

WORD FORMATION IN ENGLISH LEXICOLOGY

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ABSTRACT

This article focuses on the study of English word formation models. The article discusses the predominant word-formation models in the English language, including their problems, characteristics, and classifications.

Keywords: word-formation, word-composition derivative structures, minor types, major types, back-formation, distinctive stress, affixation.

INTRODUCTION

The study of the process through which new words, derivative structures, and methods of using old words are formed is referred to as lexicology. A significant component of this field is word creation. There are two broad categories that may be used to categorise all of the many ways of constructing words; these are the main and minor categories. It's generally agreed that word-derivation and word-composition are two of the most essential forms of formation. Back-formation, distinctive emphasis, sound mimicry, sound exchange, shortening, and acronyms are some of the other minor kinds of word creation. One can gain an understanding of the ways in which to improve the language as a whole by studying word development. After all, the language that we use is always evolving; everything that occurs in society is reflected in the language through the development of new words and new meanings for existing terms; and the primary source of the appearance of new words in the language is the process of word formation.

LITERARY ANALYSIS AND METHODOLOGY

Major Types of Word-formation

It should be obvious that effective word creation can only deal with words that can be broken down into their component



parts and examined semantically as well. Because they are the building blocks upon which derived and compound words are constructed, simple words have a tight relationship with the process of word development. Therefore, the topic matter of research in word creation consists of terms like consumer, misunderstand, sugar free, etc., whereas words like to consume, to understand, and free are irrelevant to it.

Word-derivation

When discussing word-derivation, there are two methods to create new words: affixation and conversion.

Affixation is the use of affixes to create a new word (happiness, misprint). There are two types of affixation: suffixation and prefixation.

In Modern English, suffixation is predominantly characteristic of the formation of nouns and adjectives, whereas prefixation is predominantly characteristic of verb formation. This type of word formation is concerned with the derivational structure of words, including their derivational bases, derivational affixes, and derivational patterns.

A **derivational base** is the part of the word which establishes a connection with the lexical unit that motivates the derivative and determines its individual lexical.

meaning describing the difference between words in one and the same derivative set. For example, the individual lexical meaning of the words consumer, dealer, teacher which denote active doers of the action is presented by the lexical meaning of the derivational bases: consume-, deal-, teach-.

Derivational affixes are Immediate Constituents of derived words in all parts of speech. Derivational affixes are added to derivational bases. Affixes can be of two types: prefixes and suffixes.

Prefixes stand before a derivational base. They modify the lexical meaning but rarely transfer a word into a different part of speech: hear (v) → overhear (v), fair (adj) → **un**fair (adj), president (n) → ex-president (n), etc.

Suffixes stand after a derivational base. They also modify the lexical meaning but not necessarily transfer a word into a different part of speech: king (n) → kingdom (n), book (n) → bookish (adj), rapid (adj) → rapidly (adv), etc.

A **derivational pattern** is a regular meaningful arrangement, which imposes rigid rules on the order and the nature of the derivational base and affixes that may be brought together to create a new word. Patterns are usually represented in a generalized way in terms of conventional symbols: small letters v, n, a, d which stand for parts of speech:



verbs, nouns, etc. Derivational patterns are also known as structural formulas. Here are some examples of derivational patterns: $n + -sf \rightarrow N$ (friend + ship), $v + -sf \rightarrow N$ (sing + er), etc.

Conversion is the formation of a new word by putting a stem of the already existing word into a different paradigm (fly (noun) – fly (verb)), thus, by changing the category of a part of speech without adding any derivative elements, so that the original and the converted words become homonyms. For example, the paradigm of the verb fly is as follows: fly, flies, flying, flew, flown, while the paradigm of the noun fly is different: fly (sg) and flies (pl).

Conversion is a highly-productive type of word-formation in Modern English. It is widely-spread among verbs and nouns. Converted words can sound extremely colloquial, e.g. I'll microwave the chicken for you. This specifically English type of word formation can be explained by the analytical character of the English language, deficit of inflections and abundance of monosyllabic and disyllabic words in different parts of speech.

