

Word Formation – Vocabulary

BY: ADNAN AHMED

Word Formation

- ✓ Word formation processes create new words by adding affixes to existing ones (derivation), combining words (compounding, blending), shortening words (clipping, back-formation), creating words from initials (acronyms, initialisms), adopting words from other languages (borrowing), or coining entirely new terms (coinage).
- ✓ These processes are vital for a language's evolution, enabling it to adapt and express new concepts and inventions.

Word Formation (Activity)

✓ Act

- ✓ action
- ✓ active
- ✓ inactive
- ✓ actor
- ✓ actress
- ✓ activity
- ✓ reaction

Affixation

Affixation is the process of forming new words by adding prefixes or suffixes (called affixes) to a base word (root word/stem).

✓ **Prefix** → added before a base word.

Example: un + happy = unhappy

Example: re + write = rewrite

✓ **Suffix** → added after a base word.

Example: teach + er = teacher

Example: kind + ness = kindness

Types of Affixes

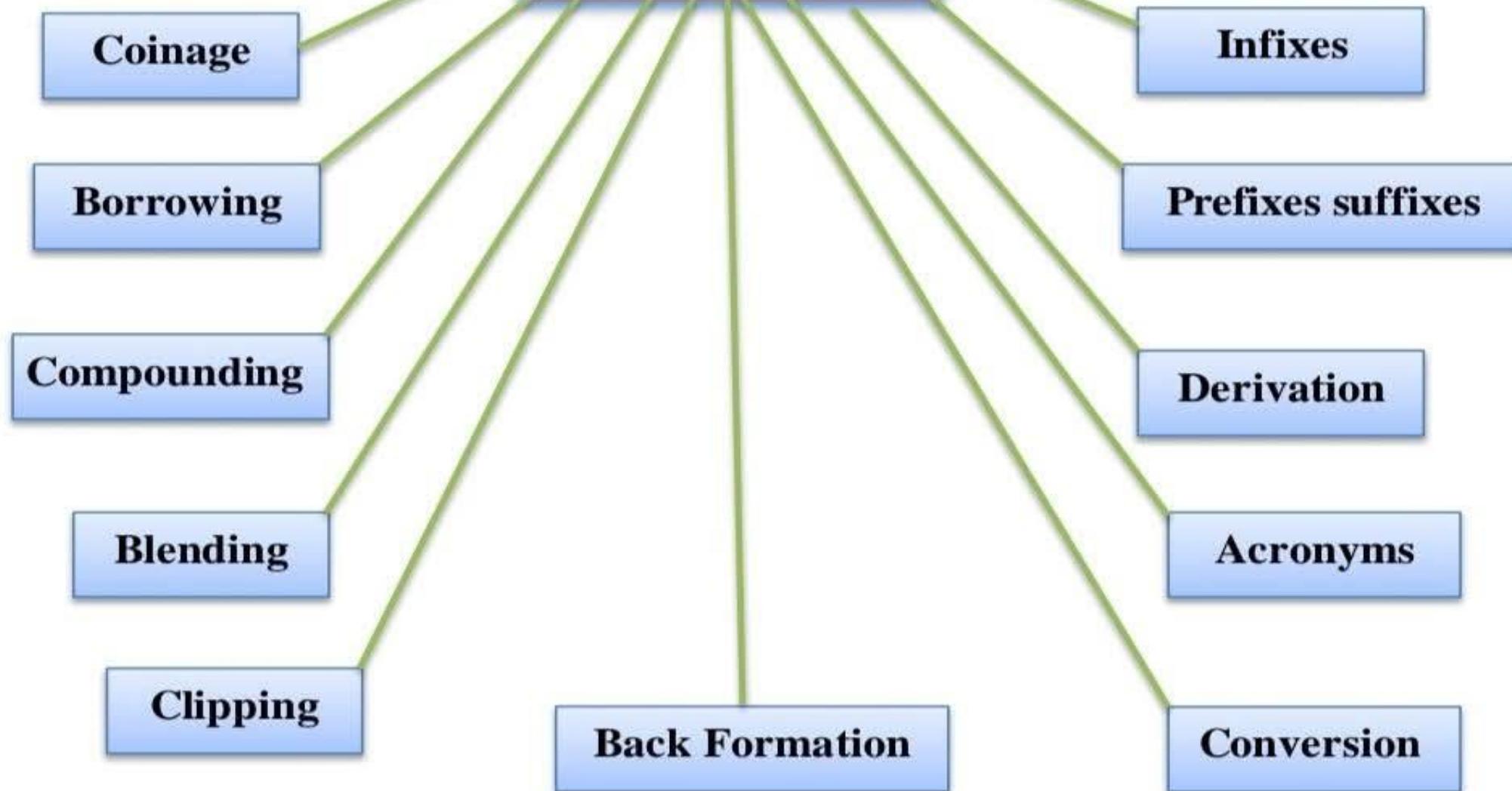
✓ **Prefixes** → change meaning

dis– (disagree), un– (unfair), pre– (preview)

✓ **Suffixes** → change word class (noun, verb, adjective, adverb)

–er (worker), –ness (happiness), –tion (action), –ly (slowly)

Processes of Word-formation



Word Formation

Derivation:

Adding prefixes or suffixes to a root word to form a new word, often changing its part of speech.

