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# Morphology

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Recommended minimum reading time: 3 hours

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## Introduction

Morphology is the study of the structure or form of words. Words exist in all languages, and speakers intuitively know what a word is. If we asked a native speaker of English how many words there are in the sentence *He's sure that what he said was the absolute truth*, they would say that there are 11, and they would be right.

Internally, words are made up of smaller elements, called morphemes, which are the smallest meaningful units of a language. For example, the word *unhappy* consists of two morphemes: *un-* and *happy*. *Happy* means «feeling or showing pleasure or contentment» (*Oxford Dictionary of English*), and *un-* means «not».

Morphology is traditionally divided into inflectional and derivational (or lexical). The former deals with morphemes that express grammatical meaning, such as gender, number or tense, while the latter is concerned with the creation of new words by means of affixes.

In this unit, we will compare English morphology, on the one hand, with Spanish and Catalan morphology, on the other hand, focusing more on the differences than on the similarities.

We will deal first with inflectional and derivational morphology, and then with compounding and other word formation processes.

## Objectives

After having studied this unit, the student will be able to:

1. Distinguish between inflectional and derivational morphology.
2. Understand and explain the expression of number and gender in English and Catalan/Spanish nouns and adjectives, identifying both differences and similarities.
3. Be aware of the differences in verb morphology in English and Catalan/Spanish.
4. Define the various word formation processes (acronymy, backformation, blending, clipping, compounding conversion, derivation, and reduplication) in English and Catalan/Spanish.
5. Formulate the differences and similarities between English and Catalan/Spanish in this area, and illustrate with original examples.

## 1. Inflectional morphology

Inflectional morphology is the study of **grammatical morphemes**, that is, those expressing categories such as gender and number (nouns and adjectives), and mood, tense, aspect, person and number (verbs). In Catalan and Spanish, inflectional morphology is much richer than in English.

Inflectional morphology deals with inflections, that is, the different affixes added to a root which contribute grammatical information.

### 1.1. Nouns

#### 1.1.1. Gender

Spanish and Catalan nouns inflect for **gender** (masculine or feminine), whereas English nouns do not. Thus, the first and biggest difference between English and the Romance languages under study is that gender is **natural** in the former and **grammatical** in the latter.

In English, gender is not a grammatical category, i.e., it is not part of the inflectional system of the language.

In Spanish and Catalan, gender is a characteristic **inherent** to nouns, and, as such, **arbitrary**. Besides, the gender of each noun has grammatical consequences in the Noun Phrase where it appears, and also beyond the clause: determiners and adjectives, on the one hand, and pronouns, on the other, agree in gender with the head noun or antecedent.

una taula vermella / \*un taula vermell

una mesa roja / \*un mesa rojo

Allà hi ha la taula vermella. La / \*el veus?

Aquí está la mesa roja. ¿La / \*lo ves?

In nouns with animate referents, there is a correlation of the grammatical categories of masculine and feminine with the extralinguistic categories of male and female.

nen - nena, gat - gata; chico - chica, perro - perra

#### Note

There is no reason why *mesa* and *taula* are feminine, while *cotxe* and *coche* are masculine.

In English, on the other hand, nouns do not inflect for gender. Gender is reflected in the language (in the pronouns or possessive determiners), when a noun has as a referent an entity in the real world with a given sex (masculine or feminine).

Can you see that **man** over there? **He** is my brother.

Can you see that **woman** over there? **She** is my sister.

Articles and other determiners do not inflect for gender, and adjectives do not inflect for gender or number.

a man / a woman

my son / my daughter

In English, we find the following genders:

- **Masculine** (referred to as *he*): *monk, king, Mr.*
- **Feminine** (referred to as *she*): *nun, queen, Ms.*
- **Common** or **dual** (referred to as *he* or *she*, depending on the sex of the referent): *cousin, classmate, nurse, novelist, singer, speaker.*
- **Neuter** (referred to as *it*): *child, baby, elephant.*

In the singular, the pronoun used for nouns with a masculine referent is *he*, for a feminine referent *she*, and for everything else *it*. In the plural, there is no gender differentiation, and *they* is used in all cases.

My uncle is very old. **He** was born in 1923.

My aunt likes living in a village. **She** hates big cities.

**They** have a cock. **It** wakes them up every morning.

When referring to a baby or a child, *it* can be used, but often speakers choose *she* or *he*, if they know the sex of the referent. As for animals, *he*, *she* or *it* are possible. *It* is the default form, and the other two are used if there is a close relationship between the speaker and the animal, especially pets.

The spider is here again! I thought **it** had gone away.

My dog died last week. **He** was 12 years old.

I've had this cat for longer than I can remember. I found **her** in the park.

There are some nouns which are considered feminine in English (and are, thus, referred to with *she*), although it has nothing to do with their sex: *ships, Christian Church, car, countries, fortune, nature.*

Let's consider now the **gender markers** in the three languages.



In Catalan, in general, masculine forms are not marked, that is, there is no morpheme (e.g. *café*, *tronc*), whereas the feminine ones are marked with *-a* (*finestra*, *pera*). There are, however, some exceptions, such as *el problema* or *la magneto*.

In nouns with **animate referents**, it is often the case that there is a form for the masculine and another one for the feminine (*gat* - *gata*). These forms are subject to some phonological changes, pervasive in the whole language, not particular to this area:

- Final sound in the masculine voiceless - voiced in the feminine: *mag* - *maga*, *sord* - *sorda*.
- Deletion of /r/ in the masculine: *former* - *fornera*, *cambrer* - *cambrera*.
- Deletion of /n/ in the masculine: *padrí* - *padrina*, *mexicà* - *mexicana*.
- Simplification of the (final) consonant cluster in the masculine: *gegant* - *geganta*, *client* - *clienta*.
- /w/ in the masculine - /v/ in the feminine: *hereu* - *hereva*, *eslau* - *eslava*.

In Spanish, the masculine is either not marked, or indicated with *-o* or *-e* (e.g. *arroz*, *perro*, *temple*), and the feminine is typically marked with *-a* (e.g. *mesa*, *cereza*). In this language, there are also some exceptions, such as *el poema* or *la fiebre* but no phonological changes.

Not all nouns with animate (non-human referents) have a masculine and a feminine form, e.g. *formiga*, *antílope*. In such cases, if the speaker wants to specify the sex of the referent, s/he needs to say *la formiga* (*mascle/femella*), *el antílope* (*macho/hembra*).

There are also a few nouns with human referents which do not have a masculine and a feminine form: *persona*, *nadó/bebé*, *criatura*, *víctima*. In this case, regardless of whether the person, baby, child or victim is male or female, the gender does not change, i.e. *persona*, *criatura* and *víctima* are feminine, and *nadó* is masculine.

