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Lauren Slocum 13 May 2009 Professor J. Esposito English 150 Paper #3:

Questions on Inflection Question #19: What is meant by Inflection? Illustrate.

Assuming my definition does not define inflections found in one particular language, and instead be defined in general terms (associated within all languages affected), the word inflection in linguistics is an adjustment made to stem (in the form of a prefix, suffix, infix, etc.) to clarify: how many, to which gender an object belongs, when an event has taken place, in which tense the 3rd person (singular) has acted, mood, voice, and also in the comparative or definitive form of an adjective (bigger, biggest). I will illustrate the effect of inflection when a noun changes from singular to plural form: By adding the plural affix “ S” to a noun, a plural inflection takes place. The following two examples can convey completely different meanings by the simple addition of “ S” to the word “ bags”: Example 1: “ John loaded up his bag and headed toward the train stop. ” Example 2: “ Johns loaded up his bags and headed toward the train stop. ” The first example differs from the second example because John carries more than one bag to the train stop in example two. The inflected word “ bags” is the only information we need to come to this conclusion. Not only does inflection define the specifics or mechanics of a sentence, but I believe that inflection is also something that can affect the reader’s perspective. Example one most likely conveys to the reader that John is headed from one place to the next with his (one) bag. But in example two, it may be assumed by the reader that John is departing from one place to another for a longer period of time considering the amount of baggage he lugs. Question #20: Select a piece of prose and eliminate all inflections. Is it comprehensible? Which inflections seem to be necessary? Could any still be lost? Excerpt (taken from “ A Cat’s Diary”): Today I

decapitated a mouse and dropped it's headless body at their feet. I had hoped this would strike fear into their hearts, since it clearly demonstrates what I am capable of. However, they merely made condescending comments about what a " good little hunter" I am. Bastards! Inflected words: " decapitated" (past tense -ed), " a" (answers how many), " mouse" (singular form of a noun stem), " dropped" (past tense —ed), " their" (possessive form of they), " feet" (plural), " had" (past tense form of " to be"), " hoped" (past tense —ed), " would" (future form of " to be"), " their" (see above), " hearts" (plural), " demonstrates" (plural), " made" (past tense of " to make"), " condescending" (present participle), " comments" (plural), " a" (see above), " hunter" (this could be considered a rare case wherein the English language specifies gender. We would assume that this cat is a male otherwise the author could have used the word " huntress". But since the word is used in a neuter language, the cat's gender is still ambiguous), " Bastards" (more than one bastard/plural). Most of these inflections are necessary. Without them, the general idea of the paragraph could be conveyed, but the story line and the specifics would be left unaddressed leaving the reader confused and unable to comprehend any deeper meaning. Inflections I found that the paragraph could do without: " hoped"- in context, the word is a verb in the past tense. But without inflection, the verb could be transformed into a noun, reading: " I had hope (that) this would strike fear into their hearts..."

Question #21: Select a page of some foreign language and count the words that are inflected and those that are uninflected. What percentage are inflected? For this answer, I used a composition that I turned in to a Spanish class this year. Despues de mis estudios, hay son muchos cosas que yo querria hacer. Espero que yo termine mis 9 estudios por la edad de treinta.

Aunque, deseo que continuar yendo a escuela para mi toda la vida 9. Es necesario que todas personas aprendan durante todas sus vidas. Escribiré un libro 10 cuando yo atendere mi escuela menos. No conozco a nadie(de mi edad y con mi mismo ahorio) que tenga el tiempo escribir un libro! Ahora no estoy seguro de las todas cosas que deseo. Pero me alegro de pensar cerca del futuro antes de mi. Me espero que mi vida después mis estudios es muy feliz. 17

Approximately 50% of the words are inflected. The most commonly inflected words in the paragraph are verbs. The composition was practice for the subjunctive form and thus the verb tenses varied from present tense to future tense to conditional tense. Also inflected were words given gender (examples): " la escuela" " el dia" " una hora. " In the spanish language, gender is noted by " la" or " el" in the beginning of the word, and often, the gender can be deciphered by the masculine " o" as the word's suffix, or the feminine " a" as the word's suffix. A complexity of inflected words can be the fact that a word may be inflected in more than one way, such as " una hora" is; the singularity of " una", rather than " unas" represents how many, and it is also inflected with the " a" stating that " hora" is categorized within the feminine gender. Works Cited (1). " Inflection: Spanish Language-. " About. com. 14 May 2009 (2). " English 401: Lessons on Inflection-. " English 401 Lessons. 13 May 2009 (3). " Inflection-. " Wikipedia- The Free Encyclopedia. 13 May 2009 (4). " Affix-. " Wikipedia- The Free Encyclopedia. 13 May 2009 (5). " Excerpts from a Dog and Cat's Diary!-. " Scribd. 13 May 2009