Example: "inform" (verb) becomes "information" (noun) or "informative" (adjective).

Compounding:

Joining two or more words to create a new one with a new meaning.

Example: "book" + "case" = "bookcase".

Word Formation

Blending:

Combining parts of two words to form a new word.

Example: "smoke" + "fog" = "smog".

Clipping:

Shortening a word by removing one or more syllables.

Example: "telephone" becomes "phone".

Word Formation

Backformation:

Creating a word by incorrectly assuming a word is a verb or noun and removing an imagined affix, often leading to a shorter, new word.

Example: "editor" is shortened to "edit".

Conversion:

Changing a word's part of speech without changing its form.

Example: "google" (noun) is used as a verb "to google".

Word Formation

Acronyms:

Forming a word from the initial letters of a phrase that is pronounced as a single word.

Example: "NASA" (National Aeronautics and Space Administration).

Initialisms:

Forming a word from the initial letters of a phrase that are pronounced individually.

Example: "FBI" (Federal Bureau of Investigation).

Difference between Abbreviation, Acronym and Initialism

Abbreviations

Acronym

An acronym forms up a new word by shortening a phrase and combining the first letter of each word in the phrase. Main thing to remember is that, acronym are pronounceable words e.g. ROFL will be pronounced as single word: [roffle].

YAHOO, NASA, FAQ, GIF

Abbreviation

An abbreviation is a way to shorten a long word. There is no specific rule to make an abbreviation. Sometimes, we use initial letters of a long word to make an abbreviation e.g. ave for avenue, sometimes we choose first and last letters e.g. dr. for doctor, and sometime we choose random letters e.g. kg for kilogram.

gym, lab, Oct, exam, photo

Initialism

It looks similar to an acronym in its forming structure but not exactly the same. Initialisms, like acronyms, also use the first letter of each word of a phrase or a sentence, but instead of combining the letters to form a new word, we pronounce each letter individually.

ATM, USA, ETA, UN, IQ

Word Formation (Other key processes)

Coinage:

The invention of completely new words, often deliberately or accidentally.

Example: "Xerox" was a brand name that became a generic term.

Borrowing:

Adopting words from other languages.

Example: "sushi" from Japanese or "karaoke" from Japanese.

Part A – Word Formation Practice (Sample Answers)

1. **Act** → action, active, inactive, actor, actress, reaction
2. **Care** → careful, careless, carelessness, caregiver
3. **Nation** → national, nationality, nationalism, international
4. **Teach** → teacher, teaching, retell, educational
5. **Play** → player, playful, replay, playfulness
6. **Create** → creation, creative, creator, recreate
7. **Help** → helpful, helpless, unhelpful, helper
8. **Manage** → management, manager, manageable, mismanage
9. **Happy** → happiness, unhappy, happily
10. **Govern** → government, governor, misgovern, governing

Part B – Match the Prefixes & Suffixes

1. un + happy = **unhappy**
2. re + use = **reuse**
3. create + tion = **creation**
4. govern + ment = **government**
5. re + read = **reread**
6. help + ful = **helpful**
7. manage + able = **manageable**
8. act + or = **actor**
9. im + possible = **impossible** (or possible + –ity = **possibility**)
10. pre + view = **preview**

Part C – Compounding

1. black + board = **blackboard**

2. tooth + paste = **toothpaste**

3. news + paper = **newspaper**

4. class + room = **classroom**

5. rain + bow = **rainbow**

6. sun + light = **sunlight**

7. bed + room = **bedroom**

8. fire + place = **fireplace**

9. water + fall = **waterfall**

10. school + bag = **schoolbag**

Part D – Identify the Word Formation Process

1. kindness → **suffix**
2. supermarket → **compounding (prefix + root)**
3. email (verb → noun) → **conversion**
4. rewrite → **prefix**
5. government → **suffix**
6. football → **compounding**
7. unhappiness → **prefix + suffix**
8. teacher → **suffix**
9. mislead → **prefix**
10. sunlight → **compounding**

Part E – Quick Challenge

1. She is a very **helpful** person. (help)
2. The teacher asked us to **rewrite** the essay. (write)
3. His **happiness** made everyone smile. (happy)
4. The **government** announced a new policy. (govern)
5. He is a good **teacher** of English. (teach)
6. We need your **decision** in this matter. (decide)
7. That was a **wonderful** story. (wonder)
8. We should always **correct** our mistakes. (correct)
9. She has a very **creative** mind. (create)
10. Ali will **recover** the lost book. (cover)

References

- Yule, G. (2022). *The study of language*. Cambridge university press.

THANKS.

BY: ADNAN AHMED