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English - II (Advanced English) Dr Om Prakash Guest Faculty

Department of Humanities and Social Sciences Indian Institute of Technology, Madras English Vocabulary-02

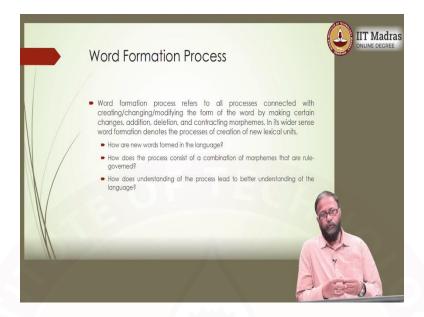
Today we are going to unfold the world of words in a language, in English, particularly here in this lecture. Words are beautiful part of any language, and we cannot imagine communicating without words. We cannot imagine. They are so powerful, they contain our intentions, our meanings, our understanding, and our experiences. And we use them to express and share understanding.

So, they are wonderful component of a language, and the number of words in any language, we cannot count them. We cannot say that this is the number of words in English or in French or in Hindi or in Telugu. Number of words cannot be counted. Why? Because you keep on adding new words to it. So, some old words go out of fashion, some new words arrive in vogue. And you might have noticed, because of social media, how many new words we have started using in our everyday transactions.

And, and you find a series of new words with new meanings being used. At times, the words are familiar, but something has been done to these words. Maybe, some portions have been dropped, maybe some something added, maybe something modified. So, we keep on experimenting and creating new expressions and words in a language. This is not only true to English but also to the rest of the language. You can see, in your own language, perhaps a word x, which had earlier meaning something else. Now in a new context, it means something else. Semantic extensions, you are changing the meaning of it. So, this is a beautiful world of words, and welcome to that.



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So, let us have a few processes, a very generic, universal processes, which helps us create, find, coin, and derive a new word. So, let us, for our convenience, call it a word-formation process. So, such processes that we, we are just going to talk about are very common and universal in nature. It is done in all languages. We all do it.

So, I will just list a few prolific and frequent processes that we use to form new words in English. You can, by the way, always draw a parallel, or you can always relate to your own mother tongue and see whether what are the things that you do to create new words in your mother tongue. And that we have a very good exercise for you. And you will also be able to relate to English. Because human languages function on certain universals and what Chomsky calls underlying principles. So, they are common, they are not new things.

So, word-formation process refers to all processes connected with creating, changing, modifying the form of the word by making certain changes, addition, deletion, and contracting morphemes. You might be familiar with the word called morpheme. Morpheme is a minimal, meaningful combination of sounds, a string of sounds. Meaningful is important. Not any string of sound can



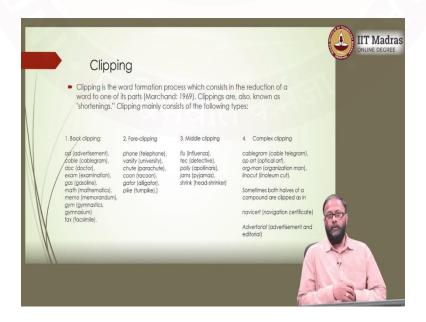
be called a morpheme. It has to have some meaning. Or, if not lexical meaning, content meaning, then at least, a very specified grammatical function. They are called morphemes.

So, in a wider sense, word formation denotes the process of creation of new lexical units or items in a language. So, three questions come to mind. How are new words formed in language? We will just see it right now. How does the process consist of a combination of morphemes that are rule-governed?

So, these combinations, these attachments, glue, gluing something before the word, adding something before the word, adding something after the word, they are not random, they are not arbitrary, they are rule-governed. There is a pattern and these patterns are language-specific. Not similar pattern is observed in all languages, but within that language, patterns are fixed. So, we have to keep in mind.

And why do we know, why do we need to know them? Knowing such processes will help you better understand the language and derive meaning out of it. It helps you in deriving meaning, framing sentences, doing lots of other grammatical operations. So, it is required that we understand the process.

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So, let us quickly survey the word-formation process in English. One is, contracting, shortening, or what you call clipping. You clip the word. A longer word is clipped, and a new word replaces it with the same meaning, but it becomes shorter. Now, we can clip at the back of the word, the backside of the word can be clipped, or the front part of the word can be clipped. We can clip something, take out of something from the middle of the word or sometimes we have two or three words combinations, and we compound them or we clip in such a way that it gives you a shorter word.

