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AN OUTLINE OF ENGLISH LEXICOLOGY

PART I
WORD FORMATION

© Editura Limes
Str. Snagov, 3/19
3400 Cluj Napoca
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Email: edituralimes@yahoo.com

ISBN : 973-8089-82-4

Editura LIMES

Cluj-Napoca, 2002

INTRODUCTION

This work is meant to be a three-volume project, of which this is the first, the next two being dedicated to **Syntagmatic and Paradigmatic Relations between Words**, respectively, **Register, Dialect, Sociolect and Problems of Lexicography**.

This attempt is targeted at students, either majoring or minoring in English, on whose accurate knowledge of English vocabulary, of basic mechanisms of word formation, mechanisms of meaning mutation and techniques of using and compiling dictionaries depends their efficiency as future specialists.

Still, this book might also prove useful to all those aiming at improving their knowledge of English, be they teachers, students or even translators, pupils preparing for their graduation examination or specialists in other fields who wish to brush up on their English vocabulary.

Each volume of the book will be, therefore, accompanied by an exercise-book, where the theoretical issues will be illustrated by examples of practical work, in an attempt at making this endeavour as useful as possible to all those interested in vocabulary.

Since my aim was rather to give an outline of the fundamentals in lexicology, I have tried to make things as clear as possible, without going into redundant details about the history of the theories and terms I have used. The practical aim I had in mind has made this book be rather a textbook than a treatise. I hope the bibliography appended to this book will offer enough food for thought to those who want extra information on the topics I have dealt with.

I also hope that my colleagues who see this book will help me improve on it with their suggestions; I am also expecting my students to give me a hand in making this a really useful instrument in their academic training.

CRISTINA TĂTARU

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CHAPTER I

LEXICOLOGY: ITS OBJECT, FIELD OF INVESTIGATION AND ADJACENT DISCIPLINES

I.1. TOWARDS A DEFINITION OF THE WORD

The term **lexicology** comes, as its name shows, from the Greek terms **lexis**=word and **logos**=discourse, which would mean "discourse about words", i.e., the science of words.

The lexical level in a language is dependent on and next to the phonemic one, prior to the syntactic one, the relationship between morphemes and words being, nevertheless, loose. As it will be shown further, some words are homonymous to morphemes, consisting of one single morpheme, others are combinations of morphemes, therefore, at least functionally, no clear-cut line seems to be possible between the fields of the two disciplines, morphology and lexicology.

The confusion comes, it seems, from the fact that there are morphemes homonymous to words (derivational morphemes, more specifically, roots). If we should define the morpheme as the smallest meaningful unit in a language, types of meaning conveyed and conveyable by morphemes, on the one hand, and words, on the other hand, should be set apart, which, in very many cases, is confusing. Perhaps the best way to clear up this confusion would be to give a functional definition of the word, as against the morpheme, that is, to define the borders of the two concepts, thus setting apart the respective fields of investigation of the two disciplines.

If we admit that the word is the fundamental unit lexicology operates with, we should be able to define the word on all the other levels of the language: the phonemic one, the morphological one, the syntactic one, the semantic and pragmatic ones.

Thus, phonetically, the word could be defined as a set of allophones preceded and followed by a graphical break. Since English is stress-timed (i.e. whatever comes between two stresses is pronounced in a weak form), graphical breaks would be the simplest manner to set apart words from each other. Still, if no written form of the language were available, probably the most convenient manner of establishing the limits of a word would be to say that it is the segment of an utterance where ties of assimilation (both regressive and progressive) between sounds operate in a lexicographically traditionalised manner. In other words, the limits of a word are those which can be identified by such frequency of usage whose unit has been ascertained as such by a dictionary.¹

Morphologically, the word could be defined as a lexicographically amended blending of morphemes, whereas syntactically it could be the minimal unit liable to take up on its own the function of part of a sentence (subject, object, predicate etc). Semantically, a word could be the minimal carrier of a full lexical meaning. These definitions suffer, nevertheless, from a certain mechanicism. Such items as articles, for instance, to give but one example, are not carriers of full lexical meaning, yet, they appear in dictionaries as "words". On the other hand, the semantic level of a language does not have the same status as the "hardware" represented by morpho-syntax, since all the other levels of the language are conditioned, differentiated and "censored" by meaning. Meaning differentiation dictates almost everything at all the other levels of the language, starting with the status of phonemes as phonemes and finishing with such subtleties as purpose of communication, tenor of discourse, stylistic function and translation equivalent nuance.

This means that there are at least two possible types of meaning, which can be conveyed by both morphemes and words: a **functional meaning** and another sort of meaning, which, for

¹ It is obvious already that the levels of language can only theoretically be separated from one another; the fundamental units with which they operate can only be defined negatively as against one another and a proximal genre – specific difference – type definition is incomplete without specifications of this type.

words, could be called **lexical meaning**, whereas with morphemes it is called **derivational meaning**. This is, then, perhaps, the checkpoint where the difference between words and morphemes lies.

Functional meaning is a feature shared by both words and morphemes; it is the type of meaning which signals that some grammatical category or categories operate at that point in the utterance. For instance, the appearance of **-ing** signals the presence of the grammatical category of progressive aspect; likewise **-s** has the triple meaning: plural, genitive and third person singular Indicative Present. Such words as **the**, **an**, signal the definiteness or non-definiteness of what follows (i.e. existing or non-existing common previous knowledge of the speakers of the object spoken about); **therefore** signals the immanence of a conclusive sentence; **where** shows a simply locative or a relative locative construction, etc.

Derivational meaning is exclusively an attribute of morphemes and signals the morpho-syntactic group to which a word containing that morpheme belongs. For instance **-ness** signals a noun, generally an abstract one; **-ly** differentiates the great bulk of adverbs and a few adjectives from the rest of the words; **-ate** shows a verb denoting activity of doing something with an optional repetitive nuance. These are not what could be called full lexical meanings, because they do not denote notions; functional meaning and derivational meaning, however complex, are only traces of meaning or appendices to an already existing notional meaning.

Lexical meaning, notional meaning or full meaning is only an attribute of words and refers to the concept (notion or object whose mental image they evoke).

There may seem to be a contradiction here, in the fact that some words consist of a morpheme, so that their status is uncertain: are such items morphemes or words? As it has been mentioned before, **there is only a homonymy between morphemes and words consisting of a morpheme.**

A morpheme is characterised fundamentally by its combinatory valence, that is, by its liability to be attached to other morphemes, which thus become stems. A word does

not have any combinatory valence; it is a set structure to which nothing can be added and from which nothing can be removed any more.

This means that even if apparently a "word" appears in a compound, or it can be converted into another word, what can be turned into something else is not a word, but a stem homonymous to that word. Words are amended as such by social and historical experience and are immutable.

A word could be defined, in this light, by taking into account the following:

- its phonemic status, as a unit in which rules of assimilation operate in a lexicographically conventionalised manner;
- its morphological status, as a unit, again lexicographically conventionalised, of several morphemes or as a homonym to one morpheme;
- its syntactic status, as being the minimal unit capable of fulfilling a syntactic function on its own;
- its semantic status, as being a unit capable of carrying a full, notional or lexical meaning, besides a derivational meaning;

This means that the word could be defined as the fundamental unit lexicology operates with, consisting of a morpheme or set of morphemes conventionalised lexicographically, which is the carrier of at least one notional meaning and is liable to fulfil a syntactic function on its own.

It should be mentioned, nevertheless, that the notion of word thus defined should also include word-substitutes, such as expressions, idioms, phrasal constructions and basically everything that conforms to the definition above. The most handy checkpoint is, again, meaning: whenever a combination of several words can be reduced to the meaning and function of a single word, being noted down as such in a dictionary, it is a word-substitute.

1.2. THE FIELD OF STUDY OF LEXICOLOGY

If the object of study of lexicology is the word and its substitutes, at least two respective fields of investigation can be mentioned as belonging to this discipline: that of words proper and that of word-substitutes. The latter present us, at least in English, with an extremely wide set of variants, both structural and functional, therefore special chapters will be dedicated to them in this book. Still, words themselves can be subdivided, in many cases, into further subjacent units, so that the structure of the simple word is also a ramification of the field of study of lexicology.

Words and word-substitutes are liable to enter into syntagmatic relations, on the one hand, and into paradigmatic relations, on the other. Syntagmatic relations of the and... and type are established between words when they enter utterances, either simple or complex, whereas paradigmatic relations are those of mutual exclusion, of the or... or type, and appear as structures which organise the vocabulary of a language. Such relations between words as: attraction, selection restrictions or agreement are dictated syntagmatically, while synonymy, hyponymy or inclusion, homonymy, antonymy etc., pertain to the paradigmatic organisation of the vocabulary. These, too, are part of the object of lexicological study.

In time, due to mutations in the common historical experience of the group, words can also mutate, either quantitatively (by increase in their physical number) or qualitatively (by multiplying their number of meanings). Both the formation of new words, their borrowing and the changes in their meaning fall into the field of lexicological study.

Lexicology also studies such word-substitutes which used to be originally figures of speech and which, because of overuse have become dead nowadays in point of stylistic value and are clichés in everyday language. Dead similes, dead metaphors or metonymies form a chapter apart in lexicology.

Last but not least, lexicology studies variants of vocabulary which are restricted in usage either geographically (dialects and regional variants of the language), socially (hyper-correct, educated, colloquial or slangy variants), professionally (terms,

internationalisms coined in various manners and from various foreign languages), stylistically (probing into the latencies of the language to analyse literary coinages and nonce-words pertaining to authorial idiolects) or occasionally (the vocabularies of frozen, formal, relaxed, informal language, even down to baby-talk).

A special subchapter of lexicology, which tends to become a discipline on its own, is **lexicography**, devoted to the manner in which dictionaries are compiled, methods of achieving this and the study of different types of dictionaries.

1.3. DISCIPLINES ADJACENT TO LEXICOLOGY

From the manner in which the word has been defined, it already results that lexicology relies heavily on the other "mainstream" linguistic disciplines, that is, **phonology, morphology, syntax, semantics and pragmatics**.

Phonology accounts for the spelling and pronunciation not only of already existing words, but also of new coinages and borrowings. It dictates, for instance, the doubling of consonants after the addition of certain suffixes or prefixes, shifts of accent in certain denominal verbs obtained by ablaut, etc. In the case of barbarisms or foreignisms phonology will dictate their variant of pronunciation in English, according to the phonetical rules of the language.

The relationship between lexicology and **morphology** has already been extensively discussed. Let us only add for now that it is morphology that dictates the acceptable combinations of morphemes which generate words, according to the combinatory valences of various stems. Functionally, morphology accounts for the different morpho-syntactic values of words and, consequently, for their status as parts of speech.

The relations between words, both the syntagmatic and the paradigmatic ones can only be defined in context; therefore **syntax** is also of capital importance for lexicological study.

Still, other linguistic disciplines can also contribute to and offer data about word-study in English: **the history of the**

language, etymology, stylistics, pragmatics, dialectology, discourse analysis, socio-linguistics and psycholinguistics.

If the history of the language and etymology rather pertain to a diachronically based study of vocabulary, the other disciplines mentioned above can offer either synchronic or diachronic information on phenomena existing in the word-stock.

Therefore, it should be first cleared up what sort of approach we have adopted in this study and which are the advantages and shortcomings of such a point of view.

1.4. SYNCHRONY AND DIACHRONY IN THE STUDY OF THE ENGLISH VOCABULARY

The vocabulary of the English language is, like any other phenomenon one might mention in the language, the outcome of a long-lasting evolution, in which not only the inner resources of the language were turned to account in order to form new words and word-substitutes, but also originally historical events made their contribution to the composition of present-day English vocabulary. This happened mainly by the phenomenon of languages in contact, which is always a bearer of change when it manifests itself.

In order to yield an accurate analysis of the phenomena operating in the vocabulary, one should consider the two convergent points of view, the synchronical one and the diachronical one, especially since, when one's focus is on vocabulary, it should be taken into account that this is the compartment of language most open to linguistic change.

