

# Chapter 4

## Derivation and the Lexicon



1

## Contents of this chapter

- Derivation
  - deriving **new lexemes**: create new meaning
  - composition of meaning in morphologically complex words
- Compounding
- Zero-derivation
- Affixation
- Other derivational processes
  - blending; acronyms; clipping; folk etymology; back formations
- Derivation and structure

2

## Sound-meaning

- Signs (“words”) are arbitrary signifiers for things that are “signified”
  - exceptions?
    - onomatopoeia (but different across languages)
      - Crows: French: croa-croa; Indonesian: gagak; Korean: kka-ak-kka-ak; Spanish: cruaaac, cruaaac; Swedish: krax; Thai: gaa gaa; Turkish: gaaak, gaak
      - Goats: Nahuatl (Mexico): choka; Norwegian: mae; Quechuan (Peru): jap’apeyay; Russian: mee; Ukrainian: me-me
    - sound symbolism: words related in meaning that share phonetic characteristics

3

## gl- / spl- / tw- in English

- glare, glaze, gleam, glee, glibber, glide, glimmer, glimpse, glint, glisten, glister, glitter, gloam, gloat, gloom, glower
  - light/wetness
- splash, splat, splay, splice, spline, splinter, split, splosh, splotch, splurge, splutter
  - water/splitting
- twaddle, twain, twang, tweak, twin, tweezer, twelve, twenty, twice, twig, twinkle, twirl, twist, twit, twitch, (be)twixt
  - old words, maybe IE infixes/prefixes

4

## Recent research

MA Thesis: Tong Ling (2016): Sound Symbolism in Brand Naming  
... We hypothesize that brand names containing front vowels are conceived smaller, lighter, milder, softer, faster, warmer etc; brand names containing more soft consonants than hard ones are considered smaller, faster, lighter, sharper etc; besides, we also expect that the lip shape weakens the sound symbolic impact in the study and the Chinese EFL participants exhibited similar sound symbolic impact on brand name preference as [western] native speakers did in the previous studies ...

5

## New lexemes

- Derivation (not inflection)
- Compounding
- Zero-derivation
- Blending
- ...

6

## Compositionality: affixes

- Affixes (like words) usually have a fairly stable meaning
  - e.g. re- in rewrite, redo, re-organize
  - meaning is **compositional**
- But not always:
  - be- in behead, befriend, besiege and bewitch: all different meanings
  - -ation in civilization, publication, fortification, organisation
  - related to history? research project

7

## Compounding

- tool + bar; tea + house
  - meaning of these compounds is clear (transparent) from meaning of the constituent parts = compositional
    - not always
- single nouns syntactically and prosodically
- **nonce forms** (or hapax legomena): on the spot creations: transparent meaning
  - e.g. [high voltage electricity grid systems supervisor ] = compound noun
  - vs. lexicalised compounds like toolbar
  - if lexicalised for a longer time, less compositional meaning

8

## Endocentric vs. exocentric

- Endocentric: "headed"
  - board game IS A kind of game
  - bluebird IS A kind of bird
- Exocentric: "non-headed" (non-compositional)
  - lazybones IS NOT A kind of bones
  - redhead IS NOT A kind of head
- Many languages have both kinds of compounds; endocentric ones more common – why?

9

## Chinese

- Exocentric examples from Chao (1968), via Packard (2004):

verbs: zhùyì 注意 pour-(one's)-mind 'pay attention'

nouns: lǐngshì 领事 lead-affairs 'consul'

adjectives: chūmíng 出名 exit-name 'famous'

adverbs: yòngxīn 用心 use-mind 'carefully'

interjections: láojià 劳驾 bother-carriage 'would you please'

10

## Zero-derivation

- bottle (N → V)
- Very frequent in child language
  - p. 115: "I'm supermanning"
  - **all from N → V** (explanation?)
  - examples Chinese?
- age 2: 50-600 words
- age 6: about 14,000 words
- adult: 20k-50k words

