Unit 4

WORDS

Definition

- 'The word may be described as *the basic unit of language*. Uniting meaning and form, it is composed of one or more morphemes, each consisting of one or more spoken sounds or their written representatives.' [Arnold, 1986: 27]

- A word is '*the smallest linguistic unit which can occur on its own in speech or writing*'.

In writing, word boundaries are usually recognized by spaces between words. In speech, word boundaries may be recognized by slight pauses.' [Richards, Platt & Weber, 1987: 311]

The aspects of a word

1. ***It has a sound form*** because it is a certain arrangement of phonemes;

2. ***It has its morphological structure***, being also a certain arrangement of morphemes, when used in actual speech;

3. ***It may occur in different word forms***;

4. ***It may have different syntactic functions and signal various meanings***.

The aspects of a word

Example: **sleep, unhappy (c a t e   cat – tea – eat – ate)**

1. The sound form of *sleep* is /sli:p/; /ʌnˈhæpi/ - phonemes

2. There is only *one free morpheme* (*a free base*) in *sleep*; **unhappy**

3. The plain form *sleep* has <u>four inflected forms</u>: *sleeps*, *sleeping*, *slept* {D_1} and *slept* {D_2};

4. The present participle form *sleeping* can be used either as:

   - <u>a verbal</u>: in '*The child was <u>sleeping</u> soundly*'

   - <u>an adverbial</u>: in '*He stood <u>sleeping</u>*';

   - <u>an adjectival</u>: in '*a <u>sleeping</u> child*'.

The aspects of a word

Example: **sleep**

    reference

different syntactic functions + signal various meanings

The present participle form *sleeping* can be used either as:

- a verbal: in '*The child was sleeping soundly*' (v)

- an adverbial: in '*He stood sleeping*'; (adv)

- an adjectival: in '*a sleeping child*'. (adj)

*The library contains many popular works of **reference**. (n)*

*We provided **reference materials** about our Greek vase collection.(adj)*

The aspects of a word

Example: **sleep**

    unhappy

1. The sound form of *sleep* is /sli:p/; /ʌnˈhæpi/

2. There is only *one free morpheme* (*a free base*) in *sleep*; **unhappy**

3. The plain form *sleep* has <u>four inflected forms</u>: *sleeps*, *sleeping*, *slept* {D_1} and *slept* {D_2};

4. The present participle form *sleeping* can be used either as:

   - <u>a verbal</u>: in '*The child was <u>sleeping</u> soundly*'

   - <u>an adverbial</u>: in '*He stood <u>sleeping</u>*';

   - an adjectival: in '*a sleeping child*'.

CHARACTERISTICS of words

- **INDIVISIBILITY (divide)**

- **INTERNAL STABILITY** (also called INTERNAL COHESION or UNINTERRUPTABILITY) and **POSITIONAL MOBILITY**

Indivisibility

The **important characteristics** of the word:

- It is **indivisible**: cannot be cut into without a disturbance of meaning.

- It is **structurally impermeable**: nothing can be inserted between its elements.

Example:

alive: a word → *indivisible & impermeable*

a lion: *a phrase (a word group/ a group of words) → divisible & permeable*

→ *a living lion, a dead lion, a big lion, an old lion*

Internal stability & positional mobility

One of the characteristics of the word is that it tends

- to be *internally stable*: in terms of the order of the component morphemes

- but *positionally mobile* (permutable with other words in the same sentence)

Example: **The boys walked slowly up the hill.**

the – boy – s – walk – ed – slow – ly – up – the – hill

slow – ly – the – boy – s – walk – ed– up – the – hill

up – the – hill – slow – ly – walk – ed – the – boy – s

Internal stability & positional mobility

__Words__ have some freedom to move within a sentence without destroying their meaning. Therefore, a word can be regarded as *a minimal linguistic unit which is freely movable with a meaning.*

Example

- *Slowly*, he walked down the street.
- He *slowly* walked down the street.
- He walked *slowly* down the street.
- He walked down the street *slowly*.

Classifications of words

- **The classification of words according to their *structure***

- **The classification of words according to their *word-formation processes***

CLASSIFICATION OF MORPHEMES

There are 2 basic classes of morphemes: *__free morphemes__* and *__bound morphemes__*.

FREE MORPHEME	BOUND MORPHEME
- **Can** be uttered alone with meaning	- **Cannot** be uttered alone with meaning
- Can **be used** on its own	- **Be never used** alone but must be with another morpheme
- **May stand alone** as words or enter into the structure of other words	- May occur only if they **combine with other morpheme**

The classification of words according to their *structure*

- *the **kinds of morpheme***: free vs. bound morphemes

- *the **combinations** of morphemes*: free + free, or free + bound, or bound + bound

- SIMPLE WORDS *consist of a single free base* (= a free morpheme): stay, flea, long, spirit, eucalyptus, Connecticut, etc.