La víctima era un home de 45 anys.

El bebé era una niña preciosa.

Most nouns with human referents (and also a few with animate non-human referent) have a masculine and a feminine form, which can be of different kinds:

- With an opposition in the gender morph: *noi* - *noia*; *sobrino* - *sobrina*.

#### Further reading

J. Solà i altres (dir.) (2002) *Gramàtica del Català Contemporani. Vol. 1: Fonètica, fonologia, morfologia* (p. 515-534). Barcelona: Empúries

Real Academia Española y Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española (2009) *Nueva gramática de la lengua española. Morfología y sintaxis. Vol. I*. Madrid: Espasa (p. 81-126).

- With no change: (*el/la*) *gerent*; (*el/la*) *testigo*.
- Change in the root + opposition in gender morph (+ suffixation): *home - dona*; *caballo - yegua*.
- Change in the root (only): *marit - muller*, *padre - madre*.
- Suffixation + opposition in the gender morph: *abat - abadessa*, *gallo - gallina*.

There are also some nouns that can be both feminine and masculine grammatically, with no change in meaning whatsoever: *el/la vessant*; *el/la mar*.

Finally, in both languages, there are nouns that have a different meaning in masculine and in feminine: *el/la salut*; *el/la pendiente*.

In English, gender, although it is not a grammatical category (and, hence, is not reflected in the inflection), can also be expressed in different ways:

- Derivational suffixes: *actor - actress*, *widow - widower*. These derivational suffixes are non-productive in present-day English. In fact, there is a tendency to avoid them altogether, so that actresses refer to themselves as actors.
- Compounds: *boyfriend*, *girl scout*. This word formation process is still productive. However, compounds such as *male nurse* or *female doctor*, which were used a few years ago, are now avoided and the tendency is to use simply the word for the job, without indicating the sex of the person holding it.
- Some nouns have different forms for the masculine and the feminine: *uncle - aunt*, *boy - girl*. This process is not productive at all any more.

### **Gender neutrality**

Presently, there is a lot of debate about the gender that should be used as generic, that is, to refer to both females and males.

In English, since there is no grammatical gender, this only affects compounds such as *chairman*, and third-person singular pronouns. As for nouns, the tendency is to replace gender-specific nouns (*chairman*, *policeman*, *fireman*) with gender-neutral forms: *chairperson*, *police officer*, *fire fighter*.

In relation to pronouns, the use of generic *he* is almost non-existent nowadays. The usual alternatives are the following: a) *s/he*, b) *she or he* or *he or she*, c) *they* with singular reference.

If a student wants to talk to the teacher, **they** should make an appointment.

If a student wants to talk to the teacher, **s/he** should make an appointment.

### 1.1.2. Number

Prototypical nouns in Catalan, Spanish and English inflect for **number** (singular and plural), as we can see in the following examples:

chair - chairs; cadira - cadires; silla - sillas

In English, the **regular plural** is formed by adding *-s* to the singular (base) form. The regular plural morpheme has three different phonological realizations (morphophonemes), depending on the context:

- /z/ after a voiced sound, e.g. *pens*, *boys*
- /s/ after a voiceless sound, e.g. *cakes*, *boots*
- /ɪz/ after /s, z, ʃ, ʒ, tʃ, dʒ/, e.g. *buses*, *prizes*

There are also **irregular plurals**, which can be grouped as follows:

- Plural with *-en*: *child-children*, *ox-oxen*, *brother-brethren*.
- Invariable nouns, i.e., nouns that have the same form in the singular as in the plural: *deer*, *sheep*, *cod*, *salmon*. The names of other animals can appear with or without *-s*; when they appear without it, they are considered game animals.

I saw a **deer** yesterday.

I saw three **deer** yesterday.

Do you know where I can fish **flounder**?

Please buy three **flounders** for dinner tonight.

- Umlaut, that is, variation of the internal vowel: *man-men*, *goose-geese*, *tooth-teeth*, *foot-feet*, *mouse-mice*, *louse-lice*, *woman-women*.
- Phonological variation of the root: in some words, the final voiceless consonant becomes voiced in the plural (it can involve a change in spelling): *knife-knives*, *wife-wives*, *calf-calves*, *loaf-loaves*, *leaf-leaves*; *sheath*, *wreath*; *house*.
- Foreign plurals: generally, words of Latin and Greek origin keep the plural forms they had in those languages. Some of these words have two plurals, such as *curriculum* - *curricula/curriculum*s.

alumnus /əʃ/ - alumni /aɪ/ : *bacillus*, *stimulus*.

#### Further reading

For more information about avoiding a sexist use of language in texts, see the following:

Catalan  
Spanish  
English

*alumna* /ə/ - *alumnae* /i:/: *alga*, *larva*.

*curriculum* /əɪ/ - *curricula* /ə/ : *erratum*, *ovum*.

*thesis* /ɪs/ - *theses* /i:z/: *axis*, *oasis*.

*criterion* /ə/ - *criteria* /ə/ : *phenomenon*.

*index* - *indices*: *appendix*, *matrix*.

In Catalan, the basic way of forming a plural is adding -s to the singular. Its pronunciation follows the rules of voiced fricatives at the end of a word. As we saw for gender, there are also some irregularities in plural formation:

- Deletion of /n/ in the singular: *camió* - *camions*, *flascó* - *flascons*.
- Plurals in -os (only masculine nouns):
  - Nouns ending in <a, ç, x, ix, tx>: *autobús* - *autobusos*, *terç* - *terços*, *annex* - *annexos*, *peix* - *peixos*, *despatx* - *despatxos*.
  - Nouns ending in <ig> show an alternation between plural in -s and in -os: *desig* - *desigs/desitjos*, *festeig* - *festeigs/festejos*.
  - Nouns ending in <sc, st, xt, sp> show the same alternation: *arabesc* - *arabescs/arabescos*, *manifest* - *manifests/manifestos*, *pretext* - *pretexts/pretextos*, *creps* - *creps/crespos*.
- Nouns that have the same form for the plural and for the singular:
  - Feminine nouns ending in <s, ç, x>: *pols*, *tos*, *pelvis*; *falç* (*falçs*), *esfinx* (*esfinxs*) [difference in spelling but not in pronunciation].
  - Masculine nouns ending in <s, x>: *alferes*, *dilluns*; *vèrtex* (*vèrtexs*), *linx* (*linxs*) [difference in spelling but not in pronunciation].
  - Compound nouns with a plural second element: *parallamps*, *gratacels*, *obrellaunes*.

