

Lecture no .7

30th March 2020

Word Formation Processes/ Part 3

Aims:

- 1.To know word formation processes and their role in enriching language vocabulary
- 2.To be able to judge on the word-formation process used in creating words.

Main Points

Word-formation processes:

Are specific techniques used by language users to add new vocabulary items to their language. These processes are similar between languages, still some languages might have other processes/resources than others. In this lecture we are going to discuss four of these processes, namely, derivation, reduplication and folk etymology.

1. What is derivation?

When small bits, affixes, are added to a word.

There are three types.

Prefixes:added before the word, e.g. Mis-, un-, pre-

Suffixes:added after the word, e.g.-less, -full, -ish, -ness (foolishness hence has two suffixes)

Infixes:added in the middle of the word,e.g. -bloody-, -goddam-

2. What is Reduplication:

Reduplication is sometimes called rhyming compounds (subtype of compounds)

These words are compounded from two rhyming words. Examples:

lovey-dovey

chiller-killer

There are words that are formally very similar to rhyming compounds, but are not quite compounds in English because the second element is not really a word-it is just a nonsense item added to a root word to form a rhyme. Examples:

higgledy-piggledy

tootsie-wootsie

This formation process is associated in English with child talk (and talk addressed to children), technically called hypocoristic language. Examples:

bunnie-wunnie

Henny Penny

snuggly-wuggly

Georgie Porgie

Piggie-Wiggie

Another word type that looks a bit like rhyming compounds comprises words that are formed of two elements that almost match, but differ in their vowels. Again, the second element is typically a nonsense form:

pitter-patter

zigzag

tick-tock

riffraff

flipflop

3. What is Folk etymology?

A popular idea of a word's origin that is not in accordance with its real origin.

Many folk etymologies are cases of reanalysis in which the word is not only reanalysis but it changes under the influence of the new understanding of its morphemes. The result is that speakers think it has a different origin than it does.

Folk etymology or **reanalysis** – sometimes called **popular etymology**, **analogical reformation**, or **etymological reinterpretation**– is a change in a word or phrase resulting from the replacement of an unfamiliar form by a more familiar one. The form or the meaning of an archaic, foreign, or otherwise unfamiliar word is reanalyzed as resembling more familiar words or morphemes. Rebracketing is a form of folk etymology in which a word is broken down or "bracketed" into a new set of supposed elements.

In historical linguistics, folk etymology is usually described as a type of false analogy, which alters the form or meaning of an unfamiliar term so as to reflect the connection that speakers think that exists between it and a better-known or better-understood word. As a result, the target expression begins to be spelt, pronounced or used in a manner that is consistent with the false etymological origin that speakers ascribe to it.

This phenomenon, therefore, can be interpreted as an attempt at de-obscuring words that speakers feel to be opaque because they are not used to their form, pronunciation or meaning.

Folk etymological changes usually affect borrowings and old compounds whose morphological constituents have become obscure throughout of time. *Chaise lounge*, for example, was borrowed from French (*chaise longue* "long chair"). The first word being pronounced like *chase* in English did not underwent changes but the final element of the borrowing was replaced with a more recognizable English word, *lounge*, whose spelling was similar to that of the original French word and was semantically plausible, since a *chaise longue* is intended to lounge.

The word *meet* is very common as both a noun and a verb, but there is also an adjective *meet*, meaning "suitable" or "appropriate," as in "it seems like a *meet* solution." It is now rarely used and somewhat old-fashioned, but a famous passage in the King James Bible used this adjective:

And the Lord God said, It is not good that
man should be alone; I will make him a help
meet for him.

—Genesis 2:18

Obviously, this use of *help* as a noun is unusual to modern ears. More recent translations of this passage make the meaning more clear, if less poetic: "I will make him a helper suitable for him," but it seems that the combination of a frequently read Biblical quotation with an infrequently heard adjectival use of *meet* was the root of the noun *helpmeet* meaning either "a companion and helper" or "wife," which came into English in the 1600s. Several decades

later, *helpmate* appeared as a more logical synonym, since *mate* can mean either “friend” or “a member of a married couple.”

Female is another clear case of a folketyomologised loanword. In the 12th century, English borrowed the word *femelle* from French, which was a diminutive of *femme* “young woman”. Two centuries later English speakers, unfamiliar with suffix *-elle*, altered its spelling by assuming a connection with the word *male*, which seems to have been reinforced by the fact that both words, *femelle* and *male*, used to appear in contrast; and by the existing parallelism with *mann* ‘man’ and *wim+man* ‘woman’

As regards as native compounds, among those that have become opaque and have undergone transformations triggered by misconceptions concerning their etymological origin are words such as *bridegroom* and *hamburger*. The former derives from Old English *brydguma* “suitor” (from *bryd* “bride” + *guma* “man”), which evolved into *bridegome* during the Middle English period. However, by the 16th century an intrusive ‘r’ was inserted in the second morpheme and the word developed into *bridegrome* or *bridegroom* – the other alternations correspond to general spelling conventions. This change seems to have been motivated by the influence of the word *groom* “young man”, “servant”, a term more familiar than *gome* to the Middle English speakers.

Examples of words created or changed through folk etymology include the English dialectal form *sparrowgrass*, originally from Greek *ἀσπράγος* (“asparagus”) remade by analogy to the more familiar words *sparrow* and *grass*.

Questions:

1.Decide on the word-formation process of the following words:

كانى ومانى coleslaw مستطيل , جزمجى

2.Give definitions ad examples of the following terms:

false-analogy backformation analogic creation (القياس)

3.Find the meanings of the example words give above.

4.Find examples for Arabic words created following the above mentioned processes.

5. Read the article in the link and think on the folk etymological processes that were done to the Turkish words as they were borrowed into Arabic.

<https://www.akhbaralaan.net/entertainment/2016/01/31/arabic-words-turkish-origins-used-daily>

Useful links/

References:

<http://www.ub.edu/diccionarilinguistica/print/6815>

<https://www.merriam-webster.com/words-at-play/folk-etymology/cesspool>

[https://www.academia.edu/23671260/Word-formation in Modern Standard Arabic and English A Corpus-based Study](https://www.academia.edu/23671260/Word-formation_in_Modern_Standard_Arabic_and_English_A_Corpus-based_Study)