EXPLORING THE ENGLISH WORD FORMATION PROCESS
(A Literature Review)

I Wy. Dirgeyasa
State University of Medan
wayandirgayasa@yahoo.com

Abstract

It is a fact that word formation is a crucial aspect of linguistics, particularly the morphology study. Its importance can help us learn new words, understand how languages change, and improve our communication skills in real interaction and communication among others. Like other sciences, language science or linguistics, specifically the morphology which is known as the study of word formation developed rapidly and massively due to the rapid development of science and technology. As a result, the vocabulary of any language is constantly changing, adding new words and phrases. This, of course enriches the vocabulary and words of the language itself. This article deals with the nature of word formation process and types of the word formation in the study of the language, particularly the English language.

Keywords: Concept, English, Type, Word Formation

Introduction

It is generally known that a dictionary publisher never tired of reminding us, that the language is growing continuously and relatively fast. English language in particular, for example is adding around 1000 words a year. A few of them include '*blog,' 'grok,' 'crowdfunding,' 'hackathon,' 'airball,' 'e-marketing,' 'staycation,' 'pubbing,'* '*Brexit,'* and a variety of other words. This shows that the words are continuously growing across the time.

However, still these represent just a sliver of the tip of the iceberg. According to Global Language Monitor, around 5,400 new words are created every year; it's only the 1,000 or so deemed to be in sufficiently widespread use that make it

https://www.theguardian.com/media/mind-your-language/2016/feb/04/english-neologisms-new-words/5/5/2023.

It is a fact that as language (English in particular) evolves and develops all the time, new words emerge to help the language user communicate and interact better. This is also enhanced by the development of science and technology. As an international language, English has evolved and innovated on the in terms of new words in which people communicate. A lot of new vocabulary has been born. They are produced in the specific context of the science and technology in particular.

The English language is known for its wonderful quality of the way in which words and sentences are formed and used. For example, the formation of new words is formed from an existing root word by adding a syllable or another word is the general process; however, there are multiple ways in which it can be done.

It is a fact that a new language and term use new words that we can relate to the one of linguistics branches of the morphological aspect namely word formation process. Generally, it is known that the word formation is the process of creating new words by modifying existing words or inventing new words. It's also known as the morphological process. In the study of the language, the word formation is a very important aspect to study and to investigate by linguist, language teacher, practitioner and or other relevant and related expertise.

Discussion

A Brief Review of the word formation

In linguistics, simple the word formation is the creation of a new word. But, the word formation is sometimes contrasted with semantic change, which is a change in a single word's meaning. The boundary between word formation and semantic change can be difficult to define such as a new use of an old word can be seen as a new word derived from an old one and identical to it in form.

Linguistically, the study of word formation is branch of linguistic known as morphology. Generally, morphology refers to the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed. According to Haspelmath and Sims (2010) morphology is the study of word formation, including the ways new words are coined in the languages of the world. They then add that morphology refers to the branch of linguistics that deals with words, their internal structure, and how they are formed. Linguists often describe alternations with a special set of morphological rules, which were historically phonetically motivated, but affect morphology

Word formation is specifically formed words with the certain processes. Similarly, Yule (2006) defines word formation processes as a way of forming and creating new words from the use of old words. In more simple and technical definition, Luis (November 5, 2022) argues that the term word formation refers to the processes through which new words are created.

In short, the word formation is the study of words, dealing with the construction of rules of formation of words in a particular language, which in linguistics is the study of the rules of word construction. Word formation refers to all processes related to changes in word form such as affixation which is a morphological problem (Yule, 2019) Yule, G. (2019) in The Study of Language. In The Study of Language. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/97811085828 89. /2/3/2024.

In linguistics, particularly in morphology domain, there are many ways for creating a new word such as coinage, borrowing, compounding, blending, clipping, backformation, conversion, acronym, derivation, prefix and suffix, etc. Today, the English language, in particular has developed over centuries, and many of the words we use have come about from the process of word formation.