In Spanish, plurals are created by adding -s (with no phonological variation in its pronunciation) or -es to the base, the former being more frequent than the latter, e.g. *edificio* - *edificios*, *dolor* - *dolores*, *mamá* - *mamás*, *res* - *reses*. With some words, both alternatives are possible: *iglú* - *iglús/iglúes*, *zahorí* - *zahorís/zahoríes*.

There are also nouns which have the same form in the singular and in the plural:

- Some compounds, especially when the second part is plural: *ciempiés*, *aguafiestas*.
- Nouns ending in -s with at least two syllables and with the stress not on the last syllable: *dosis*, *tesis*.

In the three languages there are **defective nouns**, that is, nouns that only have a singular form and others that only have a plural form:

### English

- Only singular
  - Mass nouns: *rice*, *lead*, *sherry*; *aristocracy*, *furniture*.
  - Proper nouns: *Stephen*, *Edinburgh*, *Helen*, *Iceland*.
  - Abstract nouns: *beauty*, *happiness*.
  - Unique referent: *Moon*, *Earth*.
  - Ideologies, artistic movements, virtues: *capitalism*, *impressionism*, *hope*.
  - Some nouns ending in -s: *news*, *semantics*, *acoustics*, *economics*, *the United States*, *the United Nations*, *measles*, *rabies*. These words are singular, and so they need a verb in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular inflection (*The United States is against nuclear weapons*).
- Only plural:
  - Some words, morphologically marked, ending in -s: *annals*, *the Commons/Lords*, *premises*, *credentials*, *customs*.
  - Collective nouns: *people*, *cattle*, *police*. These words, in spite of being morphologically singular, need a plural verb (*Some people hate/\*hates hearing music while waiting for a train; the police are/\*is waiting for a sign from the kidnappers.*)

### Catalan and Spanish

- There are some nouns that only have a **plural form**, both masculine and feminine: *els escacs*, *les postres*; *las fauces*, *los alrededores*.
- There are some nouns which only have a **singular form**:
  - Mass nouns: *vi*, *tabac*; *carbón*, *café*.
  - Proper nouns: *Girona*, *Ebre*; *Albacete*, *Teide*.

#### Further reading

Real Academia Española y Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española (2009) *Nueva gramática de la lengua española. Morfología y sintaxis*. Vol. I. Madrid: Espasa (p. 130-170).

#### Note

In both languages there are nouns that can be used either in the singular or in the plural (*calça* - *calces*; *braga* - *bragas*), although the plural form is more frequent than the singular one.

- Abstract nouns: *autoritat, bogeria; felicidad, hombría.*
- Unique referent: *oest, cel; sur, Tierra.*
- Ideologies, artistic movements, virtues: *comunisme, cubisme, fe; socialismo, surrealismo, caridad.*
- Collective nouns: *gent, públic; audiencia, clientela.*

## 1.2. Adjective

In English, adjectives do not inflect for gender or number, whereas in Catalan and Spanish they do.

Les nenes petites ballaven al jardí.

Las niñas pequeñas bailaban en el jardín.

The little girls danced in the garden.

As can be seen above, adjectives in Catalan and Spanish agree in gender and number with the head noun.

### 1.2.1. Gender

In Catalan and Spanish, the usual contrast between masculine and feminine is that the masculine form is unmarked, whereas the feminine has the morph *-a* (*bonic - bonica; gordo - gorda*).

The same phonological phenomena that we saw for gender in Catalan nouns are applicable here.

Again, as for nouns, there are no phonological phenomena in the Spanish adjectives for gender.

There are several adjectives in Catalan with an orthographic but not phonological difference, e.g. *càntabre - càntabra, còmode - còmoda*.

Finally, there are a few invariable adjectives in relation to gender in both Spanish and Catalan, that is, they have the **same form** in the masculine and the feminine, e.g. *fàcil, suau; estèril, valiente*.

### 1.2.2. Number

As for **number**, the situation in Catalan and Spanish is very similar to the one for the noun. In Catalan, the pronunciation of the *-s* follows the rules of voiced fricatives at the end of words, and there are some irregularities:

#### Further reading

J. Solà i altres (dir.) (2002) *Gramàtica del Català Contemporani. Vol. 1: Fonètica, fonologia, morfologia* (p. 490-498). Barcelona: Empúries

#### Further reading

J. Solà i altres (dir.) (2002) *Gramàtica del Català Contemporani. Vol. 1: Fonètica, fonologia, morfologia* (p. 502-507). Barcelona: Empúries

Real Academia Española y Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española (2009) *Nueva gramática de la lengua española. Morfología y sintaxis*. Vol. I. Madrid: Espasa (p. 930-932).

- Deletion of /n/ in the singular: *xaró* - *xarons*, *cosó* - *cosons*.
- Plurals in *-os* in the masculine and *-es* in the feminine in adjectives ending in < s, ig, sc, st>: *las* - *lassos* - *lasses*, *mig* - *mitjos* - *mitges*, *fresc* - *frescos/frescs* - *fresques*, *bast* - *bastos/basts* - *bastes*, *feliç* - *feliços* - *felices*.

### 1.2.3. Gradation

Gradation is the grammatical category, found in adjectives and adverbs, in which the different forms express the associated characteristics to a lesser or greater extent.

In English adjectives can inflect for degree, having then three forms: positive (base), comparative (*-er*), and superlative (*-est*), e.g. *tall* - *taller* - *tallest*.

However, not all adjectives show this inflection. Only the adjectives that are monosyllabic or else disyllabic ending in *-y* (*lovely*), in *-er* (*bitter*), in *-le* (*brittle*), in *-ow* (*shallow*), and in *-some* (*handsome*) inflect for degree.

The other adjectives express comparative and superlative analytically, with *more* or *most*, e.g. *intelligent* - *more intelligent* - *most intelligent*.

Bear in mind, though, that the adjectives that express absolute qualities do not have comparative and superlative degree: *round*, *perfect*, *married*. These adjectives are called **non-gradable**.

In Spanish and Catalan gradation can also be expressed with the addition of suffixes, but these suffixes are derivational and not inflectional: *llarg* - *llarguíssim*, *preciós* - *preciosíssim*; *grande* - *grandísimo*, *viejo* - *viejísimo*.

Only the following adjectives have derived forms for the comparative (as well as for the superlative): *bo* - *millor* - *òptim*, *dolent* - *pitjor* - *pèssim*; *bueno* - *mejor* - *óptimo*, *malo* - *peor* - *pésimo*.

### 1.3. Verb

The biggest difference in inflectional morphology between English, on the one hand, and Catalan and Spanish, on the other, is found in the verb. In Table 1 we can see a summary of the different inflected forms of English verbs, and there are only five:

Table 1. Inflectional forms of the English verb. Adapted from Capdevila, Curell & Llinàs (2007)

Form	Uses	Examples
Base form	-to infinitive	<i>She wants to buy a book.</i>

#### Note

There are a few irregular forms: *good* - *better* - *best*, *bad* - *worse* - *worst*, *old* - *elder* - *eldest* (for family relations).

