Word Formation Processes

Chapter 6

Introduction

- Spangler and his *electric suction sweeper*
- *Spangler- spanglering – spanglered – spanglerish – spanglerism*
- That didn’t happen, but people still talk about ‘hoovering’
- **Neologism** → a new word, usage, or expression
Etymology

- The study of the origin of the word
- Etymology → comes from Latin but has Greek roots (etymon ‘original from’ + logia ‘study of’)
- Attitude towards new words entering a language
  - *Handbook* – *aviation* in the 19th century
  - *Computer* and *radio* in Arabic
- Ways in which a word can enter a language.

Types of Word Formation

1. Coinage
2. Borrowing
3. Compounding
4. Blending
5. Clipping
6. Backformation
7. Conversion
8. Acronyms
9. Derivation
Coinage

- Invention of totally new words
- Extension of a name of a product from a specific reference to a more general one
  - e.g. *Kleenex*, *Xerox*, and *Kodak*
- **Eponyms**: words based on a name of a person or a place. E.g. *sandwich*, *jeans*, *watt*

Borrowing

- Taking over of words from another language
- English borrowed a lot of Latin and French words
  - *Leak* (Dutch)  *Barbecue* (Spanish)
  - *Piano* (Italian)  *Sofa* (Arabic)
  - *Croissant* (French)  *Yogurt* (Turkish)
- Arabic also borrowed a lot of words from English, e.g. *television*, *radio*, *supermarket*
- Loan-translation or calque
  - A phrase that is introduced into a language through translation
    - Superman → الرجل الخارق
    - Skyscraper → ناطحة سحاب
Compounding

- Two or more words joined together to form a new word.

Examples:
- Home + work → homework (N)
- Pick + pocket → pickpocket (N)
- Low + paid → low-paid (Adj)

Note: The meaning of a compound is not always the sum of the meanings of its parts.

- Coconut oil → oil made from coconuts.
- Olive oil → oil made from olives.
- Baby oil → NOT oil made from babies.
Blending

- Similar to compounds, but in blending *only parts* of the words are combined.
- Examples:
  - Motor + hotel → Motel
  - Breakfast + lunch → Brunch
  - Smoke + fog → smog
  - Teleprinter + exchange → telex

Clipping

- Shortening a word by deleting one or more syllables
- Examples:
  - Facsimile → fax
  - Hamburger → burger
  - Gasoline → gas
  - Advertisement → ad
  - Professor?
  - Doctor?
Backformation

- Creative *reduction* due to incorrect morphological analysis.
- Examples:
  - editor → edit
  - television → televise
  - babysitter → babysit

*Note*: backformation always involve reduction (changing the form of the word)

Conversion

- Assigning an already existing word to a new syntactic category.
- Examples:
  - butter (N) → V to butter the bread
  - permit (V) → N an entry permit
  - empty (A) → V to empty the litter-bin
  - must (V) → N doing the homework is a must
  - Microwave (N) → V
Acronyms

- Words derived from the initials of several words

Examples:
- National Aeronautics and Space Agency → NASA
- United Nations International Children’s Emergency Fund → UNICEF
- United Nations Educational, Scientific, and Cultural Organization → UNESCO
- Compact Disc → CD

Other examples of Acronyms:

- a) Radar → Radio detecting and ranging
- b) FYI → For Your Information
- c) TGIF → Thanks God It’s Friday
- d) a.k.a → also known as
- e) Html → Hypertext mark-up language
- f) www → World wide web
- g) btw → By the way
- h) ATM → Automatic Teller Machine
- i) FAQ → Frequently asked questions
Derivation

- The most common word formation process.
- affixes
- Examples:
  Happy → unhappy, happiness
  Arrange → rearrange
- Prefixes vs. suffixes
- Infixes → inside the word
  - Tell them I’ve gone to *Singabloodypore*!

Multiple Processes

- The creation of a particular word involves more than one process.
- Example: *Problems with the project have snowballed*

  Snow + ball → compound
  Snowball (N) → (V) conversion
Multiple Processes

- Identify the processes involved in the creation of the following forms.
  - I just got a new car-phone
  - James wants to be a footballer
  - The negotiators blueprinted a new peace proposal

Complete the process and Identify the type of word formation:

1. automatic  →  Auto  →  clipping
2. information, entertainment  →  Infotainment  →  blends
3. modulator, demodulator  →  Modern  →  blends
4. love, seat  →  Loveseat  →  compounding
5. International, police  →  Interpol  →  blends
6. A comb  →  To comb  →  conversion
7. delicatessen  →  Deli  →  clipping
8. Capt. Charles Cunningham Boycott  →  Boycott  →  eponym
See you next class 😊
Read Chapter 7