

Practice Unit 3

1. Use the three past-tense forms *attacked*, *insulted*, *frightened* as a starting point to find out the allomorphic realisations of the past tense form {-ed} and the rules for their distribution.
2. In addition to those mentioned in the book, there are a number of further exceptions to the productive {-s} pluralisation of present-day English, for example forms such as *houses* (with voiceless [s] in the singular and two voiced [z] in the plural), or *wives*, and *wolves* (instead of the expected *wifes* and *wolfes*). Consult reference grammars of English to find out about the extent of this problem.

Consider s-genitives such

as *boys'*, *children's*, *Dickens'*, *wife's*, *Bob's*, *Pat's Jones's*. Is the genitive {-s} subject to the same allomorphic distribution as the plural? Where are the similarities and contrasts?

3. In addition to the nouns ending in *-tion* given in Unit 3 (*organisation*, *realisation*, *detention*, *retention*), there are others, such as *action*, *destruction*, *obstruction*, *recuperation*, *designation*. Which additional problems do these new examples pose for a linguist attempting to find out the rules for the distribution of the various allomorphs?
4. One of the most productive derivational processes in present-day English is agent-noun formation by means of {-er}. Look up the meanings of the following examples in a dictionary:

painter, *baker*, *(pencil-)sharpener*, *computer*, *teller*, *goer*, *printer*, *sitter*

Now try to separate that part of the meaning of these forms which is predictable from the mere word-formation process involved and then go on to specify which additional components of meaning have been additionally lexicalised by convention in each case.

5. Staying with the {-er} suffix, discuss the following complex forms. Try to extend the list by adding similar examples. Discuss issues

such as the placement of the derivational morpheme and possible differences in meaning between the agent nouns used alone or in combination.

cinema-lover, movie-goer, story-teller
make-upper, maker up
a maker up of fantastic tales

6. Applied morphology: graffiti on the London Underground:

"OBSTRUCTING THE DOORS CAUSES DELAYS AND CAN BE DANGEROUS"
OBSTRUCT THE DOOR CAUSE DELAY BE DANGEROUS

Presumably, the person obliterating some morphemes in London Transport's original notice to passengers was not a professional linguist but followed his spontaneous linguistic intuition. Having studied Unit 3, however, you should be in a position to give an explicit account of the strategy employed.

7. In the following extract novelist Will Self, renowned for his occasional tendency towards rhetorical over-drive, sings the praises of a particular kind of cigar. Analyse the morphological structure of the highlighted words and discuss the productivity of the word-formation processes involved. Comment specifically on problems posed by the form *raunchy*. Is *trumpet-type* a noun compound or an adjective derived from the noun with the help of the derivational morpheme {-type}?

"I smoke the Toscanelli, a **unique** kind of cigar or cheroot, which is a **cut-down** version of something called a Tosca. It's a kind of **great flaring, trumpet-type** thing of very, very *dark black* tobacco. I think that they are **hand-rolled** - I can't conceive how machines could make them so **idiosyncratic**. Even in a pack of five you will get some that are kind of **spindly** and **fox-turdy** ... They have a very **strong** flavour, they are sort of **tetanus-ey** and **meaty, raunchy** and **dead bodyish**." (Will Self, *Independent Magazine*)

8. Can you help Clarisse, a character from Robert Musil's novel *Mann ohne Eigenschaften*, with her problem?

What the writers say

Ein Brief von Clarisse trifft ein

Ulrich hatte keinem seiner Bekannten seine Adresse hinterlassen, aber Clarisse wußte sie von Walter, dem sie so vertraut war wie seine eigene Kinderzeit.

Sie schrieb:

"Mein Liebling - mein Feigling - mein Ling!

Weißt du, was ein Ling ist? Ich kann es nicht herausbekommen.

[...]"

(Robert Musil, Der Mann ohne Eigenschaften, rororo ed., p. 711)