

# Chapter XIV: Word Formation Processes

- Other processes for word formation and morpheme formation.
- Some of these processes (clipping or blending) are not as rule governed as the affixation processes.
- They depend more on the ingenuity of the speaker who creates them.
- Other processes (backformation) depend on there being a prior rule system which provides a structure for creating new words.

# Shortening

- Acronyms and Abbreviations
  1. Acronyms: select characters, usually the first, from each of the words in the phrase to form a new term.
    - Pronounced as a word.
    - Examples: scuba (self-contained underwater breathing apparatus), radar ( radio detecting and ranging), etc.
  2. Abbreviations
    - Pronounced as a sequence of letters.
    - Examples: TV, CD, COD, etc.

# Shortening con't

- Backformation
- A process by which a new lexeme is formed by removing a morpheme or what could plausibly be analysed as a morpheme from a lexeme.
- Example: the agentive suffix *-er* (teach/teacher, read/reader, work/worker).
- Take *swindler*, it would be reasonable to assume that there must be a verb from which it is formed.
- However, the verb *swindle* was formed by removing the *-er* from *swindler*.
- A number of English verbs have been formed from nouns that look like they are agentive: for example, *edit* from *editor*, *peddle* from *peddler*.

# Shortening con't

- Clipping
- A new form is created by removing arbitrary material from an existing word.
- Example: *blog* which refers to an online journal. The word is formed from the compound *weblog*.
- The first two characters have been clipped.
- Truly a word? It inflects like a verb: *blogs* and *blogging*.

# Blends

- Blends resemble compounds in that both combine 2 objects to form a new lexeme.
- However, the objects combined in a blend may not be linguistic units at all but are simply sequences from 2 lexemes that are often chosen to fit the phonological constraints of the language.
- Typically formed from a sequence from the beginning of one lexeme and a sequence from the end of another.
- Examples: *smoke* + *fog* = *smog*
- Sometimes blends are formed from a phrase: *situation* + *comedy* = *sitcom*

# Zero Derivation

- It is often possible in English to create a new lexeme of a different category without adding a morpheme at all.
- For example, the verb *impact* is clearly from a past participle.
- However, although there is a noun *impaction* formed in the familiar way, it is not itself familiar.
- Instead, the familiar related noun is *impact*.
- The rule:  $\text{Lex}_N \Rightarrow \text{Lex}_V + \emptyset$
- Called the Zero Derivation because you add nothing to create a new lexeme.
- Compare the difference in pronunciation:

# Zero Derivation

Verb	Noun
impa <sup>1</sup> ct	i <sup>1</sup> mpa <sup>2</sup> ct
permi <sup>1</sup> t	pe <sup>1</sup> rmi <sup>2</sup> t
addre <sup>1</sup> ss	a <sup>1</sup> ddre <sup>2</sup> ss

## Zero Derivation con't

- These stress differences are the general pattern.
- Primary stress falls on the last syllable in the verbs and the first syllable in the nouns.

# Brand Names

- Sometimes a product is so successful that its name becomes the designator for all similar products.
- In effect the name becomes *generic*.
- Example: band-aid, cellophane, dry ice, kleenex, yo-yo etc.
- Businesses want to protect their brand name, ensuring that it only refers to their product.
- A brand name can lose its protected trademark status if it can be shown that it has become the generic term for a range of products.

# Fusion

- New morphemes come into existence as well.
- The creation of *-gate* to designate scandals.
- The frequent blending with *cybernetics* (cf. *cybernaut*, *cyberspace*, *cyberpunk*) may well create a new morpheme *cyber-*.
- Another process that can create a new morpheme is to fuse previously existing morphemes into a single morpheme.
- An example in English is the suffix *-ation*.
- English speakers have re-analyzed the Latin nominal suffix *-ion* when it occurs with the thematic vowel *a*, as a single unit *-ation*.
- It is now productive in English as a nominalizing suffix.