1.4.1. The diachronic point of view analyses vocabulary in its historical evolution, in time. Therefore, perhaps, the relationship between actual history and the history of a language should be discussed first, in order to get a clear idea about what diachrony actually brings about in any linguistic study.

There are, certainly, sources and methods used by both sciences, such as: inscriptions, monuments, chronicles, books (as to sources), and analysis, synthesis, conjecture or determinism (as

to methods). Yet, these sources and methods are used by the two sciences for different purposes. The discussion arises when applying a deterministic point of view upon the history of a language. We must certainly admit that the history of a people is the main source of influence upon its language, but equating the two, i.e. adopting historical determinism as the main cause of the development of a language in a certain way, would be a rather exclusivistic, if not metaphysical point of view. History has its own specific events, while in the history of a language we only have to deal with slow, lasting evolutions. Even borrowings or slang, which are the most rapid changes in the vocabulary of a language, are amended by usage during a rather long time. The language-speaking community will accept a new sign in a longer or shorter span of time, according to the importance it ascribes to the fragment of reality that new sign covers. Not only acceptation, but also adaptation to both the basis of articulation and inflectional structure of the language should take place, for a new element to enter the vocabulary. Since every language has its specific fragmentation of the mental picture of the world into semantic fields and then into notions, the place of the new element should be set by the community, as a member of a paradigm, which is also allotted a specific syntagmatic distribution.

Perhaps the best example in this respect would be the borrowing marriage, from Norman French, a language where the word has no synonyms. The word, imposed by Norman French administration upon Anglo-Saxon speaking communities, has undergone, in time, a shift of accent to the first syllable, as well as a pronunciation more or less similar to the Old English hrycg (-ridge), under the pressure of the pre-existing basis of articulation. In point of meaning, the word was superimposed upon the already existing O.E. wedung, and both words underwent a specialisation of meaning, in which marriage came to mean only the official recording of the event before the authority and in church, while wedding was used for the party following it, probably at home, among Anglo-Saxon speaking people.

We may draw the conclusion that the history of a language "absorbs" and reflects the events happening in the history of the community which speaks it. This happens after more or less long-

lasting evolutions in time, which, once completed, have lost their accidental outlines during a period in which changes are recorded as tendencies. The equation history=history of the language is, consequently, metaphysical. A historical event may be the accident that induces a change in the history of a language, but its weight as a cause is highly diminished by the time the change has been completed in, because of the conditional connections generated by the already existing linguistic system. In other words, linguistic change could be said to be a process influenced not only by history, but also by the internal pressure of the linguistic system, mainly consisting in the law of minimal (linguistic) effort, which will dictate the outlines of the final evolution. A graphical representation of this phenomenon could be:

HISTORY LANGUAGE

event -----→ reflection --→ absorption---→ final development
 (tendency) (adaptation) (new element)

Consequently, linguistic determinism plays an enormous part in the evolution of a language, as well. The analysis of changes by means of linguistic tools and ignoring their extralinguistic causes has generated comparativism, which has played a capital part in the history of linguistics. Still, linguistic determinism should be viewed as at least equally important as is linguistic accident. Perhaps, nevertheless, the number and frequency of "accidents" in linguistics as against events in mainstream history could entitle us to ignore them, still, they should be taken into account, for an accurate analysis. Homonymy, with its subvariants, homophony and homography is such a linguistic accident, and it cannot be accounted for otherwise.

Etymology is of paramount importance in a diachronically based study of vocabulary. Not only will it offer data as to the origin of words and word-substitutes, but it will also supply a periodisation of the vocabulary, which helps ascertain whether a word belongs to archaic, obsolete, obsolescent strata or it is a neologism, a barbarism or a foreignism.

Each linguistic discipline has a historically based compartment. Historical phonetics, morphology, syntax, etc. show

the evolution in time of phenomena existing at a certain synchronic point in the history of a language, accounting for the way in which these came into being. Still, perhaps what is most important regarding diachrony in any linguistic study is that it can help us conjecture or predict the possible evolution of either a certain linguistic phenomenon or of language in its entirety.

This prediction is made firstly with the help of the **historical comparative method** (a system of analytical procedures which analyses the relationship of different languages and groups of languages, reconstructing pre-historic linguistic elements and revealing their course of development in time, also providing the general laws of linguistic development). Also, the general rules of interplay between **norm** and **tendency** should be taken into account, so as to ascertain which phenomena in the vocabulary will become **productive** (i.e. likely to produce new developments in the vocabulary at a certain point in its evolution), and which will be discarded in a longer or shorter span of time. The **theory of languages in contact** (which deals with bilingualism and the general evolution of linguistic phenomena in both the substratum language and the superstratum one) as well as **sociolinguistics** can contribute to such an endeavour.

1.4.2. The synchronic point of view focuses upon the relationship between language – language-speaking group, on a certain level of their common development. Synchrony does not refer, as it might seem, only to present-day English. At any point in the evolution of the language, a synchronic slicing can be operated on it, the study thus referring to all the phenomena one is interested in at that historical moment. One could thus study, for instance, the stage of assimilation of borrowings from Norman French in Chaucer's time, or the slang of the sixties as it appears in Salinger's writings. What is important, nevertheless, about synchrony, is that it does not take into account either the previous history of the phenomenon studied, or its development subsequent to the point in time we are interested in. Should we use medical terms, if in diachrony we study a language or a phenomenon etiologically, also giving a prognosis, synchronically we can only obtain a diagnosis of

a phenomenon, restricted to the temporal limit we chose for the study.

A synchronic study of language should include both a horizontal and a vertical dimension. **Horizontally**, the relationship language – society can be studied either dialectologically, focussing on the regional varieties existing in the language at a certain stage in its development, or from a sociolinguistic point of view. **Vertically**, a synchronic point of view ought to take into account the literary standard, special usages (or functional styles), registers, poetic language or style, the psycholinguistic aspect (i.e. "languages" of individual users).

If we should stop a moment upon the last two aspects mentioned above, we should first take into account the fact that we can talk about literary style and idiosyncratic usage of individual speakers only in the case of languages with a written culture. The aspect of written culture we are interested in here, is the **literary standard** (which includes at least one normative-prescriptive grammar, a standard spelling and pronunciation). One can neither define style, nor individual usage without this system of reference, or else we shall find ourselves compelled to accept the extreme statement that each writer and speaker creates his or her own language, different from any other's.² But since the first function of any language is to communicate, there should be a proximal genre common to all stylistic or idiosyncratic usages, or else there would be no communication altogether.

The conclusion emerging from all this is that a language viewed synchronically is not the simple sum of its individual variants, but also the abstract standard accepted by the language-speaking group, which, since it is the outcome of statistics, although only theoretical and abstract, is the common background of communication.

² Apparent examples would be Carroll's *Jabberwocky* or Joyce's *Ulysses* or *Finnegan's Wake*. These books only confirm, nevertheless, the fallaciousness of such a statement: both texts convey the message of their non-textuality exactly on the basis of our background in the practice of a standardised language, from which the texts spring up as deviant, contradicting expectation.

The point of view adopted by this study is dictated by its immediate practical relevance to its target-public, consequently it will be a synchronically based one. Still, since synchrony and diachrony are inseparable facets of one and the same approach, whenever it is necessary to probe into the history of a certain phenomenon in the vocabulary, so as to give a more accurate description and interpretation of it, we shall adopt a diachronical point of view. It is our conviction that a study of English vocabulary would be incomplete without either.

CHAPTER II

FUNDAMENTAL CONCEPTS LEXICOLOGY OPERATES WITH

II.1. FREE AND BOUND FORMS; ROOTS, STEMS, AFFIXES

Since words are further subdivisible into smaller meaningful units, it results that the term **morpheme** is necessary, but not sufficient to characterise the complexity of the phenomenon studied. Morphemes have, therefore, been functionally classified, according to the part they play in word-formation, according to the types of meaning they are the carriers of, according to their degree of independence from one-another, according to frequency and productivity. These aspects will be dealt with, in details, in the chapter devoted to affixation; still, quick definitions of them are necessary, at this point, lest the terminology used from now on should be unclear.

A **free form** is, thus, a form that can appear independently in an utterance; semantically, this means that it has a notional meaning of its own, for whose understanding there is no need for anything else to be attached to it. Basically free forms are words, but also stems homonymous to words which already have a notional meaning attached to them before they undergo some subsequent lexical change.

For instance, the verb *to drive* is a free form, because it has a meaning which covers a notion and is intelligible as such; its homonymous stem *drive-* is also a free form, since it will carry the notional meaning entirely into whatever new word might be formed out of it: *driver* (=person who does the action of driving); *overdrive* (=drive horse or work person to exhaustion); *a drive* (=result of the action of driving, etc.); *drive-in* (= restaurant or cinema where one

remains in one's car during one's stay); *driving-license* (= document ascertaining that its possessor is licensed to drive a vehicle), etc.

Unlike free forms, **bound forms** are those forms that cannot appear independently in an utterance; this means that their meaning is not notional or full, but either functional or derivative. They can only appear as "formatives", be they semantic or grammatical, appended to a free form. The question might arise here whether stems are free or bound. Again, the checkpoint should be in meaning, that is, those stems are free which are homonymous to existing words, whereas stems that are not homonymous to existing words are bound. For instance *disheart-* is not a free stem, although it contains a fragment (the root, actually, *-heart-*) which is homonymous to an existing word; only by the addition of *-en*, *-ened* or *-ening* will it gain a notional meaning and become a free form.

A special status is that of **combining forms**, which are words borrowed from other languages that have become bound forms in English. Generally these have been borrowed for terminological purposes from Greek, Latin or French and are somehow midway between free and bound forms. An example could be the form *cycl-* (< Gk. *kyklos*=circle), which can play the part a free form accomplishes usually in a word, but is not homonymous to any word existing in English. In the words *cyclic*, *cycle*, *cyclist*, the combining form plays the part of the root (which is usually allotted to a form homonymous to a free form); likewise, the form *caco-* (<Gk. *kakos*=ugly) is the root of such words as *cacophony*, *cacography*, without being homonymous to any free form in English. Similar is the status of *anti-*, *supra-* or *counter-*, from Latin, or of *mal-* from French.

Morphologically speaking, a word can be said to consist of at least one **root**, to which one or several **affixes** are added.

Roots are, thus, the necessary and sufficient structural constituent for a word to exist, they are free forms if they are homonymous to a word in the language and carry the notional meaning of this word into the new word they form.

Affixes can be added to this root in a theoretically unlimited number (still, practically the limit is in the number of accepted combinations recorded in the dictionary and dictated by the

combinatory valence of the stems that root can generate). Theoretically, affixes can be either pre-positive to the root, inserted into the root, or post-positive to it. In the first case, they are called **prefixes**, in the second, **infixes**, in the third, **suffixes**. No infixes exist in Modern English. Affixes are all bound forms and they can be **derivational** or **functional**, according to the type of meaning they convey and to their function.

When one affix has been stripped away from the word, what we obtain is the **stem** of that word. Or, putting it conversely, the stem of a word is that part of it from which one can obtain the given word by adding one more affix to it.

For instance, should we consider the word *imponderability*, one possible stem of this word is *-ponderability*, while another is *imponderabil-*. The first stem is homonymous to a word, consequently it is free. Should we consider its homonym, *ponderability*, its stem is *ponderabil-*, a bound stem, at first sight, if one does not consider the fact that, because of etymological reasons (the word is a neologism borrowed as such from French), the homonymy with *ponderable* is not apparent. Still, by further stripping away affixes from this word, we obtain *ponder-*, a combining form originating in the Latin *pondo*, *-ere*, which is the root of the word. (Let us say in brackets that the English verb *to ponder* also comes from this combining form, by imparting a figurative meaning to its original one, *to weigh*). If we start the stripping operation from the other stem mentioned above, what we obtain is the same root. **Roots** are, consequently, what remains of a word after all affixes have been removed and their fundamental characteristic is that they are not further divisible into other constituent parts that should have a meaning³. Unless they are combining forms, roots have notional meaning. They can form new words by becoming stems.