English as a tool in science and technology English for Science and Technology (EST) generally refers to English used in scientific publications, papers, textbooks, technical reports and academic lectures, etc. It is used to describe the physical and

natural phenomena, their processes, properties, characteristics, laws and application in productive activities. For example, in the field of Computer Science, scientific language poses problems to some second language learners of English.

Types of word formation process

How are words formed? Are there any rules by which words are formed? These two are common questions when discussion word formation process. As a matter of fact, in linguistics, there are many ways for creating a new word. In occasion, the writing focus on word-formation processes in the English language. It is a fact that the English language has developed over centuries and is constantly evolving and expanding across time. In fact, most new words are actually old words in different forms or with fresh functions. For example, as some words fall out of fashion and into obscurity, others come into being, often because of highly specific contexts of time and place. This process of fashioning new words out of old ones is called derivation. https://www.thoughtco.com/where-do-new-words-come-from-1692700/4/4/2023.

Actually there are many ways how the new word is formatted and produced. Linguists and language experts in general classify the word formation process into many different ways. Few of them state that there six to seven ways how new words are formatted, others propose approximately seven to ten ways how new words are created. The other one agree that there are more than ten ways how new words are developed.

In term of name of process, some experts use similar names of a certain process and the other ones prefer having different term for the same process. Also it is important to note that some experts explain and elaborate in detail the process and give examples different ways and variants while other just to state the general terms with the examples.

To sum up, here are the common process of word formation from the old terms of process up to the modern era of word processing formation taken from various and different experts and sources.

The classification of word formation has seven different processes: compounding, mixing, borrowing, coining, clipping, backformation, multiple processes, and others (Yule, 2019) Yule, G. (2019) in The Study of Language. In The Study of Language. Cambridge University Press. https://doi.org/10.1017/97811085828 89. /2/3/2024.

1. Derivation

Derivation processes form new words (generally of a different category) from existing words, in English this is mainly done by adding affixes. For example, '*industrialization*,' '*transformation,' 'delivery,'* and '*destruction.' etc.* These words are originally rooted from *'industrialize,' 'transform,' 'deliver,'* and *'destruct.'*

2. Back Formation

This word-formation process happens when a word (usually a noun) is reduced to another part of speech (normally a verb). This word-formation process originated in Latin nouns ending with '*-ion'* that entered the English language. Take a look at some examples:

Insertion (noun) → to *insert*

opinion (noun) → to *opine*

resurrection (noun) → to *resurrect*

By its name, back formation process also refers to the reversing the process of affixation, a back-formation creates a new word by removing an affix from an already existing word, for examples the words '*liaise'* is from '*liaison'* and '*enthuse'* is from '*enthusiasm*.' The logic of forming these words often follows established patterns of grammar and word structure, making them fairly predictable in their creation.

3. Compounding

A compound is a fresh word or expression made up of two or more independent words such as '*office ghost*,' '*tramp stamp*,' '*breakup buddy*,' '*backseat driver.*' Phrases like these will create a new, specific image separate from their individual parts, often with highly specific connotations or figurative language. A *'backseat driver,'* for instance, refers to a person who tries to direct or advise the driver of a vehicle, often to an annoying degree, figuratively "driving" from the back seat. In terms of concept, the compound process is also called syntactic lexical (Liaojie, 2019) states that syntactic lexical refers to a way of combining two or more words to form a new vocabulary.

Actually, experts also propose some common types of compound words such as:

a. Nouns: *car park, rock band, toothbrush*

b. Adjectives: *heartbreaking, sugar-free, airsick*

c. Verbs: *oven-bake, baby-sit, chain-smoke*

d. Adverbs: *good-naturedly, eco-friendly*

In term of writing the compound words, some compound words use the hyphens. Hyphens are a form of dash (-) which are used between words or parts of words. Take a look the following examples:

- *French lorry-drivers have blockaded three ports.*
- *Come and meet my father-in-law.*
- *Don't wear too much make-up if you are planning to be in the sun.*
- *I'm phoning to ask if you can baby-sit for us this evening.*
- *It's a well-known fact that Labradors have a very nice temperament.*
- *The vice-president will speak to the company on Monday.*
- *She met her ex-husband at a party last week.*
- *The oven was red-hot when she touched it.*
- *A twelve-year-old girl was found alone in the large house.*

▪ *There were sixty-eight people who applied for the job.*

▪ *Three-quarters of the voters did not reply to the questionnaire.*

If the examples above are analyzed, the compound word using hyphens varies. Overall the compound words with hyphens are created in terms of a) compound noun, b) compound nouns formed with prepositions and particles, c) compound verbs and with adverb + adjective, d) separating words and prefixes, e) separating compound modifiers, and sometimes hyphens used when to write out figures. At last, it is important to check the spelling of compound words in a good learner's dictionary.