So, a long word or set of words clipped in such a way that they give you a new word. So, clipping is the word-formation process which consists in the reduction of a word to one of its parts. Clippings are also known as shortenings. And look at some examples, like black clipping, back clipping. So, the latter part of the word is clipped. So, we say 'ad', ad means advertisement. So, the whole word, the later part, is cut out of it, and we get a word ad. Cable, the whole word is cablegram, gram is dropped. Clipped, you say cable.

Exam, the whole word is examination. But we call it exam. Maths, for that matter. Memo, from memorandum. Memorandum is the full word. We clip it to make memo. Gym, gymnasium, gymnastic, only gym. So, we clip it. So, the later part is being clipped. This is called back clipping. So, we are clipping the later part of the word and getting a word out of it. Then there are possibilities to clip the front part of the word, and still, we get a new word. Like phone, telephone is the full word. Like chute, parachute. Like gator, its alligator. So, the front part is clipped, it is called fore-clipping. Front clipping, fore-clipping.

Sometimes, we drop certain parts, or we clip certain parts of the middle part of the, of the word. So, something like influenza. So, we have only flu. So, some portions before flu and some parts before flu, after flu, are clipped, and we get a word flu instead of influenza. Like, headshrinker, so we have shrink. Complex clipping, like you, have cablegram, cable telegram, tele is clipped. Sometimes both halves of the compound are clipped as in navicert, navigation certificate. Advertorial, advertisement, and editorial.



What we do, some part of, like back for back clipping in advertisement and front clipping or fore-clipping of editorial, and we clip them and make a new word, advertorial. You might be familiar with the word advertorial, and you might see such advertorials in magazines and newspapers. Where you see a news item, item, an ad, advertisement, which looks like a news item, and it gives you a feel of a news item. However, it is a paid news.

So, it is an advertisement. And at the end of it, if you see it very closely at the end of it in a very insignificant font, the smallest font possible, they write advertorial. So that it camouflage and you see it as a news item. Advertorial- advertisement plus editorial. So, this is how clipping helps us get new words in the language.

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Now acronym, you might have seen abbreviations, right? Where the initial letters are used to represent the whole word. But when these initials or abbreviations are used as a full word independent word. And in cases like, there is a city in near Delhi called Noida... Now, you can find it on Google Map, Noida. Now, that is a place I come from. So, Noida or Greater Noida, so Noida is acronym if you know. And this is being used as an independent, individual word.



And if you go and do the survey, majority of younger people have no idea what is Noida? It is Naveen Okhla Industrial Development Authority. But now, these abbreviations N O I D A it becomes an acronym because now it is name of a city. A huge city, a well-developed huge city, Noida. So, this is acronym. NATO, we use the word NATO, North Atlantic Treaty Organization. NATO forces, so, NATO. So, NATO is now being used as a single word. So, it contains initials of North Atlantic Treaty Organization. Look at the word called laser, for that matter. Light Amplification by Stimulated Emission of Radiation.

Now, unless you are a physicist or you are a science student, laser, for a commoner is a word. Scuba, scuba diving you must be doing. What is scuba? Self-Contained Underwater Breathing Apparatus. Now but scuba is being used as a single word. So, this is called acronym when the initials of a larger chunk, abbreviations, constitute a new word. And therefore, they refer to as a single independent word as if they are a word. But essentially, they are abbreviations. Look at ISBT, Inter-State Bus Terminus. But now, it is being used as a single word, that is acronym. This is also a very interesting process of word-formation.

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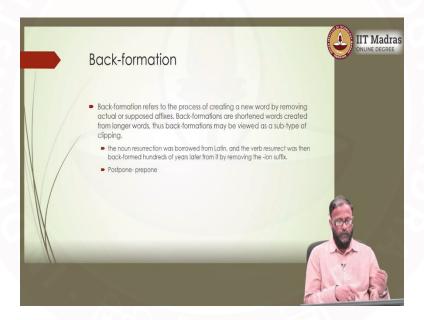
Then blending. Blend means to mix the two. We blend it in such a way that it becomes the word. Like brunch, breakfast and lunch. So, part of breakfast and part of lunch. They are blend together



to get a new word, brunch. Words like Cyborg, a blend of cybernetic and organism. So part of cybernetic, part of organism, together they are blend to get, they are blended to get a new word, Cyborg.