When a stem is only formed of a root, it is called **simple stem**; when it contains other elements, it is called **derived stem**. Other elements can be either affixes or other simple stems in combination with which a compound word takes shape. Stems can

³ Roots can, obviously, be subdivided further into phonemes, but the latter do not have any meaning.

also generate new words by conversion, when the change that takes place is not formal, but functional.⁴ For instance, the verb *to peep*, generates the stem *peep-* from which the adjective *peeping* is derived by affixation; the homonymous stem, *peeping-* can enter a compound with another stem, *-Tom*, (a *Peeping-Tom*=a person who takes delight in watching other people without their being aware of it.) Still, the original stem, *peep*, can generate by conversion a noun, a *peep* meaning a short, furtive look at something or somebody.

II.2. PRODUCTIVITY

Productivity is the capacity of a linguistic generative phenomenon to act in the language at a certain point of its historical development.

For instance, at some point around the 14th century, endings in Middle English started being eliminated, after a period in which they were levelled (i.e. they became homonymous). Loss of endings operated extensively for about a century in the language, the outcome of it being Early Modern English, a language well on the way towards becoming as analytical as it is today. Then the phenomenon ceased being productive.

In the field of vocabulary, productivity can refer to all the mechanisms of word-formation: one can, thus, speak about the productivity of certain affixes at a certain point, to the detriment of others, about the productivity of affixation in general as against conversion or composition, etc. The ultimate proof that a phenomenon is productive in the vocabulary is that it yields new developments at the stage of evolution under analysis.

The fact that, for instance, after the Norman Conquest a great many verbs (either borrowed or taken over from other verbal classes) fell into the pattern of second-class weak verbs from Old English proves that the verbal group in question was productive at that time. Actually, contemporary regular verbs come from this

⁴ Therefore, conversion is also called root-formation or zero-derivation.

pattern, under which lots of existing verbs were regularised and into which newly borrowed verbs were taken up.

Productivity should also be judged as against other equivalent variants of achieving the same goal in word-formation, if any. One cannot compare, for instance, the overall productivity of conversion to the productivity of an affix, for instance; even if today French suffixes denoting (iterative) action like *-ation*, *-isation*, *-ification*, and the like, are more productive than other suffixes like *-er*, *-en*, this does not mean that conversion is not preferred altogether to affixation, since it is the most productive means of enriching the vocabulary in Modern English.⁵

The phenomenon of productivity can be active over longer or shorter spans in a language. In some cases, a phenomenon that ceases to be productive at a certain point, may start having another period of productivity at another time in the evolution of the language.

Productivity should not be confused with frequency. **Frequency** is given by statistics performed on the entire word-stock existing at a certain point. Though the frequency of, let us say, an affix in the dictionary of the language is a proof of its productivity, this productivity may have been prior to the point at which the count is made and may have even ceased acting in the vocabulary.

II.3. BASIC WORD-STOCK / MASS OF THE VOCABULARY

Frequency is the checkpoint of a possible division of the vocabulary into **basic word-stock** and, respectively, **the mass of the vocabulary**.

⁵ The linguistic type of English, which is analytical, dictates this status of conversion as the most productive means of forming new words. This means that, since the morpho-syntactic status of a word is dictated by its place in the sentence, the relocation of a word is the simplest means of making it another part of speech. This is the fundamental mechanism of conversion.

A simple count of the entries in a dictionary of Modern English with regard to their origin, would reveal the astonishing fact that about 66% of the entries are of French origin⁶. Still, English is not a Romance language; this happens because in a dictionary all entries have the same weight. Moreover, many polysemantic words fall under the same entry, although the meanings are, at times, radically different from one another.

Should a word-count be performed on a text, the great bulk of words will prove of Anglo-Saxon origin, which means that these are the most frequently used in actual communication. An analysis of their meanings will reveal that words of Anglo-Saxon origin denote the notions fundamental to human existence and activity. These words and phrases form the **basic word-stock**, which has the following characteristics:

- a. it is formed of Anglo-Saxon words, which have preserved as their first meaning their original meaning, denoting fundamental notions;
- b. it is made up mostly of mono- and disyllabic words, which are highly polysemantic and have the highest probability to gain further new meanings;
- c. it is the most conservative part of the vocabulary and one of the most conservative parts of the language, not only because it carries the genealogical fundaments of English as a Germanic language, but also because it covers the basic needs of communication in the language;
- d. words in the basic word-stock enter the greatest number of phrases and are the most likely to undergo word-formation processes of all kinds;
- e. they appear in all the variants of English, be they dialectal, sociolectal, idiolectal, functional or register-dictated, they are basically neutral stylistically and connotationally.

The mass of the vocabulary, on the other hand, contains all the other words appearing in the dictionary, all the borrowings, foreignisms, translation loans, terms, poeticisms, etc. Generally

⁶ In a similar way, the entries of Slavic origin in a Romanian dictionary amount to about the same percentage.

speaking, these are always members of synonymical series offering options, available to the speakers in different contexts. Some of them are confined to special communication contexts, others are marked connotationally, others are regional variants of words in the basic word-stock, others pertain to poetic diction. Obsolete, obsolescent, archaic terms, as well as terminological neologisms denoting fundamentals of certain sciences or fields of research, law terms with high specificity, but also low colloquial variants and slangy words and expressions are contained here. Most of these words are not only specialised, but also monosemantic; their overall frequency of usage by the average speaker is low, their degree of assimilation by the same average speaker is small as well most native speakers never come to pronounce certain words belonging to the mass of the vocabulary in their lives. This means that these words either cover fields unessential to basic communication, or that they have synonyms in the basic word-stock which are preferred by the average communicator.

II.4. CONTEXT AND CO-TEXT

Co-text is the immediate (left – right) linguistic environment in which a word or a word-substitute appears.

Co-text is, first and foremost, a very important diagnostical element for the morpho-syntactical class the word belongs to. The relationship between co-text and meaning is again of capital importance, since it is repeated and accepted occurrence in the same or equivalent co-text that generates norm in the vocabulary, after a phase of tendency and not vice versa. Words outside co-text do not exist in communication. They do not function; they are only theoretical potentialities. For instance, the word *front*, taken in isolation, could be anything: a noun, a verb, an adjective, an adverb, part of a prepositional substitute. A set of diagnostical co-texts will clear its possible morphological status, for instance:

the ----- of the car (nominal)

to ----- a preposition (verbal)

the ----- light of the truck (adjectival)

to sit up ----- (adverbial)

to be in ----- of something/-one (prepositional).

As to the possible meanings of the word, they appear only in co-text as well. Let us only consider the nominal meanings:

1. side or part normally nearer to spectator: *front of chair, door, mouth*
2. (Archit.) any face of building, esp. that of main entrance: *front of a house, temple, theatre etc.*
3. (Mil.) foremost line or part of army, etc. line of battle, part of ground towards real or imaginary enemy, scene of actual fighting: *go to the front, be on the front, the front has moved, etc.*
4. outward appearance, bluff, pretext, person serving to cover subversive or illegal activities: *to serve as a front to, etc.*
5. (Meteorol.) forward edge of advancing mass of cold or warm air: *fronts of rain, an atmospherical front of cold air, etc.*
6. breast of man's shirt: *false shirt-front*
7. (poet. or rhet.) face, bearing, demeanour: *show a bold front.*

Unlike co-text, **context** is the entire text the item under analysis is part of. If co-text places the word into a morpho-syntactic category and lists its possible meanings as a set of diagnostical environments, context can place it diachronically, into its epoch, assign it to its author, ascertain the dialect, sociolect, register etc. it is used in. Context is, consequently, a much larger notion than co-text, since it contains the entire historical evolution of the word, both in point of form and in point of meaning. Not only is context important in a synchronical study, but also when the information required by a dictionary explanation of a word is compiled.

The placing of the word along the paradigmatic axis (listing its synonyms, antonyms, paronyms, homonyms), as well as its meanings in time are given by its context; its morpho-syntactic status and contemporary meanings (syntagmatic environment) are given by the set of its co-texts.

Consequently, context and co-text are inseparable not only for the study of the structure of the word, but also for its distribution.

II.5. DENOTATION AND CONNOTATION

Both notions are referred to in the context of meaning, still, in order to grasp their significance, one should resort to the relationship between sign and notion.

De Saussure defined meaning as the relationship between object or notion and the sign standing for them. In this view, meaning should be the realisation of the notion by means of a definite language system. **Notion** is, then, generically definable as the mental image or the reflection in the human mind of real objects and phenomena, in their essential features, alongside with their entire range of connexions (cause, effect, condition, etc.) It is immediately clear that there is no one-to-one relation between words and notions. If notions cannot exist apart from words, words can exist without notions underlying them; such are, for instance, exclamations (which do not have notional, but emotional content). On the other hand, the referentiality of words is a matter of debate; exactly what could the term real in the definition above mean, if such "objects" as dragon, fairy, and leprechaun clearly have no objective referent in the "real world"?⁷

Notions consist of two aspects: **sphere** and **content**.

The sphere of a notion is given by all the objects it refers to (here, by "object" the grammatical acceptance of the term is referred to); its **content** is the sum total of the features that distinguish that notion from other notions.

The relationship between the meaning (in its lexical acceptance) and its underlying logical notion is founded on several principles:

1. there is a variable relationship between notion and meaning (which is not always one-to-one); the logical notion is not always the referent of the lexical meaning; moreover, there

⁷ An entire theory is devoted to the dismantling of the concept of referentiality in the theory of fictional worlds (Meinong, Pavel), perhaps such non-referential entities could be best grasped if we considered a system of reference different from that of the actual, real world; still, this is far beyond our scope here.

may be several words attached to one and the same notion (in stylistic variants, for instance);

2. notions are always emotionally neutral, since they pertain to logic. This means that the meaning may, at times, convey more than some reflection of objective reality;
3. if notions cannot exist outside words, it means that the fragmentation of the surrounding reality into notions is linguistically-conditioned; in other words, each language has a different sphere for apparently similar notions, the differences being of a linguistic nature;
4. the content of notions is what ought to be common for all languages and this can only be described by formal markers.

If notions are always emotionally neutral, it means that a word contains at least two types of meaning: one reflecting the notion, which is called **denotative meaning**, and another, reflecting the emotional overtones appended to it, called **connotative meaning**.

Denotative meaning is also called referential or extensional meaning. Words fulfil their denotative function by being either the name of an object or of a notion in a given language.

Connotative meaning refers to the capacity of a word to evoke or to directly express emotion (actually fulfilling a **modal** function) as an addition to its denotative meaning. Connotation can be lexicographically traditionalised (which means that it is there for the entire group speaking that language) but it can also be idiosyncratic (in cases when a certain word evokes additional meaning to only one speaker of the language). In this last case, one of the aspects resulting might be poetic usage, by which the initial sphere of the notion is enlarged metaphorically, metonymically, etc. In other cases, idiosyncratic connotation stays valid for only one speaker, referring to a fragment of his personal experience, which is not shared by other speakers as well.

The word *hay*, for instance, has the following notional content: *grass mown and dried for fodder*. The sphere of the notion may include anything that grows among blades of grass and is mown alongside with it; or, on the other hand, any plant mown and dried for fodder, which is not necessarily grass. The denotative meaning covers, nevertheless, only the notional content, while

connotative overtones may contain any nuance, from the pleasant one (*to roll in the hay* means, in a colloquial register, to make love) and down to the unpleasant one (one can easily imagine what the word might evoke to someone who has hay-fever).

CHAPTER III

MEANS OF ENRICHING THE VOCABULARY (A SYNOPSIS)

The vocabulary of a language is its level most open to influence, although this influence is not equally manifest in all its compartments. The experience of the group speaking the language changes in the course of its history; new realities appear, requiring new lexical items to name them. According to the importance the group allots to these new notions, the words designating them enter various compartments of the vocabulary. Generally speaking, the place of a new item in the vocabulary is dictated by its distribution and frequency.

Distribution is the sum total of co-texts a word can appear in. It is clear that the older an item is in the language, the richer its distribution ought to become, since, with an old item, the likeliness of its being polysemantic is in a direct ratio with its age and "stage" of functioning. Such items are likely to be found in the basic word-stock and also signal, as it has been mentioned before, the genealogical group the language belongs to. Theoretically, again, a new notion shaped by the common experience of a group ought to be named rather by adding a new meaning to an already existing word, probably to one of comparatively high circulation, than by borrowing its name from another language.