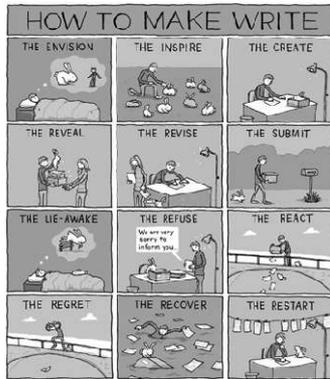
11

## Verb to Noun

- A good read      A winning run
- A long walk      A constant worry
- Take a call      A vicious attack
- NYT "literary" style:
  - physical or mental dissolve
  - the revelation of a secret in a movie is called "the reveal"
- The big ask / answer my asks

12

## Literary effect: V → N



13

## English affixation

- drink → drinker      'deverbal noun'
  - kind → kindness      'deadjectival noun'
  - read → readable      'deverbal adjective'
  - rich → enrich      'deadjectival verb'
  - write → rewrite      'deverbal verb'
  - bottle → bottle      'denominal verb'
- **Infixation with swear words**
    - fan – effing – tastic; Okla – effing – Homa
    - foot structure plays a role: before the last foot

14

## -cont.

- affixes typically attach to distinct word classes (e.g. -er to verbs)
- -ish can attach to words of different categories, e.g. childish, oldish, ticklish (last one is an exception)
  - other affixes?
- -儿 (northern dialects) attaches to?

15

## Other new words: Blending

- (not productive) Isolated examples:
  - smoke + fog = smog (!)
  - binary + digit = bit (!)
  - motor + hotel = motel
  - friends + family = framily (2010 movie)
  - free + female = freemale
  - plant + animal = plantimal
- Many examples among our new words
  - texpectation, nomotion
- In other languages, e.g. Chinese?
  - 闪 + 婚 = 'flash marriage' (2012 movie?)
  - compound? affix? blending?

16

## Acronyms

- radar = radio detecting and ranging
  - no longer functions as an abbreviation, but as a full, independent word
  - Amarillo PD radaring cars on I-40 (Google)
- NATO, spelt like an abbreviation, but pronounced like a single word
- initialisms / alphabetisms = FBI : letters are pronounced separately /'ef 'bi: 'ai/
  - essay question: are all abbreviations that *could* be pronounced acronyms? (e.g.: U.N.)
  - essay question: which acronyms / alphabetisms take a definite article? (NATO..., The FBI....)

17

## Clipping

- Cutting off part of a word to make a new word
  - refrigerator > fridge
  - typographical error > typo
  - advertisement > ad
  - San Francisco > Frisco (cf. Joseph > Jef)
- Compare: I'd, we're, you've [clitics]
- Compare: short names:
  - Robert > Rob      Josephine > Joe
  - Susan > Sue      Beverley > Bev

18

## Folk etymology

- Words that are borrowed from another language are adapted to make them look like native words:
  - woodchuck > Cree *wuchak*
  - cockroach > Spanish *cucaracha* 'woodlouse', from *cuco* 'caterpillar'
  - other examples, e.g. spelling hiccough from hiccups

19

## 1. hiccup(s) 2. hiccough(s)



20

## Back formation

- 'editor' existed in English before the verb 'edit' did
  - liposuction > liposuct (?)
  - surveillance > surveil (?)
  - pease (pl. peases) > pea
- <http://www.etymonline.com/>
- history of word is not part of native speaker knowledge

21

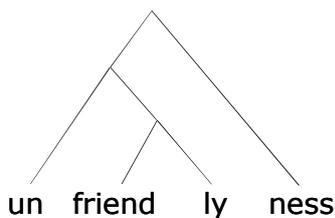
## Editor vs. edit



22

## Structure of derivations

- [[un - [friend - li]] -ness]



23

## Compound structure

- What is the structure of
  - credit card agreement form
  - undersea cable repair team
  - World Trade Center rescue worker  
(from Haspelmath's textbook)
- sometimes more than one structure is possible

24

## Homework

- Read chapter 4 especially carefully; note down any questions
- Find any new English or Chinese words
- Please prepare exercises **1-7** for class next week
- Thank you

25