

lecture No - 13
Dr. Hemant Jha.

DIII, Paper VIII : Linguistics.

Topic : Word Formation

Though the basic unit of a language, all linguists agree in general, is "phoneme" or set of phonemes (sounds) available to the speaker, the phoneme must culminate in words, (passing through, as it does, from the building block that is syllable) to be relevant and useful semantically. One of the important areas, therefore, of linguistic studies is how new words are formed; which can be enumerated as follows:-

(2) Affixation

(23) Back-Formation

(222) Clipping

(2V) Blending

(V) Conversion

(V2) Compounding

(V2V) Duplication

(X22V) Acronymy

(ix) Word ~~formation~~ ^{Manufacture}

(X) Multiple Function

(2) Affixation :-

Affixation or Derivation is the process in which a new word is formed by adding a prefix or a non-inflectional suffix to a base, or by inserting an infix to the root. Thus they are of three categories:-

- (a) Prefixation =
- A + sleep = asleep (attributive)
 - un + able = unable (Negative)
 - Dis + loyal = disloyal (Negative)
 - un + tie = untie (Reversative)
 - Mis + treat = mistreat = (Pejorative)
 - Pre + lunch = prelunch = (Prefix of Time)

Co + ordinator = Coordinator = (Prefix of altitude)
Sub + division = subdivision = (Prefix of degree or size)
Sub + way = subway = (Prefix of Location)

(b) Suffixation :-

Suffix of occupation = gang + ster = gangster.

Blackmarket + eer = Blackmark-
Sonnet + eer = ^{et}sonneteer.

Diminutive suffix = Cigar + ette = cigarette
Pig + let = Piglet.

Suffix of Status = Boy + hood = boyhood.
child + ish = childish
star + dom = stardom
Man + like = Manlike

(c) Infixation :-

Examples of infixation are to be rarely found in the Indo-European languages including English though Mangolian Family of languages do offer the instances as can be found in the Philippino language. In English we come across a new word used by George Bernard Shaw in his play the 'Pygmalion' :-

we certainly come across a new word "Abso-blooming-lutely" when we find infixation "blooming" being inserted between the word 'absolutely' by Eliza Doolittle.

(22) Back-formation :- In this process of word formation we get a new word by deleting the

suffix or what appears like a suffix. Thus this process can safely be assumed as just the opposite of affixation — we get a new word by getting rid of the terminal part of the base word. Examples: —

"Edit" from "editor" — (suffix deleted.)

"Burgle" from "burglar" — (ar is not a suffix but a part of the root.)

"Laze" from "Lazy". ('y' is part of the root not a suffix)

"Televisé" from "Television" (part of the root deleted)

"Thus deleting the terminal part of the base is an obligatory feature of this type of word formation!"

iii) Clipping : —

In this process of word formation we get a new word by shortening the original word without any change in its meaning. In the English language "clippings" are of the ^{four} three types as follows: —

(a) In the first type only the initial part of the original is kept to form a new word for the sake of convenience:

"Memo" < "memorandum"; "stereo" < "stereophonic".

"Photo" < "photograph"; "Ad" < "advertisement".

"Lab" < "laboratory"; "Exam" < "examination".

"Mike" < "Microphone"; "Non-Veg" < "non-vegetarian".

(b) The second type of the process is just the opposite of the first as in this the last part of the original is retained to form a new word: —

"Phone" < "Telephone"; "Bus" < "omnibus";

"Plane" < "airplane".

(4)

(c) In this "clipping" process of word-formation the middle part of the original word is retained for convenience while shortening it:-

"Flu" > "influenza" and "Fridge" > "refrigerator" are among its examples.

(d) In this clipping process of word formation the final "s" of the original word is added to the initial part of it to get a shorter version of the ^{word} without any change in the meaning:-

"Specs" < "spectacles" ; "Maths" > "mathematics".

"Tams" < "pyjamas" ; "Digs" > "diggings" etc.

(21) Acronymy:-

Acronymy is the process of word formation in which a new word comes into being when the initial letters of a group of words are joined together for the sake of "widely felt human desire for the economy of efforts." This process has gained momentum with the new inventions surfacing every day. Broadly speaking there are three types of acronyms:-

(a) where "sequence of initial letters ~~are~~ is in agreement with principles of syllable construction in English" enabling them to be pronounced as words:-

"Unesco" > "United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural organization".

"Radar" > "radio detecting and ranging"

(b) In this type of acronymy the initial letters are pronounced as sequence of letters:-

"V.I.P" > "Very important person"; "I.Q" > "Intelligent Quotient".

(c) In this case a new word is coined by taking letters from the same word to shorten it:-

T.B < "Tuberculosis" ; T.V. < "Television".

(To be concluded)