In practise though, things do not stand this way, since the law of minimal (linguistic) effort acts prior to that of productivity. Although a new notion ought to be named in English by a word obtained by conversion (which is the most productive internal means of enriching the vocabulary in Modern English), more than often its translation loan or even its internationalised denomination is taken over by the group, instead of coining a lexical item by putting to use the inner resources of the language. The more "urgent" the need to name a notion is to the group, (and the higher

its probable **frequency** might be in communication), the simpler mechanism of creating it will be selected by the group.

It seems, then, that different mechanisms of word-formation have different degrees of "receivability" and "acceptability" to the group, that is, a higher or lower degree of productivity at a certain point in the evolution of the language. This probably depends on the speed at which the new word is likely to pass from the stage of tendency in the language to that of norm, and this speed, in its turn, is directly dependent on its frequency of usage, on the number of people who adopt it and the time the new item takes to be "received". The importance of the new item to communication is what dictates all these conditions and only secondarily the productivity of mechanisms of generating words in the language. Last but not least, the media are also a factor which has brought about, in contemporary English, a predominance of internationalisms over words created by putting to use other means of enriching the vocabulary (even if the latter are productive and belong to the inner resources of the language).

Mechanisms of word-formation fall into two basic categories: **internal** and **external**.

Internal means of enriching the vocabulary are those which put to use elements and processes already existing in the language, i.e. belonging to the system, in order to coin new words on the basis of patterns productive at that point in the evolution of the language. In a way, their functioning is a sign that the language is alive, that is, that the self-adjusting function of the system can act to bridge communicational gaps. Their frequency and productivity is typologically conditioned. Since English is an inflective language of the analytical type (some linguists argue that it is the most analytical Indo-European language, and detect in it a tendency towards becoming isolating⁸), the predominance of conversion over other internal mechanisms of enriching the vocabulary is obvious. Still, affixation and composition are also productive in Modern English, alongside with other ways of forming new words.

⁸ An isolating language is a language which does not have any endings, operating only with roots, and expressing grammatical categories exclusively by means of word order and prepositions.

According to their mechanism of functioning, internal means of enriching the vocabulary can be predominantly **morphological** or predominantly **semantic**. With the former, already existing words in the language become stems, generating new words which will be different either in both form and function or only in function. In the case of the latter, the meaning of a word already existing in the language suffers changes, either with the preservation of the old meaning alongside with the new one, or by elimination of the old meaning in favour of the new one.

According to their degree of productivity, morphological internal means of enriching the vocabulary can be classified into **major** and **minor**.⁹

In the first subclass, such mechanisms as: **affixation**, **composition** and **conversion** can be ranged; minor means of enriching the vocabulary are: **abbreviation**, **contraction**, **change of morphological accent**, **deflection**, **back-formation**, **folk etymology**, **corruption**, **words derived from proper nouns**, **portmanteaux**, **nonce-words**.

Semantic internal means of enriching the vocabulary can also be classified according to productivity: the most productive among them seems to be **polysemy**, while **extension**, **specialisation**, **degradation** and **elevation of meaning** are somewhat less productive. There is hesitation as to ranging **trite figures of speech** (dead metaphors, metonymies, similes, etc., which have become linguistic clichés) among these mechanisms of creating new words or among idiomatic expressions. My option is for the latter, although in their case change of meaning also occurs in order to create new words. Still, since both formally and functionally they share more common features with set phrases, this book will range them among the latter.

⁹ It seems that not only synchronical productivity in English is at the basis of this classification; since it is the same for all Indo-European languages, we have reason to suspect that this grouping also has an overall diachronical factor in view. In other words, internal means of enriching the vocabulary are major or minor according to their productivity all through the history of the language(s) in question.

External means of enriching the vocabulary are **borrowings** with all their subtypes: **borrowings proper**, **translation loans**, **linguistic calc**, **barbarisms**, etc.

A more systematic synopsis of the means of enriching the vocabulary in English would, perhaps, look as follows:

MEANS OF ENRICHING THE VOCABULARY

I. INTERNAL

A. PREDOMINANTLY MORPHOLOGICAL

- a. Major
 - 1. Affixation
 - 2. Composition
 - 3. Conversion
- b. Minor
 - 4. Abbreviation
 - 5. Contraction
 - 6. Change of morphological accent
 - 7. Deflection
 - 8. Back-Formation
 - 9. Folk Etymology
 - 10. Corruption
 - 11. Words Derived from Proper Names
 - 12. Portmanteaux
 - 13. Nonce-Words

B. PREDOMINANTLY SEMANTIC

- 1. Polysemy
- 2. Mutation of meaning

II. EXTERNAL

BORROWINGS

Traditionally, polysemy is considered to be a paradigmatic relation among lexical items, alongside with synonymy, hyponymy, antonymy, etc. It is my conviction that, at least in English, if not in all languages, polysemy is a means of enriching the vocabulary. Since English is analytical, this ought to have a productivity comparable to that of conversion; but if one admits that the general tendency of inflective languages is towards analytism, polysemy should be tending to become, if it has not become already, a means of coining new words in all of them.

Any analysis of a live language is confined to a temporal point of reference, that is, it should be taken into account that, whereas phenomena in the language are being analysed and (theoretically) subdivided into classes and categories, the situation may be changing or may have changed already, in the realm of real practise. This statement may seem contradictory to what has been pointed out before about the slow pace at which linguistic change takes place; still, there are phenomena, especially if the vocabulary is considered, which change in a matter of months (such as slang, or neological borrowings belonging to the sphere of internationalisms). On the other hand, the limits between classes and subclasses are fuzzy, in that very many times two or even more word-coining mechanisms act in the case of one and the same word.

In what follows, every means of enriching the vocabulary will be considered in detail, in an attempt at describing in as accurate a manner as possible the way in which word-formation acts in English.

CHAPTER IV

AFFIXATION

IV.1. GENERAL CHARACTERISATION

Affixation is the process of forming new words by adding affixes to stems. As pointed out before, stems are fragments of words characterised by a certain **combinatory valence**. This means that they can be added at least one more affix in order to form a new word, in the case of derivation, they can enter into combination with another stem to form a compound word, or they can undergo conversion. Stems can be homonymous to words already existing in the language; in this case they are called **free stems**. If they are not homonymous to any word, they are called **bound stems**. Stems may consist of a root only, or of a root and one or more affixes. In the first case, they are **simple stems**; in the second, they are **derived stems**.

An **affix** is a morpheme which is characterised by derivational, by functional meaning, or both, and which is added to a stem in order to form a new word. The addition of affixes can be done either before the stem (proclitical or pre-positive), the affix being called, in this case, a **prefix**, or after the stem (enclitical or post-positive); in this case, the affix is called a **suffix**. There are languages in which new words can also be formed by inserting an **infix** into the root of the word, but it is not the case of English.

Affixes are not autonomous; they only occur as constituent parts of words, although a word can consist of one single morpheme, its root. This is the reason why affixes are called **bound forms**. A **free form** is a form which can stand alone without changing its meaning. The fact that some morphemes are homonymous to free forms may prove misleading. As soon as the valence of a form becomes obvious (i.e., it can enter in combination with at least one other form), the form in question becomes a stem.

Even if that stem is identical to an independent word in the language, that is, it is a free stem, it is the word homonymous to it that can stand alone without changing its meaning, not the stem in question.

What remains of a word after all the affixes have been stripped away is called **root**. Roots are not further analysable into smaller meaningful units. The root of a word is also a morpheme, but, unlike affixes it has conceptual meaning. It is the carrier of a "nuclear" meaning, which is brought over to the new word and is subsequently completed by the derivational and/or functional meaning(s) of the affixes attached to it. Still, the root meaning is never modified in its essential features (or basic semantic markers), it is never brought beyond recognition because of the addition of affixes. If the meaning changes completely (for instance, in the case of figurative, stylistic or euphemistical usage), the process affects the entire word.

Roots are the common constituents of **word-families**. A word-family is the whole series of words and word-substitutes obtained from one root by all possible word-forming mechanisms. The word *head*, for instance, gives rise to the following word-family: *head* (n.), *to head*, *to behead*, *heading*, *to be heading for something or somebody*, *to head off* (to prevent something from happening), *headache*, *headband*, *headbanger* (inf. somebody who likes to listen to loud rock music), *headboard*, *to head-butt* (to hit somebody with your head), *headcase* (inf. an insulting word for someone you think is crazy), *head cold* (a cold affecting one's nose and sinuses), *headcount* (count of all the people in a place), *headdress*, *headed paper* (a paper with the name and address of a person or organisation printed at the top), *header* (1. in football, action of hitting the ball with one's head; 2. something printed at the top of a page or a computer document), *headfirst*, *headlong*, *headgear*, *headhunt*, *headhunter*, *headhunting*, *headlamp*, *headland* (promontory), *headless*, *headless chicken* (inf. to be running about like a headless chicken=to be trying to do a lot of things quickly without being sensible or calm about it), *headlight*, *headline* (n. and vb.), *headliner* (the main performer in a show or an event, whose name is used to attract people to come and listen or watch), *headlock* (position in which someone holds his or her arm around

another person's neck, so that he or she cannot move), *headman*, *headmaster*, *headmistress*, *head office* (main office of a company or organisation), *head of government*, *head of state*, *head-on* (adv. and adj. 1. head-to-head crash of two vehicles; 2. in a very direct way), *headphones*, *headquarters*, *headquartered* (said of a company's main offices), *headrest* (part of a chair or car seat that you lean your head on), *headroom* (amount of space between one's head and the ceiling, especially in a car), *headscarf*, *headset*, *headship* (position of being in charge of an organisation, especially of a school or college), *headsquare* (=headscarf), *headstand*, *headstone*, *headstrong*, *headteacher*, *head-to-head*, *head-waiter*, *headwaters* (=the place where a stream starts, before it flows into a river), *headway* (1. progress in something; 2. move forwards), *headwind* (wind that blows in the opposite direction to the one in which one is moving), *headword* (dictionary entry), *heady* (1. affecting one in a strong and pleasant way, e.g. the heady scent of jasmine; 2. very exciting and making one feel one can achieve anything one wants, e.g. the heady freedom of the late 1960's). (The examples were taken from the 2002 edition of the Macmillan English Dictionary).

The fact that such large word-families can arise from one single root is not accidental in English; apart from the fact that the word *head* is part of the basic word-stock, generally speaking words in English, and especially those of Anglo-Saxon origin, are likely to develop huge polysemies because of the analytism of the language; on the other hand, they are the most likely to undergo affixation, conversion, etc., because they are monosyllabic and in most cases do not have any formatives to signal morpho-syntactical class.¹⁰

¹⁰ There is, as always, a disadvantage as well, in this virtually infinite potentiality of English words for polysemy: the more meanings are attached to a word, either lexical or grammatical, the more ambiguous the language becomes. At times, not even co-text is discriminatory enough for one to make out what part of speech that word belongs to or what it means exactly. This is especially problematic for translators from English.

The meaning of the root is carried over to each member of the word-family, either properly or figuratively, either entirely or in only several of its components. This is what makes it possible to identify the members of the word-family, thus identifying the extension of the lexical field they cover as well.

Affixes, unlike roots, are always bound forms. The difference between prefixes and suffixes does not only lie in their position of insertion, but also in their function. Thus, generally speaking, **prefixes do not change the morpho-syntactical status of the word they are added to, whereas suffixes also operate a shift in morphological class.** There are very few exceptions to this rule: for instance, the prefix *a-*, when added to a noun, may generate adjectives: *blaze-ablaze*; *part-apart*; when it is added to an adjective, it may generate adverbs: *loud-aloud*. There also are three verb-forming prefixes; one is *be-*, as in *to bedim*, *to belittle*, *to benumb*, *to befriend*; another is *en-*, *em-*, as in: *to enter* (= *to put into earth*), *to embed*, *to enable*, *to enslave* etc. Finally, the prefix *un-* can also form verbs from nouns: *to unclasp*, *to uncage*, etc.