Form	Uses	Examples
	bare infinitive	<i>She could buy a book.</i> <i>Did she buy a book yesterday?</i>
	general present	<i>They buy a book every week.</i>
	imperative	<i>Buy a book!</i>
	3 <sup>rd</sup> person singular	<i>She buys a book every week.</i>
Present participle	with <i>be</i> to form progressive forms	<i>She is buying a book.</i>
	non-finite subordinate clauses	<i>Buying books is what she likes best.</i>
Past tense	simple past	<i>She bought a book yesterday.</i>
	conditional constructions	<i>If she bought books more often, she'd be happier.</i>
Past participle	with <i>have</i> to form perfect forms	<i>She has already bought a book.</i>
	with <i>be</i> to form passive forms	<i>She was bought a book by her father.</i>
	non-finite subordinate clauses	<i>That said, I want to insist that we should proceed.</i>

In **regular** verbs, the various forms are created as follows:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular: add *-s* to the base (with the same pronunciations as the regular plural of nouns).
- Present participle: add *-ing* to the base form. This is the only form that has no irregularities whatsoever.
- Past tense: add *-ed* to the base.
- Past participle: add *-ed* to the base.

Syncretism is the phenomenon found in an inflectional paradigm where two or more forms are phonologically and orthographically identical.

In regular verbs, there is **syncretism** of the past tense and past participle, that is, they have the same spelling and the same pronunciation. Hence, regular verbs only have four different forms.

The pronunciation of *-ed* varies, depending on the last sound of the base:

- /d/ after a voiced sound, e.g. *loved*, *played*.



- /t/ after a voiceless sound, e.g. *jumped, stacked*.
- /ɪd/ after /t/ or /d/, e.g. *wanted, mended*.

There are also several **irregularities** in the verb paradigm:

- 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular: *do - does, have - has, say - says*.
- Past tense: *take - took, stand - stood*.
- Past participle: *sang - sung, send - sent*.

As in many other languages, the verb *be* is highly irregular, and has eight different forms, instead of the usual five: *be, am, are, is, was, were, being, been*.

There are some verbs with syncretism of the base form, past tense and past participle, which have only three forms, e.g. *cut (cut, cuts, cutting)*.

We find in English some **defective** verbs, i.e., verbs that do not have all the inflectional forms. On the one hand, we have the **auxiliary verbs**: *have* and *do* (which lack non-finite forms), **modal verbs** (which do not inflect for the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular and have no non-finite forms). On the other hand, we have ***beware***, which only exists in the base form (infinitive and imperative).

\*He musts go to school.

\*I am musting go to school.

Beware of the dog!

\*I bewared of the dog, but it still bit me.

In Catalan and Spanish, the situation is very different. We will not get into detail here; we will give just a general picture. We will include only simple forms; complex tense forms consist of an auxiliary (*anar, haver, ser; haber, ser*) and a non-finite form of the lexical verb.

- Non-finite forms: infinitive, past participle and gerund (*menjar, menjat, menjant; sudar, sudado, sudando*).
- Indicative mood: present (*afaito; sudo*), imperfective (*afaitava; sudaba*), perfective (*afaití; sudé*), future (*afaitaré; sudaré*) and conditional (*afaitaria; sudaria*) (6 different persons in each).
- Subjunctive mood: present (*afaiti, sude*), imperfective (*afaités; sudara* or *sudase*) and future (*suaré, sudare*) (6 different persons in each).
- Imperative: *afaita, afaiteu; suda, sudad*.

#### Further reading

J. Solà i altres (dir.) (2002) *Gramàtica del Català Contemporani. Vol. 1: Fonètica, fonologia, morfologia* (p. 583-729). Barcelona: Empúries

Real Academia Española y Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española (2009) *Nueva gramática de la lengua española. Morfología y sintaxis. Vol. I. Madrid: Espasa* (p. 181-335).

There are three **conjugations** in each language, which, combined with the forms just mentioned, give over 150 different forms, to which we have to add irregular verbs. As we said earlier, it is indeed a very complex picture.

The various inflectional endings, such as the *-a* in *canta*, express several grammatical meanings, in this case indicative mood, present tense, 1<sup>st</sup> person singular.

In Catalan and Spanish there are also **defective verbs**, which can be grouped in the following classes:

- Impersonal verbs, which are typically used in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular (basically natural or atmospheric phenomena): *ploure*, *nevar*; *amanecer*, *diluviar*.
- 3<sup>rd</sup> person verbs, also typically used in the 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular: *caldre*; *ocurrir*, *suceder*.
- The existentials *hi ha* and *hay*, always 3<sup>rd</sup> person singular.
- Other verbs: *soler*, *dar*; *empedernir*, *manir*.

## 2. Derivational morphology

Derivational morphology is the study of word formation by means of **affixation**, that is, the addition of **lexical morphemes** to the base.

Derivation is the process of creation of new words by adding one or more affixes to a base.

**Affixes** are morphemes that can be placed before the base (**prefixes**), after the base (**suffixes**), within the word (**infixes** and **interfixes**), and before and after the base at the same time (**circumfixes**).

- Prefixes: **un**orthodox; **descordar**; **in**moral
- Suffixes: driver; **darrerament**; **vigilancia**
- Infixes: branquilló; lloviznar
- Interfixes: cridaner; viejecito
- Circumfixes: **em**blanquir; **ensuciar**

The **base** is usually a word (**blameless**; **desfer**; **botonero**), but it can also be part of a word (**deceive**; **percebre**; **concebir**).

**Affixes** can be **class-maintaining** or **class-changing**. In the first case, the derived word and the base belong to the same word class; in the second case, they do not. In English, Spanish and Catalan, prefixes are usually class-maintaining, whereas the other affixes tend to be class-changing.

All affixes change the meaning of the base up to a certain extent. Otherwise, obviously, we would not be talking about a new word. Sometimes, the meaning of the derived word is quite straightforward, such as diminutives in Spanish or Catalan, or the prefix *pro-* in the three languages. On other occasions, the change of meaning is quite drastic, such as the English *person* - *personable* ('man, woman or child' - 'having a pleasant appearance and character').

### 2.1. Suffixes

Suffixes can be classified according to the class of the words they create:

- Nominalizers: *-er*, *-ment*; *-era*, *-isme*; *-ción*, *-itud*.

- Verbalizers: *-ify, -ize; -itzar, -ificar; -ear, -izar*.
- Adjectivizers: *-ous, -ful; -ífic, -esc; -ivo, -ario*.
- Adverbializers: *-ly; -ment; -mente*.

