Words and their characteristics

- Internal stability
  - insertions made between, not within words
- External independence
  - phonologically: may be preceded or followed by pauses
  - orthographically: separation by spaces or punctuation marks
  - syntactically: may be used alone as a single utterance
  - semantically: can be assigned meaning(s)

Word classes

- A word class: A group of words, which from a grammatical point of view behave in the same way:
  - morphologically: they show which class they belong to by using same endings e.g. -s, -ing for verbs, -ly, for adverbs.
  - Syntactically: show the class they belong - used in the same way in a sentence e.g. adjectives: used the and a noun, or after any form of be

Traditional v. modern grammars

- Noun
- Pronoun
- Adjective
- Verb
- Adverb
- Preposition
- Conjunction
- Interjection

Major word classes

- Classification based on main functions and grammatical behaviour
  - Lexical words
    - main carriers of meaning
    - numerous and members of open classes
    - have complex internal structure
    - can be heads of phrases - they include:
      - nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs
  - Function words
    - indicate relationship between lexical words or larger units
    - are members of closed systems
    - short and lack internal structure
    - frequent, occur in any text
  - Inserts
    - do not form integral part of a syntactic structure
    - carry emotional and interactional meanings
    - frequent in spoken texts

The structure of words

- Morphology: the study of the structure of words
- Domains
  - Lexical/derivational morphology: how new vocabulary items are built out of combination of elements e.g. in-describ-able
  - Inflectional morphology: the way words vary in their form to express grammatical contrast e.g. horse-s
Closed systems v. open classes

- Closed system:
  - contains a limited number of members
  - new members not easily added
  - e.g. function words - conjunctions, prepositions

- Open classes:
  - membership indefinite and unlimited
  - new members easily admitted
  - e.g. nouns, verbs, adjectives

Elements in word construction

- Base form: words which cannot be broken down into grammatical parts e.g. yes, boy,
- affixes: meaningful dependent elements added before or after the base form
  - prefixes: pure lexical role; allow construction of many new words
  - suffixes: most purely lexical: change meaning of base form e.g. -ness, -ship, -able
    - few are purely grammatical: show how words must be used in sentences e.g. plural -s, past tense -ed

Inflectional suffixes

- Noun plural, e.g. -s
- genitive case, e.g. -’s
- 3rd person singular, -s
- past tense, e.g. -ed
- contracted negative -n’t
- -ing form or present participle
- -ed form or past participle
- -er comparative; -est superlative

Adjectives and adverbs

- Adjectives: express some feature of a noun or pronoun
  - identification criteria
    - occurrence before nouns e.g. a big house- attributive
    - occurrence after forms of the verb be - predicative
    - immediately preceded by intensifying words e.g. very
    - can be compared
    - permit addition of -ly to form adverbs

  - Types of adjectives
    - central: have both attributive and predicative functions e.g. happy
    - peripheral: have only one of these functions e.g. afraid, utter
    - common suffixes: -ish, -able, -ful, -al, -ic, -less

Adjectives

- Syntactic functions
  - attributive: premodify head of NP
  - predicative: subject or object complement
  - Postpositive: follow the noun they modify e.g. something useful
  - head of NPs e.g the innocent suffer

- Semantic classification
  - stative v. dynamic
    - dynamic adjectives - use of subjective measurement
    - gradable / nongradable
      - most are gradable e.g. -er, -est, very, so
    - inherent v. noninherent
      - if they characterize the referent of a noun directly or not