4. Blending

A blend or a portmanteau word is formed by merging the sounds and meanings of two or more other words. For examples might include the words '*Frankenfood'* (a combination of (Frankenstein and food), '*pixel'* (*picture* and *element*), '*staycation'* (*stay* and *vacation*), and '*viagravation'* (*Viagra* and *aggravation*), or '*brunch'* (breakfast + *lunch)* and 'smog' (*smoke + fog,) etc.*

To note, in many (though not all) cases, words that are created via blending are slang words with a certain element of tongue-in-cheek playfulness. In the case of words like *staycation*, they may even combine two words with seemingly opposing meanings. They may also involve puns or other wordplay (for instance, *Frankenfood* makes play on words by stitching two words together, just like Frankenstein's monster is stitched together from separate parts). To a look more examples of blending words

▪ *Fortran-Formular translation*

▪ *Malware - malicious software*

▪ *Internet - international network*

▪ *Netiquette - network and etiquette*

▪ *E-mail-electronic – Mail*

▪ *Botnet - Robot network*

- *blog - web log*

- *info-tech -information and technology*

5. Conversion

   The process of conversion focuses solely on changing the word class of the particular word. In this process, if can be noticed that for example, how some nouns are used to perform the role of a <u>verb</u> or an <u>adjective</u> acting like a <u>noun</u> just by the addition of another word or slightly altering the spelling of the actual word <u>https://byjus.com/english/word-formation/1/1/2024</u>.

   It is clear that conversion involves the change of a word from one-word class to another. Or taking a word from one-word class and transplanting it to another class.

For example, the verbs '*to email'* and '*to microwave,' 'to facebook,' 'to download,'* or '*to direct message' etc.* They are formed from the nouns '*email*', '*microwave*', '*facebook'* (probably slang or tentative one), *'download,' 'direct message*,' etc.
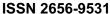
6. Clipping

   Clipping or shortening involves cutting down some parts of a word and forming a shorter word that is a synonym for the original word. Clipping is different from abbreviation as it is the shortened form of written words. Here are some examples:

   a. *gasoline = gas*

   b. *condominium = condo*

   Actually, in real context, the clipping words are sometime used as slang or jargon in communication*.* Some linguists believe that clippings originated as slang or jargon among students and teachers in schools, officers and soldiers in the army, or doctors and nurses in the medical profession. Here are some examples:

- *examination = exam*

- *mathematics = math*

- *laboratory = lab*

- *veteran = vet*

- *captain = cap*

- *manicure = mani*

- *pedicure = pedi*

In addition, the linguists also try to classify the clipping words in which they are created. At least there are four ways how clipping word is formatted.

First, initial clipping-when the initial word or syllable is kept and the final word or syllable is reduced. Or it is a removal of the beginning of a word. For examples, the word *zoo* is from *zoological garden*, or *phone* is from *telephone.* This term is also called fore-clipping.

Second, medial clipping or middle clipping-when a word is gradually shortened due to the process of elision under the influence of rhythm. Or in another term, it is the extraction of the beginning and end of a word. The type includes the words and *flu* is from *influenza, fancy* is from *fantasy, ma'am* is formed from *madam,* or *fo'c'sle* is from *forecastle*, etc.

Third, final clipping- it is the most common type of clapping word formation. It is the process in which the final word or syllable is used and the initial word or syllable is kept out or reduced. Or in another term, it involves the truncation of end of a word. For instance, the words *lab* is from *laboratory, vet* is from *veteran* or *cap* is from *captain, ad* from *advertisement.* This term is also called back clipping

Finally, complex clipping-it's another name is clipped compound when a word is clipped and compounded simultaneously with another word. Or it is a process of removing multiple parts of multiple words such as in, *sit-com* is derived from *situation comedy*, or *scie-fi* is from *science fiction*, or cablegram from cabletelegram etc.

