

# 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,  
Afr**o**-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      ky-ka-pe-ky
- in Ukrainian    ky-ka-pi-ky
- 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-poor-will, (жалобный козодой) cricket (сверчок)*