Word-composition

Compound words are words consisting of at least two stems which occur in the language as free forms. Most compounds in English have the primary stress on the first syllable. For example, blackboard has the primary stress on the black, not on the board. Compound adjectives and numerals have two primary stresses, e.g. hot-tempered, new-born, age-long, seventy four, ninety one.

Compounds possess a regular set of properties. First, they are binary in structure. They always consist of two or more constituent lexemes. A compound which has three or more constituents must have them in pairs, e.g. vacuum-cleaner manufacturer consists of vacuum-cleaner and manufacturer, while vacuum-cleaner in turn consists of vacuum and cleaner. Second, compound words usually have a head constituent. By a head constituent we mean a part of the word which determines the syntactic properties of the whole lexeme, e.g. the compound lexeme snow-white consists of the noun snow and the adjective white. The compound lexeme snow-white is an adjective, and it is so because white is an adjective, thus, white is the head constituent of snow-white. Compound words can be found in all major syntactic categories:

- nouns: sunlight, longboat;
- verbs: window shop; safeguard;
- adjectives: duty-bound, ice-cold;
- prepositions: into, onto, upon.



Morphologically compound words are classified according to the structure of immediate constituents:

- compounds consisting of simple stems: strawberry, blackbird;
- compounds where at least one of the constituents is a derived stem: gascooker, mill-owner;
- compounds where one of the constituents is a clipped stem: V-day, Xmas;
- compounds where one of the constituents is a compound stem: football player, wastepaper basket.

One more structural characteristic of compound words is classification of compounds according to the type of composition. According to this principle two groups can be singled out:

1) words which are formed by a mere juxtaposition, i.e. without any connecting elements: e.g. saleboat, schoolboy, heartbreak, sunshine;

2) stems which are connected with a vowel or a consonant placed between them: e.g. salesman, handicraft.

Semantically compounds may be idiomatic and non-idiomatic. Compound words may be motivated morphologically and in this case they are non-idiomatic. The meaning of the word Suitcase is a sum of meanings of the stems this compound word consists of (the meaning of each stem is retained).

When the compound word is not motivated morphologically, it is idiomatic. In idiomatic compounds the meaning of each component is either lost or weakened. Idiomatic compounds have a transferred meaning. For example, Butterball – is not a ball made of butter, it is someone who is fat, especially child; the combination is used figuratively.

Minor Types of Word-formation

Apart from the principle types there are some minor types of modern word-formation, they are shortening, blending, acronymy, sound interchange, sound imitation, distinctive stress, back-formation, and reduplication.

Shortening

Shortening is the formation of a new word by cutting off a part of the word. Initial, middle and final part of words can be cut off:

- aphaeresis – initial part of the word is clipped, e.g. history → story, telephone → phone;
- syncope – the middle part of the word is clipped, e.g. madam → ma'am; specs → spectacles



- apocope – the final part of the word is clipped, e.g. professor → prof, vampire → vamp;
- both initial and final, e.g. influenza → flu, detective → tec.

Polysemantic words are usually clipped in one meaning only. Let us see the example: the word doctor means 1) “someone who is trained to treat people who are ill”; 2) “someone who holds the highest level of degree given by a university”. Thus, this word can be clipped only in the first meaning, e.g. doc.

Among shortenings there can be distinguished homonyms, so that one and the same sound and graphical lexical unit may represent different words, e.g. vac – vacation and vacuum, vet – veterinary surgeon and veteran.

Blending

Blending is the formation of a new word which combines the features of both clipping and composition, e.g. boatel (boat + hotel), brunch (breakfast + lunch), smog (smoke + fog), modem (modulator + demodulator).

There are several structural types of blends:

- 1) initial part of the word + final part of the word, e.g. electrocute (electricity + execute);
- 2) initial part of the word + initial part of the word, e.g. lib-lab (liberal + labour);
- 3) initial part of the word + full word, e.g. paratroops (parachute + troops);
- 4) full word + final part of the word, e.g. slimnastics (slim + gymnastics).