Guesstimate, two words, guess and estimate. We blend them in such a way that parts are dropped. And then we get a new word. So, guesstimate, a blend of guess and estimate. These two words are independent words. But out of these two independent words, we get a new word by blending it. Breakfast is an independent word. Lunch is an independent word. But when we add and blend it together, we get brunch, breakfast, and lunch. So, this is blending.

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Then, back-formation. Sometimes, if you look at English, new words are created out of an existing word, like resurrection. A single word, there was no word called resurrect. But ion was dropped, and we get a new word. Postpone is a word, but we back-formed another word equivalent, opposite of it, prepone. Now we use it, it is in vogue, and we use it. So, what is back-formation? It is a process of creating a new word by removing actual or suppose, a fixation. So possibly we drop... it is like clipping. You drop it, and you create a new word out of it. So, if it is a noun, you get a verb out of it by dropping or clipping of things. So, this is back-formation.



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Now, have you ever, ever wondered, have you wondered how we get a word which is not, part of our own language? It comes from other language, but over a period of time, it becomes so frequent, and you know in currency, that it seems like it is our own word. For example, road. It is an English word. School, it is an English word. File, it is an English word. But file for that matter, road, highway for that matter...time, such a, such a frequent, commonly used word. So, we borrow words from other languages depending on the need.

For example, Britishers brought a lot of food items with them to this continent, Indian subcontinent, and you find these food items present in all these languages. Cake, for that matter. Pastry, for that matter. Very rare to find an equivalent of cake in any of the Indian languages, pastry in any of the Indian languages, but we are eating it, and we are using it in such a way that it seems so familiar. Road, school, rail, so these are the words.

So, borrowing is a very prolific phenomenon to increase the number of words and vocabulary in a language. And it is across languages, it is never the case that only Indian languages have borrowed from English. English has also borrowed from Indian languages. Particularly let us



say, words like loot. A Hindi word, to plunder. Now it's part of Oxford Dictionary. Raita, saree, dharna- the political agitation, lathi, lathi charge.

So, it is both ways. Languages come in contact, and we have inflow of new words to the other language and also outflow of words to, towards outside, to different languages. So, it is a very common phenomena. So, borrowing, just taking a word from another language. And look at, look at the English for that matter. English has taken a lot of words from Latin, French, and Greek. You might see all these botanical names of the trees and plants around you. They are all Latin words. And all students of botany, they all know the botanical names of these plants and trees.

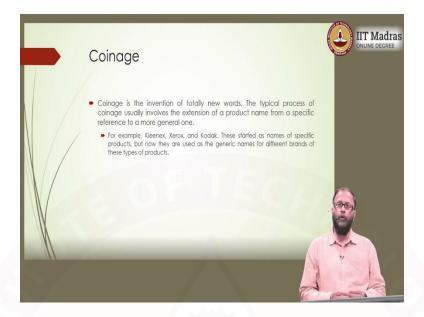
So, borrowing is a very...like in Indian language, if you look at, we borrow from each other so much that after a while, it becomes very difficult to find out which word is from where. It is a very prolific phenomena. In your own native language also, you can know. You can just count and list words which are not originally from your language. But now they are so frequent and in currency, in vogue, that they appear to be your own word. We, we adopt it, and we put it close to our heart, we use it.

If you look at English for that matter, like biology, boxer, ozone, this has been borrowed from German; like jacket, yoghurt, kiosh from Turkish; pistol, robot from Czech; dharna, loot, jungle from Hindi. So, this is a very prolific phenomenon that languages borrow from each other. It is not a one-way process. It is a two-way process. Depending on the need, we borrow items. We borrow concepts and all related words with it.

You borrow a dress, you borrow a food item, you borrow cultural practice, and you customize it and use it as your own word. This is a very prolific phenomena in all languages. And English is no exception by the way.

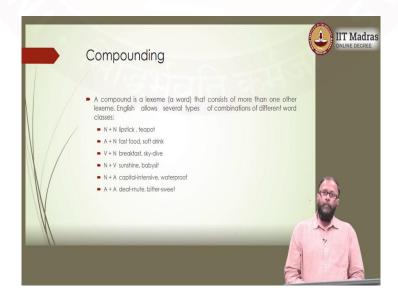


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Coinage, see, coin a new term. So, if the word, if the word is lacking, if you the word is missing, or you find no equivalent of the concept in a language, then we coin a word—Xerox for that matter. Even technology allows us to coin new words. Xerox. Now xerox is the name of the machine company that makes that machine for photocopying. But now Xerox, which is the name of the company, generic, is being used as a verb, and it is used as a word, xerox. Kleenex, the Kodak. These are the names of the company which brought the technology and the idea and the concept, and the concepts are named after them. So, this is another way of doing it.

