–V	+V	–V	+V	–V	+V	–V	+V	–V	+V	–V	+V
Stops	p	b					t	d			k	g		
Fricatives			f	v	θ	ð	s	z	ʃ	ʒ			h	
Affricates									tʃ	dʒ				
Nasals		m						n				ŋ		
Liquids							l	r						
Glides		w								j				

Figure 3.2

Limitations of the chart

This chart is far from complete. It contains the majority of consonant sounds used in the basic description of English pronunciation. There are, however, several differences between this basic set of symbols and the much more comprehensive chart produced by the International Phonetic Association (IPA). The most obvious difference is in the range of sounds covered.

We would go to an IPA chart for a description of the sounds of all languages. It includes, for example, symbols for the velar fricative sound you may have heard in the German pronunciation of the “ch” part of *Bach* or *Achtung*. It also includes sounds made with the

Noun +	-’s, -s
Verb +	-s, -ing, -ed, -en
Adjective +	-er, -est

There is some variation in the form of these inflectional morphemes. For example, the possessive sometimes appears as -s’ (*those boys’ bags*) and the past participle as -ed (*they have finished*).

Morphological description

The difference between derivational and inflectional morphemes is worth emphasizing. An inflectional morpheme never changes the grammatical category of a word. For example, both *old* and *older* are adjectives. The -er inflection here (from Old English -ra) simply creates a different version of the adjective. However, a derivational morpheme can change the grammatical category of a word. The verb *teach* becomes the noun *teacher* if we add the derivational morpheme -er (from Old English -ere). So, the suffix -er in Modern English can be an inflectional morpheme as part of an adjective and also a distinct derivational morpheme as part of a noun. Just because they look the same (-er) doesn’t mean they do the same kind of work.

Whenever there is a derivational suffix and an inflectional suffix attached to the same word, they always appear in that order. First the derivational (-er) is attached to *teach*, then the inflectional (-s) is added to produce *teachers*.

Armed with all these terms for different types of morphemes, we can now take most sentences of English apart and list all the “elements.” For example, in the sentence *The child’s wildness shocked the teachers*, we can identify eleven morphemes.

<i>The</i>	<i>child</i>	-’s	<i>wild</i>	-ness	<i>shock</i>
functional	lexical	inflectional	lexical	derivational	lexical
-ed	<i>the</i>	<i>teach</i>	-er	-s	
inflectional	functional	lexical	derivational	inflectional	

A useful way to remember all these different types of morphemes is in the following chart.

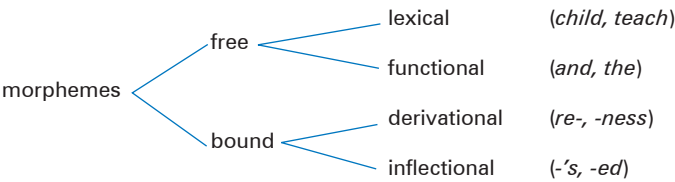


Figure 6.1

7 Grammar

Dear Ann Landers,

My husband recently ran for public office. He went to the local radio station to record an ad to be read on the air. The copy was written by someone at the station.

One of the sentences was, "Me and my family will be moving to this town." When I heard it on the air, I was shocked. My husband said, "that's the way they wrote it. It didn't sound right to me, either."

I immediately went to the station and challenged them. They said, "You are wrong." We then telephoned a graduate of Northwestern University who was an English major. He said it could be either "I" or "me."

Am I an ignoramus? I was taught to diagram sentences when in doubt. It comes out, "Me will be moving." Does this sound like correct English to you? Please settle it.

Feeling Like a Fool.

Quoted in Lakoff (1990)

We have already considered two levels of description used in the study of language. We have described linguistic expressions as sequences of sounds that can be represented in the phonetic alphabet and described in terms of their features.

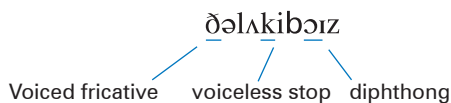


Figure 7.1