



# IIT Madras

## BSc Degree

### Copyright and terms of use

**IIT Madras is the sole owner of the content available in this portal - [onlinedegree.iitm.ac.in](https://onlinedegree.iitm.ac.in) and the content is copyrighted to IIT Madras.**

- Learners may download copyrighted material for their use for the purpose of the online program only.
- Except as otherwise expressly permitted under copyright law, no use other than for the purpose of the online program is permitted.
- No copying, redistribution, retransmission, publication or exploitation, commercial or otherwise of material will be permitted without the express permission of IIT Madras.
- Learner acknowledges that he/she does not acquire any ownership rights by downloading copyrighted material.
- Learners may not modify, publish, transmit, participate in the transfer or sale, create derivative works, or in any way exploit, any of the content, in whole or in part.

**English – II (Advanced English)**  
**Professor Rajesh Kumar**  
**Humanities and Social Sciences**  
**Indian Institute of Technology, Madras**  
**Innovation in Vocabulary**

(Refer Slide Time: 00:14)



**Innovation in Vocabulary**

Rajesh Kumar



Welcome to the class. Today, we are going to talk about some innovative processes in building vocabulary. When I say vocabulary, I do not simply mean building a stock of words for us to use. Vocabulary is of course, it contains that, it contains lexical items that we use but the process involved in building vocabulary includes a lot more than that. As you can pay attention to, it is about the process, and the process is almost similar to that of what we have been discussing about structures.

If we pay attention to the process, and if we pay attention to how these processes function in the subconscious of our mind, we get to understand a lot about the process involved in building the vocabulary in process in the making of words. We are going to do that but that is one part of it.

The second part, which is going to be the running theme, underlying theme, is there is a heavy role of sociocultural context in building vocabulary, in the making of words that we use in our regular life or sometimes we use words from selective domains, from different domains to make our language either impressive or enriched.

Either way, it is part of a process, and I wish to discuss a few things about that with you. So, when we talk about context, we know that contexts are culturally dependent. So, the process of making vocabulary that we use in India, that people can use in different parts of India, they

are going to vary on geographical base. We are going to differ in terms of our uses, but more or less, you will find a running theme in that.

So, we have categorized this process in four, five domains and we are going to talk about that, but please remember socio-culturally embedded context is important, and in this I would like to simplify this phrase for you. When we say socio-culturally embedded context we mean society, culture and context.

The three work together. They are intertwined. We cannot look at culture out of society or society out of culture, and the context is embedded within that as well. So, the use of language in society is undoubtedly dependent on the cultural context.

So, the linguistic competence being one part, that is, what is possible and what is not possible is one part of this discussion, but the context embedded in society and culture has a lot to do with how we make words and how those words become either high frequency words for use in the society or low frequency words for use in the society or in our day today languages, in our spoken language.

The other part which is important for us to keep in mind is the whole process of language use per se. It is also dependent on the context, in the sense that whether the context is formal or informal. We pick words from different areas, depending upon formal and informal nature of the use of language. So, all these things play a huge role in the back of our mind when we either make the word or use them. We are going to look at some of them to see.

(Refer Slide Time: 05:31)

### Prefixes from Greek and Latin

- Prefix
- Suffix

PREFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
Aer-	Air	Aerobic, aeronautics
Geo-	Earth	Geometry, geopolitical
Hemi-	Half	Hemisphere
Herb-	Related to plants	Herbal, herbivorous
Hydro-	Related to water	Hydrogen, hydrochloride
Hyper-	More, in excess	Hyperactive, hypersensitive
Hypo-	less	Hypothyroidism

+ low freq  
+ Cognitive

One very productive pattern for word formation is adding prefixes or suffixes from ancient sources or resources. English has a very productive pattern of word formation using prefixes from Greek and Latin. These are classical, classic languages, classical languages. Both Greek and Latin have ancient connection with English, and they have borrowed, that is, English has borrowed a lot from them, from these two languages among many others. So, we are only going to look at a few things to indicate the process to you.