IV.2. COMBINING FORMS AND SEMI-AFFIXES

Combining forms have been previously defined as forms which present both radical and affixal features, in that they are borrowed from languages in which they used to be free forms, a characteristic which they do not preserve in English, since they are not homonymous to any word existing in the language. Their radical characteristic is manifest in that they can form new words by the simple addition of one more affix (*cyclic*, for instance, consists of a combining form, *cycl-*, to which the suffix *-ic* is appended). They can also play the part of an affix (*malnutrition* is formed of the combining form *mal-*, which comes from the corresponding French word, meaning *bad*, *badly* in English, which is prefixed to the stem *-nutrition*).

Semi-affixes, on the other hand, are words of English origin, which, because of their very high availability to enter compounds, are almost affixal in behaviour, although they are also independent words in the language. Such words as: *berry*, *man*, *woman*, *like*,

ware, *wise*, *proof* etc., can very often be taken for suffixes, so high is their capacity to enter combinations with other words. Should one only consider the words in which *berry* appears, *gooseberry*, *raspberry*, *blueberry*, *blackberry*, *strawberry*, *huckleberry*, etc., it is clear that the word acts rather as a nominal suffix than as a noun in its own right, to form a compound. Such examples prove again, if need be, the frailty of the borderline between one and another word-forming mechanism.

In support of our including these elements into the category of affixes, let us mention the fact that some of them tend to lose their independence as words, remaining only semi-affixes. Quite a few of them have already undergone this process: *-monger* and *-wright* are only used as suffixes (*scandal-monger*, *fishmonger*, *wheelwright*, *cartwright*). The Germanic word *wise=manner* has only survived with this meaning as an independent word in the archaic expression *in no wise=in no way*. *Ware* tends to be used only in its plural form, *wares*; still, it is a very productive suffix, since recent words such as *hardware* and *software* were coined by means of it.

Other free forms also tend to be included into the category of semi-affixes, being very productive, adaptable, brief and endowed with a high valence (combinatory capacity). Such are, for instance, *in-*, *off-*, *on-*, *out-*, *over-*, *under-*, *with-* and the like, as well as the more recent *rent-a-*, *-buster*, *-busting*, *-friendly*, *-gate*, *-impaired*, *-crazy*, *-hungry*, *-loving*, *-mad*, *-mania*, *-maniac*, *-seeking*.

Along with these, new combining forms have appeared in the language, reflecting newly-shaped realities: *-athon*, *-fest*, *-ista*, *-meister*, *-ville*, *audio-*, *bio-*, *cyber-*, *eco-*, *geo-*, *radio-*, *techno-*, *tele-*, *video-* etc.

IV.3. MORPHEMES AND ALLOMORPHS

Like the notion of phoneme, a morpheme is only the theoretical construct, which reflects a relatively motley reality. What one actually uses in practise in order to form a new word are more than often variants of a morpheme which are in complementary

distribution (i.e. in a relation of mutual exclusiveness) and whose choice is dictated by the environment. They do not differ in meaning; still their selection is positionally conditioned. For instance: *im-*, *in-*, *ir-*, *il-* are allomorphs of one and the same negative prefix; choosing one or another of them is the consequence of historical assimilation and has phonetical causes. Still, *non-* can be ranged into the same series, since its meaning is the same and it is in contrastive distribution with all the others. Here the choice must be historically dictated, in that, *non-* is preferred in neologisms of recent coinage and is, perhaps, the most productive in the series; it would be at least outlandish to create the negative counterpart of *violent* by means of *im-*, to apply regressive assimilation and obtain something like **ivviolent*, instead of *non-violent*.

Suffixes also have allomorphs; the series of abstract noun forming suffixes, for instance, *-ness*, *-hood*, *-dom* (=state of being) are used alongside with the more recent *-ity* of Latin origin which has come to English through French.

If two or more morphemes are in contrastive distribution, i.e. they can appear in the same linguistic environment, it means not only that they are not allomorphs of the same morpheme, but also that they have different meanings. For instance, both *-ic* and *-ical* can be added to the same stems; the latter means *referring to, having to do with*, whereas the former means *of a certain importance or character*. Thus, for instance, *historical* in: *a historical event* means *related to history, having to do with history*, while *historic* in: *a historic discovery* means *a discovery of historical importance*.

IV.4. SUFFIXATION

Suffixation is the type of affixation by which new words are formed by adding a **suffix** after a stem. Suffixes generally determine the morpho-syntactic class to which a word belongs, therefore the handiest classification of suffixes is according to the part of speech they form. Still, suffixes can also be classified (like

prefixes) according to their origin, frequency, productivity and meaning.

According to the part of speech they generate, suffixes fall into the following subclasses:

IV.4.1. Nominal suffixes

- suffixes denoting « doer of action »:

-er/-or/-ar (< Fr.<Lat.) is perhaps the most productive in the series; generally speaking, it forms names of occupation from the corresponding verb: *teacher*, *driver*, *singer*, *advisor*, *registrar*. It can be added to combining forms, as well: *doctor* (<Lat. *doceo*, *-ere*); *coroner* (<Lat. *corona*). Some of the nouns formed with *-er* and its allomorphs have counterparts formed with the suffix *-ee* (<Fr.), which denote **“sufferer of the action”**: *tutor* – *tutee*; *employer* – *employee*; *adopter* – *adoptee*; the suffix seems to have become productive even outside this semantic doublet, generating such words as: *absentee*, *refugee*, *escapee*;

-ent/-ant (<Lat.) is less productive: *student*, *attendant*; diachronically, it used to be an adjectival suffix, since its Latin prototypes, *-entus*, *-enta*, *-entum*, as well as *-ens*, *-entis* were adjectival suffixes; in time, the adjectives were nominalised by conversion (the adjective, initially used as noun-complement, became a noun in its own right); the same series has also yielded adjectives in English (see infra);

-eer/-ier (<Lat.) is even less productive than the first two: *musketeer*, *gondolier*, *collier*; it is added to parts of speech other than verbs, as well, and it seems that it was borrowed along with the words in which it appeared, from Romance languages at first, becoming a suffix in English only afterwards;

-ist can also denote “doer of action”: *typist*, *dramatist*, *artist*, but it is rather consecrated as denoting “adherent to a trend of thought, doctrine, literary trend, etc.”: *Impressionist*, *Realist*, *classicist*, *capitalist*. It seems that this suffix takes over to the detriment of the older *-ite* (*Luddite*, *Latinate*), of Greek origin, to express the latter meaning;

- feminine suffixes

Morphologically expressed gender is rather a rarity in English; the great majority of nouns have no formal markers as to

gender. Still, there are cases when the feminine is formed from the masculine of the noun; in these cases, the respective suffixes have a double derivational and functional meaning. Such suffixes are:

-ess (<Fr.), forming feminines such as: *lioness*, *duchess*, *marchioness*, *actress*, etc.

-ine (<Fr.), as in *heroine*,

-ette (<Fr.): *usherette*, this suffix is also used diminutively: *kitchenette*, *suffragette*,

-ix (<Lat.): *aviatrix*

-euse (<Fr.): *chauffeuse*

The great majority of feminine nouns expressing names of animals, fowls, etc. are formed from the generic noun, by imparting the value of semi-affix to the personal pronoun *she* (*she-wolf*, *she-sparrow*, etc.), to the word *cow* (*cow-elephant*, *cow-rhinoceros*), to *hen* (*pea-hen*, *pheasant-hen*) or simply by placing *female* in front of the name of the creature. In these cases, when the gender distinction is not as important to the speech community as to name the genders by means of suppletive forms, the male of the species is also denominated by corresponding masculine semi-affixes, respectively: *he*, *bull*, *cock*, *male*. In some rare cases, the gender distinction is expressed by semi-affixation with proper names: *billy-goat/nanny-goat*; *jackass/jennyass*, *tomcat/pussycat*. This manner of expressing gender distinctions is more typical to English than suffixation; at times it can extend to names of persons as well: *driver/woman-driver*, *doctor/woman-doctor*; or, vice-versa: *nurse/male-nurse*, *servant/male-servant* or *manservant*; the names of in-laws are obtained in the same manner.

-suffixes denoting nationality:

The most frequent among them are:

-an/-ian: *Korean*, *Hungarian*, *Estonian*;

-ese: *Chinese*, *Japanese*, *Portuguese*; the suffix has extended its applicability also to other nouns than those denoting nationality; nowadays such derivations as *journalesque* or *legalesque* have been coined by means of it;

-ard: *Spaniard* (initially this suffix was derogatory);

-derogatory and diminutive suffixes:

Strangely enough, these nuances of meaning are expressed by the same suffixes in most cases; the explanation lies in the fact

that some of the respective suffixes have had a rather tormented history of successive degradations/elevations of meaning.

-ster/-aster was taken over from Latin as a derogatory suffix and it remained so: *gamester*, *poetaster*, *gangster*;

-ling was initially a diminutive suffix of Germanic origin; it kept this shade of meaning in words like: *darling*, *gosling*, *duckling*; still, it underwent a degradation of meaning in the next centuries: *underling*, *weakling*; this value did not eliminate the former one though, as it usually happens in cases of elevation/degradation of meaning;

-ton (<Fr.) was initially taken over as a diminutive suffix; it underwent degradation of meaning, becoming derogatory: *simpleton*, *glutton*;

-ard/-art (<Fr.) was taken over and remained derogatory: *braggart*, *laggard*, *sluggard*;

Still, there are in the language **suffixes which are exclusively diminutive:**

-y/-ey/-ie (<Gmc.), as in: *daddy*, *hanky*, *Charley*, *auntie*, *nightie*;

-et/-ette (Fr.), as in: *coronet*, *leaflet*, *kitchenette*;

--kin/-kins (<Gmc.), as in: *manikin*, *Munchkins*, *catkin*;

-ock (<Gmc.), as in: *hillock*, *bullock*.

-abstract noun-forming suffixes

Except for -ing, which is in free variation with all the other suffixes of this category, all the members of this subclass could be said to be allomorphs, since there is not much difference between their respective meanings, and, on the other hand, they are in complementary distribution.

-ing (<Gmc.) forms abstract nouns from, theoretically, any verb, since the Gerund, whose particle it is, has a nominal value.¹¹ Still, whenever an abstract noun can be formed by means of another suffix from the same stem, it is preferred in literary, careful style. Thus, *breaking*, *assisting*, *employing*, etc. are perfectly correct coinages in English, but their counterparts formed by other suffixes are preferred: *breakage*, *assistance*, *employment*. There

¹¹ The same particle can form the Participle and is a means of adjectivisation, by the same principle.

are, nevertheless, cases, when there is no other noun formed from the stem except for the one in *-ing*: *monitoring, meaning, building, etc.*

-age (<Fr.), has a connotation of entirety, in some cases: *tonnage, mileage*, but is also used to designate institutions: *vicarage*, or result of action: *coverage*;

-ance/-ence (<Fr.), denotes result of action or process: *appearance, assistance, experience*;

-ancy/-ency (<Fr.), denotes state of being: *vacancy, tendency, pregnancy*;

-ism/-icism (<Gk.), denotes doctrine, trend of thought, literary trend: *criticism, Christianity, Catholicism, deconstructivism, post-modernism*; the names of the adepts of certain ideatic trends or doctrines are obtained by means of the suffix *-ist* (<Gk.), as in: *capitalist, classicist, existentialist, etc.*

-hood (<Gmc.), denotes state of being: *boyhood, neighbourhood, widowhood*;

-ion/-sion/-tion/-ation/-ition (<Fr.), denotes process and result of process: *rebellion, creation, extension, ignition, alienation, mutation, etc.* This is, perhaps, the most productive suffix of the series, since it generates internationalisms of the terminological type;

-dom (<Gmc.), has the same meaning, but is much less productive nowadays: *freedom, kingdom, officialdom*;

-ment (<Fr.), when it is not borrowed along with entire words formed in French, like *environment*, denotes process: *movement, government, nourishment*;

-ness/-ess (<Fr.), denotes state of being: *tenderness, prowess, happiness*;

-ship (<Gmc.), denotes state or quality: *kinship, lordship, friendship*;

-ty (<Fr.), denotes also state or quality: *certainty, necessity, honesty*;

-th (<Gmc.), forms de-adjectival nouns like: *breadth, width, length, height*.

