

LECTURE 3

WORDBUILDING

(2)

- Conversion as a type of word-building
- Composition (compounding)

The process of coining a new word in a different part of speech and with a different distribution characteristic, but without adding any derivative element may be called

conversion, zero-derivation, root formation or functional change.

E.g.: a face – to face; a nail – to nail; yellow – to yellow

Converted verbs can denote

- a) **instrumental meaning** if they are formed from nouns denoting parts of a **human body** e.g. *to eye, to finger, to elbow, to shoulder*, etc. They have instrumental meaning if they are formed from nouns denoting tools, machines, instruments, weapons, e.g. *to hammer, to machine-gun, to rifle, to nail*,
- b) an action characteristic of the **living being** denoted by the noun from which they have been converted, e.g. *to crowd, to wolf, to ape*.

- c) verbs can denote **acquisition** (e.g. to fish) **addition** (to paper), or **deprivation** (to dust), if they are formed from nouns denoting an object,
- d) verbs can denote an action performed **at the place** denoted by the noun from which they have been converted, e.g. to park, to garage, to bottle, to corner, to pocket,
- e) verbs can denote an action performed **at the time** denoted by the noun from which they have been converted e.g. to winter, to week-end .

Verbs can be also converted from **adjectives**, in such cases they denote the change of the state, e.g. **to tame** (to become or make tame), **to clean**, **to slim**, etc.

Converted nouns can denote:

- a) **instant of an action** e.g. a jump, a move,
- b) **process or state** e.g. sleep, walk,
- c) **agent of the action** expressed by the verb from which the noun has been converted, e.g. a help, a flirt, a scold,
- d) **object or result of the action** expressed by the verb from which the noun has been converted, e.g. a burn, a find, a purchase,
- e) **place of the action** expressed by the verb from which the noun has been converted, e.g. a drive, a stop, a walk.

The problem of forming of adjectives by means of conversion from nouns

The point of view of **O. Jespersen:**

e.g. price rise, wage freeze, steel helmet, sand castle

If the first component of such units is an adjective converted from a noun, combinations of this type are free word-groups typical of English (adjective + noun).

The problem of forming of adjectives by means of conversion from nouns

The point of view of **Henry Sweet** and some other scientists:

The first component of such units to be a ***noun in the function of an attribute*** because in Modern English almost all parts of speech and even word-groups and sentences can be used in the function of an attribute,

e.g. *the then president* (an adverb), *out-of-the-way villages* (a word-group), *a devil-may-care speed* (a sentence).

! We shouldn't mix conversion and patterned homonymy.

- *e. g. love_n – to love_v*
- *work_n – to work_v*
- *drink_n – to drink_v*

These pairs of words coincided as a result of certain historical processes (dropping of endings, simplification of stems.

- *e. g. Old English: lufu_n – lufian_v*
- *Modern English: love_n – love_v*

Composition

is one of the most productive word-building types when new words are produced by combining two or more stems.

e. g. bedroom, Anglo-Saxon, TV-set.

CLASSIFICATIONS OF ENGLISH COMPOUNDS

According to the parts of speech compounds are subdivided into:

- a) **nouns**, such as: *baby-moon, globe-trotter,*
- b) **adjectives**, such as: *free-for-all, power-hungry,*
- c) **verbs**, such as: *to honey-moon, to baby-sit, to henpeck,*
- d) **adverbs**, such as: *downgrade, headfirst,*
- e) **prepositions**, such as: *into, within,*
- f) **numerals**, such as: *fifty-five.*

According to the way components are joined together compounds are divided into:

- a) **neutral**, which are formed by joining together two stems without any joining morpheme, *e.g. waterproof, to windowshop*,
- b) **morphological** where components are joined by a linking element : vowels «o» or «i» or the consonant «s», *e.g. astrospace, handicraft, sportsman*,
- c) **syntactical** where the components are joined by means of form-word stems, *e.g. free-for-all, do-or-die, lily-of-the-valley, mother-in-law, good-for-nothing*.

According to their structure compounds are subdivided into:

- a) compound words proper which consist of two stems, *e.g. train-sick, go-go, tip-top*
- b) derivational compounds, where besides the stems we have affixes, *e.g. ear-minded, hydro-skimmer,*
- c) compound words consisting of three or more stems, *e.g. cornflower-blue, eggshell-thin, singer-songwriter,*
- d) compound-shortened words, *e.g. boatel, VJ-day, motocross, Eurodollar.*

According to the relations between the components compound words are subdivided into:

a) **subordinative compounds**. These subordinative relations can be different:

- with comparative relations, *e.g. honey-sweet, eggshell-thin,*
- with limiting relations, *e.g. breast-high, knee-deep,*
- with emphatic relations, *e.g. dog-cheap,*
- with objective relations, *e.g. gold-rich,*
- with cause relations, *e.g. love-sick,*
- with space relations, *e.g. top-heavy,*
- with time relations, *e.g. spring-fresh,*
- with subjective relations, *e.g. foot-sore etc*

b) **coordinative compounds** when one person (object) has two functions, *e.g. secretary-stenographer, woman-doctor, Oxbridge, etc.* Such compounds are called *additive*. This group includes also:

- compounds formed by means of reduplication, *e.g. fifty-fifty, no-no,*
- compounds formed with the help of rhythmic stems (reduplication combined with sound interchange) *e.g. criss-cross, walkie-talkie.*

According to the order of the components
compounds are divided into:

- compounds with direct order, *e.g. kill-joy*,
- compounds with indirect order, *e.g. nuclear-free, rope-ripe* .

Viewed from the semantic aspect compounds may be divided into three groups:

- compounds whose meaning is a sum of their constituent meanings.

e.g. *bedroom, evening-gown, working-men*

- compounds one of the constituents (or both) has changed its meaning

e.g. *lady-killer*

- compounds whose meanings do not correspond to the separate meanings of their constituents:

e.g. *ladybird*

e.g. *bluestocking*

Methods to distinguish between a compound and word groups

- **graphic** – a tall boy (2 words)
a tallboy (1 word)
- **semantic** - a tall boy 1. a young male person
2. big in size
a tallboy 1. a piece of furniture
- **phonetic** (for single-stressed compounds) – e.g.
'tallboy, 'blackbird, 'bluebell – one stress
BUT: 'blue-'eyed, 'absent-'minded – two stresses