So, in this discussion I am not aiming at giving you a list of a whole range of words. Rather I intend to talk about the process and then that will be useful to you in helping yourself see this pattern and find this pattern in words that you use. So, look at this, there are some prefixes that we often find in words and then these are prefixes and suffixes from Greek and Latin sources, so they become low frequency words in our language.

So, we have words like look at this. Like let us look at first examples, aerobic or aeronautics. The first part that you see 'aero' comes from Greek prefix 'aer' which means air, and that can be combined with other words to make a new word like aerobic, aerobics or aeronautics. Similarly, if you look at the other prefix 'geo', which means earth or related to earth and then we get words like geometry, geopolitical, geography and so on. The whole word geography is from this prefix geo, which is Earth, are related to Earth.

'Hemi' means half and words like hemisphere comes from this prefix. 'Herb' it is related to, it is a word, it is a prefix, which means, literally means related to plants, and then we get words like herbivorous or herbal or it is a prefix that you find in more words. It is a very productive pattern. 'Hydro', it is water or related to waters, means, hydrogen, hydrochloride. When you use these words, when you see these words 'hydrogen', the first part of this word hydro is a prefix, which means something related to water. 'Hydrochloride', these are the names, this is the name of a chemical, 'hydro project' and more words with 'hydro' in: hydrogen, hydrochloride, hydroperoxide, hydro project, and so this indicates a productive pattern to us.

'Hyper': it means more or in excess. So, in words like hyperactive, hypersensitive; when you see this word hyperactive this prefix has a specific meaning, it is coming from another language, and we get words made of these prefixes and these words become low frequency words plus the moment you have words with low frequency, that is, words that occur lower in its frequency the number of times we use, they are also going to be high cognitive, in the high cognitive zone.

So, the higher the cognitive level, the lower the frequency, this is a very simple tool. So, all these words that you see are low frequency because they are higher in cognitive level. Why higher? Because they come from different sources.

‘Hypo’: hyperthermia, hypothyroidism. Just looking at the name, it is going to become low frequency and but the important part is, even if these are low frequency words, it is important for us to understand that there are prefixes from other languages, and once we understand these prefixes, the meaning of these words become easier for us, and above all, they cannot be, we cannot avoid these words in English languages and more in the domain of academic English, more in the domain of English from a specific fields, the use of words in specific fields, and we quite often run across these words.

(Refer Slide Time: 11:57)

### Prefixes from Greek and Latin

PREFIX	MEANING	EXAMPLES
Inter	Between	Internet, interpersonal
Intra	<u>Within</u>	Intranet, intracellular
<u>Mega</u>	<u>Big</u>	Megabyte, mega star
Re	<u>Back, again</u>	Redo, reuse, <u>rebuild</u> , <u>recycle</u>
Ultra	<u>In excess</u>	Ultrasonic, ultraviolet



Some more are like ‘inter’, which means between. So, internet, interpersonal, these are some of the words that you can say. ‘Intra’ which means within. So, intracellular, intranet, intracircular, intradependent, there are a lot of words that you will find with these things. ‘Mega’; these are common. It means big, so megabyte or mega star or mega performance. We use this with quite a number of words in English, and we find it very regular.

So, ‘re’ means back or again. Things like redo, reuse, rebuild, these are some of the, recycle, these are some of the words where we use these prefixes. ‘Ultra’ is, the literal meaning of this word, is in excess of. So, ultrasonic, ultraviolet, ultrasensitive, ultrasound. So, we get to see these things (with high frequency words for) with low frequency word and high cognition word in English language.

(Refer Slide Time: 13:34)



## Suffixes from Greek and Latin

SUFFIXES	MEANING	EXAMPLES
-cide	Killer	Insecticide, pesticide, <u>homicide</u>
-gamy	Marriage	Polygamy, bigamy
-gen	Produce	Carcinogen, allergen
-graph	Writing	Cinematograph, telegraph
-ism	Act of	Multilingualism, journalism
-logy	Science of / study of	Biology, anthropology
-nomy	Knowledge of	Economy, astronomy
-vore	Feeding	Carnivore, herbivore



Unlike like prefixes, there are certain suffixes which also get added to words to create innovative vocabulary in English. ‘Cide’: look at this, this is a suffix. It means killer. So, insecticides, pesticide, homicide, these are the words that you will hear in our regular domains in our regular uses.