- COMPLEX WORDS *contain at least one bound morpheme as an immediate constituent* (IC): un- +happy, un-+happ(i)+-ly

- COMPOUND WORDS (also called COMPOUNDS) *have at least two free bases* (*free morphemes*) *with or without bound morphemes:* class+room+-s

Complex words

• *Complex words–FB* (free-base) have **one free morpheme as <u>an</u> IC**:

lioness = ***lion*** + ***–ess*** *'female'*

rainy = ***rain*** + ***–y*** *'having'* or *'marked by'*

uncertain = ***un–*** *'not'* + ***certain***

disappear = ***dis–*** *'do the opposite of'* + ***appear***

• *Complex words–BB* (bound base) have **a bound morpheme for <u>each</u> IC**:

Televise = ***tele–*** *'far'* + ***–vise*** *'see'*

Matricide = ***matri–*** *'mother'* + ***–cide*** *'killing'*

- COMPLEX WORDS *contain* **at least one bound morpheme** *as an* IC. *COMPLEX WORDS–FB* have **one free morpheme** **as <u>an</u>** IC:

lionesses = ***lion*** *+* ***–ess*** + -es

rainy = ***rain*** *+* ***–y*** '*having*' or '*marked by*'

uncertainly = ***un–*** + ***certain*** + -ly

disappearing = ***dis–*** + ***appear + -ing***

- COMPLEX WORDS *contain* **at least one bound morpheme** *as an* IC

Complex words–BB (bound base) have **a bound morpheme for <u>each</u> IC**:

Televise = ***tele–*** + ***–vise*** + ***-ing,***

tele- │ ***-vise,***

tele- │ ***phone,***

tele- │ ***graph***

Matricide = ***matri–*** + ***–cide***

Compound words

- COMPOUND WORDS (also called COMPOUNDS) *have **at least two free bases** (free morphemes) **with or without bound morphemes***.

Example:

✓ highborn = high + born

✓ northeast = north + east

✓ desk-lamp(s) = desk + lamp(–*s*)

✓ ill-treat(ed) = ill + treat (–*ed*)

The features of compounds

- **_The phonological feature:_** _Some compounds_ are differentiated from _grammatical structures_ by their patterns of stress.

Compound words	Grammatical structures
`**blue**bell	blue `**bell**
`**red**coat	red `**coat**
`**green**house	green `**house**

The features of compounds

• *The syntactic feature:*

- *Order:* the arrangement of the elements in a compound may differ from that of a grammatical structure in order

Compound words	Grammatical structures
downfall	fall down
outbreak	break out

- *Indivisibility:* Compound words are considered as <u>solid blocks</u>. They cannot be divided by the insertion of any other elements.

Compound words	Grammatical structures
She is a sweetheart.	She has a (very) sweet (and kind) heart.

The features of compounds

• *The semantic feature:*

- Compound words have specialized meanings.

- Therefore, knowing the meaning of each element of a compound word does not make it possible to figure out the meaning of the whole combination.

- It is said that compound words have *idiomatic status*.

Example: the meaning of an '*egghead*' is by no means closely related to that of '*egg*' and '*head*'.

The types of compounds

1. Derivational compounds

- The compounds in which *the derivational suffix* is attached to the combination as a whole, not to one of its elements: *kind-hearted, old-timer, school-boyishness, teen-ager…*

- There are **4 subcategorizes**:

✓ **noun base + noun base + –er**: *footballer*, honeymooner, mill-owner…

✓ **adjective base + noun base + –ed**: *absent-minded, light-hearted, black-haired, blue-eyed, ill-mannered, short-sighted…*

✓ **noun base + noun base + –ed**: *bow-legged, war-minded, heart-shaped…*

✓ **number base + noun base + –ed**: *five-coloured, three-fingered, one-eyed, two-headed…*

The types of compounds

2. **Repetitive compounds** can be subcategorized into:

- ***Reduplicative compounds*** are the compounds in which <u>the second element</u> <u>is</u> <u>the proper repetition of the first element</u> 'with intensifying effect'.

EX: drip-drip, hush-hush, blah-blah, quack-quack…

- ***Ablaut compounds*** are 'twin forms consisting of <u>one basic morpheme</u> (usually the second), sometimes a pseudo-morpheme which <u>is repeated</u> <u>in</u> <u>the</u> <u>other constituent</u> <u>with a different vowel</u>'.

EX: *chit-chat, tittle-tattle, shilly-shally, tip-top…*

- ***Rhyme compounds*** are 'twin forms consisting of two elements (most often two pseudo-morphemes), which are conjoined to <u>rhyme</u>'.

EX: boogie-woogie, harum-scarum, hoity-toity, humdrum, lovey-dovey…

The classification of words according to their word-formation processes

1. COINAGE is *the creation of totally new words* by:

• *inventing names for new products*: nylon, aspirin…

• *using specific brand names as the generic name for different brands of these types of products*: Vaseline or Frigidaire…

• *changing proper names of individuals or places to common nouns*: sandwich or robot…

→ COINAGE is one of the most uncommon processes of word formation in English.

