

Module 4 : Morphology Vocabulary

Word Formation Processes Vocabulary

Acronyms

Acronyms are formed when the first letters of one or more words are combined; for example, *ATM* takes the first letters of *A*utomated *T*eller *M*achine. A key component of acronyms is that through continued use, they become independent words disassociated from the originals. EX: *radar*

Blending

Blending occurs when one or more parts of one word is combined with one or more parts of another word. EX: *man* and *landscaping* are combined to form *manscaping*. *Breakfast* and *lunch* are combined to form *brunch*.

Clipping

(Also called *shortening*). Clipping occurs when one or more syllables or morphemes is deleted from a single word. EX: *cab* is a clipped form of the word *cabriole*. *Fab* is a clipped form of the word *fabulous*. *Hypocorism* is a type of clipping.

Coinage

(Also called *neologism*). Coinage refers to words that are entirely created; that is, they are not formed by adding or subtracting existing words or morphemes. True coinages are rare. There are two word formation processes that are similar to coinage: acronyms and eponyms.

Compounding

Compounding is the most frequent word formation process in English. Compounding occurs when two complete words are combined together to form a new word. EX: *green* + *house* > *greenhouse*. *Chair* + *man* > *chairman*

Eponyms

Eponyms are words originally formed from a person's first name or surname. EX: *watt* is an eponym from James Watt, Scottish engineer and inventor.

Etymology

Etymology is the study of the origin of word roots (*etymons*).

Hypocorism

Hypocorism refers to a special type of clipping that involves shortening a word and adding an [i] sound at the end of the word. EX: *nightgown* > *nightie*. *Sandwich* > *sanny*. Hypocorism is often used for a person's name: *Ginger* > *Ginnie*. *Stephen* > *Stevie*

Word Formation Processes

Word Formation Processes refer to the methods by which new words are formed, thereby expanding the lexicon (vocabulary) of a language. Common word formation processes in English are listed in this glossary.

Morphology Vocabulary

Affix

An affix is a morpheme attached to a root for the primary purpose of increasing the lexicon of a language or for the purpose of adding grammatical information to a word. There are 3 types of affix: *prefixes*, *infixes*, and *suffixes*.

Derivational Suffix

A derivational suffix is a suffix that is used to create additional words (called derivatives).

EX: *pave* + {-ment} gives us the noun *pavement*. Words with derivational suffixes will have their own entry in a dictionary. Common derivational suffixes in English include {-tion}, {-ment}, {-ity}, {-y} and others.

Infix

In its broadest definition, an infix refers to one or more morphemes inserted into the middle of a root. EX: *abso-BLOODY-lutely* True morphological infixes refer to the insertion of specific morphemes into a root in order to form derived words. EX: *k_t_b* is a tri-consonantal root in Arabic that is analogous to the to-infinitive verb form in English (*to write*). By inserting an {i} or an {ā}, the new word *kitāb* 'book' is formed

Inflectional Suffix

Inflectional suffixes are special suffixes that convey specific grammatical information. EX: {-s} added to a noun denotes plural number. There are only 8 inflectional suffixes in English: 2 noun-forming: {-s} and {-s}; 4 verb-forming: {-s}, {-ed}, {-en}, {-ing}; 2 adjective forming: {-er} and {-est}. Inflectional suffixes do not change the grammar of the root they attach to. Words with inflectional suffixes do not have their own dictio

Morpheme

A morpheme is the smallest unit of meaning in a language. Morphemes can be as small as one letter or as big as a full word. There are different ways to categorize morphemes. The four main categories are Lexical, Functional, Derivational, and Inflectional. They can also be categorized as free or bound. Special note: morphemes and syllables are not always the same thing.

Prefix

A prefix is a derivational affix that is attached in front of the root. Like derivational suffixes, prefixes are used to expand the lexicon of a language by creating more words. Prefixes are less frequent in English than suffixes are. EX: {re-}, {pre-}, {il-} etc.

Root

(Also called *etymon*). Roots are the base words on which affixes (prefixes, derivational suffixes, and inflectional suffixes) are attached. Once an affix is attached to a root, the root is commonly referred to as a *stem*. EX: *reconstructionists* can be analyzed as follows: {re-} is the prefix, {construct} is the root (stem), {-tion} and {-ist} are both derivational suffixes, {-s} is an inflectional suffix