So, if we understand this word, this suffix ‘cide’ in these words or wherever we find them, it helps us connect, it helps us make sense of the word, make sense of the context and in terms of meaning. So they are related to killing, death. I mean forceful killing. So they become, so the meaning becomes apparent to us.

‘Gamy’: it is a union or marriage, so in the words like polygamy or bigamy. Actually, these are both, ‘poly’ is a prefix and ‘gamy’ is suffix. So, if you see these words, we understand what they could possibly mean.

So, ‘gen’ has literal meaning produce. So you see carcinogen, allergen and so on. You get more words with ‘graph’, means writing. Words like cinematograph, telegraph, geograph. So, you get more and more words with these suffixes where they will just help you and give the meaning of the word.

‘Ism’, a very productive suffix, which means act of. So, words like multilingualism, journalism, feminism, socialism, so ism is a, Hinduism. It is a very productive pattern for word formation. ‘Logy’ means science of or study of. You see in biology, astrology, geology. So, any word where you see ‘l o g y’, ‘logy’, it is a suffix and it means study of. So, it will be helpful in making the word. ‘Nomy’ means knowledge of. So, economy or astronomy, these



are few examples where you can see the use of these words. ‘Vore’ means feeding, so carnivore, herbivore and so on. You will get more words.

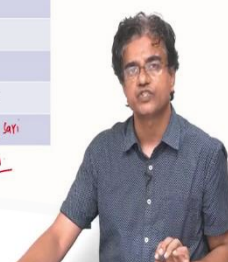
So, in these two points that you see, we are trying to meet with some examples which is basically the point that there are some prefixes and suffixes from Greek and Latin sources, which are very productive when it comes to low frequency but high cognitive words, high cognitively loaded words in English languages, and we use them in specific domains.

(Refer Slide Time: 17:26)

### Words from Foreign Languages

- English as you may know has borrowed many words from other languages.
- Some lexicographers have documented words from as many as 120 languages in English. Out of them Latin is the major source.

LANGUAGES	EXAMPLES
Celtic languages	Basket, bachelor, beak, car, cross, clan
Latin and Greek	Candle, circle, plant, preach, false, mile
Scandinavian languages	Dirt, egg, kid, leg, skin, sky, window, man, wife
French	Government, royal, evidence, grammar, logic dinner, art, lemon
Hindi and Indian languages	Karma, jungle, loot, thug, pyjamas, juggernaut, avatar, <u>dhobi</u> , <u>sari</u> , <u>dhruv</u>



Another one, that is important for, as an innovative pattern as a productive pattern of word formation in English or for that matter for the use of English is, English is one language, which is not just widely spoken across the world, widely used across the world. That it is true that English is widely spoken across the world and widely used across the world. As a result of that, it is one language which is in contact with most number of languages spoken anywhere in the world.

So, for example, it is highly unlikely for Hindi to be in contact with Spanish or let us say French or German, but English is in contact with French, German, Spanish, Italian at the same time, Hindi, Tamil, Telugu, Bangla, Indonesian, Japanese. It is not an overstatement if we say English is in one way or the other, in contact with all spoken languages of the world.

If that is to be given and if that is true, then we also need to understand that English will be the language which will get or borrow words from most of these sources. So, English will have words from all other languages of the world.

It is just that English spoken in India may not have high frequency words in English from Spanish or some lesser-known languages. So, that is a description of why so many words come to English and why English is such a dynamic language, and it is this dynamism in turn which makes English one of the most widely used languages of the world.