Suffixation is a very productive phenomenon in the three languages, and so the picture is extremely complex. Here we will provide just a summary in the form of a table:

Table 2. Summary of words derived by means of suffixation

Derived words	From	English	Catalan	Spanish
Nouns	Verbs	worker	fundació	tolerancia
	Adjectives	freedom	picantor	sordera
	Nouns	childhood	forner	carpetazo
Verbs	Nouns	prioritize	beatificar	golpear
	Adjectives	simplify	agilitzar	brutalizarse
Adjectives	Nouns	thirsty	marí	gustoso
	Verbs	acceptable	pidolaire	transportador
	Adverbs	--	proper	lejano
	Adjectives	greenish	blavós	amarillento
Adverbs	Adjectives	beautifully	curosament	claramente
	Adverbs	--	llunyíssim	despacito

## 2.2. Prefixes

As we mentioned above, prefixes generally do not change the word class of the base, so their most important function is to change its meaning. Hence, they tend to be classified according to the meaning they contribute to the derived word.

In Table 3, we present a list of prefixes of the three languages, according to their meaning, as an orientation:

Table 3. Some prefixes in English, Catalan and Spanish

Semantic category	English	Catalan	Spanish
Negative	undo	desfer	descontrol
	impossible	inadequat	indecente
	amoral	asocial	alegal
Pejorative	misfit	malviure	malformación

### Further reading

J. Solà i altres (dir.) (2002) *Gramàtica del Català Contemporani. Vol. 1: Fonètica, fonologia, morfologia* (p. 741-761). Barcelona: Empúries

Real Academia Española y Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española (2009) *Nueva gramática de la lengua española. Morfología y sintaxis. Vol. I*. Madrid: Espasa (p. 337-662).

A. Carstairs-McCarthy (2002). *An Introduction to English Morphology. Words and their Structure*. Edinburgh: Edinburgh University Press (p. 44-58).

### Further reading

J. Solà i altres (dir.) (2002) *Gramàtica del Català Contemporani. Vol. 1: Fonètica, fonologia, morfologia* (p. 711-765). Barcelona: Empúries

Real Academia Española y Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española (2009) *Nueva gramática de la lengua española. Morfología y sintaxis. Vol. I*. Madrid: Espasa (p. 663-733).

R. Quirk *et al.* (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London & New York: Longman (p. 1540-1546).

Semantic category	English	Catalan	Spanish
	pseudo-intellectual	pseudoprofeta	pseudocientífico
Time and order	foresee	preindustrial	antedata
	postgraduate	postoperatori	postguerra
Degree or size	outdo	hiperactiu	requetemal
	minilaboratory	supermercat	infravalorar
Attitude	counter-culture	anticomunista	contraataque
	pro-German	proamericà	pronuclear
Location	underwear	entremurs	periostitis
	intercity	subaquàtic	transnacional
Quantity	polyamorous	unilateral	multipropiedad
	biannual	monocrom	tetraedro

Overall, suffixation and prefixation are quite similar phenomena in the three languages.

### 2.3. Infixes and interfixes

Interfixes and infixes, as we said above, are affixes inserted within the base (*Carlitos*), or between the base and the suffix (*lladregam*). The difference between them is that interfixes do not contribute any meaning to the resulting word, whereas infixes do.

In Spanish, infixes have a diminutive meaning, such as *Carlitos* and *azuquítar*. In Catalan, they can be augmentative (*allargassar*), diminutive (*nevisquejar*) or pejorative (*amargotejar*). In English, they do not exist.

### 2.4. Circumfixes

Circumfixes are discontinuous morphemes, one part of which is attached before the base, and the other one after the base. They do not exist in English, and in Spanish and Catalan they are always verbalizers: *apedregar*, *emmalaltir*; *amuermar*, *enaltecer*.

This phenomenon is also called *parasyntesis*.

### 3. Compounding

**Compounding** consists in creating a new word by combining two free roots. This simple definition, however, does not fully reflect the complexity of the issues around compounding. In Catalan, for example, there is a fine line between compounds and words with a stressed prefix (e.g. *extralingüístic*). In Spanish, on the other hand, it is not always easy to decide whether a sequence of two or more words is a compound or a phrase (*Madrid capital, pata de gallo*).

Compound words have the following characteristics:

- **Orthographically.** They can be written as one word (*airplane; caragirat; sacapuntas*), as separate words (*cheese knife; cotxe escombra; perro lobo*), or with hyphens (*sweet-talk; sud-oest; lavadora-secadora*)
- They behave as a **semantic unit**. Sometimes the meaning of the compound is derivable from the meaning of the two roots (*crystal clear; espantaocells; pararrayos*), and sometimes it is not (*blue blood; panxacontent; cabeza cuadrada*).
- Compounds have **internal coherence**. That is, generally, morphemes are added to the last element of the compound (*apple trees / \*apples tree; filferros/\*filsferro; sordomudos/\*sordosmudo*), but there are also cases in which it is added to the first element (*passers-by/\*passer-bys; gossos llop / \*gos-llops; trenes bala / \*tren balas*), or to both (*vagons llits; copias piratas*).
- In terms of **prosody**, compounds usually have just one main stress, which, in the case of English noun compounds, falls on the first element, so that there is a phonological difference between a teacher of English (*English teacher*, with stress on *English*), and a teacher from England (*English teacher*, with stress on *teacher*).
- **Semantically**, compounds can be classified as follows:
  - **Endocentric** compounds consist of a head and a modifier. The head expresses the main meaning of the compound, and the modifiers restrict this meaning. Generally, the word class of the compound is the same as that of the head (*flower pot; gos llop; autocine*).
  - **Exocentric** compounds do not have a head, and their meaning is not always directly derivable from the meaning of their parts (*redskin; figaflor; salvamanteles*).

#### Further reading

J. Solà i altres (dir.) (2002) *Gramàtica del Català Contemporani. Vol. 1: Fonètica, fonologia, morfologia* (p. 782-784). Barcelona: Empúries

Real Academia Española y Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española (2009) *Nueva gramática de la lengua española. Morfología y sintaxis. Vol. I*. Madrid: Espasa (p. 735-739).

- **Copulative** compounds are formed by two heads, and the resulting meaning is the sum of the meaning of the heads (*bittersweet; allioli; francocanadiense*).
- As for **syntax**, the relationships between the two elements of compounds varies enormously, both intra- and interlinguistically. We include here just a few examples as illustration.
  - Subject and verb: *sunrise; terratrèmol; maremoto*.
  - Verb and object: *sightseeing; terratinent; abrelatas*.
  - Noun and attribute<sup>1</sup>: *blackboard; camacurt; caradura*.

