

Block

# 3

**WORD FORMATION STRATEGIES**

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## **BLOCK INTRODUCTION**

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### **Block 3 “Word Formation Strategies”**

You might have sometimes noticed that a word which you take for granted and assume you know its meaning, turns out on closer scrutiny, to be quite complicated. Our attempt in this block is to help you understand something about the internal structure of the English word.

We will begin by discussing the basic concepts in English word patterns (Unit 1). After that we shall take up some of the processes of word formation in English i.e. inflectional morphology of English relating to different parts of speech – nouns, pronouns, adjective and adverbs (unit 2 and 3). We will also deal with derivational morphology, conversion and compounding (unit 4).

It is advisable to take a break after each unit. We hope you understand how words are formed.

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# UNIT 1 WORD PATTERNS

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## Structure

- 1.0 Objectives
- 1.1 Introduction – The World of Words
- 1.2 Origins of Words in English
  - 1.2.1 Word Loans
- 1.3 Recognising the Relationship between Words in English
  - 1.3.1 Comparing Words with other Words – ‘Field of Words’.
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  - 1.5.1 Affixing
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- 1.6 Let us Sum Up
- 1.7 Key words
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## 1.0 OBJECTIVES

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In this unit we shall consider briefly historical and sociological sources that have contributed to the ever increasing vocabulary of English. We shall pay special attention to factors within English, that is, structural processes involved in the formation of new words from existing ones, and comparison of words in terms of their meaning which help us recognize the relationship between words and their patterning. After completing this unit you should be able to :

- Recognize some ways in which a language expands its vocabulary
- Recognize and understand the nature of the relationship between English words
- Recognize that word patterns enable us to build a vocabulary
- Recognize that it is this relatedness that makes teaching and learning more meaningful
- Use the dictionary to look for other words related to the words in a text.

## 1.1 INTRODUCTION: THE WORLD OF WORDS

The world of words in any language is fascinating. When we talk of the expanding vocabulary of a language, we generally refer to words that form the meaning - base of that language. In other words, we refer to content words which carry meaning. That they are in fact important for meaning becomes clear when we observe children learning their first language. They begin by using one-word or two-word sentences (which comprise only content words) to communicate with adults, and are nearly always successful in conveying the message they wish to convey. Gradually, they begin to notice that the thousands of words in their language form patterns. They and in fact all adults find it easier to learn new words in sets or groups where all the words in the set are related to each other in some way. They may be related because they have a similar meaning or because they have the opposite meaning. In English the words *oblivion* and *forgetfulness* have a similar meaning and are called synonyms, the words *hot* and *cold* have the opposite meaning and are called antonyms. Another way that words can be compared as belonging to the same field is that they may have related senses. In other words, one word may be included in another. For example, the Hindi words लाल, पीला, हरा etc. are related to the field of colour or रंग. Similarly, rose, jasmine, marigold, tulip are related to the field of flowers.

This relationship is known as hyponymy. Thus rose is a hyponym of flower, snake is a hyponym of reptile. It is this relatedness of words that helps us build up a vocabulary.

Now, when we come across all these related words we wonder where they came from or what the origin of these words is in a language. One of the ways of looking at the origin of words is to trace their history and find out how long ago they existed and what changes have taken place in their meaning. A source of the growing vocabulary of a language is the other languages it comes into contact with over a long period of time. Thus a large number of Indian languages have borrowed words from Sanskrit, which they have been in contact with for centuries. The Urdu language has a considerable number of words borrowed from Arabic and Persian. English has a large number of words of German, French and Latin origin.

While the history of a language and words borrowed from other languages that it comes into contact with are important external sources of its growing vocabulary, the main source, which is internal to a language, is the strategy of word-building which allows us to build new words out of old ones.

In this Unit we shall look briefly at the extremely interesting world of words in English with reference to external and internal sources of its ever increasing vocabulary.

## 1.2 ORIGINS OF WORDS IN ENGLISH

As we have said, the history of a language and its contact with other languages are an important external source of its increasing vocabulary. If we wish to know where words come from we trace the history of those words, and go as far back in history as possible to their origin and trace changes in their meaning over the

years. The origin and history of a particular word is known as the etymology of that word: if you wish to know the etymology of an English word you must consult Shorter Oxford English Dictionary or any other dictionary that includes the etymology of words. Let us see what the origin of the English word nice is as given in the Oxford Dictionary. The word came into English from the old French word nice, which meant ‘silly’ or ‘simple’. That had its origins in the Latin word niscuis meaning ignorant from the verb nescire which means ne-> not plus scire -> know.

In Middle English (13th century) the word was an adjective and meant ‘foolish’, ‘stupid’, ‘senseless’. In late middle English (14th -15th centuries) it meant ‘strange’, ‘rare’, ‘extraordinary’; it also meant ‘hard to please’, ‘of refined or critical taste’. In the late 16th century it meant ‘entering minutely into details’, ‘attentive’, ‘close’. It began to be used in the very general sense as a word of approval only in the 18th century. It meant agreeable, or pleasant, or satisfactory, delightful, generally commendable; (of food) tasty appetizing, (of a person) kind, considerate, friendly. Today **nice** is used as a word of approval very often, and for such a wide range of things that in formal English we would prefer to replace it with a more discriminating word. Thus in place of ‘nice’ food we would rather use ‘tasty’ or ‘delicious’, or in place of ‘a nice’ person we would use other words which would describe a person more accurately, such as ‘friendly’ ‘kind’ ‘generous’ ‘considerate’ etc. The meaning the word ‘nice’ has today is very different from its meaning many centuries ago. While tracing the history of the word ‘nice’ we realize that it had a very different meaning in the languages of its origin, that is, Latin and then old French from which the English word was derived. After the word came into English its meaning evolved over the centuries and finally acquired the meaning it has today.

### 1.2.1 Word-loans

As we have said above, the origin of ‘nice’ and other English words is an indication of how English acquired a rich vocabulary. This happened as a result of the large number of words borrowed\* over the many periods of its history. How has this enriched the English language you might ask? It is because of extensive borrowing of words that it is now possible to make distinctions of meaning that would not have been possible before. David Crystal in his book Words, Words, Words gives examples of words in triplets. He says that of the triplet of adjectives: kingly, royal and regal, the first is Germanic, the second French and the third Latin. He gives examples of ten doublets and triplets in English: alternatives of Germanic, French and Latin origin which have enriched the stylistic range of the language:

| Germanic | French    | Latin                |
|----------|-----------|----------------------|
| ask      | question  | interrogate (verb)   |
| fast     | firm      | secure (adj.)        |
| fire     | flame     | conflagration (noun) |
| holy     | sacred    | consecrated          |
| rest     | remainder | residue              |
| climb    | ascend    |                      |

\* Here this word does not mean ‘received with the intension of returning it’, it means ‘taken and made part of the ‘borrowing language’.

|           |           |
|-----------|-----------|
| weariness | lassitude |
| clothes   | attire    |
| sorrow    | distress  |
| wish      | desire    |

Besides borrowing words from Germanic, French and Latin, English has been borrowing words from any language it comes into contact with. According to Crystal, English has borrowed words from over 350 languages around the world. Most of these borrowings have been in the language for centuries as a result of the first periods of contact, so we no longer have a sense of their foreign-ness. For example, city and flower are from French, desk and client are from Latin. It is difficult to think of million (Italian) mattress (Arabic), marmalade (Portuguese), and Rhubarb (Greek) as foreign.

However, it is by no means the case that English has stopped borrowing from languages it comes into contact with. Words from Indian and other Asian and African languages are now included in the Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary (7th and 8th editions), for example, chapatti, sari, salwar, kameez, kajal from Hindi, samosa, kabab from Urdu, kaizen (business) from Japanese, kamikaze (suicidal) from Japanese, samfu (a light suit worn by women) from Chinese, idli from South Indian languages, kanzu (a long loose piece of outer clothing worn by men) from East Africa.

If we look through the dictionary we find many more words of foreign origin which are now part of the English language.

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### 1.3 RECOGNISING THE RELATIONSHIP BETWEEN WORDS IN ENGLISH

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While etymology, a specialized field of study, gives us fascinating insights into the origins of words and their history, recognizing the relationship between clusters of words belonging to the same field helps us learn the vocabulary of a language. How do we build up 'fields of words'?

#### 1.3.1 Comparing Words with Other Words – 'Field of Words'

When we come across an English word for the first time we look up the meaning in the dictionary and then look for other words that are related in some way to that word. For example, when we come across word aerial (attacks) which means 'attacks from a plane', we think of other words that are connected with 'air' and are therefore partially related to 'aerial', for example, the words aeroplane, aerogramme, aerospace, aerodynamics, aeronautics etc. This cluster of related words belongs to a field of words.

##### 1.3.1.1 Contrast in Meaning

Another way in which we compare words with other words is when we explain one word by contrasting it with another. Thus we explain the word thin by saying it means not fat, or the word hot by saying it means not cold, or the word light by saying it means not heavy. It is this contrast in meaning that helps us learn more words. So we have thin-fat, hot-cold, light-heavy, smooth-rough and so on. Such pairs of words are called opposites or **antonyms**.

### 1.3.1.2 Similarity in Meaning

We also compare words by looking at the similarity in meaning of two or more words. So when we compare words we say that one word is the same as another. For example, 'to scold' is to 'chide', 'calamity' means the same as 'disaster', the word 'civil' is similar in meaning to the word 'courteous', the word 'happy' means the same as 'glad'. As we said earlier, such words are called synonyms.

### 1.3.1.3 Words with Related Senses

Yet another way we compare words is by saying that one word is included in another. We gather together all the words that have related senses, so in the field of flowers, for instance, we have marigold, rose, lily, jasmine and so on. Now in order to say what colours these flowers are we have to refer to the field of colour in which there is red, yellow, maroon, orange, white and several other colours. This relationship between a word and the field it belongs to is one of **hyponymy**. Thus marigold is a hyponym of flower. Though hyponymy is not a very well known word, it is in fact a much more important way of comparing words than 'synonym' and 'antonym'. In the dictionary the definition/meaning of words relies on hyponymy most of the time. For example, marigold is defined as 'an orange or yellow garden flower'; sitar is defined as 'a musical instrument' from South Asia like a guitar, with a long neck and two sets of metal strings'.

Thus we can compare words with other words either in terms of contrastive meaning or similarity in meaning or related senses.

In addition to their meaning words can be compared with other words according to their pronunciation, that is, the sounds they have. We shall consider these briefly.

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## 1.4 WORDS AND THEIR SOUNDS

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### 1.4.1 Rhyming Words

The sounds in words often helps us compare them with other words that are similar sounding. For example, given the word late we look for words that sound like it, and we find that the following words sound the same, though they have different meanings.

|      |          |      |
|------|----------|------|
| late | skate    | mate |
| date | slate    | rate |
| fate | spate    |      |
| gate | state    |      |
| hate | straight |      |

We look for words sounding like came and we have

|      |       |
|------|-------|
| dame | same  |
| fame | tame  |
| game | blame |
| lame | claim |

Grouping words according to their sound patterns is a useful way of adding to one's stocks of words in English. Rhyming words are a useful tool to teach young learners English sound patterns, and help them build new words that rhyme with those given in the poems they learn. For example, in the stanza

Of all the flying birds I know

The most provoking is the crow

No man does he respect at all

No being either great or small

We compare other similar sounding words with know and crow and we get low, row, blow, flow, no, mow, grow, slow, snow, stow, toe, doe, foe, go, hoe, sew, show. Similarly, other words that rhyme with all and small are ball, call, fall, gall, hall, mall, pall, tall, wall, stall, sprawl, scrawl, brawl, crawl.

All these words have different meanings so we may need to look them up in the dictionary. Thus sound patterns can add to the stock of words we already know.

### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Look at the following words and use the dictionary to write down at least one word that has a meaning similar to each.
 

|                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| i) alarming        | vii) intelligent |
| ii) agree          | viii) brutal     |
| iii) answer (noun) | ix) elated       |
| iv) baffle         | x) fragile       |
| v) calm            | xi) smooth       |
| vi) centre         |                  |
- 2) Look at the following words and write down at least two words that have the opposite meaning in each case.
 

|               |              |
|---------------|--------------|
| i) forgive    | vi) honest   |
| ii) angry     | vii) infect  |
| iii) grateful | viii) insane |
| iv) difficult | ix) joy      |
| v) hate       | x) kind      |
- 3) Of the semantic fields given below select two fields you know well, and write down as many words belonging to this field as you can think of. Use the dictionary to help you.
 

|               |              |                          |
|---------------|--------------|--------------------------|
| i) flowers    | ii) fruit    | iii) musical instruments |
| iv) transport | v) furniture | vi) dance                |
|               |              | vii) dress               |

## 1.5 WORD BUILDING PROCESSES

### 1.5.1 Affixing

We have seen that an important part of the English vocabulary is comprised of words taken from Latin, German, French and several other languages owing to contact with people speaking these languages over a long period of time. But they are far outnumbered by words that are built up by the addition of parts to already existing words. For every basic word form or root we can build up several words. Let us first look at some base forms of Hindi words and see how related words have been built up to increase the vocabulary of the language.

- i) (ghar) (ghareloo) (gharana) (gharonda)  
house homely family nest
- ii) (vyakti) (vyaktitv) (vyaktigat)  
person personality personal

Notice that in (i) the second, third and fourth words are related to the first word which means 'house'. Similarly, the second and third words in (ii) are related to the first (vyakti) which means 'person'. In both cases the first word is the base word and the other words in the sets are words that have been formed by adding or affixing an additional element to the base word.

In English too we can recognize the several related words that are built up from one basic word form.

Let us look at the word nation as the root and the words built by adding elements at the end, that is, suffixes

- i) nation, national, nationalism, nationalize, nationalization
- ii) it can be built by adding elements at the beginning, that is **prefixes** – denationalize.

Similarly, we can add suffixes to the root word 'democrat' and we get democratic, democracy, democratization, or we can add a prefix as in undemocratic. Let us consider these processes in detail.

### 1.5.2 Prefixing

Each language has different ways of forming new words out of existing ones.

Look at one of the ways in which Hindi forms new words out of existing ones.

- i) (sambhav) (a)sambhav  
meaning: possible impossible
- ii) (bhagya) (durbhagya)  
meaning: luck/fortune ill-luck
- iii) (uchit) (un)uchit  
meaning: appropriate inappropriate
- iv) (aasha) (niraasha)  
meaning: hope despair

Notice that in each case though the second word is related to the first word in some way it means exactly the opposite of the first word, and adds to the existing vocabulary. Similarly, Telugu makes use of elements at the beginning of words to make new words which have a different meaning. For example,

- |     |                 |                      |
|-----|-----------------|----------------------|
| i)  | (satyamu)       | ( <u>a</u> satyamu)  |
|     | meaning: truth  | untruth              |
| ii) | (dharmamu)      | ( <u>a</u> dharmamu) |
|     | meaning: dharma | absence of dharma    |

Tamil, on the other hand, does not use any elements at the beginning of existing words to form new words.

English like Hindi and Telugu forms new words by adding an element at the beginning of words. The element, which is a prefix, is used to express a change in meaning of the base word.

Look at the following pairs of words for example.

- |    |               |            |
|----|---------------|------------|
|    | (a)           | (b)        |
| I) | i) theist     | atheist    |
|    | ii) obey      | disobey    |
|    | iii) complete | incomplete |
|    | iv) wise      | unwise     |
|    | v) legal      | illegal    |
|    | vi) relevant  | irrelevant |
|    | vii) mobile   | immobile   |

The prefixes added to the words in column (b) are a-, dis-, in-, un-, il-, ir-, im-

With the addition of these prefixes the words in column (b) acquire the opposite meaning of the words in column (a). They express negation, i.e., 'not'. Thus 'theist' means one who believes in God and 'atheist' means 'one who does not believe in God'. Similarly, disobey means 'not to obey' and 'incomplete' means 'not complete' and so on.

II) Look at the change in meaning the following prefixes bring about.

- |      |         |                    |
|------|---------|--------------------|
|      | (a)     | (b)                |
| i)   | frost   | <u>d</u> efrost    |
| ii)  | connect | <u>d</u> isconnect |
| iii) | do      | <u>u</u> ndo       |

These prefixes express reversal of direction. Thus we 'defrost' a refrigerator so that it is free of frost. We 'disconnect' something that is connected, and we 'undo' what we did.

Notice that the prefix dis- can be used to negate and also to express reversal of action as in disapprove where it expresses negation and disconnect in which it expresses reversal of action.

III) Here are some more prefixes. They express the meaning that something is of little value. In other words, they express disparagement.

- | (a)               | (b)                |
|-------------------|--------------------|
| i) function       | malfunction        |
| ii) lead          | mislead            |
| iii) intellectual | pseudointellectual |

IV) Look at the following prefixes, which express number

- | (a)         | (b)                |
|-------------|--------------------|
| i) cycle    | bicycle            |
| ii) rail    | monorail           |
| iii) racial | bi or multi racial |
| iv) technic | polytechnic        |
| v) oxide    | dioxide            |
| vi) circle  | semicircle         |

In these bi- means 'two', mono- means 'one', multi- means 'many', poly- means 'several', semi- means 'half' or part.

