

# Ways of Word-Building

# Conversion

- I. Definition of conversion: a) different approaches to the phenomenon of conversion; b) conversion and convergence; c) semantic development of the resultant word.
- II. Types of conversion. Adjectivization and substantivation.
- III. Semantic relations in converted words.

# Definition of conversion

- **Conversion** is a non-affixal way of word-building: *e.g. a book - to book*
- Conversion consists in coining a new word from some existing one by changing the category of part of speech, the morphemic shape of the original word remaining unchanged: *e.g. to head an army, to table a resolution, to smooth a dress.*

# Definition of conversion

- The new word has a meaning, which differs from that of the original one though it can more or less be easily associated with it.
- It has also a new paradigm peculiar to its new category as a part of speech: e.g. *eye, n: an eye, (the) eyes; eye, v: eyes (3rd person singular), eyed (past indefinite), eying (participle 1).*

# Productivity of conversion

The productivity of conversion in the English language is encouraged by

- the analytical structure of this language,
- the simplicity of paradigms of English parts of speech,
- a great number of one-syllable words.

# Convergence and Conversion

On the diachronic level conversion should be distinguished from **convergence** of sound forms of nouns and verbs, which took place as a result of the loss of endings in the 15-16th centuries:

e.g. *OE carian (v), caru (n) > MnE care (v, n);*

*OE lufian (v), lufu (n) > MnE love (v, n);*

*OE wyrcan (v), weorc (n) > MnE work.*

# Types of conversion

- N > V (the most usual direction): *a hand – to hand, a wolf – to wolf, a room – to room;*
- V > N (a frequent direction): *to make – a make; to show – a show, to walk – a walk;*
- Adj > V: *pale – to pale, yellow – to yellow, cool – to cool;*

# Types of conversion

- N > Adj (**adjectivization of nouns**): "*a stone wall*", "*a village school*";
- Adj > N (**substantivation of adjectives**): partial (e.g. *the blind, the unemployed, the wounded*) or complete (e.g. *a private, the private(s), the private's*);
- Prep / Conj > N: "*ins*", "*but*", "*ifs*".



# Semantic relations in converted words

# I. $V < N$ (verbs converted from nouns, i.e. denominal verbs)

- verbs have *instrumental meaning* if they are formed from nouns denoting parts of the human body or from nouns denoting tools, machines, instruments, weapons: e.g. *to eye, to finger, to elbow, to shoulder; to hammer, to machine-gun, to rifle, to nail;*
- verbs can denote *an action characteristic of the living being* denoted by the noun from which they have been converted: e.g. *to crowd, to nurse, to wolf, to ape;*

# V < N

- verbs can denote *acquisition or addition* of an object denoted by the noun from which they have been converted: e.g. *to fish, to paper*;
- verbs can denote *deprivation or removal* of an object denoted by the noun from which they have been converted: e.g. *to dust, to peel*;

# V < N

- verbs can be *locative* if they are converted from nouns denoting places, buildings, containers: e.g. *to park, to garage, to bottle, to corner, to pocket*;
- verbs can denote *an action performed at the time* denoted by the noun from which they have been converted: e.g. *to winter, to week-end*.

## II. *V* < *Adj* (verbs converted from adjectives, i.e. deadjectival verbs).

- Verbs converted from adjectives denote *change of state*: e.g. *to tame* (*to become or make tame*), *to clean*, *to slim*, *to calm* etc.

### III. $N < V$ (nouns converted from verbs, i.e. deverbal nouns)

- ***an agent of the action*** expressed by the verb from which the noun has been converted: e.g. *a help, a flirt, a scold*;
- ***instance of the action***: e.g. *a jump, a move*;

**$N < V$**

- ***place of the action:*** e.g. *a drive, a stop, a walk;*
- ***object or result of the action:*** e.g. *a find, peel.*
- ***process or state:*** e.g. *sleep, walk.*

# WORD-COMPOSITION

- I. Definition of compound words. Specific features of English compounds. Composition and other ways of forming compound words other ways of forming compound words. A compound and a phrase: the criteria of compounds.
- II. Diachronic approach to compounds: simplification, demotivation, semi-affixes.
- III. Classification of compounds.



# I. Definition

- **Composition** is one of the most productive types of word-building in Modern English, in which compound words are produced.
- **Compound words** are words consisting of at least two stems, which occur in the language as free forms.

# The criteria of compounds

## Structural cohesion:

- 1) the unity of stress (e.g. a *ˈblackboard* vs a *ˈblack ˈboard*),

But: Double stress: e.g. *ˈsnow-ˈwhite*, *ˈsky-ˈblue*

- 2) solid or hyphenated spelling (e.g. *homework*, *exercise-book*),

But: Different spelling (e.g. *blood-vessel* / *blood vessel*); **block compounds** (one uniting stress but spelt with a break): e.g. *air piracy*, *cargo module*, *coin change*, etc.

# The criteria of compounds

- 3) semantic unity (the meaning of the whole compound is not a sum of meanings of its components): e.g. *to ghostwrite*, *skinhead*, *brain-drain*, etc.
- But: In non-idiomatic compounds semantic unity is not strong: e.g. *airbus*, *to bloodtransfuse*, etc.