But it must be understood that the complex clipping is also a type of blending process. So, in short, we can say that complex clipping is also blending formation process. Also be careful to with the term Back-formation and clipping. It is different from clipping. Back-formation may change the word's class or meaning, whereas

clipping makes shortened words from longer words, but does not change the class or meaning of the word.

7. Hypocorism

It is also a type of clipping mostly used in British and Australian English when a longer word is reduced to one syllable and *-'ie'* or *–'y'* is added to the end. It is mainly used in *'child-talk', 'nicknames'*, and everyday life conversations. The examples as follows:

- *Moving picture: movie*
- *Television: telly*
- *Sick leave: sickie*
- *Bookmarker: bookie*

8. Coinage or Neologisms

Coinage or sometimes called as neologism is a type of word-formation process in which a new word is created, either by inventing a completely new word or by adapting an existing word in a new way. This can happen because of advances in technology, movies, literature, music, and popular culture. For instance:

- *google*
- *teflon*
- *aspirin*
- *gimmick*
- *gadget*

Among the example above, the words such *google, gadget* and *gimmick* are truly new, and are not adapting from the existing words. This process specifically called novel creation-it still typically refers to as neologisms.

9. Eponyms

This is a type of coinage where the word is derived from the names of people or places. Eponyms are created from names of inventors or famous people. The

researcher discovered what Computer Science English employed a lot of eponyms by creating new words from names of famous people in the field of Computer Science.

a) In 1917, Napier devised as set of rods for use as multiplication aids. The rods were carved from bone and often called Napier's bones

b) The French mathematician Blaise Pascal deviced the first true calculating machine. Pascal's contribution to computing was given a mark of recognition in the late 1960's when Niklaus Wirth of Zurich named his new programming language 'Pascal'

c) Pascal had already devised a method of number complements for use in subtraction

d) Parkinson

Here, the condition is named after James Parkinson who described the shaking palsy.

10. Abbreviation

An abbreviation is a shortened form of a word or phrase that is used to represent the full form of the word or phrase. Here are some examples:

- USA (United States of America)
- CEO (Chief Executive Officer)
- UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization)
- km (kilometer)
- St. (street)

There are five types of abbreviations. Let's take a look at each type:

a) Acronyms- when we put the initial letters of a set of words together or separate the initial letters of a word, we make an acronym. An acronym. An acronym is always pronounced as a word. For examples:

NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration.

UNICEF (United Nations International Children's Emergency Fund)

b) Initialism- an initialism is formed by the first of group of words that are pronounced letter by letter, and NOT as word. For examples:

- HR (Human Resources)
- URL (Uniform resource locator)
- FYI (for your information)
- OTW (On the way), etc.

c) Contraction- when we reduced the size of the word, by omitting the middle letters such as *Sgt* (sergeant), *Mr* (Mister), *amt* (amount), etc.

d) Shortening-when only the first letters or the first syllables of a word are kept. For example; *Prof* (Professor), *approx* (approximately), *Sun* (Sunday), Co (Company), etc.

e) Syllabic abbreviation-when an abbreviation is formed from the initial syllables of a group of words and pronounced as a word. For examples, *Interpol* (international police), *comintern* (Communist International) etc.

Then, experts argue that actually the last three types of abbreviation elaborated above (*contraction, shortening, and syllabic abbreviation*) can be also categorized as clipping process. Because the three types are having similar way the words are formatted.

11. Semantic shifts.

The specialized meaning is extended the range of applications of the words underlined: '*advice*', '*mouse*', '*monitor*', '*Jerusalem*', '*slave*', '*master*', '*signature*', '*finger service*', '*cyber warfare*', '*Zombie Armies*', '*vulnerabilities*', '*weaving*', '*worn*', '*love letter*', '*integrity*' These words have taken on new meanings by extending their scope of reference. Hence, Finegan (2012) calls this semantic shift '*metaphorical* 'extension. He, further, posits that the phenomenon creates metaphors. So ordinary words have specialized meaning in the field of Computer Science and or any other fields of sciences.