We have seen how some common prefixes when added to the beginning of base forms of English words express different meanings.

### Check Your Progress 2

a) Change each of the following words by adding a suitable prefix to express negation.

- |               |              |                 |                  |
|---------------|--------------|-----------------|------------------|
| i) real       | ii) modest   | iii) logical    | iv) agree        |
| v) accurate   | vi) literate | vii) reversible | viii) reasonable |
| ix) honest    | x) relevant  | xi) possible    | xii) effective   |
| xiii) approve | xiv) believe |                 |                  |

b) Change each of the following words by adding a suitable prefix to express reversal of direction

- |            |               |             |                |
|------------|---------------|-------------|----------------|
| i) fraud   | ii) infect    | iii) mask   | iv) fold       |
| v) dress   | vi) continue  | vii) engage | viii) entangle |
| ix) embark | x) centralize | xi) hydrate |                |

c) Change each of the following words by adding a suitable prefix to express disparagement.

- |              |               |                 |                  |
|--------------|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| i) practice  | ii) represent | iii) adjustment | iv) intellectual |
| v) pronounce | vi) science   | vii) manage     | viii) content    |
| ix) treat    |               |                 |                  |

- d) Change each of the following words by adding a suitable prefix to express number.
- |               |              |                  |             |
|---------------|--------------|------------------|-------------|
| i) lateral    | ii) final    | iii) cycle       | iv) purpose |
| v) angle      | vi) cultural | vii) millionaire | viii) media |
| ix) automatic |              |                  |             |

### 1.5.3 Suffixing

As we said earlier, we can also build up words by adding elements to them at the end. Elements added to the ends of words to bring about a change in them and at the same time enlarge the vocabulary are called **suffixes**.

Look at the following sets of English words for example.

- i) photograph – photography – photographic
- ii) nation – national – nationality – nationalize
- iii) create – creation – creativity
- iv) false – falsify – falsification
- v) beauty – beautify – beautification

Notice that the first word in each case expands with the addition of an element to the end of it. Unlike prefixes, which bring about a change in the meaning of an English word, suffixes do more than alter the meaning of the word to which they are attached. Many of them also change the word's grammatical status. For example, the –ify ending changes the adjective 'false' into the verb 'falsify', and the noun 'beauty' into the verb 'beautify'. In this they differ from prefixes which rarely bring about a change in the grammatical status of words.

Let us look at how suffixes function in some Indian languages.

In Tamil

- |    |                                |                  |
|----|--------------------------------|------------------|
| 1) | (padi)                         | (padippi)        |
|    | <u>meaning</u> : read (v)      | learning         |
| 2) | (madi)                         | (madippi)        |
|    | <u>meaning</u> : respect (v)   | respect (n.)     |
| 3) | (avi)                          | (aviyal)         |
|    | <u>meaning</u> : boil/cook (v) | cooked vegetable |

Notice that in Tamil, the addition of suffixes to words results in a change of meaning as well as a change in the part of speech, that is, a change from a verb to a noun. Look at a few examples of suffixes in Hindi.

- |    |                         |            |
|----|-------------------------|------------|
| 1) | (namra)                 | (namrata)  |
|    | <u>meaning</u> : gentle | gentleness |
| 2) | (nirmal)                | (nirmalta) |
|    | <u>meaning</u> : pure   | purity     |
| 3) | (ooncha)                | (oonchai)  |
|    | <u>meaning</u> : high   | height     |

4) (paagal) (paagalpan)

Word Patterns

meaning: mad

madness

Just as in the case of English, the suffixes in Hindi above bring about a change in the part of speech of a word (from adjective to noun), but do not bring about a major change in the meaning of these words.

Some of the commonly occurring suffixes in English are –ion, -ian, -ial, -ness, -able, -ery, -ity, -ess, -ment, -ling, -ish, -al.

### Check Your Progress 3

From the list of suffixes above, add a suitable suffix to the following English words to form new words. Consult the dictionary for the spelling of the new words.

- |                  |              |                |               |
|------------------|--------------|----------------|---------------|
| i) music         | ii) educate  | iii) grammar   | iv) establish |
| v) responsible   | vi) organize | vii) suit      | viii) duck    |
| ix) prince       | x) sentiment | xi) proverb    | xii) decide   |
| xiii) experiment | xiv) child   | xv) scholar    | xvi) fellow   |
| xvii) divert     | xviii) slave | xix) intellect | xx) govern    |
| xxi) able        | xxii) gentle | xxiii) kind    | xxiv) lion    |
| xxv) snob        |              |                |               |

### 1.5.4 Compounding

We shall now look at another way in which new words are formed in English using already existing words. Look at the following words for example:

Everything, everybody, hailstorm, earthquake, weekend, railway, windmill, snowfall, rainfall, blackbird, motorcycle, videotape, photocopy, darkroom, sunrise, widespread

In each of these words we recognize two distinct words each of which has a distinct meaning of its own. These two words are combined to form new words with a new and sometimes special meaning. Though these parts appear to be two words on the surface, they in fact function as a single item. The word blackbird for example, is a combination of black and bird, but it does not mean any bird that is black. It is a special bird found in Europe and America. Similarly, the word darkroom is a combination of dark and room but it does not mean any room that is dark. It means a special room where photographic film is processed.

Words that combine in this way in any language to form new words (with a meaning that is different from that of the two as separate words) are known as compound words.

Can you think of compound words in your language? Here are a few examples of compound words in Hindi to help you think of compound words in your language.

Hindi: 1) (aakashvani) 2) (doorbhash) 3) (sachivalaya) 4) (doordarshan)

meaning: radio

telephone

secretariat

television

Notice that in Hindi each compound word is made up of two words but its meaning is not the sum of their separate meanings. For example, aakashvani does not mean sky-speech but stands for radio.

Write down a list of compound words in your first language, look at the meaning of each of the two words that make each compound and then at its 'new' meaning. In later units we shall examine compound words in English in greater detail.

#### Check Your Progress 4

Read the following passage carefully and underline the compound words.

Owing to the heavy downpour at the weekend, everyone was forced to stay indoors and either watch television or play indoor games. Some preferred scrabble to watching television, while others played cards. For some others, solving puzzles on the blackboard was a favourite pastime on rainy days.

### 1.5.5 Conversion

Words form patterns in a language in yet another way. Look at the following sentences:

- 1a) A **beggar** stood outside the door.
- 1b) The scene of the sunset **beggared** description.
- 2a) I want to buy a **carpet** for my room.
- 2b) I want my room **carpeted**.

You will notice that the words **beggar** in 1a and **carpet** in 2a are used as nouns. The same words are used as verbs in 1b and 2b respectively. The important thing to note is that the base form of the word does not undergo any change, i.e. no suffix or prefix is added to convert the noun into a verb (or the verb into a noun, depending on which way the conversion is). There can be no doubt there is a process of word-creation involved here. In fact one which is quite popular in English. The process creates a new lexical word, with sufficiently different meaning to merit a separate entry in the dictionary.

Now look at the following pairs of words:

- |             |          |             |            |          |              |
|-------------|----------|-------------|------------|----------|--------------|
| 1) practice | practise | 2) to swim  | a swim     | 3) dirty | to dirty     |
| advice      | advise   | to hit      | a hit      | empty    | to empty     |
| relief      | relieve  | to cheat    | a cheat    | dry      | to dry       |
| food        | feed     | to bore     | a bore     | calm     | to calm down |
| shelf       | shelve   | to show-off | a show-off |          |              |

What are the changes that take place in the second word of each pair in the three sets? Notice that in the first set, the spelling of the second word of each pair is different from that of the first word. Use your dictionary to find out the grammatical function of each of the pairs of words in each set.

When words change their grammatical function from noun to verb or verb to noun or adjective to verb without the addition of an affix (as in the sets of words above), the process by which they are related is called conversion.

In the following units we shall consider these word building processes in English in greater detail.

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## 1.6 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit we have learnt that

- The vocabulary of most languages is enriched by means of an important external source, that is, borrowing from languages they come into contact with over a long period of time.
- We recognize the relationship between clusters of words in terms of their meaning. We look at words with opposite meaning –antonyms and words which means the same –synonyms.
- We recognize the relation between words which have related senses as belonging to the same field. They are called hyponyms.
- We recognize the relationship between words in terms of their sounds, that is, rhyming words.
- We also recognize the relationship between words and their patterning in terms of structural processes languages use to form new words from already existing ones.
- These processes may be different for different languages
- English has a number of processes to form new words from old ones.
- New words can be formed by adding an element to the end of a word. This is called a suffix.
- New words can be formed by adding an element to the beginning of a word. This is called a prefix.
- New words can also be formed by combining two separate words each having a meaning of its own. The new word formed by this process has a new and sometimes special meaning. These words are called compound words.
- Words also form patterns in English by the process of conversion. According to this process a word belonging to one part of speech is used as a word belonging to another part of speech. Thus verbs and adjectives are commonly used as nouns and nouns and adjectives are used as verbs.

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## 1.7 KEY WORDS

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**Synonyms:** words with the same meaning

**Antonyms:** words with opposite meaning

**Hyponyms:** words which have related senses and belong to the same field.

**Rhyming words:** words that sound alike

**Element:** a part of a word which has no meaning on its own but acquires a meaning when attached to a word either at the beginning or at the end to form a new word.

**Compound word:** a word formed by combining two or more smaller words

**Conversion:** the process by which a word belonging to one part of speech is used as a word belonging to another part of speech

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## 1.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Crystal. D., (2006/2007). *Words Words Words*. OUP (2006/2007)

Crystal. D., (1995) *The Cambridge Encyclopedia Of The English Language* CUP. 1995/96

Hornby A S (1948/2010) 8th edition, *Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary of Current English*

Trumble W R Stevenson Angus (eds.) 2002 (Fifth edition) *Shorter Oxford English Dictionary OUP Volume 2* (Fifth Ed.) 2001

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## 1.9 ANSWERS

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### Check Your Progress 1

- 1)
  - i) appalling, shocking
  - ii) concur, assent
  - iii) reply, response
  - iv) confuse, puzzle
  - v) composed, cool, unruffled
  - vi) core, middle, heart
  - vii) clever, bright
  - viii) cruel, heartless, pitiless
  - ix) delighted, overjoyed
  - x) delicate, frail
  - xi) flat, even
- 2)
  - i) charge, blame, censure
  - ii) serene, calm
  - iii) thankless, unappreciative, ungrateful
  - iv) easy, simple
  - v) love, like, admire
  - vi) dishonest, deceitful, insincere
  - vii) purify, disinfect
  - viii) rational, sane, sensible
  - ix) grief, misery, sorrow
  - x) unkind, cruel, severe
- 3) Do it yourself.

## Check Your Progress 2

## Word Patterns

- a)
- i) unreal
  - ii) immodest
  - iii) illogical
  - iv) disagree
  - v) inaccurate
  - vi) illiterate
  - vii) irreversible
  - viii) unreasonable
  - ix) dishonest
  - x) irrelevant
  - xi) impossible
  - xii) ineffective
  - xiii) disapprove
  - xiv) disbelieve
- b)
- i) defraud
  - ii) disinfect
  - iii) unmask
  - iv) unfold
  - v) undress
  - vi) discontinue
  - vii) disengage
  - viii) disentangle
  - ix) disembark
  - x) decentralize
  - xi) dehydrate
- c)
- i) malpractice
  - ii) misrepresent
  - iii) maladjustment
  - iv) pseudointellectual
  - v) mispronounce
  - vi) pseudoscience
  - vii) mismanage
  - viii) malcontent
  - ix) maltreat

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- d) i) unilateral, bilateral, multilateral
- ii) semifinal
- iii) bicycle, tricycle
- iv) multipurpose
- v) triangle
- vi) multicultural
- vii) multimillionaire
- viii) multimedia
- ix) semiautomatic

**Check Your Progress 3**

- i) musical, musician
- ii) education, educational
- iii) grammarian, grammatical
- iv) establishment
- v) responsibility
- vi) organization
- vii) suitable, suitability
- viii) duckling
- ix) princess
- x) sentimental
- xi) proverbial
- xii) decision, decisive
- xiii) experimental
- xiv) childish, childlike
- xv) scholarly, scholarship
- xvi) fellowship
- xvii) diversion, diversionary
- xviii) slavery, slavish
- xix) intellectual
- xx) governor, government
- xxi) ability
- xxii) gentleness
- xxiii) kindness, kindly
- xxiv) lioness
- xxv) snobbery, snobbish

### Check Your Progress 4

### Word Patterns

Owing to the heavy downpour at the weekend, everyone was forced to stay indoors and either watch television or play indoor games. Some preferred scrabble to watching television, while others played cards. For some others, solving puzzles on the blackboard was a favourite pastime on rainy days.



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## UNIT 2 INFLECTIONAL MORPHOLOGY OF ENGLISH-I

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### Structure

- 2.0 Objectives
- 2.1 Introduction
- 2.2 Identifying the Smaller Elements in a Word
- 2.3 What is a Morpheme?
  - 2.3.1 Free and Bound Morphemes
  - 2.3.2 Affixes and Roots
- 2.4 Different types of Affixes: Inflectional and Derivational
- 2.5 Inflectional Affixes
  - 2.5.1 Inflectional Morphology of the English Noun
    - 2.5.1.1 Morphology of the Count Noun
    - 2.5.1.2 Morphology of the Mass Noun
  - 2.5.2 Inflectional Morphology of the English Pronoun
  - 2.5.3 Inflectional Morphology of the English Adjective
- 2.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 2.7 Key Words
- 2.8 Suggested Readings
- 2.9 Answers

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### 2.0 OBJECTIVES

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At the end of this unit you should be able to:

- identify morphemes
- identify prefixes, suffixes and roots
- add prefixes/suffixes to form new words
- distinguish between inflectional and derivational suffixes
- distinguish between proper, count and mass nouns in terms of the kinds of inflections they take
- distinguish between regular and irregular nouns
- identify pronouns and adjectives
- recognize the various grammatical categories associated with pronouns
- see how case, person, gender and number contrasts are expressed by the different pronoun forms
- recognize the grammatical category of degree associated with adjectives and
- recognize the different ways – regular and irregular – in which words performing the function of adjectives express degree contrasts

## 2.1 INTRODUCTION

In Unit 1 we looked at ways in which languages build their stock of words with special reference to English. Languages borrow words from other languages they come into contact with over a long period of time. The borrowed words become part of the languages that borrows them and sometimes the meaning changes entirely over the years. In addition, words form patterns in terms of their meaning, or in terms of related senses, or in terms of their sounds.

We saw that an important part of the English vocabulary is comprised of words borrowed from Latin German and French and as many as 350 languages. But these words in the English vocabulary are far outnumbered by words that are built up by the addition of elements or parts to already existing words, so that with every basic word form we can build up several words by adding elements either at the beginning (prefixing) or at the end (suffixing). Whereas prefixes affect the meanings of words, suffixes bring about a change in the structure and function of words but not a major change in meaning. Other ways in which new words are formed are compounding and conversion.

This kind of study, of word-building by means of processes that affect the internal structure of words in a language is called **morphology**.

When we refer to units in a language, such as sentences, clauses and phrases we find that they are made up of different elements that are related to each other. A sentence, for example is made up of clauses, a clause is made up of phrases and phrases are made up of words. Similarly, words too have elements of which they are made up. It is these structural elements or parts of words that we shall consider in detail in this and the following units.

## 2.2 IDENTIFYING THE SMALLER ELEMENTS IN A WORD

In the previous Unit we assumed that smaller elements that are attached to words exist. We assumed that these elements are prefixes and suffixes. Let us now see how we identify these smaller units in a word.

There are four criteria that can help us identify the smaller elements that form the structure of a word.

- a) If a word is made up of two or more smaller words, each smaller word constitutes a structural element of the word. For example, in the Hindi words दूरदर्शन and आकाशवाणी are made up of two smaller words each:

दूर + दर्शन and आकाश + वाणी

In English the words 'something' and 'everyone' are made up of some+thing and every+one

- b) We can divide a word into two or more parts, if the parts are such that they can also occur in other words. For example, in Hindi we have the यॉ in चाबियाँ occurring in the words कुर्सियाँ, रोटियाँ, लडकियाँ. Thus we have:

चाबी – चाबियाँ

रोटी – रोटियाँ

कुर्सी – कुर्सियाँ

लडकी – लडकियाँ

Similarly, in English the **–s** of **parents** also occurs in **colours** also occurs in **brothers, sisters, tables, chairs, pillars** and the **–er** of **younger** also occurs in words like **sweeter, taller, longer, older** and so on. There are, however, other words that also end in **–er** such as **brother, sister, master, filter, barber** etc.

