

LNGT0101 Introduction to Linguistics



Lecture #8
Oct 1st, 2014

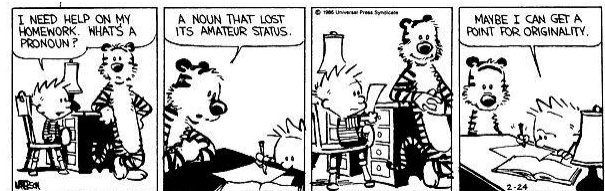
Questions?

- Any questions on Homework #2?

Prescriptivism can cost you \$\$\$

- On game shows:
- <https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=GCuUaUHjCxo>

Morphological cartoon of the day



Today's agenda

- More on word-formation processes.
- Overview of morphological typology.
- Presentation and discussion of Myth 10.

Back-formation

- Back-formation of words results when a word is formed from another word by taking off what looks like a typical affix in the language.
- This was the case with the verb *edit*, which entered English as a back-formation from *editor*.
- Same applies to the pairs *television-televise*, *self-destruction-self-destruct*, *donation-donate*.

Acronyms

- Acronyms are words created from the initial letters of several words. Typical examples are NATO, FBI, CIA, UN, UNICEF, FAQ, WYSIWYG, *radar*, *laser*.
- Sometimes acronyms are actually created first to match a word that already exists in the language, e.g., MADD (Mothers against Drunk Drivers).

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Clipping

- Another process of word-formation is clipping, which is the shortening of a longer word. Clipping in English gave rise to words such as *fax* from *facsimile*, *gym* from *gymnasium*, and *lab* from *laboratory*.

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Blending

- Blending is another way of combining two words to form a new word. The difference between blending and compounding, however, is that in blending only parts of the words, not the whole words, are combined. Here's a couple of examples:

smoke + fog → *smog*

motor + hotel → *motel*

information + commercial → *infomercial*

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Eponyms

- Eponyms are words derived from proper names, e.g., "sandwich" from the Earl of Sandwich; "lynch" after William Lynch.
- [LINK](#)

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What process(es) is involved?

- Terra firma
- Webcam
- Facebook
- CEO
- Enabler
- Execs
- Blog (noun) and blog (verb)

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- Use an **acronym** for your uncle's second oldest son.
"We visited my _____ at Christmas."
- Use **conversion** for the act of going to the movies.
"Are you planning to _____ with us on Friday?"
- Use a **compound** for the annoying string of cheese stretching from a slice of hot pizza to one's mouth.
"As the _____ hung precariously from my lips, our eyes met."
- Use **backformation** for the action of backformation.
"We had to _____ words in our linguistics class today."
- Use **word coinage** for the act of scrubbing with Ajax.
"I _____ ed the tub after giving Fido a bath."
- Use an **eponym** for the act of breaking dishes, which Jonathan does regularly.
"Looks like Sam's going to _____ all of my best dishes."
- Use **clipping** for a course in ovinology (the study of sheep).
"Have you done your _____ assignment yet?"
- Use **derivation** for being able to be contacted.
"The counselor is not very _____."
- Use a **blend** for a hot drink made with chocolate and ginseng.
"I'll have a _____ and two peanut butter cookies, please."
- Use a **borrowing** to fill in the blank below. Indicate the language of the borrowing as well as the word's meaning.
"John just does not seem quite _____ about his current job."

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Morphological typology

How do languages differ in their word structure?

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Synthesis: How many morphemes does your language have per word?

- One aspect of morphological variation has to do with **synthesis**: Some languages choose to “stack” morphemes on top of one another within words; others elect to use at most one morpheme per word, and many others will fall somewhere between these two extremes.
- Let us start by comparing Yay to Oneida (examples from Whaley 1997:127):

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Synthesis: How many morphemes does your language have per word?

Yay:

- a. mi ran tua ɲwa lew
not see CLASS snake CMLPT
“He did not see the snake.”

Oneida:

- b. yo-nuhs-a-tho:lé:
3.NEUT.PAT-room-epenthetic-be.cold.STAT
“The room is cold.”

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Morphological typology: Index of synthesis

- On the so-called *index of synthesis* for morphological typology (Comrie 1989), understood as a continuum, Yay is considered an **isolating** language, whereas Oneida would be closer to the **synthetic** end of the scale, with English closer to the Yay-end than to the Oneida-end:

Isolating < x-----x-----x---> Synthetic
Yay English Oneida

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Morphological typology: Index of synthesis

- Some languages take synthesis to the extreme, marking all grammatical relationships on the verb with extensive affixation, thereby creating **long and complex words** that would correspond to whole sentences in languages like English, as in Tiwa (example from Whaley 1997:131):
men-mukhin-tuwi-ban
dual-hat-buy-PAST
“You two bought a hat.”

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Morphological typology: Index of synthesis

- Or Eskimo:
iglu-kpi-yuma-laak-tu-ɲa
house-build-intend-anxious-reflexive-I
“I’m anxious to build a house.”
- Or Mohawk (from Baker 2001:88):
Katerihwaiénstha’
“I am a student. [Literally: I habitually cause myself to have ideas.]”

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Swedish

| | | | |
|----------|---------------|-----------|---------------|
| en lampa | 'a lamp' | en bil | 'a car' |
| en stol | 'a chair' | en soffa | 'a sofa' |
| en matta | 'a carpet' | en tratt | 'a funnel' |
| lampor | 'lamps' | bilar | 'cars' |
| stolar | 'chairs' | soffor | 'sofas' |
| mattor | 'carpets' | trattar | 'funnels' |
| lampan | 'the lamp' | bilen | 'the car' |
| stolen | 'the chair' | soffan | 'the sofa' |
| mattan | 'the carpet' | tratten | 'the funnel' |
| lamporna | 'the lamps' | bilarna | 'the cars' |
| stolarna | 'the chairs' | sofforna | 'the sofas' |
| mattorna | 'the carpets' | trattarna | 'the funnels' |

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Presentation and discussion

- Myth 10: Some languages have no grammar.

Next class agenda

- Syntax: Continue to read Chapter 3 until p. 108.