Acronymy

Acronymy is the formation of a new word by means of the initial letters of parts of a word or phrase. Acronyms are commonly used for the names of institutions and organizations. No full stops are placed between the letters. All acronyms can be divided into two groups. The first group comprises acronyms which are often pronounced as series of letters: EEC (European Economic Community), FBI (Federal Bureau of Investigation), PC (personal computer).

The second group of acronyms is composed by words which are pronounced according to the rules of reading in English: AIDS (Acquired Immune Deficiency Syndrome), NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization). Some words of the second group can be written without capital letters as they are no longer recognized as acronyms: laser (light amplification by stimulated emissions of radiation), radar (radio detection and ranging), jeep (general purpose car).

Like shortenings acronyms can be homonyms as well: MP – Member of Parliament, Military Police and Municipal Police, PC – Personal Computer and Politically correct.



Sound-interchange

Sound-interchange is the formation of a new word due to an alteration in the phonemic composition of the root of a word. Sound-interchange can be of two types: 1) vowel-interchange, e.g. full – fill; in some cases vowel-interchange is combined with suffixation, e.g. long – length; 2) consonant-interchange e.g. believe – belief. The combination of consonant-interchange and vowel-interchange may be found among English words either, e.g. life – to live.

Sound imitation or (onomatopoeia)

New words formed by this type of word-building denote an action or a thing by more or less exact reproduction of the sound which is associated with it. Let's compare such words from English and Russian: cock-a-dodoodle-do – ку-ка-ре-ку, bang – бах, бац (сильный удар).

DISCUSSION AND RESULTS

Semantically, according to the source sound, many onomatopoeic words are divided into the following groups: 1) words denoting sounds produced by human beings in the process of communication or expressing their feelings, e.g. chatter, boor; 2) words denoting sounds produced by animals, birds, insects, e.g. moo, buzz; 3) words imitating the sounds of water, the noise of metallic things, movements, e.g. splash, scratch, swing.

Distinctive stress

Distinctive stress is the formation of a new word by means of the shift of the stress in the source word, e.g. 'increase (n) – in'crease (v), 'subject (n) – sub'ject (v).

Back-formation

Backformation is the formation of a new word by cutting off a real or supposed suffix, as a result of misinterpretation of the structure of the existing word. This type of word-formation is not highly productive in Modern English and it is built on analogy, e.g. cobbler – to cobble, blood transfusion – to blood transfuse.

Reduplication

Some linguists define one more type of word-formation that is reduplication. Most words built by reduplication represent informal groups: colloquialisms and slang, e.g. hurdy-gurdy, walkie-talkie, riff-raff, chi-chi girl. In reduplication new words are formed by doubling a stem, either without any phonetic changes or with a variation of the root-vowel or consonant. For example, bye-bye – reduplication of the stem without phonetic changes; chit-chat – reduplication of the stem with a variation of the root-vowel i into



a; walkie-talkie – reduplication of the stem with a variation of the consonant w into t.

As it can be seen from the examples above, this type of word formation combines features of word-combination and sound-interchange. Thus, some scientists may regard such words as a special group formed by either word combination or sound-interchange.

In The Cambridge Encyclopedia of the English Language, David Crystal writes about word formations:

"Most English vocabulary arises by making new lexemes out of old ones — either by adding an affix to previously existing forms, altering their word class, or combining them to produce compounds. These processes of construction are of interest to grammarians as well as lexicologists. ... but the importance of word-formation to the development of the lexicon is second to none. ... After all, almost any lexeme, whether Anglo-Saxon or foreign, can be given an affix, change its word class, or help make a compound. Alongside the Anglo-Saxon root in *kingly*, for example, we have the French root in *royally* and the Latin root in *regally*. There is no elitism here. The processes of affixation, conversion, and compounding are all great levelers."

CONCLUSION

In linguistics (particularly morphology and lexicology), word formation refers to the ways in which new words are formed on the basis of other words or morphemes. This is also known as derivational morphology.

Word formation can denote either a state or a process, and it can be viewed either diachronically (through different periods in history) or synchronically (at one particular period in time).

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