How do we know that the **–er** of **younger, taller** etc. is not the same as the **–er** of **brother, sister** etc? We cannot consider **–er** as a structural part of a word simply because it is similar to a similar portion of another word. For example, we cannot say that the portion **–er** of **brother** is a structural element of **brother** simply because **–er** also occurs in other words like **sweeter** and **taller**. It is important for us to make sure that when we divide a word into parts, the parts must be such that they also occur elsewhere. For example, if we isolate the **–er** of **sweeter, taller, longer**, etc. we are left with the elements **sweet, tall, long** which occur not only as independent words but also as parts of other words like **sweetest, tallest, longest**. On the other hand, if we isolate the **–er** of **sister, master, filter**, we are left with the portions **sist, mast, filt**, which do not occur anywhere else. Therefore, the **–er** in **younger** is different than **er** in **sister**.

- c) A third consideration when we are identifying the parts that form the structure of a word is that of meaning. In isolating the element **–er** in **longer, taller, older**, we are guided by the fact that these words share a common element of meaning, that is the comparative element, the element which is also expressed in some words by ‘more’ (as in more beautiful).

Similarly, while dividing the word **sisters** into the parts **sister** and **–s** we are aware that the element **–s** carries the meaning ‘plural’ or more than one. This is why we consider the **–s** occurring in **masters, boys, girls, barbers**, different from the **–s** occurring in **helps, gives, gets, occurs**, etc. Thus the **–s** in **sisters** expresses plurality while **–s** in **helps** expresses third person singular verb.

- d) The fourth consideration that helps us identify a portion of a word as being its structural part is the grammatical function. For example, the **–s** of **shares** in the sentence ‘Radha shares her lunch with her classmates every day’ is added to the word **share** when it occurs with the third person and singular number of the subject **Radha**. Thus the grammatical function that this element **–s** performs is agreement with the third person singular form of the subject. This grammatical description enables us to identify the **–s** as a separate element in all verbs of this kind. Similarly, the element **–d** can be isolated as a separate element in all past tense verbs performing the function of past tense formation.

## Check Your Progress 1

1) Say whether the highlighted portion in each of the following words can be called a smaller structural element.

- |                      |                        |                       |
|----------------------|------------------------|-----------------------|
| i) <b>background</b> | viii) <b>homework</b>  | xv) happens           |
| ii) <b>finger</b>    | ix) cartoons           | xvi) <b>valuable</b>  |
| iii) <b>director</b> | x) <b>indefinite</b>   | xvii) <b>filter</b>   |
| iv) <b>partner</b>   | xi) <b>collection</b>  | xviii) <b>colour</b>  |
| v) <b>brighten</b>   | xii) <b>influence</b>  | xix) <b>breakfast</b> |
| vi) <b>collar</b>    | xiii) <b>important</b> | xx) <b>endless</b>    |
| vii) <b>compared</b> | xiv) <b>arm chair</b>  |                       |

2) Which of the criteria above would you apply to differentiate between each of the following sets of words which have –s as a structural part?

- | a) | (i)     | (ii)     |
|----|---------|----------|
|    | cells   | breathes |
|    | bells   | coughs   |
|    | cards   | goes     |
|    | pillows | sends    |
|    | temples | feels    |
|    | days    | writes   |
|    | deeds   | reads    |

3) i) which one of the two sets of words each in (a) and (b) has a smaller structural element?

ii) why do you think the other set of words cannot be said to have a structural part?

Use the ‘criteria’ above to help you.

- | a) | (i)             | (ii)            | (b) | (i)             | (ii)            |
|----|-----------------|-----------------|-----|-----------------|-----------------|
|    | <b>sister</b>   | <b>fatter</b>   |     | <b>fittest</b>  | <b>detest</b>   |
|    | <b>daughter</b> | <b>greater</b>  |     | <b>shortest</b> | <b>protest</b>  |
|    | <b>brother</b>  | <b>brighter</b> |     | <b>lightest</b> | <b>interest</b> |
|    | <b>fever</b>    | <b>longer</b>   |     | <b>thinnest</b> | <b>contest</b>  |
|    | <b>letter</b>   | <b>higher</b>   |     | <b>loudest</b>  | <b>infest</b>   |
|    | <b>crater</b>   | <b>stronger</b> |     | <b>easiest</b>  | <b>suggest</b>  |
|    | <b>lather</b>   | <b>fewer</b>    |     | <b>deepest</b>  | <b>invest</b>   |

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## 2.3 WHAT IS A MORPHEME?

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We have so far been referring to the constituents of a word as part, structural part, element etc. The technical term used for a ‘structural part’ of a word is **morpheme**. A morpheme is the smallest grammatically relevant unit, or the

smallest meaningful element of a language. Being the smallest unit it cannot be divided any further.

However, a morpheme does not always refer to a part of a word. For example, we can say that the word **students** has two morphemes **student** and **–s**. As a grammatical unit or as a unit of meaning **–s** is not actually a morpheme but ‘represents’ a morpheme. The morpheme it represents is the grammatical unit ‘plural number’. It is important to make this distinction between a morpheme and its representation because in morphology we generally refer to words and their parts in their spoken form and in English the spelling does not always represent the spoken form accurately.

Let’s look at the following sets of words, for example.

|          |          |           |
|----------|----------|-----------|
| 1) carts | 2) cards | 3) horses |
| bricks   | clubs    | houses    |
| stumps   | rings    | prizes    |
| berths   | figs     | brushes   |
| cuffs    | brooms   | churches  |
|          | bells    | judges    |
|          | sons     |           |
|          | radios   |           |

All these sets have two features in common. Can you identify them? Well, all of them have two morphemes and all of them have the plural element which has been formed by the addition of **–s** or **–es**. But the plural element is pronounced in three different ways. In the first set it is pronounced *s* as in *sea*, in the second it is pronounced *z* as in *zoo* and in the third it is pronounced *iz* as in *his*. Which one of these shall we call the plural morpheme – *s*, *z* or *iz*? We can solve this problem by regarding these three forms (*s*, *z* and *iz*) as the realization of the plural morpheme.

Sometimes the plural morpheme is neither realized as *s* or *es* in spelling nor is it pronounced *s*, *z* or *iz*.

Look at the following words for example.

|    | Singular | Plural |
|----|----------|--------|
| 1) | deer     | deer   |
|    | sheep    | sheep  |
| 2) | man      | men    |
|    | woman    | women  |
|    | mouse    | mice   |

In set 1 there is no change in the word in the plural number and in set 2 there is a change in the vowel or vowels in the plural form of the words. This change in the vowel/s brings about a change in the pronunciation of these plural forms. Thus for the reasons given above it is important to make a distinction between a morpheme and its representations.

### 2.3.1 Free and Bound Morphemes

In Unit One we have already seen how new words are formed either by adding elements to the base word at the beginning (prefixes) e.g. **il-** in **illegal** or at the end (suffixes) e.g. **-ful** in **beautiful**, or by combining two separate words as in **someone** (some+one)

Morphemes that can occur by themselves as words e.g. **some** and **one** in **someone** are called free morphemes. Morphemes that cannot occur by themselves as words and must be attached to a free morpheme, e.g. **dis-** in **displease** or **-ful** in **beautiful** are called **bound** morphemes.

### 2.3.2 Affixes and Roots

Free morphemes are thus what we call base words.

To these, bound morphemes are attached to form new words. These bound morphemes function as affixes, that is, prefixes and suffixes in the structure of a word.

Let us look at the structure of the following words:

|                 |   |                |
|-----------------|---|----------------|
| disobey: dis-   | : | bound morpheme |
| -obey           | : | free morpheme  |
| impatient: im-  | : | bound morpheme |
| -patient        | : | free morpheme  |
| unbearable: un- | : | bound morpheme |
| -bear           | : | free morpheme  |
| -able           | : | bound morpheme |
| planted: plant- | : | free morpheme  |
| -ed             | : | bound morpheme |

Notice that all the words have a free morpheme and one or more than one bound morphemes. The single free morpheme from which the word grows is called the **root**. For example, in the word **unsuitable**, **suit** is the root from which the word grows to **suitable** when the suffix **-able** is added to it and to **unsuitable** when the prefix **-un** is added to **suitable**. Similarly, in the word **impossible**, **possible** is the root, in **disobey**, **obey** is the root, in **wanted**, **want** is the root and in **brushes**, **brush** is the root. If a word consists of two or more free morphemes it is called a **compound root**. For example, in the word **aircraft**, **air** and **craft** are two free morphemes which make **aircraft** a compound root. Similarly, **eyesight** is a compound root as it has two free morphemes **eye** and **sight**, and the three free morphemes **table**, **spoon** and **ful**, make up the compound root **tablespoonful**.

#### Check your Progress 2

- 1) Write down the morphemes which each of the following words have. For example, the word unavoidable has three morphemes un+avoid+able.

- |               |                 |                  |
|---------------|-----------------|------------------|
| i) flasks     | vi) possibility | xi) photographer |
| ii) bridges   | vii) headmaster | xii) uphill      |
| iii) hygienic | viii) inside    | xiii) whatever   |

- |               |                |               |
|---------------|----------------|---------------|
| iv) careless  | ix) faithfully | xiv) yourself |
| v) collection | x) unemployed  | xv) waterfall |

- 2) Identify the root, the prefixes and the suffixes in each of the following words. For this follow the example given below.

Example: **irregularity**: root: **regular**

prefix: **ir-**

suffix: **-ity**

- |                   |                       |
|-------------------|-----------------------|
| i) competitive    | vii) grammarian       |
| ii) organization  | viii) disregarded     |
| iii) immeasurable | ix) ineligibility     |
| iv) irregularity  | x) illegitimacy       |
| v) uneducated     | xi) victorious        |
| vi) impossibility | xii) misappropriation |

- 3) Look at the following pairs of words. State whether the morphemes, represented by the highlighted portions in each pair belong to the same morpheme or different morphemes.

For example, **-er** in the words **writer** and **brighter** belongs to different morphemes

- |                         |                            |
|-------------------------|----------------------------|
| i) writes; bites        | vi) cashier; healthier     |
| ii) gently; gentlemanly | vii) enlist; enrage        |
| iii) speaker; greater   | viii) illogical; illegible |
| iv) sews; crews         | ix) striped; lived         |
| v) happily, silently    | x) mismanage; mistrust     |

- 4) Add a prefix to each of the following roots to make new words.

- |               |               |
|---------------|---------------|
| i) happy      | vi) correct   |
| ii) finite    | vii) colour   |
| iii) practice | viii) patient |
| iv) relevant  | ix) comfort   |
| v) fortune    | x) familiar   |

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## 2.4 DIFFERENT TYPES OF AFFIXES: INFLECTIONAL AND DERIVATIONAL

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In the previous section we saw how new words can be formed in English by adding affixes to the root. We also saw that affixes can either be prefixed or suffixed to the root. In this section we shall examine two main types of affixes.

In our discussion of the criteria for finding out whether an element is a structural element or a morpheme, two very important criteria were **meaning** and **grammatical** function. For example, the criterion of meaning applies when each

part of a word carries a distinct meaning. Thus **un-** in **unhappy**, or when added to other words has a negative meaning; **dis-** 'prefixed' to words as in **dis+pleasure** also has a negative meaning. These types of words are known as **lexical affixes**. The criterion of grammatical function applies when an affix is added to a word in accordance with a rule of grammar. Thus in the word **schools**, **-s** is added to the noun **school** to indicate plural number. The suffix **-s** in the word **goes** in **He goes to school at 8'o clock** performs the grammatical function of indicating the third person singular present tense form of the verb **go**.

Let us look at differences between the two types of affixes in English, that is, those that affect meaning and those that primarily affect grammatical function.

#### Set 1 (Lexical Affixes)

- a) please, displease, displeasure
- b) act, active, inactive
- c) avoid, avoidable, unavoidable
- d) modest, immodest
- e) write, rewrite
- f) legal, illegal

#### Set 2 (Inflectional Affixes)

- clever, cleverer, cleverest
- walk, walks, walked
- window, windows
- Ratna, Ratna's

Can you see at least one major difference between the two sets?

You must have noticed that while in Set 1 prefixes as well as suffixes have been added to the root, in Set 2 only suffixes have been added. Secondly, these suffixes occur only on the right-most edge of a word. Thirdly, you will have noticed that while in set 2 the part of speech does not change with the addition of the inflectional suffix (e.g. walk, walks, walked). In Set 1 the addition of a prefix or suffix may or may not change the part of speech. For example, in the words in (a), (b), (c) the part of speech does change but in the words in (d), (e) and (f) the part of the speech does not change – **write** and **rewrite** are both verbs, **modest** and **immodest** are both adjectives, **legal** and **illegal** are both adjectives.

The distinction between these two types of affixes is an important one. Grammatical affixes that is, of the set 2 type are known as **inflectional affixes**. **Lexical affixes** are known as **derivational affixes**.

The study of inflectional affixes is called **inflectional morphology** and the study of lexical affixes is called **derivational morphology**. In the two sections that follow, we shall study the inflectional morphology of English.

### Check Your Progress 3

- 1) a) Say whether the addition of an affix changes the part of speech in each of the following sets of words. Use your dictionary to help you.
  - i) coloured                      discoloured
  - ii) commend                      commendable
  - iii) credible                      credibility
  - iv) cartoon                      cartoonist
  - v) rational                      rationalize

|              |            |
|--------------|------------|
| vi) stud     | studded    |
| vii) woman   | womanhood  |
| viii) sly    | slyly      |
| ix) literate | illiterate |
| x) run       | running    |
| xi) ornament | ornamental |
| xii) scholar | scholastic |
| xiii) match  | mismatch   |
| xiv) tremble | trembled   |
| xv) infect   | disinfect  |

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## 2.5 INFLECTIONAL AFFIXES

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We have already seen that the study of Inflectional Affixes is called inflectional morphology. We have also seen that inflectional affixes can be added only to the right most edge of words. No other suffixes can be added to a word after an inflectional suffix has been added. Inflectional suffixes do not change the part of speech of the word to which they are added, but indicate grammatical relationships. We shall, in this and the following sections study inflectional morphology.

To study inflectional morphology we need to first divide words according to their grammatical functions, that is, the different parts of speech. The major parts of speech are nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Each major part of speech has a number of categories that are associated with it. For example, nouns are associated with number (singular and plural) and case (nominative, etc.).

Let us consider the inflectional morphology of the English Noun.

### 2.5.1 Inflectional Morphology of the English Noun

Let us look at nouns in English. In the sentence **Kavita has gone to Mumbai** the first word **Kavita** is the name of a girl, and the word **Mumbai** is the name of a place. As you know, we call these **Proper Nouns**. In a sentence like, **Radha has bought these tables and chairs**, the words **tables** and **chairs** are also nouns. They are names of a class of objects and things, and are known as **Common Nouns**.

Common nouns can be divided further into **count** and **mass**. **Count nouns** are those common nouns which denote objects which can be counted, and which can therefore occur with numbers like one or two, ten, twenty, etc. for example, chair, mango, egg, orange, etc. are count nouns. **Mass Nouns** are nouns which denote objects that cannot be counted and therefore cannot occur with numbers e.g. sugar, milk, water, coffee, honey, advice, peace, honour, etc. The distinction between proper, count and mass nouns is important for us to understand the morphology of these nouns.

#### 2.5.1.1 Morphology of the Count Noun

##### a) Regular Plurals

Most Count Nouns express the number contrast by taking an inflectional suffix (-s and -es) for the plural. This is the **regular** plural form. The plural form can be recognized easily from the noun. Thus **cats**, **dogs**, **bushes**, **bags**, **tables** are the plural forms of **cat**, **dog**, **bush**, **bag** and **table** respectively.

Notice that these and many English count nouns form their plurals by taking an inflectional suffix. In **spelling** this suffix takes the following forms.

- i) -s after most nouns ending in a consonant letter e.g. **cart+s**, **shop+s**, **fan+s**, etc.
- ii) -es if the noun ends in -s, -z, x or ch or -sh e.g. **classes**, **buzzes**, **foxes**, **batches**, **brushes**
- iii) -s if the noun ends in -o e.g. **ratios**, **zoos**. Some nouns ending in -o are exceptions to this rule and take **es** e.g. **potatoes**, **heroes**.
- iv) -es which is accompanied by a change from y to i in nouns ending in -y e.g. **city-cities**, **fly-flies**.

As we said in the units on the sounds of English, the pronunciation of the plural suffix differs depending on the consonant sound the nouns have in the final position in words.

## b) Irregular Plural

- i) There are nouns that have an irregular plural form. They do not take an affix to express the contrast between singular and plural forms, but do it through some other change in the word. For example, **mouse-mice**, **louse-lice**, **man-men**, **foot-feet**, **goose-geese**, **tooth-teeth**. Notice that there is a change in the vowel sound in the plural form of the noun.
- ii) There are other count nouns that form their plurals in another manner. Look at the following words for example:

knife – knives

thief – thieves

In the plural of these words, notice that in addition to the regular plural suffix the final consonant sound has also changed. The f in the first of the two pairs of words changes to v as in **voice**.

