

Brown's Fourteen Morphemes

In 1973, a researcher by the name of Roger Brown isolated 14 morphemes that appear early in child language. Since many of these morphemes (smallest unit of meaning) have alternate forms of expression – e.g. Sara's car *or* her car, it is difficult to determine an exact age of acquisition. However, the below chart serves as a guide for what is generally anticipated at each stage of normal development in this area.

MORPHEME	EXAMPLE	AGE OF MASTERY* (IN MONTHS)
Present Progressive –ing (no auxiliary verb)	Mommy driving.	19-28
In	Ball in cup.	27-30
On	Doggie on sofa.	27-30
Regular plural –s	Kitties eat my ice cream. Forms: /s/, /z/ and /Iz/ <i>Cats</i> <i>Dogs</i> <i>Classes, Wishes</i>	27-33
Irregular past Possessive's	Came, Fell, Broke, Sat, Went Mommy's balloon broke. Forms: /s/, /z/ and /Iz/ as in regular plural	25-46 26-40
Uncontractible Copula (verb <i>to be</i> as main verb)	He is. (Response to "Who's sick?")	27-39
Articles	I see a kitty. I throw the ball to daddy.	28-46
Regular past –ed	Mommy pulled the wagon. Forms: /d/, /t/, /Id/ Pulled Walked Glided	26-48
Regular third person –s	Kathy hits. Forms: /s/, /z/ and /Iz/ as in regular plural	26-46
Irregular third person	Does, Has	28-50



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Uncontractible auxiliary	He is. (Response to "Who's wearing your hat?")	29-48
Contractible copula	Man's big. Man is big.	29-49
Contractible auxiliary	Daddy's drinking juice. Daddy is drinking juice.	30-50
*Used correctly 90% of the time.		