I do not mean to add comments, which are not necessary for learning English, but as a footnote at this point, I do want to add that English being most influential language across the world and English is the most widely used language of the world, not just because it was the language of British Empire — of course it was the language of the British Empire and that has a huge role to play — but another reason why English happened to be the most widely spoken language of the world is because it has accepted borrowings from most of the languages of the world and it got itself in a position to mix and to allow mixing from other languages of the world, which is what makes English one of the most dynamic languages.

So if you look at English, it has borrowings from Celtic languages, which are neighboring languages of English, like basket, bachelor, beak, car, cross clan. These are some of the borrowings from Celtic languages. Latin and Greek, we have seen prefixes and suffixes, but whole words, just a few examples are candle, circle, plant, preach, false, smile; very frequently used words from Latin and Greek.

Some words from Scandinavian languages are dirt, egg, kid, legs, skin, sky, window, man, wife. These are some of the very widely spoken high frequency words from Scandinavian languages. French words are restaurant, government, royal, evidence, grammar, logic, dinner, lemon and so on.


At the same time, Hindi has also influenced English, Hindi and some other Indian languages, many Indian languages. In fact, English has had borrowings from many languages, some of them are karma, jungle, loot, thug, juggernaut, avatar, etc, dhoti, saree, samosa, rasgulla, from all other fields, dharna. We see, we cannot have a whole list of words, but just giving you an idea that how it gets influenced.

So what I was discussing a minute ago is, it is very usual for speakers of Hindi who speak English in India or speakers of different languages who speak English in India to identify these words and to get associated with these words, and many use more such words in English, but these words are used by speakers of other languages also.



So, the actual borrowing happens when some word comes in the language and are used by speakers of other languages also. So these are some of the words from foreign languages, and here foreign simply means not geography, but other than English.


(Refer Slide Time: 23:23)



Words from instilingo (code - IIT Madras) 8490-

WORD	MEANING
Firang/firangs (hindi)	Foreigners
Junta/juntum (hindi)	People
Sutt/sutts (hindi)	Cigarettes
Chumma (tamil)	Simply ←
Kutty (tamil)	Small ←
Vetty(tamil)	Jobless ←
Enti/entra(telugu)	What ←

Insti ← Institute  
 lingo ← language  
 funda ← fundamental



In this class, as a part of this class on vocabulary I want you to be familiar with another part. And I am using a term here, as you can see 'instilingo'. It is a specific code, sometimes we use the word code for language also, at IIT Madras and particularly among the students, and the reason why it is among students is because it is the language of another generation. So, instilingo is the term at IIT Madras for the code used by young students of IIT Madras for a wide range of conversations among themselves.

There are very productive grammatical patterns makes the language and language use innovative at the same time creates some sort of association and identity among the students. Now, for you, as part of this institute as IIT Madras, it is important to know at the same time, why it is important for you to know is to see them as instances of word formation and creativity and innovation in English.

So, you will usually find youngsters at IIT Madras speaking words like firang, junta, sutta, chumma, kutti, vetty, enti. Now, important thing for you to notice is, they are from Hindi, firang, junta, these are Hindi words; sutta Hindi word; chumma a Tamil word, which simply means, it simply means 'simply'.

And another word, kutty, from Tamil and Malayalam means small; vetty means jobless; enti or entra means 'what'. So, as you see, a is the question marker in Dravidian languages. So, it

draws words from Tamil, Telugu, Malayalam, Kannada, Hindi, all kinds of languages and place them for use in a very productive pattern. They have suffixes, they have prefixes.

I am not giving you a whole list of things. You will become familiar with this and we will probably have another class on that. But just to make you familiar with the, with the term instilingo, and instilingo as a term is itself an example of instilingo because it comes from two, it has two parts, one is 'insti', which is a shortening of 'institute' and 'lingo' is a shorter form of language. So, and that becomes instilingo, language of the institute, and there are more patterns in that.

For example, you will also find people using shortening of words like insti and lingo, 'funda', which comes from a noun that is called that is fundamental. So, instead of using the full word, it becomes productive in using funda.