However, there are a number of count nouns ending in f, the plural form of which does not bring about a change in the final consonant. They are quite regular in forming their plural. For example, the word **chief** and **cliff** have the plural forms **chiefs** and **cliffs** respectively.

- iii) There are other count nouns that effect changes of another sort to form plurals, e.g., **child-children**, **brother-brethren**. In these words -en is affixed to the plural form and the vowels in the singular forms of the words also undergo a change. The suffix -en as a regular plural form occurs only in the plural form of **ox** -oxen.
- iv) Nouns that do not change their form for plural are also irregular. There are only a few in this category. They are (1) names of animals: **sheep**, **deer** (2) names of nationalities: **Chinese**, **Japanese**, **Swiss** and (3) nouns

denoting quantities: **dozen, hundred, thousand, million**. For example we say **two dozen, three hundred** NOT **two dozens** apples or **three thousands** people.

### c) The Case Contrast

In count nouns there are two categories that are expressed: **possessive** and **non-possessive**. There are no inflections for the **nominative** and **objective** cases. To indicate the possessive case we add the suffix **-s**, and we use an apostrophe between the final consonant and the **-s** to indicate the singular and possessive form, as in **the farmer's field, the child's toys, the doll's house** etc. The plural and possessive forms of count nouns are mostly alike, the only difference being an apostrophe in writing in the case of the possessive form e.g. **boys – boys' hostel**.

In the case of singular count nouns with irregular plurals, however, there is a distinction. Thus we have **wives** (plural) and **wife's** (possessive) **thieves** (plural) and **thief's** (possessive). Plural count nouns that are irregular such as **men, children** take the regular possessive suffix **'s**, while the regular plural count nouns such as **girls, cats** do not have a separate **s** added to them for the possessive form. In writing only the apostrophe is added, thus we have **girls – girls', cats – cats'**.

**It is important to note that not all count nouns take the possessive form freely. Generally, nouns that denote persons, or living beings take the possessive affix.** Other nouns express the relationship thus:

The officer's car but the tyres of the car.

The girl's dress but the colour of her dress.

#### 2.5.1.2 Morphology of the Mass Noun

Mass nouns, for example, **advice, furniture, happiness** inflect neither for number nor for case. This means that the things that the mass nouns denote are treated as uncountable. We do not add the plural suffix to the noun. We do not say **furnitures** but articles or items of **furniture**. Similarly, **we do not speak of advices** but pieces or words of **advice**.

For the possessive case, also mass nouns do not take inflection. For example, we do not say **power's love** but **the love of power**. We do not say **courage's man** but **a man of courage**.

#### Check Your Progress 4

It would be a good idea to use your dictionary for these tasks.

- 1) Against each of the words given below mention whether it is a mass noun or a count noun.
 

|                |             |
|----------------|-------------|
| i) tea         | vii) flour  |
| ii) sugar      | viii) year  |
| iii) knowledge | ix) root    |
| iv) wealth     | x) water    |
| v) woman       | xi) picture |

- vi) colour                      xii) flower
- 2) Give plural forms of the following nouns.
- i) loaf                          vii) tomato
- ii) house                      viii) spy
- iii) booth                      ix) lens
- iv) bridge                      x) kernel
- v) berth                        xi) deer
- vi) diary                        xii) calf
- 3) Say whether each of the following words can take the plural form or not.
- i) news                        vi) honesty
- ii) courage                    vii) grease
- iii) man                        viii) hay
- iv) politics                    ix) heir
- v) compass                    x) princess
- 4) Which of the following nouns can take the possessive form?
- i) child                      vi) sparrow                      xi) reporter
- ii) happiness              vii) (the) sun                    x) salt
- iii) men                      viii) bread
- iv) chairs                    ix) cow
- v) water                      x) Gitika

## 2.5.2 Inflectional Morphology of the English Pronoun

Pronouns behave like nouns, but differ from them in certain ways. The number of pronouns is much smaller than the number of nouns in English. Unlike nouns, pronouns are limited to a fixed number and no new pronouns can be added to this class. Moreover, pronouns have a grammatical function, that is, they belong to the class of words called structure words. They do not give us any additional information about the persons or objects they refer to.

Pronouns serve to identify **number** (singular/plural), **person** (first, second and third), **case** (nominative, objective, possessive) and **gender** (feminine, masculine, neuter). However, we will not discuss this aspect in detail.

## 2.5.3 Inflectional Morphology of the English Adjective

Adjectives are generally related to nouns or pronouns. For example, in the sentence **The food is delicious**, the adjective **delicious** is related to **food** and in the sentence, **The naughty boy broke the window panes**, the adjective **naughty** is related to the **boy**.

### The Grammatical Category Associated with Adjectives

The grammatical category associated with adjectives is that of **degree**. As you know there are three degrees: **positive**, **comparative** and **superlative**. The inflectional suffixes that are added to a large number of adjectives to form the

comparative and superlative degree are **–er** and **–est** respectively. For example, the adjectives *tall*, *large*, *sweet* have three forms:

|       |         |          |
|-------|---------|----------|
| tall  | taller  | tallest  |
| large | larger  | largest  |
| sweet | sweeter | sweetest |

The comparative and superlative suffixes apply to a large number of adjectives in English. In some adjectives, however, the comparative and superlative degrees are expressed by adding the words **more** and **most** (**beautiful**, **more beautiful**, **the most beautiful**). In other adjectives the degree are expressed in both ways. For example, **holy**, **holier**, **holiest** and **holy**, **more holy**, **most holy**.

Generally, short words with only one or two vowels sounds take inflectional suffixes. For example, words like **tall**, **bold**, **big**, **cold**, **hot**, **fat** – all have only one vowel sound can take the inflectional suffixes **–er** and **–est** for the comparative and superlative degrees respectively. Similarly, words like pretty, lovely, greedy, crazy take the inflectional suffixes **–er** and **–est** for the comparative and superlative degrees.

Longer words on the other hand, are generally compared by adding **more** and **most** before the adjective not by adding the inflectional suffixes **–er** and **–est**. For example, the words courteous, considerate, beautiful, take **more** and **most** for the comparative and superlative degree respectively.

There is a small group of adjectives in English, which have comparative and superlative forms that are quite different from the base form. These adjectives are:

| Positive | Comparative          | Superlative            |
|----------|----------------------|------------------------|
| good     | better               | best                   |
| well     |                      |                        |
| bad      | worse                | worst                  |
| far      | { farther<br>further | { farthest<br>furthest |
| little   | { less<br>lesser     | least                  |
| much     | more                 | most                   |
| many     |                      |                        |
| old      | { older<br>elder     | { oldest<br>eldest     |

### Check Your Progress 5

- 1) For which of the following adjectives can you form the comparative and superlative degrees by adding the inflectional suffixes **–er** and **–est**. Use your dictionary to find out.
  - i) competent
  - ii) round
  - iii) dull

- iv) sweet
- v) right
- vi) wealthy
- vii) handsome
- viii) fruitful
- ix) pleasant
- x) frank
- xi) difficult
- xii) green

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## 2.6 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit we have learnt:

- that words in English are made up of smaller elements.
- how to identify the structural elements in a word.
- that the structural element of a word is called a morpheme.
- that a morpheme is the smallest unit that is grammatically relevant.
- that there are two kinds of morphemes – those that are bound and those that are free.
- that all words have at least one free morpheme and one or more than one bound morphemes.
- that the single free morpheme is called the root.
- that the additions that are made to form new words can be prefixed and/or suffixed to the root.
- that there are different types of affixes – inflectional and derivational.
- that the study of inflectional affixes is known as inflectional morphology.
- that nouns belonging to the major grammatical categories – number (singular & plural) and case (possessive) have inflections.
- that pronouns inflect for the grammatical categories number (singular & plural) person (first, second and third) case (nominative, objective and possessive) and gender (feminine, masculine and neuter).
- that adjectives inflect for the grammatical category degree (comparative and superlative).

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## 2.7 KEY WORDS

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|                   |   |                                                                             |
|-------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Morphology</b> | : | the study of the internal structure of the word.                            |
| <b>Structure</b>  | : | the way a word is made up of parts and the relationship between its parts.  |
| <b>Morpheme</b>   | : | the smallest meaningful unit of a language which is grammatically relevant. |

|                                  |   |                                                                                                                                                                             |
|----------------------------------|---|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Free morpheme</b>             | : | a morpheme which can occur independently as a word.                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Bound morpheme</b>            | : | a morpheme which cannot occur independently as a word but must combine with a free morpheme to form a word.                                                                 |
| <b>Affix</b>                     | : | a bound morpheme which is attached to the beginning or the end of the base word.                                                                                            |
| <b>Prefix</b>                    | : | a bound morpheme which is attached to the beginning of the base word.                                                                                                       |
| <b>Suffix</b>                    | : | a bound morpheme which is attached to the end of the base word.                                                                                                             |
| <b>Root</b>                      | : | the element consisting of a single free morpheme to which affixes are added.                                                                                                |
| <b>Inflectional affix</b>        | : | an affix that is attached to a word to perform some grammatical function in accordance with some rule of grammar.                                                           |
| <b>Derivational affix</b>        | : | an affix that is attached to a word to produce a 'new' word.                                                                                                                |
| <b>Inflectional morphology:</b>  |   | description of the inflectional affixes and other changes that occur in words belonging to the major parts of speech when certain grammatical contrasts are to be conveyed. |
| <b>The major parts of Speech</b> | : | nouns (including pronouns), verbs, adjectives and adverbs.                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Number contrast</b>           | : | the contrast between singular ('one') and plural ('more than one') expressed through inflectional changes in the word.                                                      |
| <b>Case contrast</b>             | : | the contrast between the various forms that a noun acquires to express its relationship with other words in a sentence.                                                     |
| <b>Possessive case</b>           | : | the case form that a noun acquires to convey certain kinds of relations (i.e. possession) with another noun which follows it.                                               |
| <b>Count noun</b>                | : | a noun which denotes items that can be counted.                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Mass noun</b>                 | : | a noun which treats the object it denotes as a mass which cannot be counted.                                                                                                |
| <b>Pronouns</b>                  | : | a group of structure words which behave like nouns.                                                                                                                         |
| <b>Nominative case</b>           | : | the case of a noun/pronoun when it is the subject of a verb.                                                                                                                |

|                             |                                                                                                                                                                         |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Objective case</b>       | : the case of a noun/pronoun when it is the object of a verb or a preposition.                                                                                          |
| <b>Possessive case</b>      | : (pronoun) the case of a pronoun when it occurs before a noun or as a complement of a verb.                                                                            |
| <b>Person</b>               | : a grammatical category associated with pronouns.                                                                                                                      |
| <b>First person</b>         | : pronouns of the first person refer to the speaker or writer of the message when in the singular number and to the speaker/writer plus some others when in the plural. |
| <b>Second person</b>        | : pronouns of the second person refer to the person(s) addressed.                                                                                                       |
| <b>Third person</b>         | : pronouns of the third person refer to the third parties not directly involved in speaking or receiving the message.                                                   |
| <b>Gender</b>               | : a grammatical category associated with pronouns. It has three sub-categories: masculine, feminine and neuter.                                                         |
| <b>Masculine gender</b>     | : pronouns which are used to refer to human beings or animals belonging to the male sex.                                                                                |
| <b>Feminine gender</b>      | : pronouns which are used for referring to human beings or animals of the female sex.                                                                                   |
| <b>Neuter gender</b>        | : pronouns which are used for referring to non-living objects.                                                                                                          |
| <b>Degree</b>               | : a grammatical category associated with adjectives. It has three sub-categories: positive, comparative and superlative.                                                |
| <b>Regular adjectives</b>   | : adjectives which form their comparative and superlative degree forms by taking the suffixes –er and –est respectively.                                                |
| <b>Irregular adjectives</b> | : adjectives which form their comparative and superlative degree forms by changing their forms in other ways.                                                           |

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## 2.8 SUGGESTED READINGS

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Quirk, R. and Greenbaum S. (1973). *A University Grammar of English*. London: Longman.

Gleason H A (1961). *An Introduction to Descriptive Linguistics*. Holt, Rinehart and Winston.

Leech, G Deuchar, M. and Hoogenrad, R. (1982). *English Grammar for Today. A New Introduction* (Chapter 3) London: Macmillan.

## 2.9 ANSWERS

### Check Your Progress 1

- |    |          |           |          |           |
|----|----------|-----------|----------|-----------|
| 1) | i) yes   | vi) no    | xi) yes  | xvi) yes  |
|    | ii) no   | vii) yes  | xii) no  | xvii) no  |
|    | iii) yes | viii) yes | xiii) no | xviii) no |
|    | iv) no   | ix) yes   | xiv) yes | xix) yes  |
|    | v) yes   | x) yes    | xv) yes  | xx) yes   |
- 2) Criteria (c) and (d)
- 3) a) ii) has a smaller structural element  
b) i) has a smaller structural element

The sets of words in (a) (i) cannot be said to have a structural element because if we isolate the **-er** of **sister, daughter, brother, fever** etc we get **sist, broth, fev**, which do not occur anywhere else. They do not have a common element of meaning. The words in (ii) on the other hand, share a common element of meaning, that is, the comparative element.

Similarly, in the words in b(ii) **-est** cannot be said to share a common element of meaning. When we isolate the **est** of **detest, protest, interest** etc. we are left with **det, prot, int** which cannot occur anywhere else. The words **fittest, shortest, lightest** in b(i), on the other hand, can occur elsewhere – **fit+ter, short+er, light+er**. They share a common element of meaning, that is, the superlative element **-est**.

### Check Your Progress 2

- |    |                    |                    |
|----|--------------------|--------------------|
| 1) | i) flask+s         | ix) faith+ful+(l)y |
|    | ii) bridge+s       | x) un+employ+ed    |
|    | iii) hygien(e)+ic  | xi) photograph+er  |
|    | iv) care+less      | xii) up+hill       |
|    | v) collect+ion     | xiii) what+ever    |
|    | vi) possib(le)+ity | xiv) your+self     |
|    | vii) head+master   | xv) water+fall     |
|    | viii) in+side      |                    |
- 2)
- |                    |                    |
|--------------------|--------------------|
| i) root: compet(e) | vii) root: grammar |
| suffix: (t)ive     | suffix: -ian       |
| ii) root: organize | viii) root: regard |
| suffix: tion       | prefix: dis-       |
| suffix: -ed        |                    |
| iii) root: measure | ix) root: eligible |
| prefix: im-        | prefix: in-        |
| suffix: -able      | suffix: -ity       |

- |                                                   |                                                        |
|---------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------|
| iv) root: regular<br>prefix: ir-<br>suffix: -ity  | x) root: legitimate<br>prefix: il-<br>suffix: -cy      |
| v) root: educat(e)<br>prefix: un-<br>suffix: ed   | xi) root: victor(y)<br>suffix: -ious                   |
| vi) root: possible<br>prefix: im-<br>suffix: -ity | xii) root: appropriate<br>prefix: mis-<br>suffix: -ion |

- |                  |                 |
|------------------|-----------------|
| 3) i) same       | vi) different   |
| ii) different    | vii) same       |
| iii) different   | viii) same      |
| iv) different    | ix) different   |
| v) same          | x) same         |
| 4) i) unhappy    | vi) incorrect   |
| ii) infinite     | vii) discolour  |
| iii) malpractice | viii) impatient |
| iv) irrelevant   | ix) discomfort  |
| v) misfortune    | x) unfamiliar   |

### Check Your Progress 3

- |           |          |
|-----------|----------|
| i) no     | ix) no   |
| ii) yes   | x) no    |
| iii) yes  | xi) yes  |
| iv) no    | xii) yes |
| v) yes    | xiii) no |
| vi) yes   | xiv) no  |
| vii) no   | xv) no   |
| viii) yes |          |

### Check Your Progress 4

- |            |             |
|------------|-------------|
| 1) i) mass | vii) mass   |
| ii) mass   | viii) count |
| iii) mass  | ix) count   |
| iv) mass   | x) mass     |
| v) count   | xi) count   |
| vi) count  | xii) count  |

**Word Formation Strategies**

- 2) i) loaves  
ii) houses  
iii) booths  
iv) bridges  
v) berths  
vi) diaries  
vii) tomatoes  
viii) spies  
ix) lenses  
x) kernels  
xi) deer  
x) calves
- 3) i) no  
ii) no  
iii) yes  
iv) no  
v) yes  
vi) no  
vii) no  
viii) no  
ix) yes  
x) yes
- 4) (i), (iii), (vi), (vii), (ix), (x), (xi)

**Check Your Progress 5**

- |          |          |          |
|----------|----------|----------|
| i) no    | v) no    | ix) yes  |
| ii) yes  | vi) yes  | x) yes   |
| iii) yes | vii) yes | xi) no   |
| iv) yes  | viii) no | xii) yes |

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## UNIT 3 INFLECTIONAL MORPHOLOGY OF ENGLISH-II

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### Structure

- 3.0 Objectives
- 3.1 Introduction
- 3.2 Inflectional Morphology of the English Adverb
  - 3.2.1 Irregular Adverbs
- 3.3 Inflectional Morphology of the English Verb
  - 3.3.1 Verb Classes
- 3.4 Grammatical Categories Associated with the English Verb
  - 3.4.1 Person and Number
  - 3.4.2 Tense
  - 3.4.3 Aspect
  - 3.4.4 Mood
  - 3.4.5 Voice
- 3.5 Morphology of the Full Verb
  - 3.5.1 Regular and Irregular Verbs
- 3.6 Let Us Sum Up
- 3.7 Key Words
- 3.8 Answers

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### 3.0 OBJECTIVES

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At the end of this Unit you should be able to :

- recognize the grammatical category of degree associated with adverbs and see how words that function as adverbs express the degree contrasts in regular and irregular ways.
- distinguish between adverbs and adjectives that are identical in form.
- recognize the main classes of verbs
- recognize the different grammatical categories associated with the English verb and
- recognize how these grammatical contrasts are expressed by verbs through inflection.