# The criteria of compounds

- 4) the unity of morphologic and syntactic functioning, i.e. they are used in a sentence as one part of it and only one component changes grammatically (e.g. *These girls are chatter-boxes.*),
- 5) indivisibility, i.e. the impossibility of inserting another word or word-group between its components.

# Specific features of English compounds

- 1) Both components in an English compound are free stems, i.e. they can be used as words with a distinctive meaning of their own: e.g. *"a green-house"* and *"a green house"*.
- 2) English compounds have a two-stem pattern, with the exception of compound words which have form-word stems in their structure: e.g. *middle-of-the-road*, *off-the-record*, *up-and-coming*, etc.

# Other ways of forming compound words

- reduplication (e.g. *too-too*), reduplication + sound interchange (ablaut): e.g. *rope-ripe*;
- conversion from word-groups: e.g. *to mickey-mouse*, *makeup*, etc;

# Other ways of forming compound words

- back formation from compound nouns or word-groups: e.g. *to bloodtransfuse, to fingerprint, etc.*;
- analogy: e.g. *lie-in, phone-in (on the analogy with "sit-in"), brawn-drain (on the analogy with brain-drain), etc.*

## II. Diachronic approach to compounds



# Simplification of stems

- the morphological structure of a compound may undergo certain changes and it turns into a root word: e.g. *husband* < OE *husbonda* "master of the house"

# Demotivation

- Due to etymological isolation a compound may lose its ties with formerly correlated words: e.g. *breakfast* (literally means "to interrupt going without food / прервать пост"), *kidnap* (literally means "to seize a young goat").

# Semi-affixes

- Some compounds look very much like derivatives due to semi-affixes "*man*", "*berry*", "*land*", "*proof*", "*like*", "*worthy*", "*monger*", etc.: e.g. mainland, waterproof, praiseworthy, businesslike, fishmonger.

# III. Classification of compounds

# I. The means of joining the components:

- 1) **neutral**, i.e. words with a mere juxtaposition of components without connecting elements: e.g. *headache, film-star, blockbuster*;
- 2) **morphological**, i.e. words whose components are joined together with a vowel or a consonant as a linking element: e.g. *speedometer, handicraft, statesman*;
- 3) **syntactical**, i.e. words with linking elements represented by form-word stems: e.g. *down-and-out, sister-in-law*.

## II. The morphologic structure of components

- 1) compounds consisting of simple stems (**compounds proper**): e.g. *bookcase*, *blackbird*;
- 2) compounds where at least one of the components is a derived stem (**derived, or derivational compounds**): e.g. *long-legged*, *chain-smoker*;

## II. The morphologic structure of components

- 3) compounds where at least one of the components is a shortened stem (**contracted compounds**): e.g. *H-bag*, *math-mistress*;
- 4) compounds where at least one of the components is a compound stem: e.g. *wastepaper-basket*, *aircraft-carrier*, *singer-songwriter*.

# III. The part of speech of a compound

- **compound nouns** (e.g. *sunbeam, pickpocket*);
- **compound adjectives** (e.g. *lifelong, red-hot, hard-working*);
- **compound verbs** formed either by means of conversion from compound nouns (e.g. "to weekend" from "a weekend") or by back-derivation from compound nouns (e.g. "to baby-sit" from "a baby-sitter");



# III. The part of speech of a compound

- **compound pronouns** (e.g. *somebody, nothing*);
- **compound adverbs** (e.g. *somewhere, inside, headfirst*),
- **compound prepositions** (e.g. *into, without*),
- **compound conjunctions** (e.g. *insofar as*),
- **compound numerals** (e.g. *fifty-five*),

## IV. The degree of motivation of compounds

- 1) **non-idiomatic** compounds (with a perfectly clear motivation): e.g. "*a seaman – a man professionally connected with the sea*";
- 2) **idiomatic** compounds (the motivation is vague): e.g. *a chatterbox, to blackmail*;

# V. The relations between the components

- 1) **subordinative** compounds where one of the components is the semantic and structural centre and the second component is subordinate: *e.g. custom-house, coast-line*
- 2) **coordinative** compounds where both components are semantically independent: *e.g. secretary-stenographer, woman-doctor, fifty-fifty, no-no, criss-cross, walkie-talkie*

# Subordinative relations

- purpose or function relations (e.g. *bathrobe, classroom, textbook*)
- local relations (e.g. *dockyard, garden-party, sea-front*)
- comparison (e.g. *snow-white*)
- the material the thing is made of (e.g. *silverware, tin-hat*)

# Subordinative relations

- temporal relations (e.g. *summer-house*, *night-club*, *day-train*)
- the first element denoting gender (e.g. *she-dog*, *tom-cat*)
- the first element pointing out the agent (e.g. *cock-crowing*)
- the first element pointing out the instrument (e.g. *pinprick*)

# Subordinative relations

- limiting relations (e.g. *breast-high*, *knee-deep*)
- emphatic relations (e.g. *dog-cheap*)
- cause relations (e.g. *love-sick*)
- space relations (e.g. *top-heavy*), etc.

## VI. The order of the components

- direct order (e.g. *kill-joy*)
- indirect order (e.g. *nuclear-free, rope-ripe*)