<sup>(1)</sup>The relative order of noun and adjective corresponds to the order of these elements in the noun phrase in the three languages

#### Further reading

J. Solà i altres (dir.) (2002) *Gramàtica del Català Contemporani. Vol. 1: Fonètica, fonologia, morfologia* (p. 796-824). Barcelona: Empúries

Real Academia Española y Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española (2009) *Nueva gramática de la lengua española. Morfología y sintaxis*. Vol. I. Madrid: Espasa (p. 755-782).

R. Quirk et al. (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London & New York: Longman (p. 1567-1578).

At first sight, it might seem that English, Catalan and Spanish behave quite similarly in relation to compounding. For example, the following structures are shared by the three languages:

- N + N > N: *oil well; autopista; bocacalle*.
- V + N > N: *scarecrow; portaavions; rompeolas*.
- N + V > V: *carbon-date; corglaçar; vasodilatar*.
- A + A > A: *bluish-green; anglofrancès; maxilofacial*.
- N + A or A + N > A: *white-collar; camacurt; boquiabierto*.

There are also structures that exist only in the Romance languages, such as V + V > N (*alçaprem; duermevela*); and others that exist only in English, for instance N + Ving > A (*weight-bearing*) or N + Ving > N (*bookkeeping*).

The biggest difference can be found in the **productivity** of the various combinations of roots in the three languages. Some are equally productive in English, Catalan and Spanish, such as A + A > A. However, in others there is a big difference, the most important of which would be N + N > N, which is highly productive in English, and not so much in the Romance languages.

## 4. Other word formation processes

### 4.1. Acronymy

Acronymy consists in the creation of new words by **combining the initial letters** (capitalised) of other words, and sometimes also numbers. Acronyms are found in all three languages:

BBC, MI5; ONU, TV3; UGT, 4x4

There are acronyms written in small letters, just like any other word, which are not recognised as acronyms by most speakers. That is, speakers know that *BBC* stands for *British Broadcasting Corporation*, *ONU* for *Organització de les Nacions Unides*, and *UGT* for *Unión General de Trabajadores*. The situation, however, is different in the following examples:

radar > radio detecting and ranging

laser > light amplification (by) stimulated emission (of) radiation

In English, acronyms can be pronounced as individual letters, as words, or as both. There is no rule about this:

- Pronounced as individual letters: *CIA* (*Central Intelligence Agency*) /,sɪə'et/, *UCLA* (*University of California Los Angeles*) /,ju:ci:el'et/
- Pronounced as words: *YOLO* (*You only live once*) /'jəʊləʊ/, *AIDS* (*acquired immune deficiency syndrome*) /eɪdz/
- Pronounced as both: *ASAP* (*as soon as possible*) /,eɪsə'pi:/ or /ə'sæp/, *UFO* (*unidentified flying object*) /'ju:fəʊ/ or /,ju:efəʊ/

In Catalan and Spanish, the general tendency is to pronounce acronyms as words if the phonological rules of the language allow it. Otherwise, they are pronounced as individual letters:

- Pronounced as words: *AGAUR* (*Agència de Gestió d'Ajuts Universitaris i de Recerca*); *OEA* (*Organización de Estados Americanos*)
- Pronounced as individual letters: *PSC* (*Partit dels Socialistes de Catalunya*); *PP* (*Partido Popular*)

It is quite frequent for Catalan and Spanish to **borrow** acronyms for English, adapting their pronunciation to that of the target language, e.g. FBI, UNESCO.

#### Further reading

J. Solà i altres (dir.) (2002) *Gramàtica del Català Contemporani. Vol. 1: Fonètica, fonologia, morfologia* (p. 923-925). Barcelona: Empúries  
 Diccionario panhispánico de dudas (2005) [accessed 07/06/2017].



## 4.2. Backformation

Backformation consists of creating new words by **removing suffixes** (real or supposed). It always involves a change in word class, and the most typical case is the creation of verbs out of nouns.

baby-sitter > to babysit, enthusiasm > to enthuse

saltar > salt, adobar > adob

pasear > paseo, cortar > corte

It exists in the three languages, but it is more frequent in English than in the other two.

## 4.3. Blending

Blending consists in the **fusion of two words** to create a new one, in which one or both words are first clipped. It can be considered a combination of clipping and compounding.

perman(ent) + frost > permafrost, fan + (maga)zine > fanzine

cant(ant) + autor > cantautor; Maria + Isabel > Maribel

cant(ante) + autor > cantautor, María + Luisa > Marisa

This process is much more productive in English than in Catalan and Spanish, where it is largely restricted to proper nouns. Some English blends have been borrowed by the Romance languages, e.g. *motel*, *brunch*, and are now part of their respective lexicons.

## 4.4. Clipping

Clipping is the creation of a new word by **dropping part of the original one**, which can be the beginning and/or the end, or the middle. There is no change in meaning, and no change in word class. The resulting word is simply shorter than the original one.

telephone > phone; Joaquim > Quim; autobús > bus

university > uni; bolígraf > boli; televisión > tele

influenza > flu

fantasy > fancy; bufetada > bufa; Barcelona > Barna

Clipping is rather frequent in all three languages. Often, the clipped word appears in **colloquial language** and is then added to the general lexicon. Removing both the beginning and the end is possible only in English. The suppression of the middle part of the word is much less frequent than that of the beginning or the end, in all three languages. As for the elimination of

the beginning of the word, it is more frequent in English and Catalan than in Spanish. The most usual case in all three languages is omitting the last part of the word, that is, keeping the beginning.

#### 4.5. Conversion

Conversion consists of creating a new word **without the addition of an affix**, and it only exists in English, made possible by the simple nature of its inflectional morphology. Sometimes the two words are identical, and on other occasions there is a change in stress. The most important category shifts are:

- N > V: (*to*) *box*, *bottle*
- V > N: (*a*) *talk*, *swim*
- A > V: (*to*) *dirty*, *lower*

As for those cases in which there is a **change in stress**, nouns (and adjectives) have the stress on the first syllable, and verbs on the second. The change in stress produces a change in the vowels involved, so that the unstressed ones are reduced and the stressed ones become full:

- present (N) /'prezənt/ - present (V) /prɪ'zent/
- perfect (A) /'pɜ:fɪkt/ - perfect (V) /pə'fekt/

A special kind of conversion, which exists in the three languages, is **commonization**, in which a proper noun becomes a common word (noun, verb or adjective): *to google*, *serendipity*; *arlequí*, *ilota*; *támpax*, *celo*.