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### 3.1 INTRODUCTION

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We have so far seen that inflections sometimes show contrasts by means of suffixes, but at other times contrasts are shown by a change in the part of speech. We have also seen that each important part of speech has certain grammatical categories associated with it, and grammatical relationships are expressed through inflection. For example, adjectives have the grammatical category **degree**, so difference in the comparative and superlative degree are either expressed through

the addition of the suffixes **–er** and **–est**, respectively, or through the addition of the words **more** and **most**.

In this unit we look at the ways in which the adverbs and verbs are inflected.

### 3.2 INFLECTIONAL MORPHOLOGY OF THE ENGLISH ADVERB

Adverbs are sometimes difficult to identify because there are a large number that occupy different positions in the sentence. Some adverbs are closely associated with the verb, others with adjectives and also other adverbs. They describe the time, place and degree, manner of an action or event.

Adverbs resemble adjectives in that they, like adjectives, are inflected for only one grammatical category and that is **degree**.

Let us compare the ways in which adjectives and adverbs inflect for degree. Look at the following examples.

- 1) a) Did you have to work **hard**?
- b) Did you have to do a lot of **hard work**?
- a) You couldn't have worked **harder**.
- b) You had to put in **harder** work than they did.
- a) He had to work (the) **hardest**.
- b) He had the **hardest** job to do.

In each of these pairs, the word **hard** is used in the positive, comparative and superlative degree respectively. Can you tell in which sentence in each pair the word **hard** is used as an adjective/adverb? The first sentence in each group has used **hard** as an adverb and in the second sentence in each group **hard**, **harder**, **hardest** are used as adjectives.

Notice that in both cases the word **hard** has inflected for degree.

Let us look at another set of words.

- 2) a) They had to stay **long**
- a) They stayed **longer** than expected
- a) They stayed **longest**.
- b) They had to stay a **long** time.
- b) They had a **longer** stay than expected.
- b) Theirs was the **longest** stay ever.

In these sets of sentences the word **long** inflects for degree in adjectives and adverbs. In sentence (a) of each pair **long** functions as an adverb and in sentence (b) of each pair, it functions as an adjective.

Some other adjectives of this type are **fast**, **short**, **early**, **late**, etc. They all inflect for degree both as adjectives and adverbs

There is another group of words which sometimes change their form for adverbs slightly, by taking the **–ly** suffix. For example, **clean**, **deep**, **direct**, **fine**, **flat**, **high**, **light**, **sharp**. When these words occur in comparison, the choice is between

the comparative inflected form **-er** and the **-ly** form with **more** or **most** placed before it. For example,

Adjective: This tin opener makes a **clean** cut through the lid.

Adverb: This tin opener cuts **clean** through the lid.

Adverb: This tin opener cuts **cleanly** through the lid.

Adjective: This tin opener makes a **cleaner** cut than that one.

Adverb: This tin opener cuts **cleaner** than that one.

Or

This tin opener cuts more **cleanly** than that one.

Like some adjectives, adverbs also inflect for degree by the addition of **more** or **most** before them. For example,

She sings **beautifully**.

Rita sings **more beautifully** than Sita

Anita sings **most beautifully**.

In order to distinguish between adjectives and adverbs which have identical form when they are inflected for degree we need to look at the verbs in the two sentences closely. Memorizing the inflected forms would not be of any use. Let us look at the sentences in which some of the words occur in an identical form of adjectives and as adverbs.

The sentence with the word **hard** in set 1 uses the word **hard** as an adverb as well as an adjective. The word **hard** in (a) is an adverb. It modifies the verb **work**. Adverbs modify verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Adjectives, on the other hand, occur before a noun or after certain verbs, modifying the noun or saying something about it. In sentence (b) the adjective **hard** modifies the noun **work**.

### 3.2.1 Irregular Adverbs

We have so far looked at those adverbs that have the comparative and superlative degree. They are regular adverbs. Irregular adverbs are also mostly the same as irregular adjectives and have irregular inflections for the comparative and superlative degrees. Sometimes, the only difference that they have is in the positive form. For example, let us compare the use of **well** and **bad(ly)** and their inflected forms as adverbs and as adjectives:

#### As adverbs:

Bhavna sings **well**. Saba sings **better**. Sarita sings **best**.

They performed **badly**. We performed **worse**. You performed (the) **worst**.

#### As adjectives:

**Bhavna** is a **good** singer. Saba is a **better** singer. Sarita is the **best** singer.

They are **bad** performers. We are **worse**. You are the **worst**.

Have you noticed any difference between the degrees for adjectives and those for adverbs? Well, the positive form for the adverbs **better** and **best** is 'well' while for adjectives it is **good**.

**Check Your Progress 1**

- 1) Say whether the words in bold type in each of the following sentences is an adverb or an adjective.
  - i) We had an **early** breakfast
  - ii) Don't speak so **fast**.
  - iii) Have you been waiting **long**?
  - iv) We had breakfast **earlier** than usual.
  - v) We waited **half** the afternoon.
  - vi) I want a **straight** answer to my question.
  - vii) You'll have to think **hard** to solve the problem.
  - viii) I **clean** forgot to ask him about it.
  - ix) Do you play tennis with your **left** hand?
  - x) They are demanding a **longer** holiday.
  - xi) Turn **right** at the cross-roads.
  - xii) He was **fast** asleep.
  - xiii) He has come **straight** from Paris
  - xiv) We went by a **fast** train.
  - xv) He was following **close** behind.

---

### 3.3 INFLECTIONAL MORPHOLOGY OF THE ENGLISH VERB

---

As you are already aware, the verb is considered to be the core of the sentence and therefore the most important word in it. We cannot do without verbs because the form of a verb generally influences the structure of the whole sentence. For example, look at the following sentence.

Radha gave Monica a book.

The verb **give** in this sentence makes the choice of the Nouns **Monica** and **book** essential. In other words the verb **give** takes two objects. Let us look at some more sentences.

The wind **howled**.

The child **cried**.

Notice that the verbs **howl** and **cry** in these sentences do not require an object. Such verbs are known as **intransitive** verbs. Verbs that require an object are known as **transitive** verbs.

Verbs are also important because they express various shades of meaning with the help of various grammatical contrasts such as those of **tense**, **mood**, **number** and **person**. The contrasts are expressed by several inflections. You have already studied these concepts.

In this unit we deal with them from the point of view of word-formation.

### 3.3.1 Verb Classes

The verb can function in two ways in a sentence – either as the **main verb** or as an **auxiliary** or helping verb. Verbs that can function only as main verb are called **Full Verbs**. For example, in the sentences

- i) He **eats** chocolates every day.
- ii) They **go** to the theatre on Saturdays
- iii) The dog **saved** their lives.
- iv) The ghost **vanished**.
- v) Do you **meditate** regularly?

The verbs **eat, go, save, vanish, meditate** are Full Verbs.

New verbs can be added to the list of full verbs in a language.

A complete English sentence always has a main verb, but it may or may not have an auxiliary. Let us look at the following pairs of sentences:

- i) Shobha **leaves** for Delhi tomorrow.
- ii) Shobha **had left** the house before 8 o'clock.
- i) The barber **cut** his hair very short.
- ii) The barber **has cut** his hair very short.

The first of each of these pairs of sentences has a main verb but no auxiliary. In the second of each of these pairs of sentences there is a main verb **left** and **cut** and also an auxiliary, that is, **had** and **has**.

A combination of a main verb plus an auxiliary verb is called a **verb phrase**. In a verb phrase the main verb carries the principle meaning. The auxiliary verb helps to express tense, voice, aspect or mood of the main verb. In other words, the auxiliary or helping verb expresses **grammatical function**, while the main verb **describes the action**. For example in the sentences

- i) They are eating dinner.
- ii) He has eaten dinner.

The main verb eating/eaten describe the action, the auxiliaries **are, has** only indicate tense, aspect, etc. In the first sentence the auxiliary **are** indicates the action in progress. In the second sentence the auxiliary **has** indicates that the action is completed.

In English there are three classes of verbs:

- a) Those that function only as main verbs
- b) Those that function only as auxiliaries, and
- c) Those that function as both.

As we have seen the verbs that function only as main verbs are called full verbs. The verbs that function only as auxiliaries are called **modal verbs** or **modal auxiliaries**. These are limited in number and it is not possible to add new modals. The modal auxiliaries are **will, would, shall, should, can, could, may, might**

**must, ought, dare, need and used.** Different modal verbs express different attitudes such as desirability, necessity, possibility, likelihood, etc.

The third class of verbs are those that can function either as main verbs or as auxiliaries. These are **BE, HAVE** and **DO**. They are called **primary verbs**. Each of these verbs has a number of different forms according to the grammatical contrasts they express, and most of these forms can occur both as main verbs and as auxiliaries. For example, the verb **BE** has the forms **is, am, are, was, were, being, been**, etc. Let us look at the following sentences:

- i) She is an electronics engineer.
- ii) She is studying electronics engineering.
- iii) I am a sales representative.
- iv) I have been working hard.

In sentences (i) and (iii) the verb 'be' occurs as the main verb. In sentences (ii) and (iv) the verb 'be' occurs as an auxiliary.

The primary verbs **have** and **do** have the meanings 'possess' and 'finished' respectively in the following sentences and function as main verbs.

Do you **have** some coloured pencils?

Have you **done** your assignment?

We have seen that there are three types of verbs, Full Verbs, Auxiliary (Modal) Verbs and Primary Verbs. In the next section we shall discuss the morphology of these types.

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Pick out the verb/s in each of the following sentences and say whether it is a full verb, a modal or a primary verb. If it is a primary verb, say whether it is functioning as a main verb or as an auxiliary.
  - i) She can sing well.
  - ii) They are all members of the Association of Engineers.
  - iii) We have done very well.
  - iv) You ought to leave before 6pm.
  - v) Radha has the most beautiful garden in the locality.
  - vi) I have made my meaning clear.
  - vii) We might leave next year.
  - viii) You should have informed me earlier.
  - ix) They bagged all the good seats.
  - x) I have been studying hard.
  - xi) We haven't had enough rain this year.
  - xii) You must be in the auditorium by six o'clock.
  - xiii) They should inform the authorities immediately.
  - xiv) You need to have a think before you take a decision.

- xv) Have you been to the industrial exhibition?  
 xvi) It would be in aid of a worthwhile cause.  
 xvii) He is always being criticized by everybody.  
 xviii) She used to drink tea but now she drinks coffee.
- 2) What is the meaning conveyed by the modal auxiliaries highlighted in each of the following sentences. Use your dictionary to find out.
- 1) I **should** have warned you earlier?
  - 2) He says we **can** leave as soon as we've finished.
  - 3) **Can't** I stay till the end of the programme?
  - 4) If you invite him he **might** come.
  - 5) She **might** be waiting at the airport.
  - 6) If he sees you he **may** stop.
  - 7) Ann **couldn't** have seen Tara yesterday.
  - 8) You **must** go for a walk every morning.
  - 9) We **should** have a party to celebrate your success.
  - 10) **Could** students choose the subjects they wanted to study?
  - 11) Kavita **might** lend you the money.
  - 12) They **ought to** have stopped at the traffic lights.
  - 13) You **should** file your income tax returns.
  - 14) I knew I **ought** to have written to them.
  - 15) They **shouldn't** allow cars to park in this narrow street.

### 3.4 GRAMMATICAL CATEGORIES ASSOCIATED WITH THE ENGLISH VERB

We shall now describe the grammatical categories associated with the English verb.

#### 3.4.1 Person and Number

The verb forms according to Person (1st, 2nd, 3rd) and Number (singular and plural) are as follows.

| Full verb  | Primary Verb     | Modal Verb        |
|------------|------------------|-------------------|
| I write    | I am writing     | I should write    |
| We write   | we are writing   | we should write   |
| You write  | you are writing  | you should write  |
| He writes  | he is writing    | he should write   |
| They write | they are writing | they should write |

Notice that the full verb takes **–s** inflection for third person singular as in the case of 'He writes'. The primary verb shows variation in form as well **–am** in the

first person singular, **is** in the third person singular and **are** in the rest of the cases. However the modal verb shows no change.

It is important for the verb to agree with the subject in person and number. Full verbs show this change only in the present tense not in the past tense e.g.

|            |           |            |            |          |
|------------|-----------|------------|------------|----------|
| I sleep    | we sleep  | <b>but</b> | I slept    | we slept |
| You sleep  | he sleeps |            | you slept  | he slept |
| They sleep |           |            | they slept |          |

Primary verbs, however, do show change in the past tense as well.

|                    |                  |
|--------------------|------------------|
| I was sleeping     | we were sleeping |
| You were sleeping  | he was sleeping  |
| They were sleeping |                  |

The modal verbs do not have clear past tense forms. The past tense forms of some modals (e.g. could, would, might, etc.) do not change their forms for number and person (e.g. I/we/you/he/they **might** go tomorrow).

### 3.4.2 Tense

Verbs inflect for tense in only two forms. One form indicates past tense and the other form refers to all times except the past, (that is, present, future or all time). Let's look at the following sentences for example,

#### Full Verbs

They **left** last week (past time)  
 They **leave** tomorrow (non-past=future)  
 They **left** early today (past)  
 They **leave** at six o'clock every day (habit= all time)

#### Primary Verbs

Ratan **was** in town till yesterday (past)  
 He **was** attending a meeting (past)  
 History **is** an interesting subject (non-past=all time)  
 She **is** arriving tomorrow (non-past=future)

In the last sentence notice that there is no inflected form of the verb to refer specifically to future time. Generally, to talk of an event in the future we use the modal auxiliaries **shall** and **will** with the base form of the verb. For example,

- i) He **will** go there tomorrow.
- ii) I **shall** be there by six o'clock tomorrow evening.

### 3.4.3 Aspect

**Aspect** in English is the distinction between 'action in progress' and 'action completed', which is expressed by inflectional changes in the verb. **Aspect** has thus two sub-categories: the **progressive** aspect and the **perfective** aspect (action completed).

Let us look at the following sentences:

- i) Radha is writing a letter.
- ii) Radha was writing a letter.

Notice that the first sentence refers to an activity that is continuing in the present. The second sentence also refers to an activity that is continuing but it is continuing in the past. The main verb in both sentences has the suffix **-ing** which indicates that the activity is in progress.

Now let us look at two more sentences.

- i) Radha has written the letter.
- ii) She had written the letter before you came.

The special form of the verb used in both sentences, that is **written**, gives us a sense of action completed. This form as we all know is the past participle form. In regular verbs this form is marked by the suffix **-ed** and in irregular verbs it is marked by the suffix **-en** or some other feature.

### 3.4.4 Mood

Another grammatical category associated with the verb is MOOD.

A verb or verb phrase takes different forms depending on the attitude the speaker expresses towards what is being said or towards the person being addressed. If what is being said is a statement of fact, it takes one set of forms. For example, the following sentences are spoken as statements of fact.

- i) Radha is a tall girl.
- ii) The earth rotates on its axis.
- iii) Man landed on the moon for the first time in 1969.

The verbs in these sentences are said to be in the **Indicative Mood**. They take different form depending upon the person and number of the subject, the tense, the aspect, etc. that are involved.

If the sentence is meant not as a statement of fact but as a command or a request asking someone to do something, the verb forms are different. It is the base form of the verb which is used in this case and there are no distinctions of tense, aspect, etc. The verb used thus is said to be in the **Imperative Mood** and the sentence containing the base form of the verb is called an imperative sentence.

Let us take up a few sentences that are commands expressed by the imperative.

- i) **Wait!**
- ii) **Stop!**
- iii) **Tell** me the truth

These have the same form as the base verb or bare infinitive.

For the negative we put **Don't** before the verb:

Don't hurry!