It is to be noted that the predominance of French nominal suffixes, especially in the realm of abstract nouns, is a reminiscence of the Norman French administrative terms, which

were taken over by the substratum-language in its epoch of formation. Some of these were detached from the nouns carrying them and started functioning as suffixes; a few remained stuck to the words which brought them over into English and never became word-forming particles in the receiving language. Alongside with these, Anglo-Saxon suffixes also survived, in a smaller number, decreasingly productive, as time went, perhaps also because of the terminological pressure of Latinate particles.

The tendency nowadays seems to be the transformation of some words into semi-affixes, and/or the borrowing of combining forms revived from Greek and Latin and creating new words and terms which are somewhere on the borderline between affixation and composition. Words tending to become affixes are: *-crazy, -hungry, -loving, -mad, -friendly, -mania, -seeking, -fashion, -shaped, -style*. Along with them, new combining forms like *-aholic* or *-phile* have entered the language recently.

IV.4.2. Adjectival suffixes

Adjectives can either be formed from other parts of speech or from other adjectives. In this latter case a suffix of "approximation of quality" is used, the suffix *-ish* (<Gmc.), as in: *greenish, yellowish*, which seems to have become productive recently by generating such expressions as: *five o'clockish, noonish etc.* The suffix also applies to nouns: *boyish, stylish*.

When adjectives are formed from other parts of speech, the most frequent suffixes are:

-ed (<Gmc.), denotes "possession of quality" when added to other parts of speech than verbs: *wicked* (<O.E. *vicca*=wizard), *dogged, wooded, horned*; the suffix is especially productive in forming adjectives by a double mechanism of composition and affixation: *blue-eyed, fork-tongued, addle-pated, hunch-backed*; the participle in *-ed* of a verb can also be used adjectivally: *possessed, drawn, brainstormed, rolled, cleft*.

-ing (<Gmc.), denotes "quality bound to course of action", when the participle in *-ing* is used adjectivally: *speaking, rolling, running, fretting etc.* The same double mechanism of composition and affixation generates adjectives like: *loud-speaking, hair-*

splitting, back-breaking and the like, in a virtually endless series, denoting the high productivity of the mechanism.

-able/-ible/-uble (<Fr.) form adjectives originally meaning "likely to, easy to": *adaptable, accessible, soluble, gullible* etc. Some of these adjectives appear in semantic doublets with adjectives in *-ed*, denoting "potential sufferer – sufferer of action": *submissible-submitted; mistakable-mistaken; dupable-duped*, etc.

-al/-ial (<Fr.), form adjectives meaning "related to, possessing quality of": *cordial, glacial, radial, martial*, etc. These are allomorphs of *-ic*, which has the same meaning: *plastic, historic, lexicologic*, etc.

-ary/-ery (<Fr.), are also allomorphs pertaining to the same semantic series: *statutory, accessory, revolutionary*;

-ant/-ent (<Fr.), generates adjectives meaning « in the state of »: *rampant, dormant*, or "doing the action of": *repellent, deodorant, hesitant*;

-ate/-ete (<Lat.), have been borrowed along with words containing them and are not productive affixes in English: *accurate* (<Lat. *accuratus*); *complete* (<Lat. *completus*);

-ic/-ical (<Fr.), has been previously explained;

-ive (<Fr.), means "possessing quality of", as in: *progressive, possessive, aggressive*; it is an extremely productive suffix nowadays;

-ous/-ious (<Lat.<Fr.), a less productive suffix in contemporary English, still, with a high frequency, which denotes it was productive in the previous centuries: *gorgeous, tremendous, surreptitious, rampageous*;

-some (<Gmc.), again very little productive; it appears in adjectives like: *tiresome, cumbersome, handsome, buxom*;

-y/-ly (<Gmc. *-ic/-lic*), a suffix extremely productive in Old English, which was borne into the following historical stages of the language by the words carrying it: *friendly, cloudy, womanly*; the proof that it was productive in Middle English and Early Modern English as well, lies in the fact that it was added to words of Norman French origin as well: *cowardly, dressy*. The same suffix has an iterative value, when it is appended to nouns denoting divisions of time: *yearly, monthly, daily*, etc.

Some semi-affixes can also form adjectives:

-ful/-less (<Gmc.) were extremely productive in the past centuries; *harmful/harmless; useful/useless*; they also generated adjectives outside these antonymical doublets: *eventful, sorrowful, delightful*, respectively *listless, ruthless, limitless*;

-like (<Gmc.), generated adjectives such as: *life-like, bear-like, etc.* This semi-suffix still seems to enjoy a certain productivity, since it can still generate adjectives in Modern English, which have the meaning: "resembling, identical to": *Bush-like, Putin-like*.

Last but not least, the suffixes forming the comparative and superlative of mono- and some disyllabic adjectives should be mentioned here, *-er* for the comparative of superiority and *-est* for the relative superlative. In disyllabic adjectives there is oscillation between this suffixal way of forming the comparative – superlative and the analytical variant with *more* and *the most*. It seems that the latter takes over the former, that is, the tendency is to regularise this compartment of the language as well.

IV.4.3. Verbal suffixes

There are comparatively few verb-forming suffixes in Modern English, since conversion plays the most important part in obtaining verbs from other parts of speech. The suffixes which exist, nevertheless, have enjoyed a high productivity, therefore they are extremely frequent. These are:

-ate/-itate (<Fr.<Lat), has an iterative overtone and means "bring in the condition to": *facilitate, litigate, intoxicate, etc.*

-ise/-ize (<Fr), is an allomorph of the previous; both predominate in recent terminological verbs: *fertilise, Latinise, utilise* etc.

-fy/-ify (<Fr.) is part of the same series: *magnify, intensify, modify, etc.*

Less productive suffixes of Germanic origin are:

-er, with the iterative meaning: "to do something intermittently": *glimmer, twitter, shimmer, flicker* etc.

-en meaning "bring something in the state of": *brighten, enlighten, deepen, whiten* etc.

-ish, is an allomorph of the previous, semantically: *establish, brandish, cherish*; apparently it is Germanic, since it is

homonymous to a Germanic adjectival suffix; still, it is of French origin, coming from the ending of the III-rd group of verbs, *-ir*. It came into English alongside with the respective verbs and is not productive in forming new items.

IV.4.4. Adverbial suffixes

The commonest adverbial suffix in English is *-ly* (<Gmc.), which is added in most cases to adjectives in order to form the corresponding adverbs: *gloriously, scientifically, beautifully, sadly, wisely* etc. The basic meaning of an adverb can be either **generic**: "in a _____ way", or **specific** for various other adverbial meanings: temporal, spatial, etc. This option has been dictated by the fact that, semantically, all adverbials of manner can be seen as vehicles of modality (i.e. the attitude of the speaker towards his own utterance) and the adverbial suffix *-ly* expresses precisely this shade of meaning. Its function is, in some cases, taken over by the older and less frequent suffix *-wise* (<Gmc.), which is an allomorph of *-ly* in such words as: *likewise, otherwise*.

A variant of *-wise* is *-way(s)* appearing in such words as: *sideways*, with spatial meaning, and in *always* with temporal meaning.

Other adverbial suffixes are specialised to express specific meaning, more precisely, directional meaning. Such are:

-wise in its etymological acceptance, the directional one, generating adverbs like: *clockwise*, ; the suffix is, even with this meaning, less productive and it has a more frequent allomorph:

-ward/-wards (<Gmc.); the suffix was originally a verb in Old English, meaning "to become"; in German it gave rise to the particle with which the Future Tense is formed, *werden*; it underwent a stage of semi-affix, after which it became a suffix proper, with a high productivity which explains its frequency in Modern English. Such adverbs as: *northward(s), westward(s), onward(s), inward(s)*, in which the variant with final *-s* expresses an even more marked directional meaning¹², were coined according to this model. The

¹² For instance, the adverb *northward* could be translated in Romanian by *dinspre/din nord*, whereas *northwards* could be equated with *inspre nord*; the same holds good for all the members of the pairs.

proof of its high productivity lies in the fact that the semi-affix *-ward/-wards* could also generate in Early Modern English adjectives like *untoward, wayward* or *nayward* (which is presumed to have been coined by Shakespeare on the model), or prepositions like *towards*.

IV.4.5. Numeral suffixes

Cardinal numbers are formed in English basically by composition. Still, numerals can be formed by affixation in some cases:

-teen (<Gmc.) generates the cardinals between 12 and 19: *fifteen, nineteen*;

-ty (<Gmc.) is used to coin the cardinals designating multiples of 10: *ninety, twenty*;

-th (<Gmc.) is the suffix of ordinal numbers and it can be appended either to already affixed cardinals (*the twentieth, the ninetieth, the thirteenth*), or to compound ones (*the twenty-fourth, the fifty-ninth, the one hundred and twenty-seventh*).

-fold (<Gmc.) was also originally an independent word, which then became a semi-affix and is only a suffix nowadays. It generates multiplicative meaning in both adjectival and numeral distribution: *manifold, twofold, tenfold*.

IV.5. PREFIXATION

By **prefixation** an affix called **prefix** is inserted before the stem of the word. Prefixes are more independent semantically than suffixes, since in most cases they do not carry functional meaning, i.e., they do not change the morpho-syntactical status of the word they precede. The few exceptions have been dealt with in IV. 1. Moreover, the same prefix can appear with different parts of speech, which means that, unlike suffixes, they are not specialised to a certain morpho-syntactic category. Consequently, a prefix is a lexical formative rather than a grammatical one. A classification of prefixes should, therefore, have in view predominantly semantic criteria and not predominantly morphological ones, as it was the case with suffixes. Moreover, prefixes are polysemantic, that is they

can have several types of lexical meaning.¹³ For instance, the prefix *in-* and its positional variants can have, at the same time, negative, inchoative and locative meaning. Such prefixes will, therefore, appear in several meaning-classes, below.

Two or more prefixes can appear in a word (e.g. *to disentangle*); even in such cases, their respective meanings stay fairly independent from one another.

Prefixes are less fused with their stems than suffixes, therefore the words containing them can be spelled either solid or hyphenated.

The lexical meaning of the stem is modified by the addition of prefixes in an adverbial manner. Thus, according to the type of adverbial meaning they convey, prefixes fall into several meaning subclasses:

IV.5.1. Negative prefixes

This is by far the widest class of prefixes in English. The prefixes belonging to it express various shades of negative meaning:

de-/dis- (<Lat.) express the most general and "radical" negative meaning, that of annihilation of the object or action expressed by the stem. The prefix may mean "not", as in *disuse*, *discharge*, *disapprove*, *disavow*, *disallow*; it may mean "the contrary of", as in: *disease*, *disenchanted*, *delusion*, *deter*; another meaning of the prefix is "asunder, away, apart", as in: *dismantle*, *delete*, *disembowel*, *depress*, *dishonour*;

in-/im-/ir-/il- (<Lat.), are topical variants of one and the same morpheme, their final consonant being dictated by phonological context. Their negative meaning could be paraphrased as "contrary of" or "not": *insane*, *impiety*, *irrelevant*, *illiterate* etc;

non- (<Lat.) is a borderline case between a prefix and a combining form; it is felt as neological, still, perhaps more

integrated and accepted into English than, for instance, *supra-*. Semantically, it is perfectly synonymous to *in-*, being one of its allomorphs from the distributional point of view. Since it is not as fused with its stem as the previous, its spelling can also be hyphenated: *non-violence*, *non-resident*, *non-stop*, when it appears in neological coinages. When the word is borrowed entirely, it is spelled solid: *nonsense*, *nonconformist*, *nonchalant*. As one goes back into the history of the language, the same prefix seems to have had an earlier epoch of productivity, proved by the tighter fusion with the stems it was added to. The words generated by means of it, *nobody*, *nothing*, *nowhere*, *never*, *neither*, *nor*, etc., are members of the basic word-stock, which might mean, at first sight, that the prefix was taken over alongside with the first wave of borrowings from Latin; still, it seems that this was the basic negation in Indo-European, since all cognate¹⁴ languages have variants of it;

mis- (<Gmc. and <Fr.), is semantically equivalent to "badly, wrongly"; there are actually two prefixes, one of native origin, coming from the Germanic **missa*¹⁵, which is appended to verbs and verbal derivatives (*mislead*, *misshapen*, *mistrust*) and another, of French origin, which can be appended to verbs, adjectives and nouns. The latter originates in the Latin *minus* and appears in words like: *misadventure*, *mischievous*, *misinterpretation*, *misplaced* etc. It is likely that the two also have a common ancestor in Indo-European (probing into other neo-Indo-European languages might be relevant; the same etymon, *mis-*, in *misogynist*, a word coming from Greek, is a combining form; in Greek *misos* means *hatred*).

un- (<Gmc.) is a polysemantic prefix; its usual meaning is "contrary to, annulling, depriving or removing action". It can be added to verbs, to form other verbs (*to unlock*, *to unbalance*, *to unclasp*), occasionally with an intensified sense (*to unloose*, *to unrip*=*to open by ripping*). When added to some nouns, it can form verbs: *frock*>*to unfrock*; *arm*>*to unarm*; *bolt*>*to unbolt*. As it has

¹³ Suffixes are also polysemantic; this is one of the basic features of Indo-European, still, they are not only lexically polysemantic, but also functionally. Thus a suffix like *-ette*, apart from signalling diminutive meaning (which is lexical), also signals feminine singular (which is functional). A prefix only rarely signals meaning other than lexical.