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Then we have compounding, where two words are put together to create a third word to represent a new concept. Like tea and pot. Two separate words, teapot. Lipstick. Lip and stick, lipstick. Lipstick. A new word is a new meaning. By the way, a stick has nothing to do with lip here, lipstick. Breakfast. Fast, a separate word. Break, a separate word. And gives a new word-breakfast. Sunshine babysit, baby oil. Now baby oil, like it is not like mustard oil. When we say mustard oil, oil extracted out of mustard. But baby oil is not oil extracted out of baby, baby oil for baby. So, to be consumed and used for baby, massaging baby.

So, we need to understand that this compounding sometimes change the meaning. So, independent words have a different meaning, but when they are joined together, they give an entirely different meaning. So, mustard oil and baby oil, please, are not the same, we have to keep in mind. Waterproof. Like...bittersweet. So, these are compounding processes and very prolific. And you find in your own language also that how two words just together to get a new word, a third word and how it changes the meaning and how it is used in different contexts to represent different ideas.

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Then, inflection. So, there are words, when we use them in sentences, they change the form. These are grammatical functions. So, meaning may not change, but the form changes. Like go, goes, going. And if you put 'ed', add to it, went. If you put 'en' to it, gone. So, these are called



inflections, the process of inflection where use you use a suffix to suit a grammatical requirement, to meet a grammatical requirement in a sentence.

So, go and going are two different words with two different purposes. They represent two different things. Like go is in simple verb, but when we say going, it is a progressive form of the simple, same verb, go. If I say went, it is a past form of the same verb. Gone, a past participle form of the same verb go. Or probably baby and babies, are singular, and then we make plural out of it by just adding 'ies' in babies.

Sometimes you have superlative, comparative degree in adjectives. So, we say fast, faster, fastest. So, word remains adjective, but we are adding er for comparative degree, for we are adding 'est' for superlative degree. So, this process is called inflection.

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Then we have a process called derivation. And in derivation, we derive a new word out of already existing word, either by prefixation, so adding something before the word, or by suffixation, adding something after the word. So, let us have some examples like kindness, a word. So, kind is the word and ness, a suffix added to it. So, kind is adjective. But the moment



we add ness, a noun forming suffix, it becomes kindness. So adjective, and if derived noun out of it, adjective is kind, kindness.

You can derive verb like modern, adjective. But the moment I say modernize, I derive modernize from the same word modern, just by adding a suffix to it. And I have a new verb modernize from modern. Capital, capitalize. National, nationalize. So, this is how we derive new words, new categories of words. Then, you can derive adjective out of noun. Recreation, recreational. Nation, national. Temporary.

So, so, you can derive verb out of nouns like glorify. Glory-glorify. Beautify. Beauty-beautify. Simple-simplify. Then you can derive adjective out of verbs, something like drink-a verb. Drinkable. Drinkable-adjective. Likable. Drinkable. You can also derive noun out of verbs, some, deliver, deliverance, delivery. So, you can keep on practicing how we derive nouns out of verbs, how we derive verbs out of nouns, how we derive adjective out of nouns, how we derive adjective out of verb.

So, this is a very prolific, productive process where either we use prefix or like, for example, let us say something like power. When we say empower. Large-enlarge. Friend-befriend. So, by just prefixing, we are getting a verb out of it.

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And for further understanding of the process, you can just have a look at these books. And you can understand this beautiful process of creating new words in a language and in English, we just talked about. You can think of such processes in your own mother tongue and see what are the processes which are so productive in your mother tongue to create new words. How they are created, modified, derived, how you are giving a new meaning to a word extending the semantic extension we are doing, extending the meaning of the word, the same existing word.

Look at technology for that matter, mouse, for that matter. Is not what we know in IT? We know in computer very well mouse, mouse the function of it. Window, we know window, but it has a different meaning in IT. So, you have the same word with a different extended meaning in different contexts. So, this is a beautiful world of words and keep practicing. We will continue our discussion. For now, this is it. Thank you very much.