The person addressed is not mentioned, but can be expressed by placing a noun at the end of a phrase:

Eat your dinner, girls.

Be quiet Arun.

The pronoun **you** is rarely used unless the speaker wishes to be rude, or wishes to make a distinction, as in:

**You** wait here; **I'll** get a taxi.

Some examples of requests (asking someone to do something) expressed in the imperative mood are:

- i) Could I **have** two tickets please?
- ii) Could I **see** the secretary, please?
- iii) Could you please **show** me the way?
- iv) Please **take** a seat.
- v) Would Miss Bose please **come** to the enquiry desk?

Notice that the base form of the verb is used in all these sentences.

The third sub category of mood in English is the **Subjunctive Mood**. Verbs acquire different forms when one expresses a wish, makes a suggestion, a demand, expresses a possibility, a doubt, etc. This is most clearly seen in clauses with third person singular subject in non-past tense. In the indicative mood the verb in such clauses, takes the **-s** suffix as in 'He leaves for London tonight,' but in the subjunctive mood the base form of the verb is used. Look at the following sentences, for example:

I suggest that she leave tonight.

We suggest that she leave tonight.

We demand that she leave at once.

This use of the base form of the verb is known as the **present subjunctive**.

Another subjunctive form of the verb is the **past subjunctive** as in

He behaves as though he **owned** the place.

I wish they **were** here.

### 3.4.5 Voice

The category of voice has two sub-categories – **Active** and **Passive**. While reporting the same event we may either use the active voice or the passive voice. In the active voice the subject is seen as the doer. In the passive voice action is seen as done to/by the subject. For example,

- i) The tailor **stitched** four dresses yesterday. (active)
- ii) Four dresses **were stitched** by the tailor yesterday. (passive)

Notice that the form of the main verb in the second sentence is the past participle (-ed) and is preceded by the plural form of the verb BE as an auxiliary.

Having looked at the grammatical categories that are associated with the verb, we shall now consider the inflectional changes that Full Verbs can take.

## 3.5 MORPHOLOGY OF THE FULL VERB

### 3.5.1 Regular and Irregular Verbs

Full verbs are of two types: Regular and Irregular

How can we distinguish between regular and irregular verbs? Regular verbs have four morphological forms:

- i) The base form
- ii) The –s form
- iii) The –ing form
- iv) The –ed form

If we know the base form of the regular verb we can predict all its other forms. The vast majority of English words belong to this class. For example,

- i) help      ii) helps      iii) helping      iv) helped
- i) work      ii) works      iii) working      iv) worked
- i) talk      ii) talks      iii) talking      iv) talked
- i) shout      ii) shouts      iii) shouting      iv) shouted

Irregular verbs on the other hand do not have forms that are predictable. Some irregular verbs have five forms, others have only three, for some others the past form and past participle form are identical with the base form. Some others have two forms for the past and the participle, while others have one. Let us look at the following examples:

| Base   | -s form | -ing form | -ed1 form | -ed2 form |
|--------|---------|-----------|-----------|-----------|
| give   | gives   | giving    | gave      | given     |
| break  | breaks  | breaking  | broke     | broken    |
| bring  | brings  | bringing  | brought   | brought   |
| learn  | learns  | learning  | learned   | learned   |
|        |         |           | learnt    | learnt    |
| cost   | costs   | costing   | cost      | cost      |
| strike | strikes | striking  | struck    | struck    |
| beat   | beats   | beating   | beat      | beaten    |

Naturally, new or coined words cannot follow this uncertain pattern of these verbs. The number of irregular verbs in English, therefore cannot expand and is limited.

### Check Your Progress 3

- 1) State the grammatical category that is involved in the contrast between the verb forms in each pair of sentences below. For example, in the sentences:

The boy wants to play

The boys want to play

The grammatical category of Number (singular/plural) brings about a contrast between the verb forms in the first and the second sentence.

- i)     a)    I walk to school every day.  
          b)    Lata walks to school every day.
- ii)    a)    The child likes sweets.  
          b)    The children like sweets.
- iii)   a)    Soni is stitching some dresses.  
          b)    Soni has stitched some dresses.
- iv)    a)    They awarded her a distinction.  
          b)    She was awarded a distinction.
- v)     a)    The festival of lights begins tomorrow.  
          b)    The festival of lights began yesterday.
- vi)    a)    He was ill last week.  
          b)    He has been ill since last week.
- vii)   a)    I am going on leave for a fortnight.  
          b)    He has gone on leave for a fortnight.
- viii)  a)    They broke the window.  
          b)    The window was broken.
- ix)    a)    She goes to Bombay by air.  
          b)    I suggest that she go to Bombay by air.
- x)     a)    They ought to have told him.  
          b)    He ought to have been told.
- 2)     Supply the correct form of verb in brackets.
  - i)    Yesterday they (beat) a man to death.
  - ii)   He (drive) the car faster than he had ever done before.
  - iii)  King Bruce (fling) himself down in great despair.
  - iv)   He (quit) the flat at very short notice.
  - v)    He was asked to (wear) the tail coat his grandfather had (wear).
  - vi)   The picture that (hang) on the wall suddenly broke into pieces.
  - vii)  Before he (realize) what was (happen) the man (thrust) a briefcase in his hand and (disappear).
  - viii) The news had (spread) much before it was published.
  - ix)   The scooter was (steal) from the garage.
  - x)    The manager (bring) the circular from the head office to the notice of the employees.
  - xi)   She generally (spend) more than she (earn).

## 3.6 LET US SUM UP

In this unit we have learnt that

- Only a few adverbs have inflected forms. The inflections are the same as for adjectives, i.e. for the grammatical category of degree.
- Most adverbs that inflect for degree are those which have identical corresponding adjectives.
- English verbs occur either as main verbs or as auxiliaries.
- English verbs are divided into three classes: full verbs, modal verbs (auxiliary) and primary verbs. Full verbs occur only as main verbs; modal verbs occur only as auxiliaries; primary verbs occur both as main verbs and as auxiliaries.
- The grammatical categories associated with verbs are person and number, tense, aspect, mood and voice.
- Person and number contrasts of verbs are dependent on the subject since the verb agrees in person and number with the subject.
- Tense has two sub-categories, past and non-past, which are expressed inflectionally by verbs.
- The category 'aspect' refers to the inflectional expression of whether the activity denoted by the verb is in progress or has been completed. These represent its two sub-categories called the progressive and the perfective aspect, respectively.
- The category 'Mood' has three sub-categories: indicative, imperative and subjunctive.
- The category 'voice' has two sub-categories: active and passive.
- Modal verbs do not inflect for grammatical contrasts.
- Each of the primary verbs, BE, HAVE and DO shows a different set of forms to express grammatical contrasts.

## 3.7 KEY WORDS

- Auxiliary Verb** : The part of verb phrase that modifies the meaning of the main verb by showing such things as tense, aspect, mood, voice, etc.
- Aspect** : The grammatical category which expresses the way in which the action described by the verb is seen either as 'continuing' or as 'completed'. It has two subcategories: progressive ('action continuing') and perfective ('action completed').

|                                             |   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|---------------------------------------------|---|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Full verbs</b>                           | : | The large and open class of verbs in English which occur only as main verbs.                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Irregular</b>                            | : | Adverbs that form their comparative and superlative degrees by changing their forms in <b>adverbs</b> other ways.                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Irregular verbs</b>                      | : | Those full verbs which occur in five or three forms. They form their past tense forms in ways other than by the addition of <b>-ed</b> .                                                                                                                                       |
| <b>Main verb</b>                            | : | The word in a verb phrase which expresses its principal meaning, as distinguished from the auxiliary verb which merely modifies that meaning. The main verb can also occur alone as the verb element of a sentence and carry all its indicators of tense, number, person, etc. |
| <b>Modal verbs or<br/>Modal auxiliaries</b> | : | A small and closed class of verbs in English which occur only as auxiliaries.                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
| <b>Non-past tense</b>                       | : | The subcategory of tense that expresses action in present, future, or in all time. The so-called present tense forms (e.g. the <b>-s</b> form) are actually non-past forms.                                                                                                    |
| <b>Primary verbs</b>                        | : | The verbs, BE, HAVE and DO which can occur either as full verbs or as auxiliaries.                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Person and<br/>Number</b>                | : | Grammatical categories associated with the agreement between the subject and verb of a sentence.                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Past tense</b>                           | : | the subcategory of tense that expresses action in past time.                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Present<br/>Participle</b>               | : | Refers to the <b>-ing</b> form                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Past participle</b>                      | : | Refers to the <b>-ed</b> form; also expressed in irregular verbs with <b>-n</b> or <b>-en</b> suffix.                                                                                                                                                                          |
| <b>Regular adverbs</b>                      | : | Adverbs which form their comparative and superlative degree forms by taking the suffixes <b>-er</b> and <b>-est</b> respectively.                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Regular verbs</b>                        | : | Those full verbs which occur in four forms: the base form, the <b>-ing</b> form, the <b>-s</b> form and the <b>-ed</b> form.                                                                                                                                                   |
| <b>Tense</b>                                | : | Expression of time reference by means of verb inflections.                                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
| <b>Verb phrase</b>                          | : | The element in the predicate part of a sentence which consists of one or more than one auxiliary and a main verb.                                                                                                                                                              |
| <b>Voice</b>                                | : | The grammatical category which indicates whether the subject is seen as the 'doer' of the action or as the 'receiver'. The category has two subcategories: <b>active voice</b> ('subject does the action') and <b>passive voice</b> ('the action is done 'to/by the subject')  |

## 3.8 ANSWERS

### Check Your Progress 1

- i) adjective    ii) adverb    iii) adverb    iv) adverb    v) adjective  
vi) adjective    vii) adverb    viii) adverb    ix) adjective    x) adjective  
xi) adverb    xii) adverb    xiii) adverb    xiv) adjective    xv) adverb

### Check Your Progress 2

- 1)
  - i) can: modal; sing: full verb
  - ii) are: primary verb – main verb
  - iii) have: primary verb (functions as auxiliary); done: functions as main verb
  - iv) ought: modal; (to) leave: full verb
  - v) has: primary verb (functions as main verb)
  - vi) have: primary verb (functions as auxiliary); made: full verb.
  - vii) might: modal; leave: full verb
  - viii) should: modal; have: primary verb (functions as auxiliary); informed: full verb
  - ix) bagged: full verb
  - x) have been: primary (auxiliaries); studying: full verb
  - xi) have (n't): primary verb (functions as auxiliary); had: primary verb (functions as main verb)
  - xii) must: modal; be: primary verb (functions as main verb)
  - xiii) should: modal; inform: full verb
  - xiv) need: modal; (to) have: primary verb (functions as main verb) take: full verb
  - xv) have: primary verb (functions as auxiliary); been: primary verb (functions as main verb)
  - xvi) would: modal; be: primary verb (functions as main verb)
  - xvii) is being: primary verbs (function as auxiliary); criticized: full verb
  - xviii) used to: modal auxiliary; drink: full verb; drinks: full verb
- 2)
  - 1) Obligation
  - 2) have permission
  - 3) permission
  - 4) possibility
  - 5) it is possible that .....
  - 6) it is possible
  - 7) lack of possibility/ability
  - 8) compulsion
  - 9) obligation

- 10) permission
- 11) remote possibility
- 12) unfulfilled obligation
- 13) you ought to – it is an obligation, a duty.
- 14) obligation/duty
- 15) obligation

**Check Your Progress 3**

- 1) i) Person ii) Number iii) Aspect iv) Voice v) Tense  
vi) Aspect vii) Aspect viii) Voice ix) Mood x) Voice
- 2) i) beat ii) drove iii) flung iv) quit  
v) wear and worn vi) hung  
vii) realized, happening, thrust and disappeared viii) spread  
ix) stolen x) brought xi) spends, earns



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## UNIT 4 DERIVATIONAL MORPHOLOGY OF ENGLISH

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### Structure

#### 4.0 Objectives

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#### 4.2 Derivational Affixes

#### 4.3 Derivational Prefixes

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#### 4.7 Let Us Sum Up

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### 4.0 OBJECTIVES

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At the end of this unit, you should be able to :

- describe the general characteristics of derivational affixes as a class,
- explain why derivational prefixes are classified on the basis of meaning while derivational suffixes are classified on the basis of grammar,
- recognize the different types of derivational prefixes classified according to the kind of meaning they contribute,
- identify the major derivational suffixes of English and classify them according to the scheme of classification,
- recognize conversion and compounding as a process of word formation.

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### 4.1 INTRODUCTION

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In Unit 1 we looked at ways in which words are patterned in the some Indian languages (especially Hindi) and English so that they can be clearly seen to be

related. These patterns emerge in languages as a result of the need for new words, which are formed from existing words to meet the communicational needs of the speakers of those languages. In Unit 1 we also looked at the different ways in which words grow and are used in languages with special reference to English. The study of word formation in different languages is known as morphology. In Unit 2 we distinguished derivational morphology from inflectional morphology in that we saw that the main distinction between these was based on the nature of the affixes attached to the base word. We saw that affixes which are attached to words in accordance with some rule of grammar are called inflectional affixes. The study of the rules according to which they are attached to words is called inflectional morphology of English.

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## 4.2 DERIVATIONAL AFFIXES

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Derivational morphology as we said earlier is the study of derivational affixes which are attached to base words in order to create 'new' words. This enables the speakers of a language to have a larger store of words from which they can choose to express their ideas and thus communicate effectively. All these words are listed separately in dictionaries. These affixes occur both as prefixes and suffixes. In the previous two units we saw that unlike derivations, inflections occur only as suffixes at the right most edge of the word. Derivations also differ from inflections in that they often change the part of speech of the words to which they are attached. The number of derivational affixes, which express shades of meaning can be large, whereas inflectional affixes which have grammatical functions to perform are comparatively fewer in number. This difference in the function of derivational and inflectional affixes necessitates a difference in the classification as well. We studied inflectional affixes on the basis of the part of speech of the words to which they are attached. For example, the suffix **-s** for plural number and the suffix **'s** for the possessive case are the only suffixes attached to nouns.

Derivational affixes, however, cannot be studied with reference to the parts of speech of the words to which they are attached because not all derivational suffixes are restricted to one part of speech. For example, the prefix **dis-** can be attached to nouns (**dis+order**), to adjectives (**dis+honest**) or verbs (**dis+obey**). Secondly, derivative affixes, unlike inflectional affixes cannot be attached freely to all the words belonging to a part of speech. For example, the suffix **-er** which is generally attached to **verbs**, e.g. **dancer, writer, player, runner** cannot be attached to some other verbs e.g. **cheater, arranger, hopper, expresser**.

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## 4.3 DERIVATIONAL PREFIXES

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We have already distinguished between prefixes and suffixes. Prefixes, as we said earlier, are attached to the beginning of a word and suffixes are attached to the end of a word. Prefixes when attached to the beginning of words modify their meaning. We shall study the kind of modification they make in the meaning of words when attached to them.

### 4.3.1 Negative, Reversative, Pejorative Prefixes

- a) **Negative Prefixes** are those that lend the meanings 'not' or 'opposite of' 'lacking in'. These prefixes can be attached to nouns, adjectives, verbs or adverbs. The most common negative prefixes are

- un-** e.g. uncommon, unpopular, unable, uncertain
- in-** e.g. inanimate, inconvenient, injustice
- dis-** e.g. disadvantage, disagree, discontent, dishonest
- non-** e.g. non-violent, non-cooperation, non-existent, non-smoker, non-resident

Other prefixes which are negative are

- il-** e.g. illegal, illegible
- ir-** e.g. irregular, irrelevant, irreverent
- im-** e.g. impossible, imbalance, immovable

**b) Reversible or privative prefixes** contribute the meaning 'reverse the action' denoted by the base word. These are

- un-** This combines only with verbs to convey the meaning 'reverse the action' e.g. undo, untie, unpack, unlock
- de-** This prefix combines with verbs and with nouns derived from verbs to convey the above meaning e.g. decode, decontrol, denationalize, defrost
- dis-** This prefix combines with verbs to mean 'reversing the action' e.g. disconnect, disinfect, disown, disqualify, dissatisfy

It has the meaning 'remove, deprive of, rid of' when added to what is denoted by some nouns e.g., disfigure, dishonor, discourage

**c) Pejorative Prefixes** are those which convey the meanings 'wrong', 'wrongly', 'bad', 'badly', 'false', 'imitation'

The main pejorative prefixes in English are

- mis-** This prefix when added to verbs conveys the meaning 'wrongly' 'badly' etc. e.g. mislead, mishandle, misbehave, mismanage.
- mal-** This prefix combines mostly with verbs to convey the meaning 'badly' e.g. maltreat, maladjust. It is combined with nouns as in malpractice, malnutrition, malfunction, with adjectives as in malodorous, and with participles as in malformed, malnourished and maladjusted.
- Pseudo-** combines with nouns and adjectives to convey the meaning 'false, imitation' e.g. pseudo-intellectual, pseudo-scientific.