¹⁴ Cognate languages are languages genealogically related, that is, which come all from the same mother-language.

¹⁵ An asterisk marks the words which have been reconstructed in a proto-language, by means of the historical-comparative method.

been mentioned before, this is one of the exceptional cases when a prefix can change the morpho-syntactic class of the stem it is added to. The same prefix can denote "absence of quality", when it is added to adjectives or adverbs: *unconscious, undoubted, unofficial, uncanny, untimely, untrue*. In the same distribution, it can also have the meaning "reverse of", implying a connotation of praise (*unselfish, unassailable*) or of blame (*ungracious, uncalled-for, uncharitable*). Finally, it can be added to nouns, forming other nouns with senses similar to those given above (*unrest, untruth*).

To these prefixes proper, a series of semi-affixes could be added, of either Latin, Greek or French origin, which also express various nuances of negative meaning. Such are: *counter-/contra-, anti-, ex-, a-/an-*, etc.

IV.5.2. Inchoative prefixes

These prefixes show the beginning, origin, source of action, therefore they are typical to verbs and verbal derivatives. Some negative prefixes also have an inchoative meaning; such are:

de-, especially when it was borrowed along with an entire word; in this case the root of the word is a combining form: *to deploy, to depict, to denote, to derive*; in the corresponding nouns, the meaning of the prefix is preserved;

be- (<Gmc.), can be appended to transitive verbs, giving an overtone of "all over, all round", as in *to besmear, to beset*; it can also have a connotation of "thoroughly, excessively" in such verbs as: *to begrudge, to belabour*. It can be applied to intransitive verbs, making them transitive: *to bemoan, to bestride*; if applied to nouns or adjectives, it expresses transitive action; *to befool, to befoul*; it can be attached to nouns, with the meaning "to surround with, to affect with, to treat in the manner of": *to becloud, to befriend*; it can form inchoative-shaded participles with adjectival value, as in: *bejewelled, beribboned, bespectacled, bewigged*;

en-/em- (<Gmc.), apart from their directional meaning (which is the most widespread), can also have an inchoative overtone, as in: *to ensure, to endow, enamoured, to embrown, to embalm*. In this case they may be in free variation with *in-/im-*: *endue* or *indue*; *enthronisation* or *intronisation* etc. At other times, the variants in *en-* and *in-* have different meanings: *to ensure=make person or*

thing safe against risks; to insure=secure payment of sum of money in the event of, or against loss or damage of, or injury to property, life, person, etc;

pro- (<Lat.), is a prefix whose primary meaning is directional, but it also has an inchoative connotation, as in: *to proceed, to progress, to prohibit, to protect*.

IV.5.3. The iterative prefix re-

Iterative means that the meaning has a repetitive overtone.

The reason why there is only one such prefix in English might be that there are so many other lexical, grammatical or both lexical and grammatical manners of expressing the idea of repeated action. *Re-* is of Latin origin and seems to have entered the language alongside with the first wave of borrowings from Latin; it is appended both to Latinate and to native words: *to retrieve, to reenter, to re-read, to reconcile, to repot, to reseat, to retake* etc.

IV.5.4. Spatial and directional prefixes

There are very many such prefixes in English, most of them being of Germanic origin; this is, to some extent, normal, since space orientation is capital to a human being and, therefore, the words designating it are among the oldest in the language and part of the native basic word-stock.

Almost all of these prefixes are borderline cases between semi-affixes and prefixes proper, because their great majority originate in prepositions and adverbs of place; their homonymous words still function as such in the language.

Semantically, these prefixes go in antonymical pairs and their great majority can create antonyms by being attached to one and the same stem:

in- and *out-* (<Gmc.), induce, in this context, the meaning of the respective adverbs to the stems carrying them: *inmate, to inspire, to induce, income, influx, to inlay*, respectively *to outgo, outgrowth, outhouse, outlet, to outline* etc. Antonymical pairs with these prefixes are: *input – output, indoors – outdoors, inflow – outflow, etc*. Generally speaking, antonymical pairs with *in-* and *out-* can be generated when the stem is Germanic; with Latinate stems, for instance, the negative counterpart of *in-* is *ex-* or *de-*: *to inspire*

– to *expire*, *incision* – *excision*, *inclusive* – *exclusive*, *inflation* – *deflation*; the explanation lies in the fact that actually the two *in*-prefixes are different: one coming from the Germanic preposition, the other one from the Latin one. It is the Latin preposition which also has the negative meaning previously dwelt upon. The Germanic preposition, on the other hand, has the iterative meaning mentioned above. They both are polysemantic, but the interlinguistic polysemy does not overlap. The reason why they are homonymous lies, perhaps, in the common origin of the two languages.

On the other hand, the prefix *out*-, also has a meaning overtone which does not appear in its Latin counterpart, *ut*: that of *over*-, present in such words as: *to outwit*, *to outnumber*, *to outblaze*, etc.;

over- and *under*- (<Gmc.) also impart the basic meanings of the homonymous prepositions to the stems to which they are appended. Antonymical doublets such as: *to overpay* – *to underpay*, *overdone* – *underdone*, *to overfeed* – *to underfeed*, *overskirt* – *underskirt*, etc. coexist with independent usages of the two prefixes: *overjoyed*, *to overlap*, *overclouded*, *overlord*, respectively: *underdog*, *underling*, *undergraduate*, *to undermine* etc.;

up- and *down*- (<Gmc.) can generate, in the same way as above, both antonymical pairs: *uphill* – *downhill*, *uptown* – *downtown*, *upstairs* – *downstairs*, *to upturn* – *to downturn* and the like, and can give rise to words which have no antonym coming from the same stem: *upheaval*, *uprising*, *to upholster*, *upstanding* etc., respectively: *downtrodden*, *downcast*, *downpour*, *downfall* etc. At times the antonym in such a pair is obtained not from the same stem, but from the antonymous stem: *upbeat* – *downcast*, *uplifted* – *downtrodden*, *upsurge* – *downfall* etc.;

a- (<Gmc.) means "away, on, up, out" as in *arise*, *afire*, *aback*, *ablaze*, when it comes from the Old English meaning "on", or it can mean "of" as in *akin*, *alike*. Another *a*-, which is a semi-affix, not a prefix proper, comes from the Latin *ad*, meaning "to, at" as in *to ascend* or from the Latin *ab*, meaning "from, away", as in *to abduct*, *to abuse*, *abnormal*. These should not be confused with the Greek *a*-, which means "without, devoid of, deprived of", and only appears

in such neologisms as: *agnostic*, *amoral*, *apetalous* etc. The latter is a negative semi-affix, not a spatial one or a directional one;

fore- (<Gmc.), in its spatial acceptation means "front, in front" (*forearm*, *forehead*); it also has a temporal meaning, which will be discussed later. This prefix comes from a Germanic preposition, **for*-, probably standing for *before* or *afore*;

for- (<Gmc.), is a prefix with an etymology different from the previous (it originates in an Indo-European polysemantic prefix which has left forms in Old English, Old Saxon, Old High German and Gothic). Among its meanings there exists a spatial one, "away, off, apart", as in: *forbye* (=besides, in addition to), *to forget*, *to forgive*; a prohibitive one (*to forbid*, *to forfend*=to avert, to keep off), one of abstention and neglect (*forbear*, *forgo*, *forsake*, *forswear*), one of excess or intensity (*forlorn*).

The Latin prepositions *pre*- and *post*-, *supra*- and *infra*-, *extra*- and *intra*-, *inter*- and *exter*-, *circum*-, *circa*- and *trans*-, the Greek *meta*- ("beyond"), *endo*- ("inner"), *exo*-/ecto- ("outer") and *cyclo*- ("round"), as well as other forms, which will be treated in the chapter devoted to internationalisms, function as semi-affixes when they appear attached to a stem, but some of them can also be functional as combining forms, receiving affixes in their turn and becoming the semantic core of a word. The first two can also have temporal meaning and will be mentioned in what follows.

IV.5.5. Temporal prefixes

Most of these prefixes are of Latin origin, coming from the corresponding prepositions denoting time:

ante- means "prior to" and is generally appended to nouns (*antemeridian*) or to adjectives (*antenatal*, *antediluvian*, *antecedent*); its allomorph, *pre*-, of the same origin, has the same meaning, but is more frequent, appearing in verbs as well: *to presume*, *to prefer*, *to predestinate*, and also in nouns and adjectives: *pre-emption*, *pre-eminent*, *predilection*; *prediction*, *precocious*. Its native allomorphs are:

fore-/afore-, which, when used temporally, mean "prior to, beforehand, in advance". It can appear either with nouns (*forefather*, *forenoon*), or preceding verbs: *to foresee*, *to*

foreshadow, to forecast, to forerun. In psychoanalysis, *foreconscious* was created on the same pattern, from an adjective. *Afore-* is rather a semi-affix (some dictionaries include it in the category of combining forms, because it is obsolete); it is used especially in legal English, with the meaning "previously, before", in such words as: *aforementioned, aforesaid, afore-thought* etc.;

post- (<Lat.) is midway between a semi-affix and a prefix; its degree of independence from the stems it can be combined with results from the spelling, which can be either solid or hyphenated. Semantically it has preserved its meaning from Latin: "after". It appears in internationalisms, such as: *post-war, to postpone, post-graduate, Post-Impressionism, etc.*;

up- and *out-* (<Gmc.) also have a temporal meaning besides their spatial-directional one: *updated* — *outdated(dated)*; here it seems that the temporal meaning was coined by back-formation from the idiomatic expression *to be up-to-date*. This might be the reason why no other temporal usage of these prefixes has been found.

IV.5.6. Numeral prefixes

Whenever a numeral is built up by means of a prefix, it is of foreign origin, since English numerals are built by composition or suffixation.

Still, for terminological purposes, the Latin and Greek multiplicative prefixes are used in very many neologisms, and, lately, they started being appended to native words, as well. These prefixes are: *bi-, tri-, quadri-, multi-, centi-, milli-, billi-* and the like, from Latin, and their Greek counterparts: *mono-, di-, tetra-, penta-, hexa-, deca-*, etc.

* * *

Should one look at affixes from the etymological point of view, the shocking majority proves to be of foreign origin, mainly of French origin. Having in view the assumption that the fund of affixes is the most conservative compartment of a language, together with its basic word-stock, the question arises whether English can still be considered a Germanic language.

There are several arguments to discard such questioning. The major one lies in the difference between productivity and frequency, which has been dealt with earlier in this book. Whereas in a dictionary every entry has an equal weight, in fact some entries are radically more widely used in concrete, basic communication than others. What is valid for words is certainly valid for affixes as well, in that Anglo-Saxon affixes ought to have the same high frequency as the words which carry them, or, at least statistically, an even higher one, since affixes also possess a combinatory valence allowing them to appear in a great number of words.

