

Word Formation Processes

Affixation

- Process of forming words by adding affixes to morphemes
- Prefixation: re + apply → re-apply
- Suffixation: constitution + al → constitutional
constitutional + ly → constitutionally
- Infixation: insertion of an affix within the root morpheme

Infixation example from Tagalog, a language of the Philippines

Verb stem

sulat 'write'

bili 'buy'

kuha 'take, get'

Infinitive

sumulat 'to write'

bumili 'to buy'

kumuha 'to take,
to get'

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Pseudo-infixation in English

- English doesn't have true infixation.
- English does have something similar in a limited sphere.
- Expletives can be inserted inside a word for emphasis.
 - Un-fucking-believable

- Abso-bloody-lutely (from *My Fair Lady*)
- Halle-fucking-lullah (Soprano’s episode)

Reduplication

- Process of forming new words by doubling all or part of a morpheme.

Example from Indonesian

Singular

ruman ‘house’
 ibu ‘mother’
 lalat ‘fly’

Plural

rumahrumah ‘houses’
 ibuibu ‘mothers’
 lalatlat ‘flies’

Alternation

- Process of forming a word using morpheme-internal modifications
- Example from English: vowel changes in formation of some plurals
 - man / men, woman / women, goose / geese

Compounding

- process of joining two separate words to produce a single word
- E.g., fingerprint, bookcase, sunburn, wallpaper, doorknob, textbook, wastebasket, waterbed

Clipping

Backformation

- Reduction of a word of one lexical category (usually a noun) to a word of another lexical category (usually a verb).
- Examples: television → televize, editor → edit, donation → donate, option → opt, emotion → emote, enthusiasm → enthuse.

Blending

- process of combining two separate forms to produce a single

new term

- typically the beginning of one word is joined to the end of the other word
- E.g., *smog* (smoke+fog); *brunch* (breakfast+lunch), *motel* (motor+hotel), *telecast* (television+broadcast).

Acronyms

- words formed from the initial letters of a set of other words
- Examples: NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization), NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration), laser (light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation), radar (radio detecting and ranging) and scuba (self contained underwater breathing apparatus)

Coinage

- the invention of totally new terms
- E.g., *aspirin*, *nylon*, *kleenex*, *xerox*
 - originally invented trade names
 - now everyday words

Borrowing

- process of taking over words from other languages
- Loan words
- English example: 'alcohol' (Arabic), 'boss' (Dutch), 'croissant' (French), 'lilac' (Persian), 'piano' (Italian), 'pretzel' (German), 'robot' (Czech), 'tycoon' (Japanese), 'yogurt' (Turkish) and 'zebra' (Bantu).

Loan words from English into other languages

- Japanese *suupaamaaketto*
- Hungarian *sport* and *futbal*
- French *le parking*, *le weekend*

Calque

- loan translation
- direct translation of the elements of a words into the borrowing language.
- E.g. French *gratte-ciel* ('scrape-sky') from English *skyscraper*; English *loan word*, from German *Lehnwort*