### 4.3.2 Prefixes of Number, Time and Order

**a) Prefixes of Number** are those that are generally attached to nouns and adjectives and express a meaning denoting number. The following prefixes denote number.

- uni/mono-** meaning one e.g. unidirectional, unilateral, monorail, monolingual
- bi, di-** meaning two e.g. bilingual, bifocal, bimonthly, dioxide

- tri-** meaning three e.g. tricycle, tripod, tripartite
- poly-** meaning more than two e.g. polysyllabic, polytechnic

**b) Prefixes of time and order** are attached to nouns, verbs and adjectives.

- ex-** which conveys the meaning ‘former’ as in Ex-Prime Minister. This prefix is generally used with nouns.
- fore-** this gives the meaning ‘before in time’ e.g. foretell, forethought. It is mostly used with nouns.
- post-** this prefix when attached to either nouns or adjectives conveys the sense of something taking place after a particular date or event e.g. postwar, post-independence, post-colonial.
- pre-** this prefix forms words (nouns or adjectives) which describe something as taking place before a particular date or event e.g. pre-war, pre-independence.
- re-** conveys the meaning ‘again’ and is added to verbs and nouns to refer to the repetition of an action, e.g. rebuild, re-use, re-evaluate; or it refers to the opposite of an action that has already taken place e.g. regain, reappear.

### 4.3.3 Prefixes Showing Location and Attitude

**a) Prefixes of Location** are generally attached to nouns, verbs or adjectives to convey the meaning ‘situated’. For example,

- sub-** occurs with nouns, adjectives, verbs, to convey the meaning ‘beneath’, ‘below’ or ‘under’ e.g. subway, subnormal, submerge.
- inter-** occurs with verbs, nouns, adjectives to convey the meaning ‘between’ or ‘among’. For example, intermarry, interaction, inter-college, inter-national
- trans-** occurs with adjectives and verbs and conveys the meaning ‘across’ from one place to another e.g. transatlantic, transplant.

**b)** A few prefixes when attached to nouns, adjectives and verbs produce words which reflect attitude or position with respect to something. For example,

- co-** is attached to verbs or nouns and conveys the meaning ‘with’, ‘joint’. For example, cooperate, co-pilot.
- counter-** is added to abstract nouns and verbs and produces the meaning ‘against’ or ‘in opposition to’ e.g. counterattack, counter-clockwise.
- anti-** is added to nouns, adjectives and adverbs and conveys the meaning ‘against’ as in anti-missile, anti-social, anti-clockwise. It also has the meanings ‘the opposite of’ and ‘preventing’ e.g. anticlimax, anti-hero, anti-convulsant, anti-freeze
- pro-** is added to nouns and adjectives and contributes the meaning ‘on the side of’ e.g. pro-student, pro-America, pro-communist

#### 4.3.4 Prefixes of Degree, Rank, Size and Order

The following prefixes are attached to nouns, verbs or adjectives to convey meanings which have to do with rank, size or order.

- arch-** has the meaning 'highest or worst' and is attached mainly to nouns (human) e.g. arch-duke, arch-enemy.
- super-** occurs with nouns and adjectives and conveys the meaning 'above, more than, better' e.g. superman, super-market, superpower, supernatural, superhuman
- out-** is attached to some verbs to form other verbs which mean 'do something faster, longer, better than another person, thing,' e.g. outrun, outnumber, outlive, outgrow.
- sur-** has the meaning 'over and above' and is attached mainly to nouns e.g. surcharge, surtax.
- sub-** has the meaning 'lower than, less than' and is added to adjectives and nouns e.g. subhuman, substandard.
- over-** is added to verbs or adjectives to indicate that a quality exists or an action is done which is exaggerated e.g. overeat, overripe, overconfident.
- under-** is added to nouns and produces the meaning 'lower in rank', e.g. undersecretary. It is added to verbs and participles to convey the meaning that the action is done or the quality exists to an insufficient extent, e.g. undercook, underestimate, underprivileged, undernourished.
- hyper-** is added to adjectives and conveys the meaning 'extremely' e.g. hypersensitive, hypercritical.
- ultra-** is added to adjectives and nouns and contributes the meaning 'mega' or 'even more' ultra-modern, ultrasonic, ultra-sound
- mini-** is added to nouns and conveys the meaning 'small' e.g. miniskirt, mini-break, mini-bus, mini-disc
- micro-** is added to nouns which refer to 'very small' versions of certain things, e.g. micro-computer, micro-organism, micro-survey.

#### 4.3.5 Prefixes which Change the Part of Speech of the Word

We have already seen that prefixes do not normally affect words they are attached to grammatically. In a few cases, however, prefixes do affect the part of speech of the word they are attached to. The function of such prefixes is mainly grammatical and they do not carry any special meaning. The number of these prefixes is small and so is the number of words in which they occur. Such prefixes are also called **Conversion Prefixes**.

- be-** this prefix is added to nouns and adjectives to form verbs, e.g. befriend, belittle, becalm.

**en/em-** this is added to nouns to form verbs, e.g. enslave, endanger, empower, embitter.

**a-** this prefix forms adjectives from verbs e.g. ablaze, asleep, aglow

### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) Look at each of the words given below, identify the type of prefix attached to each word and write it down in the first column under 'Type of Prefix'. Then think of another word with the same prefix and the same meaning, and write it down in the second column under 'your example'.

|        | Word              | type of prefix | your example |
|--------|-------------------|----------------|--------------|
| i)     | discomfort        |                |              |
| ii)    | post-meridian     |                |              |
| iii)   | unmask            |                |              |
| iv)    | unkind            |                |              |
| v)     | ex-chief minister |                |              |
| vi)    | bi-centenary      |                |              |
| vii)   | irresponsible     |                |              |
| viii)  | disprove          |                |              |
| ix)    | disqualify        |                |              |
| x)     | monosyllabic      |                |              |
| xi)    | microbiology      |                |              |
| xii)   | multinational     |                |              |
| xiii)  | pseudonym         |                |              |
| xiv)   | unimaginative     |                |              |
| xv)    | rewind            |                |              |
| xvi)   | overestimate      |                |              |
| xvii)  | besiege           |                |              |
| xviii) | forenoon          |                |              |
| xix)   | deconstruct       |                |              |
| xx)    | anti-gravity      |                |              |
| xxi)   | hyperactive       |                |              |
| xxii)  | entrust           |                |              |
| xxiii) | avowed            |                |              |
| xxiv)  | undergraduate     |                |              |
| xxv)   | embalm            |                |              |

- 2) Choose the correct prefix from the prefixes given in brackets to express the kind of meaning indicated for each of the words given below.

- i) Contented (mal-, dis-, un-) negative

- ii) Represent (non-, mal, mis-) 'wrongly'
  - iii) Inform (mal-, mis-, dis-) 'incorrectly'
  - iv) Warn (post-, re-, fore-) 'before in time'
  - v) Advertise (pre-, re-, de-) 'again'
  - vi) Oceanic (trans-, inter-) 'across'
  - vii) Colonial (pre-, post-, ex-) 'after'
  - viii) Author (co-, pro-, bi-) 'joint'
  - ix) Active (ultra-, over-, hyper-) 'extremely'
  - x) Comfortable (un-, dis-, non-) negative
- 3) Use the correct prefix to convert each of the words in brackets into verbs or adjectives as required by the context. You may have to change the form of the verb.
- i) The Indian bustard is an \_\_\_\_\_ species. (danger)
  - ii) They \_\_\_\_\_ paying so much money for second-rate equipment. (grudge)
  - iii) Cars and buses were set \_\_\_\_\_ during the riot. (blaze)
  - iv) In her speech she gave examples that \_\_\_\_\_ the crowd. (rage)
  - v) He knew that without a life belt he could not stay \_\_\_\_\_. (float)
  - vi) She lived in the style \_\_\_\_\_ the first lady of classical music. (fit)

## 4.4 DERIVATIONAL SUFFIXES

In this section we shall look at derivational suffixes in English and the rules for their attachment to words. First we shall describe those suffixes that do not bring about a change in the part of speech of the word they are attached to.

### 4.4.1 Suffixes which do not Change the Part of Speech of the Word

Derivational suffixes may or may not bring about a change in the part of speech of the word they are attached to. Let us look at the following derivational suffixes.

- A) i) -age e.g. bag – baggage, bond – bondage, post – postage.
- ii) -dom e.g. king – kingdom, star – stardom, serf – serfdom
- iii) -ery e.g. jewel – jewellery, weapon – weaponry, slave – slavery
- iv) -hood e.g. state – statehood, boy – boyhood, widow – widowhood
- v) -ing e.g. farm – farming, shirt – shirting
- vi) -ism e.g. hero – heroism, fanatic – fanaticism, Hindu – Hinduism
- vii) -ship e.g. member – membership, fellow – fellowship, professor – professorship

Notice that the words to which each of these suffixes is attached are all nouns. Is there any change in the part of speech of the words after the suffixes are attached?

The new words are also nouns. The suffixes when added to nouns form abstract nouns. Thus the addition of the suffix **-age** to the nouns **bag** or **bond** gives us the abstract nouns **baggage**, **bondage**.

Similarly, the addition of the suffixes **-dom**, **-ery**, **-hood**, to the nouns **king**, **slave** and **state** give us abstract nouns **kingdom**, **slavery**, **statehood**. The same is the case with the endings **-ing**, **-ism** and **-ship** when added to nouns such as **farm**, **hero** and **member**, for example.

As we have seen in the Unit on word stress, these derivational suffixes do not affect stress. The stress in all the words above remains unchanged after the suffix is added. For example:

'widow+hood – 'widowhood (stress on 1st syllable)

'hero + ism – 'heroism (stress on 1st syllable)

pro'fessor + ship – pro'fessorship (stress on 2nd syllable)

B) Let us look at another set of suffixes that do not change the part of speech of the word to which they are attached.

- i) –er e.g. mountaineer, engineer, profiteer
- ii) –er e.g. teenager, three-wheeler, gardener, jeweller
- iii) –ess e.g. actress, waitress
- iv) –let e.g. booklet, piglet, playlet
- v) –ling e.g. duckling, seedling

Of these derivational suffixes only (i) **-er** affects stress. The word **mountain** for example, receives the stress on 'moun. When the suffix **-er** is added, the stress shifts to the suffix and we pronounce the word **mountai'neer** with the stress on **neer**.

The other derivational suffixes in this category do not affect placement of stress. In other words, the stress on words remains unchanged after the addition of the suffixes, **-er**, **-ess**, **-let**, **-ling**.

#### 4.4.2 Suffixes Which Change the Part of Speech of the Word

In this section we shall study derivational suffixes that bring about a change in the part of speech of the word to which they are attached.

A) There are suffixes that form nouns from adjectives. For example:

- i) –dom      free+dom      – freedom
- ii) –hood      false+hood      – falsehood
- iii) –ity –      regular+ity      – regularity
- electric+ity      – electricity

(This suffix affects stress. In other words, the stress shifts – 'regular – regu'larly, e'lectric – elec'tricity)

- iv) –ness      e.g.      sweet+ness – sweetness
- faithful+ness – faithfulness
- dark+ness – darkness

- v) -th e.g. wide+th – width  
long+th – length

B) Some suffixes are attached to verbs to form nouns (abstract and concrete).  
These are:

- i) -age e.g. break+age – breakage  
cover+age – coverage  
waste+age – wastage
- ii) -al e.g. arrive+al – arrival  
refuse+al – refusal  
survive+al – survival
- iii) -ation e.g. examine+ation – examination  
alter+ation – alteration  
mediate + ation – mediation

(This suffix affects stress e.g. e'xamine – exami'nation, 'alter – alte'ration)

- iv) -ment e.g. appoint+ment – appointment  
argue+ment – argument  
develop+ment – development  
establish+ment – establishment
- v) -ure e.g. fail+ure – failure  
close+ure – closure  
expose + ure – exposure
- vi) -ant e.g. contest (v.) +ant – contestant  
defend + ant – defendant  
participate+ant – participant
- vii) -ee e.g. employ+ee – employee  
pay+ee – payee  
train+ee – trainee
- viii) -er/-or e.g. write+er – writer  
play (v)+er – player  
dance+er – dancer  
accelerate+or – accelerator

C) Some derivational suffixes form adjectives.

1) Of these there are those that form adjectives from nouns.

Let's look at some suffixes which when added to nouns, form adjectives.

- i) -al e.g. accident+al – accidental  
incident+al – incidental  
education+al – educational  
culture+al – cultural

- |           |      |                                                                                             |
|-----------|------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| ii) -ial  | e.g. | 'editor+ial – edi'torial<br>pro'fessor+ial – profes'sorial<br>'territory+ial – terri'torial |
| iii) -ic  | e.g. | 'atom+ic – a'tomic<br>'hero+ic – he'roic<br>'poet+ic – po'etic                              |
| iv) -ical | e.g. | phi'losophy+ical – philo'sophical<br>ge'oography+ical – geo'graphical                       |

(Notice that the suffixes -ial, -ic, -ical affect word stress. The stress is marked and clearly shows a shift to the right when the suffix is added.)

- |            |      |                                                                          |
|------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| v) -ful    | e.g. | beaut(y)+ful – beautiful<br>care+ful – careful<br>truth+ful – truthful   |
| vi) -ish   | e.g. | child+ish – childish<br>fool+ish – foolish                               |
| vii) -less | e.g. | child+less – childless<br>pain+less – painless<br>tooth+less – toothless |
| viii) -ly  | e.g. | mother+ly – motherly<br>woman+ly – womanly                               |
| ix) -y     | e.g. | filth+y – filthy<br>health+y – healthy<br>sleep+y – sleepy               |

2) The following suffixes form adjectives when added to verbs

- |             |      |                                                                                            |
|-------------|------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| i) -able    | e.g. | bear+able – bearable<br>read+able – readable<br>suit+able – suitable                       |
| ii) -ant    | e.g. | please+ant – pleasant                                                                      |
| -ent        | e.g. | differ+ent – different                                                                     |
| iii) -atory | e.g. | exclaim+atory – exclamatory<br>prepare+atory – preparatory<br>inflamm+atory – inflammatory |
| iv) -ful    | e.g. | forget+ful – forgetful<br>mourn+ful – mournful<br>resent+ful – resentful                   |

- v)   ive           e.g.   attract+ive – attractive  
                      collect+ive – collective  
                      create+ive – creative

The following suffixes when attached to nouns or adjectives, produce words which are again nouns or adjectives.

- i)    -ese           e.g.   China+ese – Chinese  
                      Japan+ese – Japanese  
                      Singhala+ese – Singhalese
- ii)   -ian, -an e.g.   Australia+(ia)n – Australian  
                      India+(ia)n – Indian  
                      Africa+(ia)n – African  
                      America+(a)n – American
- iii) -ist           e.g.   violin+ist – violinist  
                      piano+ist – pianist  
                      loyal+ist – loyalist  
                      left+ist – leftist  
                      social+ist – socialist
- 3)   a)   Some of these suffixes form verbs when added to nouns
- i)   -ify       e.g.   beaut(y)+fy – beautify  
                      code+ify – codify  
                      identi(ty) +fy – identify  
                      electri(city) + fy – electrify
- ii) -ize       e.g.   crystal+ise – crystalise  
                      hospital+ise – hospitalize
- b)   Some suffixes form verbs when added to adjectives. For example,
- i)   -en       e.g.   bright+en – brighten  
                      short+en –shorten  
                      wide+en – widen
- ii) -ify       e.g.   simple+ify – simplify  
                      false+ify – falsify  
                      clear+ify – clarify
- iii) -ize       e.g.   equal+ize – equalize  
                      modern+ize – modernize

- 4)   Some derivational suffixes form adverbs when added to nouns or adjectives

- a) The following suffixes form adverbs when added to nouns.
- |                  |      |                                                  |
|------------------|------|--------------------------------------------------|
| i) –ward, –wards | e.g. | home+ward – homeward(s)<br>sky+ward – skyward(s) |
| ii) –wise        | e.g. | width+wise – widthwise<br>clock+wise – clockwise |
- b) The suffix –ily/ly forms adverbs when added to adjectives
- |         |      |                                                                                                                   |
|---------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| –ily/ly | e.g. | careful+ly – carefully<br>neat+ly – neatly<br>pretty+ily – prettily<br>angry+ily – angrily<br>funny+ily – funnily |
|---------|------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|

## Check Your Progress 2

- 1) Given below are words to which you must add an appropriate derivational suffix in order to bring about a change in the part of speech of each word. The part of speech the word should belong to after the addition of the suffix is given in brackets.