Since the language continuously develops over time, the new words also develop as the way they are. The process of the rise of the new words vary depending on the context, for examples, word may be proceeded by clipping, coinage or neologisms,

eponym, hypocorism, blending, and or semantic shift. Take for examples, the word '*google'* is formed by coinage or neologisms, the word '*bookie'* is formed by *hypocorism*, and the word *'mouse'* is a matter of semantic shift, etc.,

12. Creative spelling

This involves spelling a word differently in order to make it more practical, attractive, or to fulfil some particular aim, usually commercial. This type of word formation generally is used in less formal situation and non-academic and or scientific word and they still have similar meaning with the original ones. For example:

- *because –> bcoz*
- *light –> lite*
- *forever –> 4eva*
- *Combat –> Kombat*

Conclusion

As a matter of fact, the continuous and rapid development of science and technology plays important role toward the emergence of the new words. They are always developing and emerging in line with the development of science and technology themselves. Generally, the vocabulary of any language is constantly changing, adding new words and phrases and their meaning as well. Theoretically, the word formation is significant in linguistics as it encompasses the mechanisms of language development and enrich the language horizon in terms of vocabulary and words. As a matter of fact, the process of the new word formation may take some various different ways such as derivation, compound, blending, neologism, eponym, etc.

REFERENCES

Dian Luthfiyati, Abdul Kholiq, Intan Ni'matus Zahroh. 2017. The Analysis of Word Formation Process in the Jakarta Post Website in *Journal of Linguistics, English Education and Art (LEEA)* Volume 1 No 1, Desember 2017. pp. 30-36.

Finegan, E. 2012. *Language: Its structure and Use*. USA: Wadsworth Language learning Ford, A. and Peat, F. (1988).

Haspelmath, M., & Sims A,D. (2010). *Understanding Morphology,* second edition. London: Hodder Education,an Hachette UK Company,338 Euston Road

Liaojie. 2019. The Word Formation Characteristic of English New Vocabulary in the Internet Age. in *IPO conference series of Earth and Environmental Science.* Proceeding. pp.1-5.

Luis, Porras Wadley. November 5, 2022. *Word Formation Processes in English: 10 Types with Examples* in https://kseacademy.com/word-formation-processes/12/1/2025

Munteanu, S.C. 2011. *English for science and technology: Technical texts for academic purposes*. Unpublished dissertation, University Bales-Bolyai
https://byjus.com/english/word-formation/1/1/2024.
https://www.theguardian.com/media/mind-your-language/2016/feb/04/english-neologisms-new-words/5/5/2023.
https://www.theguardian.com/media/mind-your-language/2016/feb/04/english-neologisms-new-words/5/5/2023
https://www.thoughtco.com/where-do-new-words-come-from-1692700/4/4/2023

Press Yule, and Yule, G. 2019. *The Study of Language*. Cambridge University Press.

Shortis, T. 2000. *The language of ICT*. London: Routledge.

The role of language in science Retrieved from www.fdavidpeat.com/bibliography/essays/lang.htm/3/3/2024.
https://www.thoughtco.com/where-do-new-words-come-from-1692700/4/4/2023.
https://byjus.com/english/word-formation/1/1/2024.
https://en.wikipedia.org/wiki/Civil_engineering#:~:text=Civil%20engineering%20is%20a%20professional,components%20of%20buildings%2C%20and%20railways4/4/2024.
https://www.scribd.com/document/724849668/word-formation-processes/2/3/2025.

Wellinton, J. and Osborne, J. 2001. *Language and literacy in science education.* Buckingham: Open University Press Wadsworth: Cengage Learning.

Xiuhua Li and Li Li. 2015. The Characteristics of English for Science and Technology in *International Conference on Human and Social Science Research (ICHSSR)* pp.161-165.

Yule, G. (2006). *The Study of Language,* third edition. New York: Cambridge University.