Some words that can be used are 'gyan'. Gyan, has an ironic use, which is gyan literally means knowledge, but it is used as unnecessary knowledge, unnecessary information, and unnecessary talk. It is a irony, it is a kind of oxymoron, reverse oxymoron in the language, but this is how it is used. So, you will find a lot of such patterns being applied. I just wanted to introduce this term 'instilingo' to you.

(Refer Slide Time: 28:07)

### New media

Tweet	Share
Facebook	DP ←
Insta(gram)	Watsapp
Blog ✓	Follow
Meme ✓	Troll
Unfriend ←	Subscribe
Like ←	Viral



In the age of new media, the innovation in English vocabulary also comes from the use of social media or what is also known as new media, and that is, that has brought in so many words. The way society is introduced to internet, information technology and computers in totality brings in a lot of vocabulary, which did not exist as late as 20 or 25 years ago.

So you will hear words, there are some new words and there are some words with newer meaning. We are bringing in just a few examples for you, and they are high frequency words, frequently used and perfectly acceptable English words for their uses. ‘Tweet’: it is a tweet, ‘Facebook’, ‘Insta’: insta is a, is a word that comes from Instagram. Remember, we were talking about telegram, which has this suffix ‘gram’ associated with this.

Words like blog, meme, these are some of the newer words which has come and become part of English vocabulary with the influence of new media. You see a word like unfriend, which has come from the use of networking, social networking sites like Facebook, etc, where you can connect with somebody and become friend.

In the real world, there was not a term called unfriend, but the process of delinking with somebody socially, on the social media is known as unfriend. So, with that, this word comes in and becomes new vocabulary in the realm of English words.

‘Like’: like had a different meaning, but the moment you use this word in the context of social media, it means an option provided by these applications for you to either like or dislike something. So that people get it. This is an option used to get an idea whether viewers endorse or not, and that term is like, share.

‘DP’ is a short form for display picture, but has become a word and is often used in the context of new media. ‘WhatsApp’ is name of a communicative technology; comes from English phrase ‘what's up’ has become WhatsApp, and it has also become a word of English.

Follow or unfollow, troll, subscribe, viral: these things have loaded meanings. They are part of new media, they come from a particular domain and they are legitimate words. They have specific uses and our familiarity or unfamiliarity with the word, these words indicate our connection with new media.

(Refer Slide Time: 31:48)



## New media acronyms

ACRONYM	MEANING
GM	Good morning
GN	Good night
HB	Happy Birthday
ASAP	As soon as possible
NBD	No big deal
LOL	Laugh out loud
ROFL	Roll on the floor and laugh
DP	Display picture
BF	Boyfriend
GF	Girlfriend
RIP	Rest in Peace



At the same time, you will see some acronyms, specific acronyms which function as words in English and again, they are used in social media. Some people can attribute to them, as they are only used informally or among kids of younger generation or guys of younger generation. All that is true or might be true, but most important part for us to discuss here is this, is the process of becoming a word in the language, and your familiarity with these words is going to be important in understanding people and the uses of language. And you see these things used, being very, very often. In short, for 'good morning' people use GM; GN for good night; HB for Happy Birthday; ASAP, this is also very highly frequent too, used for as soon as possible; NBD for no big deal; Lol for laugh out loud, and so on.

DP for display picture; BF for boyfriend and GF for girlfriend. One another word, rest in peace, a phrase that we use when somebody dies, the short form RIP. We often see this written on the Facebook walls in the Facebook messages or messaging sites where we, in a serious way, express our condolence by saying RIP.

Now, my point of introduction of this to you here in this class is, innovation is associated with vocabulary. The entire process of building vocabulary is innovative. There are all kinds of innovations embedded in making a new word and bringing in for uses in different domains and socially called socially embedded cultural contexts is important for the use of these words in different domains, and our understanding of these words is imperative for learning and improving English language for us.

At this point, before I conclude, I would simply say as a matter of exercise for this word, is keep your eyes and ears open when people speak these words, people use them in front of

you, and you can enrich your own domain, your own vocabulary by use of these, not just these words, but words like these, and keep yourself aware and updated with the uses, different uses in English language. Thank you so much. See you next time.

