

WORD FORMATION

Borrowing and word-building (or word-formation) provide for enlarging and enriching the vocabulary of the language.

Word formation is the creation of new words from elements already existing in the language.

Groups of morphological word-formation

Major – highly productive

- affixation
- conversion
- compounding

Minor – less productive

- shortening
- sound alteration
- stress interchange
- back-formation
- ellipsis
- onomatopoeia

Affixation

Affixation (derivation) is the formation of new words by means of attaching **affixes** to a **stem**.

A STEM AND A ROOT

A Stem – the part of a word which remains unchanged throughout its grammatical paradigm.

singer:

singer, singers, singer's, singers'

- possesses both lexical and grammatical (part-of-speech) meaning.

A STEM AND A ROOT

A Root – the basic part of a word which remains unchanged in the process of morphological derivation.

- shows the lexical meaning of a word

heart, hearten, dishearten, heartily, heartless, hearty, heartiness, sweet heart, heart-broken, kind-hearted, whole-heartedly

Types of stems

- **Simple stems** coincide with the roots of words.
a work, a port, a book
- **Derived stems** contain one or more affixes.
a worker, bookish, skilful
- **Compound stems** are made up of two or more simple stems.
a room-mate, a girlfriend

Types of English affixes

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graph TD; A[Types of English affixes] --> B[suffix]; A --> C[prefix]; A --> D[infix];
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suffix

prefix

infix

- **a suffix**

a derivational morpheme following the stem and forming a new derivative in a different part of speech or a different word class

–ify horr-ify, pur-ify, simpl-ify

- **a prefix**

a derivational morpheme standing before the root and modifying meaning.

hearten - dishearten, sleep - asleep

- **an infix**

an affix placed within the word, like -n~ in stand or between stems. It is not productive.

Classifications of English affixes

according to their:

- grammatical functions
- etymology
- productivity
- meaning

According to their grammatical functions:

- *noun-forming*
-al (refusal), -er (driver), -ure (picture)
- *verb-forming*
-ate (navigate), -ite (unite), -ify (simplify)
- *adjective-forming*
-ous (famous), -y (windy), -en (wooden)
- *adverb-forming*
-ly (daily), -ward (forward), -wise (clockwise)

According to their etymology:

native

-ling (OE)

duckling

-th (OE)

length, strength

borrowed

-ess (French)

actress, poetess

-ist (Greek)

artist, economist

According to their productivity:

- *productive*

take part in deriving
new words in a
particular period of
language
development

-dom (OE)

kingdom, wisdom

- *non-productive*

-ade (Latin)

blocade, lemonade

-ary (Latin)

legendary,
reactionary

-ce (OE, Middle E)

once, twice

Conversion

- a highly productive way of coining new words in Modern English
- an affixless way of word-building
- making a new word from some existing root word by changing the category of a part of speech, without changing the morphemic shape of the original word

- The *telephone* rang while I was eating my toast.
- He would send a cable or *telephone* as soon as he returned.
- I have just received a bill from the *telephone* company.

The most frequent types of conversion:

- from noun to verb:

to hand, to back, to face, to eye, to mouth

- from verb to noun:

do, go, make, run, find, catch, cut, walk, worry

- from adjective to noun and to verb:

to pale, to yellow, to cool, to grey

Compounding

- morphological joining of two or more stems in one word.

Peculiarities of compounding in English:

1. The regular pattern for the English language is a two-stem compound.
2. Both stems of an English compound can function as independent words with a distinct meaning of their own.

Ways of forming compounds:

- by the juxtaposition of the parts:

*heartache n, heart-beat n, mankind,
peace-loving, take-off, everything*

- with the help of the linking vowel /
consonant **o, e, s:**

*elect**o**motive adj, speed**o**meter n,
Af**ro**-Asian adj, state**s**man*

Shortening (Contraction)

- a rather highly productive way of word-building
- involves the shortening of both words and word-groups
- is used especially in American English

Shortenings /clippings are produced in two different ways:

a new word is made from a syllable of the original word:

- *phone* from *telephone*
- *hols* from *holidays*, *vac* from *vacation*
- *flu* from *influenza*, *fridge* from *refrigerator*

a new word from the initial letters of a word group:

- **UN** from the **U**nited **N**ations

informal shortenings

- *Who's the letter from?*
- *My g. f.*
- *Didn't know you had girl-friends. A nice girl?*
- *Idiot! It's from my grandfather!*

More examples of informal shortenings:

moving-picture — movie;

gentleman — gent;

spectacles — specs;

Sound interchange or gradation

- a productive way of word building in OE
- important for a diachronic study of the English language
- lost its productivity in ME and no new word can be coined by means of sound gradation
- an alternation in the phonemic composition of the root

Two groups of sound interchange

- **Vowel interchange**

full (adj.) - fill (v.)

food (n.) - feed (v.)

blood (n.) - bleed (v.)

*strong (adj.) –
strength (n.)*

*long (adj) – length
(n.).*

- **Consonant interchange**

use - to use

belief – to believe

house - to house

advice – to advise

life (n.) - live (v.)

bath (n.) - bathe (v.)

Stress Interchange

- is neither productive nor regular
- mostly happens in disyllabic nouns and verbs of Romanic origin

accent, compact, impact, compress, impress, conflict, contest, contract, extract, contrast, convict, essay, export, import, transport, increase, insult, object, subject, project, perfume, permit, present, produce, progress, protest, record, survey, transfer.

Back-formation

- the derivation of new words by subtracting a real or supposed affix from existing words through misinterpretation of their structure

to beg from the French borrowing
beggar

to burgle from *burglar*

to cobble from *cobbler*

Ellipsis

leaving out a word or words in a phrase or in a sentence when their absence does not affect the meaning

- is used for reasons of economy, emphasis, or style
- may be grammatical and lexical.

- Grammatical ellipsis - when grammatical words are omitted.

When (I was) a child, I often played in this garden.

- Lexical ellipsis may be considered one of the ways of word-formation.

weekly < from “weekly paper”

finals < from “final examinations”

мило < from “мильна опера”

ONOMATOPOEIA

the naming of an action or thing by a more or less exact reproduction of a natural sound associated with it

Words coined by this type of word-building are made by imitating different kinds of sounds that may be produced by animals, birds, insects, human beings and inanimate objects.

The cock cries:

- in Russian ку-ка-ре-ку

- in Ukrainian ку-ка-пи-ку

- in English cock-a-doodle-doo

- In England ducks quack and frogs croak.

Some names of animals and especially of birds and insects are also produced by sound-imitation:

crow, cuckoo, humming-bird, whip-roor-will, (жалобный козодой) cricket (сверчок)