For example,

code ..... (verb) – code+ify – codify

- i) noisy..... (adverb)
- ii) reader..... (abstract noun)
- iii) plural..... (noun)
- iv) heir..... (noun)
- v) friend..... (abstract noun)
- vi) critic.....( abstract noun)
- vii) just..... (verb)
- viii) sane..... (noun)
- ix) deep..... (noun)
- x) organize.....(noun)
- xi) ceremony.....(adjective)
- xii) girl.....(adjective)
- xiii) negate.....(adjective)
- xiv) geology.....(adjective)
- xv) truthful.....(noun)
- xvi) character.....(noun)
- xvii) tight.....(verb)
- xviii) stealthy..... (adverb)
- xix) length.....(adjective)
- xx) terrorist.....(verb)

- 2) The meaning of each word and the part of speech to which it belongs is given below. Find a single word with the appropriate suffix (and prefix where necessary) for the meaning given in each case.

Example: the cost of having goods carried from one place to another in a cart or any other vehicle. (noun)

Answer: Cartage

- i) the act of changing by replacing old methods or equipment with new ones. (verb)
- ii) the act of refusing (noun)
- iii) to make one feel happy or glad (verb)
- iv) to change into a solid (verb)
- v) that which is bearable (adjective)
- vi) the quality of being well-liked (noun)
- vii) one who absents himself from the place where he is required to be. (noun)
- viii) in a quiet manner (adverb)
- ix) usual, done as a matter of habit (adverb)
- x) the quality of being healthy in mind (noun)
- xi) marked by, or done according to ceremony (adjective)
- xii) concerned with or connected with the way the mind works (adjective)
- xiii) suffering or death for lack of food (noun)
- xiv) the quality of being on time (noun)
- xv) liking to talk a lot (adjective)

## 4.5 CONVERSION

An important fact we need to remember when we discuss conversion is that it is a process of derivation though it does not involve the addition of any derivational affixes. As we saw in the first unit, conversion like derivation, creates new words. When a word is converted from one part of speech to another, its meaning also undergoes some change. For example, the word **cheat** when it functions as a noun means **one who cheats**. The same word when converted to a verb means **the act of cheating**. Thus conversion changes the part of speech of the word without the addition of either a suffix or a prefix.

### 4.5.1 Types of Conversion

There are three major types of conversion

- I) Conversion to noun
  - II) Conversion to verb
  - III) Conversion to adjective
- I) Let's first look at some words that are converted to nouns from verbs.

- i) (to) cheat (v.) – He is a **cheat** (noun)
- ii) (to) bend (v.) – There's a hairpin **bend** on the road only a hundred metres from here. (noun)
- iii) (to) catch (v.) – Did you **catch** any fish?  
Well, our total **catch** (n.) was one large fish.
- iv) (to) find (v.) – The carved statue they unearthed was a real **find** (noun)

Some other common verbs that are converted to nouns are **attach, attempt, collapse, cry, fall, hit, laugh, look, murder, search, desire, dislike, doubt, love, need, taste, dump, retreat.**

Some other words are converted to nouns from adjectives. For example, **criminal, intellectual, noble, progressive.**

We might ask ourselves the question 'How do we decide which one of the two parts of speech of a word is the base, we generally try to identify the main or primary meaning of a word. This is not easy. If we can identify the primary meaning of a word, that can be established as the base.

## II) A. Conversion to verbs

Let's look at a few words that are converted to verbs from nouns

These are:

|          |           |         |
|----------|-----------|---------|
| campaign | echo      | mail    |
| motion   | coin      | ship    |
| orbit    | bottle    | bicycle |
| parade   | can       | motor   |
| butter   | catalogue | land    |
| grease   | floor     | list    |
| mask     | ground    | pocket  |
| plaster  | tunnel    | table   |
| powder   | cripple   |         |
| salt     | group     |         |
| watch    | dust      |         |
| bud      | milk      |         |
| flower   | skim      |         |

B) There are other words that are converted to verbs from adjectives. For example:

|       |        |        |       |
|-------|--------|--------|-------|
| bald  | narrow | dirty  | free  |
| dry   | slim   | smooth | still |
| empty | sour   | humble |       |

### III) Conversion to Adjectives

The number of converted adjectives from nouns is rather small. This may be due to the fact that nouns can often be used in the position of an adjective while still remaining nouns, that is, they are often placed before nouns in a modifying function. For example, **a gold chain, a brick house**. Some nouns can also occur after verbs like adjectives, e.g. **It's a beauty** instead of **It's beautiful**, **He's a fool** instead of **He's foolish**.

However, there are very few nouns that can occur both before a noun and after a verb. For example, we can say **a paper plate**, but not **This plate is paper**. Similarly, we can say **the boy's a fool** but not **fool boy**. If we do come across a noun which can occur in both these positions we regard it as an adjective derived from a noun. For example,

**A brick house – The house is made of brick**

**The head teacher – The teacher is the head**

**A concrete floor – The floor is concrete**

#### 4.5.2 Conversion and Stress

As we saw in the Unit on Word Stress, the conversion of words that function as nouns or adjectives to verbs affects the stress on these words in speech. Words, when they function as nouns or adjectives receive the stress on the first syllable, but when they function as verbs the stress shifts on the second syllable. However, this shift in stress applies to **some two-syllable words only**.

For example,

|                   |                |
|-------------------|----------------|
| 'conduct (n)      | con'duct (vb)  |
| 'import (n)       | im'port (vb)   |
| 'present (n/adj.) | pre'sent (vb)  |
| 'object (n)       | ob'ject (vb)   |
| 'convict (n)      | con'vict (vb)  |
| 'subject (n)      | sub'ject (vb)  |
| 'absent (adj.)    | ab'sent (vb)   |
| 'transfer (n)     | trans'fer (vb) |
| 'protest (n)      | pro'test (vb)  |
| 'frequent (adj.)  | fre'quent (vb) |
| 'permit (n)       | per'mit (vb)   |

Thus conversion in words such as these is indicated in speech by a shift in stress from the first to the second syllable.

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## 4.6 WORD COMPOUNDING

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Word compounding is as we have seen in the first unit, also a process of word formation. Compounds are made up of two or more parts or elements which can also occur independently as words. These separate words are combined to form

other new words which are listed separately in the dictionary and have separate meanings. They also take inflectional and derivational affixes.

Let's look at the following compound words, for example:

blackboard

flowerpot

armchair

Each of these words comprises two words that have their own meaning. The compound word **blackboard** is a **large board with a smooth black surface that teachers write on with a piece of chalk**. Similarly, the two nouns **flower** and **pot** in **flowerpot** become a single new unit. This new unit is a noun which has a plural form like other nouns and takes an adjective. Thus the plural form in **flowerpots** is applicable to the whole compound, and the addition of an adjective, for example, **red** flowerpot refers to a flowerpot that is red in colour, rather than to the colour of 'flower'.

Some compound words have meaning that is in no way derived from the meaning of their parts. Notice that while the meaning of compounds like **flowerpot**, **armchair**, **schoolboy**, **raincoat** does not lie totally outside the compounds, a word like **highbrow** for instance does not mean 'a type of brow' but it means an intellectual. Similarly, a **blockhead** is **not a kind of head** but a person who is stupid, and **butterfingers** is **not a kind of fingers** but someone **who lets things fall or slip through his/her fingers**. Compounds such as these have in other words, an **idiomatic meaning**.

#### 4.6.1 Noun Compounds

Noun compounds are those compounds that have the function of nouns irrespective of whether the constituent parts are both nouns. Noun compounds can have the following possible combinations of elements that have these parts of speech.

- 1) Noun + noun e.g. icecream, ladybird, walking stick
- 2) Verb + noun e.g. breakfast, pickpocket
- 3) Noun + verb e.g. sunshine, birthcontrol
- 4) Adjective + noun e.g. greenhouse, darkroom
- 5) Verb + particle e.g. dropout, fallout
- 6) Particle + verb e.g. income, outcast
- 7) Particle + noun e.g. afterthought, overdose

#### 4.6.2 Adjective Compounds

Adjective compounds are those compounds that have the function of adjectives. Adjective compounds can have the following different combinations of elements that have these parts of speech.

- 1) Noun + verb e.g. tax-free, fat-free, man-made, gut-wrenching
- 2) Adjective + adjective e.g. icy-cold, deaf-mute
- 3) Noun + adjective e.g. waterproof, horn-rimmed

- 4) Adverb + adjective e.g. long-awaited
- 5) Adjective + noun e.g. white collar, green-fingered.

### 4.6.3 Verb Compounds

The third type of compounds are those that function as verbs. Verb compounds have the following combinations.

- 1) Noun + verb e.g. to brainwash, bottle-fed
- 2) Adjective + noun e.g. to blacklist, to cold-shoulder
- 3) Particle + verb e.g. to overflow, underestimate
- 4) Adjective + verb e.g. dryclean

### Check Your Progress 3

- 1) To which part of speech does the *italicized* word in each of the following sentences belong? What is the base from which it has been converted?
  - i) Police *checks* on the highway have been on the increase since last week.
  - ii) There's no harm in giving it another *try*.
  - iii) You cannot *encash* your cheque today because it is a bank holiday.
  - iv) After you have helped yourself to the sauce please *cork* the bottle.
  - v) She goes for a two-kilometre *run* every morning.
  - vi) People *lined* the streets to welcome the foreign dignitary.
  - vii) Biro's were the earliest ball point pens to be *marketed*.
  - viii) No sooner had she finished cleaning the room than her son *dirtied* it again.
  - ix) She's beginning to *weary* of explaining the same thing over and over again.
  - x) Nobody knows what has *soured* their relationship.
- 2) Identify the type of compound to which each of the following compounds belongs in terms of the type discussed in sections 4.6.1. to 4.6.3.
 

|                |                 |                   |                 |
|----------------|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| i) brainstorm  | ii) downpour    | iii) drawback     | iv) earthquake  |
| v) farfetched  | vi) heartfelt   | vii) longlost     | viii) overpower |
| ix) outgrow    | x) sleeping bag | xi) large hearted |                 |
| xii) staircase | xiii) underpin  | xiv) water-borne  |                 |

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## 4.7 LET US SUM UP

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In this unit we have learnt that

- i) Derivational affixes modify the meaning of the words to which they are attached. These are large compared to the number of inflectional affixes.
- ii) Derivational affixes are either prefixes or suffixes unlike inflectional affixes which are only suffixes.

- iii) Prefixes can be classified on the basis of the meaning they contribute to the resulting words.
- iv) There are eight group of prefixes – negatives, reversatives, pejoratives, number, degree, size, rank, time and order, location, attitude and orientation.
- v) There are a few prefixes which change the part of speech of the word they are added to.
- vi) Some derivational suffixes change the part of speech of the word to which they are attached.
- vii) The majority of derivational suffixes bring about a change in the meaning of the word to which they are attached.
- viii) Suffixes are grouped according to the part of speech of the word which results from the suffix that is attached to it. (e.g. noun suffixes, verb suffixes, adjective suffixes etc.)
- ix) Conversion is another form of word formation. Words can be converted to nouns from verbs, or to verbs from nouns, or to verbs from adjectives without the addition of suffixes.
- x) Conversion affects places of stress on some two-syllable words.
- xi) In compounding two or more independently occurring words are combined to form a single 'new' word. the new word functions as a single word and not as a combination of two words.
- xii) The meaning of some compound words may be idiomatic, i.e. they cannot be logically derived from the meaning of their parts.
- xiii) Three kinds of compounds are found in English: noun compounds, adjective compounds and verb compounds

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## 4.8 KEY WORDS

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|                             |                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Attitude prefix:</b>     | A prefix that helps to identify something by describing its attitude or orientation towards something else. |
| <b>Base:</b>                | the word which undergoes conversion                                                                         |
| <b>Compounds:</b>           | A word made up wholly of two or more parts each of which can occur independently as a word                  |
| <b>Conversion:</b>          | A process of derivation by which 'new' words are formed without the addition of an affix.                   |
| <b>Degree, rank</b>         | A prefix that contributes the idea of one thing being higher or lower than.                                 |
| <b>Size prefix:</b>         | equal to something else in degree, rank or size.                                                            |
| <b>Derivational suffix:</b> | A derivational is attached to the end of a word.                                                            |

|                               |                                                                                                                                                                    |
|-------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Location prefix:</b>       | A prefix that helps to identify a thing by describing it as being located: at, in front of, below, above, etc., or between two or more other things.               |
| <b>Negative prefix:</b>       | A prefix that contributes the meaning 'not', 'opposite of', 'lacking in', 'irrelevant to' etc.                                                                     |
| <b>Number prefix:</b>         | A prefix that contributes the idea of number (one, two, many, half, etc.) to the meaning of the base word.                                                         |
| <b>Pejorative prefix:</b>     | A prefix that adds the meaning 'bad', 'badly', 'wrongly', 'false', 'imitation', etc. to the meaning of the base word.                                              |
| <b>Privative prefix:</b>      | A prefix that contributes the meaning 'deprive' or rid (someone of something)                                                                                      |
| <b>Reversative prefix:</b>    | A prefix that contributes the meaning 'reverse the action' or 'undo the action' denoted by the stem.                                                               |
| <b>Suffixation:</b>           | The process by which a bound morpheme is attached to the end of a word.                                                                                            |
| <b>Time and order prefix:</b> | A prefix that helps to identify a thing, action, etc., by relating it to some event in terms of time (e.g. before or after) or order (e.g. following or preceding) |

## 4.9 ANSWERS

### Check Your Progress 1

- 1) The solution below gives only the type of meaning contributed by the prefix. To confirm whether the word you write also contains the same prefix with the same meaning or not, consult the following books.

*Collins COBUILD English Language Dictionary* (1987). London; Collins  
*Oxford Advanced Learner's Dictionary* (7 edition – 2005 or 8th ed. 2010)

Quirk R and Greenbaum S (1973) *A University Grammar of English*. London: Longman

- i) Negative
- ii) Time or order
- iii) Privative or Reversative
- iv) Negative
- v) Order
- vi) Number
- vii) Negative
- viii) Reversative
- ix) Reversative
- x) Number

- xi) Size
- xii) Number
- xiii) Pejorative
- xiv) Negative
- xv) Order
- xvi) Size
- xvii) Change of part of speech from noun to verb
- xviii) Time
- xix) Reversative
- xx) Added to noun to mean 'against' – 'Attitude or Position'
- xxi) Order
- xxii) Change of part of speech from noun to verb
- xxiii) Change of part of speech from verb to adjective
- xxiv) Rank
- xxv) Change of part of speech from noun to verb

- |    |                    |                   |
|----|--------------------|-------------------|
| 2) | i) discontented    | ii) misrepresent  |
|    | iii) misinform     | iv) forewarn      |
|    | v) re-advertise    | vi) trans-oceanic |
|    | vii) post-colonial | viii) co-author   |
|    | ix) hyperactive    | x) uncomfortable  |
| 3) | i) endangered      | ii) begrudge      |
|    | iii) ablaze        | iv) enraged       |
|    | v) afloat          | vi) befitting     |

### Check Your Progress 2

- |    |                  |                   |
|----|------------------|-------------------|
| 1) | i) noisily       | ii) readership    |
|    | iii) pluralism   | iv) heiress       |
|    | v) friendship    | vi) criticism     |
|    | vii) justify     | viii) sanity      |
|    | ix) depth        | x) organization   |
|    | xi) ceremonial   | xii) girlish      |
|    | xiii) negative   | xiv) geological   |
|    | xv) truthfulness | xvi) characterize |
|    | xvii) tighten    | xviii) stealthily |
|    | xix) lengthy     | xx) terrorise     |
| 2) | i) modernize     | ii) refusal       |
|    | iii) gladden     | iv) solidify      |
|    | v) tolerable     | vi) popularity    |

- |                  |                    |
|------------------|--------------------|
| vii) absentee    | viii) quietly      |
| ix) habitually   | x) sanity          |
| xi) ceremonial   | xii) psychological |
| xiii) starvation | xiv) punctuality   |
| xv) talkative    |                    |

### Check Your Progress 3

- |                              |                                |
|------------------------------|--------------------------------|
| 1) i) Noun from verb base    | ii) Noun from verb base        |
| iii) Verb from noun base     | iv) Verb from noun base        |
| v) Noun from verb base       | vi) Verb from noun base        |
| vii) Verb from noun base     | viii) Verb from adjective base |
| ix) Verb from adjective base | x) Verb from adjective base    |
| 2) i) Verb compound          | Noun + Verb                    |
| ii) Noun compound            | Particle + Verb                |
| iii) Noun compound           | Verb + Particle                |
| iv) Noun compound            | Noun + Verb                    |
| v) Adjective compound        | Adverb + Verb                  |
| vi) Adjective compound       | Noun + Verb                    |
| vii) Adjective compound      | Adverb + Adjective             |
| viii) Verb compound          | Particle + Noun                |
| ix) Verb compound            | Particle + Verb                |
| x) Noun compound             | Noun + Noun                    |
| xi) Adjective compound       | Adjective + Noun               |
| xii) Noun compound           | Noun + Noun                    |
| xiii) Verb compound          | Particle + Verb                |
| xiv) Adjective compound      | Noun + Adjective               |