#### 4.6. Reduplication

Reduplication is the creation of a new word by means of the **repetition** of a word, or part of it. There are different kinds, depending on what is repeated:

- Exact reduplication: *hush-hush*; *bitllo-bitllo*; *yoyó*
- Identical consonants and different vowels: *zig-zag*; *nyigui-nyogui*; *tictac*
- Identical vowels and different consonants (only in English): *pell-mell*

## Summary

In this unit, we have dealt with **morphology**, that is, the study of the internal structure of words.

First, we distinguished between **inflectional** and **derivational** morphology. The former involves the study of grammatical morphemes, and the latter the creation of new words by means of affixes.

We saw that there are a few differences between English and Catalan/Spanish in **inflection**. First, it is much richer in the Romance languages than in English, especially regarding the verb. Second, there are some meanings that are inflectional in one language and derivational in the other: gender is natural in English and grammatical in Catalan/Spanish; gradation in adjectives is expressed inflectionally in English and derivationally in the Romance languages.

As for **derivational** morphology, there are suffixes and prefixes in all three languages, which behave essentially in the same way. In fact, there are affixes shared by the three languages, since in English there are Latin as well as Anglo-Saxon ones.

Next, we dealt with **compounding**, which is, together with derivation, the most productive word formation process. Essentially, it works alike in the three languages, but there are differences in the kinds of elements that can form a compound, and in the degree of productivity.

Finally, we dealt, much more briefly, with other **minor word formation processes**: acronymy, backformation, blending, clipping, conversion and reduplication. They all exist in the three languages, with both differences and similarities.



## Activities

1) Divide the following sentences into words and morphemes. Count how many words and how many morphemes appear. Notice and explain any differences between Catalan, English and Spanish.

- Lily, the caretaker's daughter, was literally run off her feet. Hardly had she brought one gentleman into the little pantry behind the office on the ground floor and helped him off with his overcoat than the wheezy hall-door bell clanged again and she had to scamper along the bare hallway to let in another guest. It was well for her she had not to attend to the ladies too.  
James Joyce, «The Dead». *Dubliners*.
- Lily, la filla del porter, tenia els peus literalment desfets. Tot just acabava d'acompanyar un senyor al recambró de darrera l'oficina de la planta baixa i l'havia ajudat a treure's l'abric, que l'asmàtica campaneta de la porta del rebedor tornà a sonar i va haver de travessar corrents el rebedor per fer passar un altre convidat. Encara bo que no havia d'atendre les dames i tot.  
Translated by Joaquim Mallafré
- Lily, la hija del encargado, tenía los pies literalmente muertos. No había todavía acabado de hacer pasar a un invitado al cuarto de desahogo detrás de la oficina de la planta baja para ayudarlo a quitarse el abrigo, cuando de nuevo sonaba la quejumbrosa campana de la puerta y tenía que echar a correr por el zaguán vacío para dejar entrar a otro. Era un alivio no tener que atender también a las invitadas.  
Translated by Guillermo Cabrera Infante

2) Provide as many derived words as possible, resulting from adding an affix to the following bases. Notice and explain any differences between English, Spanish and Catalan.

*white - whiteness, whiten, whitish*

*blanc - blancor, blanquejar, blanquinós*

*blanco - blancura, blanquear, blancuzco*

a) child, good, box, legal, brother

b) nen, bo, caixa, legal, germà

c) niño, bueno, caja, legal, hermano

3) Identify which morphological process (derivation or inflection) is present in the following pairs of words. Notice and explain any differences between Catalan, English and Spanish.

a) pen, pens

b) long, longer

c) duke, duchess

d) love, loved

e) centre, central

f) llibre, llibreter

g) rei, reina

h) comprar, comprarem

i) pom, poms

j) malalt, emmalaltir

k) perdón, perdonar

l) profesor, profesora

m) verde, verdes

n) saltar, saltaba

o) fino, refinar

4) Find 5 words in English, Catalan and Spanish that: a) are only singular, b) only plural. Then classify them according to the categories established in the Unit.

5) Find 3 important differences between the English and the Spanish inflectional systems.

## Self-evaluation

1) Divide the following word forms up into morphs and then classify the affixes into prefixes (P) suffixes (S) or circumfixes (C), and say whether they are derivational (D) or inflectional (I):

	Word forms	Morphs	Affixes
1.	play	play	--
2.	replay	re-play	DP
3.	plays	play-s	IS
4.	anger		
5.	supermarket		
6.	unhappiness		
7.	drinks		
8.	overwrite		
9.	bigger		
10.	enlarge		
11.	avalot	avalot	--
12.	antiavalots	anti-avalot-s	DP, IS
13.	embrutar		
14.	dormint		
15.	dosificar		
16.	precapitalista		
17.	àvia		
18.	rebel		
19.	irreal		
20.	menjable		
21.	tren	tren	--
22.	tren	tren-es	IS
23.	cocinera		
24.	releer		
25.	cantando		
26.	tesis		

	Word forms	Morphs	Affixes
27.	abanderar		
28.	despacito		
29.	unifamiliar		
30.	cicatrizar		

2) Write the feminine of the following English, Catalan and Spanish nouns (if any). Then explain what process can be observed in each case.

- a) English: *nephew, count, teacher, child*.  
 b) Catalan: *conductor, gendre, noi, ostatge*.  
 c) Spanish: *cantante, toro, enano, héroe*.

3) Sort the suffixes in the words below according to their class-changing function.

- a) N > N  
 b) V > N  
 c) A > N  
 d) A > V  
 e) N > V  
 f) N > A  
 g) V > A

English: *assertive, beautify, classification, joyless, manhood, variability*.

Catalan: *brutícia, cavaller, eternitzar, honorífic, mandrejar, probabilitat, xerraire*.

Spanish: *babear, ejemplificar, formalidad, huidizo, oleaje, perdición, verdadero*.

4) Classify the following compounds as exocentric, endocentric or copulative.

- a) English: *income tax, pickpocket, put-down, sleepwalk, textbook*  
 b) Catalan: *blau-verd, escola bressol*  
 c) Spanish: *cantamañanas, casa cuartel*

5) Identify the word formation process involved in each of the words in bold type (acronymy, backformation, blending, clipping, compounding, conversion, derivation or reduplication).

- a) Please call me **immediately**.  
 b) I'm not very fond of **computer-animated** films.  
 c) Let's go for a **walk** along the **riverbank**.  
 d) M'hauries de pagar la **faldilla-pantaló bitllo-bitllo**.  
 e) En **Quimet** és molt **treballador**.  
 f) **Mercabarna** és el mercat majorista més gran de Catalunya.  
 g) Cuando llegué a casa, vi el **destrozo** que habían hecho.  
 h) El diccionario de la RAE resulta **altamente** útil.  
 i) **Isa** trabaja en una **casa cuna**.