The classification of words according to **their word-formation processes**

2. BORROWING is *the process by which words in a language are borrowed from another.* English words have been borrowed:

• from <u>French</u>: *champagne, garage, beige, rouge, couchette,* etc.;

• from <u>German</u>: *rucksack, kindergarten,* etc.;

• from <u>Italian</u>: *cantata, opera, concerto,* etc.;

• from <u>American Indian languages</u>: *shampoo, cot,* etc.

→ BORROWING is one of the most common processes in word formation.

The classification of words according to **their word-formation processes**

3. BLENDING is *the fusion of two words into one, usually the first part of one word with the last part of another.*

• smog, from smoke and fog

• *motel*, from *motor* (or *motorist's*) and *hotel*;

• *brunch,* from *breakfast* and *lunch*;

• *Frenglish*, from *French* and *English*;

• *slanguage*, from *slang* and *language*;

• *transceiver*, from *transmitter* and *receiver*;

• *spam*, from *spiced and ham*; etc,

The classification of words according to
their word-formation processes

4. CLIPPING is *the process of cutting off the beginning or the end of a word, or both*, *leaving a part* (the abbreviation or the clipped word) *to stand for the whole* (the full form).

- The end of the word is deleted: *exam* (from *examination*), *ad* or *advert* (from *advertisement*), *lab* (from *laboratory*), *dorm* (from *dormitory*), *bike* (from *bicycle*), *gym* (from *gymnasium*), *demo* (from *demonstration*)...

- The beginning part of the word is removed: *bus* (from *omnibus*), *plane* (from *airplane)*, *phone* (from *telephone*)...

- Both the beginning and the end are clipped: flu (from *influenza)* and fridge (from *refrigerator)*

→ These clipped words are usually used in casual speech rather than in writing or formal speech.

The classification of words according to their word-formation processes

5. ACRONYMY is *the process whereby a word is formed from the initials or beginning segments of a succession of words.*

- NATO /ˈneɪtəʊ/   'North Atlantic Treaty Organization'

- UNESCO /juːˈneskəʊ/   'United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization'

- NASA /ˈnæsə/   'National Aeronautics and Space Administration'

- WHO /ˌdʌbljuːeɪtʃ ˈəʊ/   'World Health Organization'

- S.O.S /ˌes əʊ ˈes/   'Save Our Souls'

- TV or T.V. /ˌtiː ˈviː/   'television'

The classification of words according to their word-formation processes

6. CONVERSION **consists of two subcategories:**

- COMPLETE CONVERSION is *the process of shifting a word from one word class to another without adding an affix*.

- APPROXIMATE CONVERSION is the process by which 'a word, in the course of changing its grammatical function, may undergo a slight change of pronunciation or spelling.

• <u>Voicing of final consonants</u> (noun → verb): *advice → advise, thief → thieve, sheath → sheathe*

• <u>Shift of stress</u>: when verbs of two syllables are converted into nouns, the stress is sometimes shifted from the second to the first syllable: *conduct, conflict, contrast, convert…*

The classification of words according to their word-formation processes

7. AFFIXATION is *the process by which an affix is added to a base to form a new word*. This process can be subdivided into *prefixation* and *suffixation*.

- PREFIXATION *is the addition of a prefix in front of a base: pro-life, recycle, deselect*, etc.

- SUFFIXATION is *the addition of a suffix at the end of a base: ageism, marginalize, additive*, etc.

The classification of words according to their word-formation processes

8. BACK-FORMATION is *the process of deriving words by removing what is thought to be a suffix from an existing word*. This is just the reverse of the customary process of *suffixation*.

- Back-formation applies chiefly to the coining of <u>verbs</u> from <u>nouns</u>:
emotion → emote; *enthusiasm → enthuse*; *television → televise*

- <u>Two major sources of backformation</u> are:

(1) nouns (including compounds nouns) ending in *–er/–or/ –ar* or *–ing*,

(2) nouns ending in *–tion* or *–ion*.

(3) and a miscellaneous group: *laze* (from *lazy*), *liaise* (from *liaison*), *reminisce* (from *reminiscence*), *statistic* (from *statistics*)

The classification of words according to their word-formation processes

9. COMPOUNDING is *the process of combining two or more existing words to form a new one.*

- Compounds contrast with phrases, which consist of two or more words that are grammatically related: *a large card, beautiful pictures*.

- Compounds are found in all word classes: noun, verb, adjective, adverb, pronoun, preposition…

- Historically, compound verbs are derived chiefly from nouns: *black-mail, cold-shoulder, daydream…*

- New coinages are mainly compound nouns and adjectives: *heartache, bedclothes, houseboat, footballer, son-in-law…*

1. Morpheme
2. Allomorph
3. Affix (Prefix + Suffix)
4. Derivation
5. Inflection
6. Immediate constituents (ICs)
7. Simple word
8. Complex words – FB
9. Complex words – BB
10. Compounds

1. Coinage
2. Blending
3. Clipping
4. Borrowing
5. Acronymy
6. Complete conversion
7. Approximate conversion
8. Affixation
9. Back-formation
10. Compounding