## Answer key

### Self-evaluation

1.

	Word forms	Morphs	Affixes
1.	play	play	--
2.	replay	re-play	DP
3.	plays	play-s	IS
4.	anger	anger	--
5.	supermarket	super-market	DP
6.	unhappiness	un-happy-ness	DP, DS
7.	drinks	drink-s	IS
8.	overwrite	over-write	DP
9.	bigger	big-er	IS
10.	enlarge	en-large	DP
11.	avalot	avalot	--
12.	antiavalots	anti-avalot-s	DP, IS
13.	embrutar	em + ar – brut	DC
14.	dormint	dorm-int	IS
15.	dosificar	dos(i)-ificar	DS
16.	precapitalista	pre-capital-ista	DP, DS
17.	àvia	avi-a	IS
18.	rebel	rebel	-
19.	irreal	i(n)-real	DP
20.	menjable	menja-ble	DS
21.	tren	tren	--
22.	tren	tren-es	IS
23.	cocinera	cocin-er-a	DS, IS
24.	releer	re-leer	DP
25.	cantando	canta-ndo	IS
26.	tesis	tesis	--
27.	abanderar	a + ar, bandera	DC
28.	despacito	despaci(o) – ito	DS
29.	unifamiliar	uni-famili(a)-ar	DP, DS



30.	cicatrizar	cicatriz-ar	DS
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2. a) English: *nephew* - *niece*: change in the root; *count* - *countess*: suffixation (derivational); *teacher*: there is no feminine form, it is a dual noun; *child*: there is no feminine form, it is a neuter noun

b) Catalan: *conductor* - *conductora*: opposition in gender morph; *gendre* - *nora*: change in the root + opposition in gender morph; *gendre* - *jove*: change in the root; *ostatge* - *ostatge*: the same form for masculine and feminine.

c) Spanish: *cantante* - *cantante*: the same form for masculine and feminine; *toro* - *vaca*: change in the root + opposition in gender morph; *enano* - *enana*: opposition in gender morph; *héroe* - *heroína*: Suffixation + opposition in the gender morph

3. a) N > N: manhood; cavaller; oleaje

b) V > N: classification; perdicción

c) A > N: variability; brutícia, probabilitat; formalidad

d) A > V: eternitzar; ejemplificar

e) N > V: beautify; mandrejar; babear

e) N > A: joyless; honorific; verdadero

f) V > A: assertive; xerraire; huidizo

4. Endocentric: income tax, textbook; escola bressol

Exocentric: pickpocket, put-down; cantamañanas

Copulative: sleep-walk; blau-verd; casa-cuartel

5. a) *immediately*: derivation

b) *computer-animated*: compounding

c) *walk*: conversion; *riverbank*: compounding

d) *faldilla-pantaló*: compounding; *bitllo-bitllo*: reduplication

e) *Quimet*: clipping+derivation; *treballador*: derivation

f) *Mercabarna*: blending

g) *destrozo*: backformation

h) RAE: acronymy; *altamente*: derivation

i) *Isa*: clipping; *casa cuna*: compounding

## Glossary

**acronymy** Word-formation process that consists in combining the initial letters of various words.

**adjectivizer** Suffix that creates adjectives (out of nouns, verbs, adjectives or adverbs).

**adverbializer** Suffix that creates adverbs (out of adjectives or adverbs).

**affix** Morpheme that is added to a base.

**backformation** Word-formation process in which a new word is created by eliminating a suffix.

**base** Morpheme to which affixes can be added.

**blending** Word-formation process that consists in fusing two words.

**circumfix** Discontinuous affix added to the base, a part before it and the other part after it.

**clipping** Word-formation process that consists in cutting a part of a word, the beginning and/or the end, or the middle.

**compounding** Word-formation process in which two roots are combined.

**conversion** Word-formation process whereby a new word is created without the addition of any affix.

**copulative compound** A compound, the meaning of which is the sum of the meaning of the two roots.

**derivational morphology** The branch of morphology that studies the formation of new words by means of affixation.

**endocentric compound** A compound formed by a head and a modifier.

**exocentric compound** A compound with no head, whose meaning is not always easily derivable from the meaning of its component parts.

**grammatical morpheme** A morpheme that expresses grammatical meaning, such as number, gender, person, tense, mood.

**infix** An affix inserted within a word.

**inflectional morphology** The branch of morphology that deals with the various forms of a given word for grammatical purposes.

**interfix** An affix that is inserted within a word, and which, differently from infixes, does not contribute any meaning to the resulting word.

**lexical morpheme** A morpheme that expresses semantic meaning.

**morpheme** The smallest meaningful unit of a language.

**morphology** The study of the internal structure of words, and of the creation of new words.

**nominalizer** Suffix that creates nouns (out of nouns, verbs or adjectives).

**prefix** Affix placed before the base.

**reduplication** Word-formation process that consists in repeating (parts of) words.

**suffix** Affix placed after the base.

**verbalizer** Suffix that creates verbs (out of nouns or adjectives).

## Bibliography

### Basic works

**Booij, G. E.** (2012). *The Grammar of Words: An Introduction to Linguistic Morphology*. 3<sup>rd</sup> edition. New York: Oxford University Press.

This book provides an up-to-date introduction to the morphological analysis of words, together with a cross-linguistic survey of word formation processes.

**Quirk, R. et al.** (1985). *A Comprehensive Grammar of the English Language*. London & New York: Longman.

The information relevant to this unit can be found in 3.2-20 (verb), 5-73-111 (noun), 7.74-86 (adjectives), and Appendix I (word formation).

**Real Academia Española y Asociación de Academias de la Lengua Española** (2009). *Nueva gramática de la lengua española. Morfología y sintaxis. Vol I*. Madrid: Espasa.

Chapters 2, 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 8, 9 and 10 provide exhaustive explanations on inflectional and derivational morphology, and compounding.

**Solà, J. i altres** (dirs) (2002). *Gramàtica del Català Contemporani. Vol. 1: Fonètica, fonologia, morfologia*. Barcelona: Empúries.

Within the Section «Morfologia», chapters 2, 4, 5, 6, 7 and 9 provide very comprehensive information on the topics dealt with in the chapter.

### Further reading

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**Brinton, L.** (2000). *The Structure of Modern English. A Linguistic Introduction*. Amsterdam/Philadelphia: John Benjamins.

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**Prieto Vives, P.; Sifré Gómez, M; Todolí Cervera, J.** (2011). *Llengua catalana: fonètica, fonologia i morfologia*. Barcelona: UOC.

**Seguí i Trobat, G.** (1995). *Iniciació a la morfosintaxi catalana*. Palma: Documenta Balear.