The problem is that, since English is so highly analytical, the words in the basic word-stock do not have, in their great majority, any endings. This means that Anglo-Saxon affixes, which ought to appear appended to words in the basic word-stock, have disappeared. This can be explained by the process of levelling of endings, which took place in the Middle English period, and which ultimately led to a quasi-complete loss of endings in Early Modern English.

Here a distinction should be made: lexicologically speaking, our main concern should be lexical affixes, not grammatical ones. The latter, although subject to massive loss of endings, have remained Anglo-Saxon, few as they are. Since grammatical formatives are not borrowed among languages, their only source can be heritage from the mother-language, which, in our case, is Proto-Germanic. All grammatical affixes in English are of Germanic origin, although they are very few (*-s, -ed, -ing, -er, -est, -teen, -th* etc.). This is proof enough that English is Germanic.

In the field of lexical affixes, the situation asks for a differentiation. Norman French is not a language from which English should have borrowed words, but one of its constitutive elements, along with Old English, Celtic, Latin, Old Norse. This makes it questionable whether elements taken over from Norman French in the Middle English period should be considered borrowings proper, and ranked among borrowings from Chinese or Russian, for instance.

On the other hand, lexical affixes have periods of productivity and non-productivity in the history of a language. Some affixes, which were non-productive in the last century, have been revived

for technical terms in our day (such is the case of *-ance*). A non-productive affix may, on the other hand, fuse to such an extent with its carrier-stems, that only etymological analysis can reveal it as such. Such are *-d* in *seed*, *deed*; or *-le/-l/-el* in *bridle*, *sail*, *hovel*, *-lock* in *wedlock*, as well as *-red* in *hatred*. At times such dead affixes disappear from the language altogether, without having been subject to loss of endings (which affected grammatical endings, basically); such is the verbal iterative suffix *-ettan* in *dropettan*; in other cases, they are replaced by a more productive suffix, as is the case of *-ih* in *stanih* which was replaced by the more productive adjectival suffix *-y*.

The tendency towards analytism which is present in all inflective languages and which seems to be turning present-day English into an isolating language, prevents affixation from becoming the most productive means of enriching the vocabulary in English. At present, conversion is preferred for coining new words, alongside with the polysemy and ambiguation of the language it involves. Still, the pressure of internationalisms affects English as well, although what we have under our lens is the contemporary *lingua franca* of the world. Still, no language can play exclusively the part of superstratum, when two languages are in contact. English ought to be, to some extent at least, the receptacle of outer influences, as well. Both the regional variants of English (American, Australian, Canadian etc.) and the other languages surrounding it and coming into contact with it (Latin and Greek included), exert a slow but constant pressure upon English.

This pressure is manifest in the fact that English is slowly turning its words into semi-affixes which might become affixes proper in time, in order to create new words. Since English words in the basic word-stock are monosyllabic in their great majority, this might be a formal factor favouring the tendency. On the other hand, the plethora of polysemantic and multifunctional prepositions might also turn some day into prefixes, as it happened to Latin prepositions. This generates a continuous reciprocal conditioning between affixation and composition, on the one hand, and between conversion and polysemy, on the other hand. It is not unlikely that the differences between them should disappear, in time, and that

affixation should merge with composition into one mechanism, as conversion might merge with polysemy on the other hand.

The fact that a language presents tendencies is, nevertheless, a sign that it is a live language; it will probably take an immeasurable amount of time until the variants of English become independent languages and English becomes extinct.

CHAPTER V

COMPOSITION

Composition is the major internal means of enriching the vocabulary by means of which new words are formed by putting together at least two stems which are homonymous to free forms existing in the language.

The major characteristic of compounds is, then, the lexical and semantic fusion between their component parts, which should be as tight as to allow them to function as one single word in the language. This fusion is characterised by the following conditions:

- a. **Integrity of the compound**
- b. **Its structural cohesion**

The **integrity of the compound** is a function of its form and is manifest in the fact that compounds are indivisible. No other element can be inserted among their components, be that element a word, a word-group or a word-substitute, with the preservation of their status as compounds. In other words, **compounds are different from free combinations**. Should we take, for instance, the compound *pencil-box*, it stands as such not only because it denominates one single object and evokes one notion, but also because, if we insert something between its components, like *pencil and pen box*, what we obtain is a free combination, which does not stand, in our case, any chance of being logically acceptable, since the notion of *pencil-box* already contains the idea that anything one uses for writing is normally held in it, not only pencils.

If *pencil-box* were a free combination, according to the rules of syntagmatic arrangement in English (i.e., adjectives come prior to nouns), it might be understood as: *a box made of pencils*, as in, say, *plastic box, tin box, wooden box* and the like. One could insert anything else into any of the above free combinations, according to the normal rules of word order in English: *a plastic and glass box, a*

tin and copper box, etc. With a compound, this is impossible. If, nevertheless, more information is needed and the compound should extend, it will become a normal utterance, as in, say, *a box (meant) for pencils, rubbers, pens etc.* Neither free combinations, nor syntagms are compounds.

On the other hand, if one of the morphemes entering a compound is of adjectival origin, it cannot undergo intensification of any kind, nor can it receive degrees of comparison. *Blue* in *bluestocking* cannot become *bluish, dark blue, more blue* or *the bluest*.

This impossibility of inserting something into, or modifying in any other way a compound comes from the fact that its components are not words, but morphemes.

The **structural cohesion** of a compound, on the other hand, depends on its function, which is to denote one single notion. Semantically speaking, a compound always has only one notional counterpart, however transparent the relationship between its components might be. Most compounds have one-word synonyms in the language and send to the mental image of one object. On the other hand, this unity of meaning imposes, at times, solid or hyphenated spelling, unity of stress and, which is most important, the fact that they function morpho-syntactically as one single word. In other words, compounds are set as such, by the common communicative experience of the group that has created them; moreover, they reflect the mentality and vision of the world of the respective group. The latter two factors condition the nature of components, the way in which they enter into the compound and the final, overall meaning.

It results from here that compounds are different from the sum of their components. Still, structurally, they present various degrees of fusion, both formally and semantically, which makes a classification of compounds possible. Another criterion could be the morphological one, in that compound nouns, adjectives, verbs and so on can be distinguished. Compounds could also be classified according to their component parts, the type of composition and the relations established among the components. In what follows, the various classes and subclasses of compounds resulting from the application of these criteria will be analysed.

V.1. THE CRITERION OF DEGREE OF FUSION

The classification according to degree of fusion should take into account the factor of idiomatic/non-idiomatic character. Most compounds have come into being idiomatically, which accounts for a high degree of fusion between their elements. The degree of fusion is, therefore, the extent to which the individual components contribute to the global meaning of the compound, or, otherwise, their degree of recognisability. In *blackbird* (=mierlă), for instance, the degree of fusion of the components is as high as to allow solid spelling, but not only this formal factor is to be taken into account. The compound also denotes a particular species of European songbird of the thrush family. A crow is a black bird, too, but it is a member of another species. Another highly fused compound, *blackberry*, denotes a berry which is actually dark blue, so that the component *black-* is devoid of meaning; should we consider to *blackmail*, on the other hand, here the meanings of the components have absolutely nothing to do with the overall meaning of the compound. This means that the morphemes entering a compound are nothing but formal signals of the global meaning and that, synchronically at least, the semiotics of composition cannot be probed into.

Should things be considered diachronically, nevertheless, the more fused the components are, the older the compound. Some compounds are so old that they cannot even be recognised as such by native speakers. The words *window* and *daisy*, for instance, were Old English kennings (a rather complicated kind of metaphor used in poetry, mostly). They were accepted by the speech community and turned first into linguistic clichés, after which these clichés grew trite by overuse and became idiomatic phrases, and then the phrases fused and became single words. Originally, *window* comes from the Anglo-Saxon *windes-eage*=the eye of the wind; likewise, *daisy* comes from *dæges-eage*=the eye of the day. Not all kennings had this fate; still, these examples show one possible manner in which the interaction compound – idiom takes place.

The reverse of this statement is also valid. The more "transparent" the compound, the more recent it is. *Spaceship*, for

instance, denotes a vehicle designed to "sail" in outer space. There is a metaphorical usage of the word *ship* in creating the compound, but *spacecraft*, the non-metaphorical compound, already has a larger sphere, in that it comprises any sort of vehicle meant for space, not only those in which human passengers can travel as well. This means that the more recent the compound, the higher its degree of secondary motivation is. Compounds can be ranged, accordingly, considering their age and respective degree of formal and semantic fusion.

V.2. THE MORPHOLOGICAL CRITERION

A more synchronically grounded approach would be to classify compounds according to the parts of speech into which they fall, and within these, to establish classes and subclasses of compounds, on the grounds of the morphological origin of their stems. Within these classes and subclasses, the following types of composition can occur:

1. **Juxtaposed compounds**, in which there appear no connectives between the stems: *gooseberry*, *flapjack*, *bloodcurdling*, etc.
2. **Compounds with a linking element**, usually a vowel or consonant: *speedometer*, *Afro-Asian*, *handiwork*, etc.
3. **Compounds linked by prepositional or conjunctive stems**: *face-to-face*, *son-in-law*, *salt-and-pepper*;
4. **Compound derivatives or derivational compounds**, in which the compound is suffixed, thus putting to work two word-forming mechanisms; in such cases, the suffix always refers to the whole compound, not only to one of its components: *old-timer*, *honeymooner*, *left-handed*. These compounds are radically different from free combinations like *mill owner*, *bus driver*, in which the suffix only refers to the second component.

V.2.1. Compound nouns

There is no consistent criterion according to which compound nouns should be spelled solid, hyphenated or without a hyphen. At times, even very old compounds in the language

are spelled in two or several separate words. In other cases, newly coined compounds are spelled solid.

There are several morphological patterns according to which compounds are created in English:

a. noun + noun: in many such cases, one of the nouns determines the other adjectivally (normally the first one); this noun is called determiner, while the noun determined is called determinatum. The relation established among them can be one of:

- purpose: *baby carriage*(=small carriage for transporting babies); *bachelor flat* (=a flat designed for an unmarried person); *backpack* (=a bag designed to be carried on one's back)
- place: *back office*(=office at the back of a shop, bank etc.); *backache*(=pain in one's backbone); *backyard* (=yard at the back of a house);
- origin: *barley water* (=drink made from lemons or oranges and barley); *Bactrian camel* (=a camel from the Asian region of Bactria); *Britpop* (=type of British pop music from the 1990's, which was influenced by the rock of the 60's);
- resemblance: *brushwood* (=small branches that have fallen off the trees and have dry twigs on them); *buck teeth*(=top front teeth that stick out more than the bottom teeth); *buffer zone* (=area of land between two armed forces, which they are not allowed to enter); *bullfrog* (=a large frog that makes a deep, loud noise);
- instrument: *bungee jumping*(=the sport of jumping from a very high place while attached to a long piece of rubber); *bottle opener*, *cork-screw*;

At times, one of the nominal stems may be in the genitive, showing origin, as in: *tailor's dummy*, *barber's itch/rash* (=ringworm of face, communicated by unsterilised instruments); *bird's eye view* (=a good view of something from a high position).

The two stems can also be linked by prepositions or conjunctions, as in: *bird of paradise*, *father-in-law*, *bed-and-breakfast*, *lily-of-the-valley*.

More than often a compound is made up of more than two nominal stems; in these cases, only the last stem is the

determinatum, the rest being determiners: *a box end wrench*(=tool for making nuts and screws loose); *random access memory*; *heart-lung machine* (=a machine used for pumping blood and oxygen around someone's body, when they are having a medical operation on their heart). Still, the most common such compounds consist of an adjective + noun + noun sequence, in which the adjective determines the first noun, and both become determiners to the second: *a back seat driver* (=somebody who keeps telling the driver what to do and how to drive); *best-before date*(=a date printed on a food container to show how long the food remains fresh).

b. adjective + noun: the determiner here is an adjectival stem proper; here several cases can be identified:

- when the determiner is an adjective proper: *blackbird*, *blackboard*, *blueberry*, *Bluebeard*; *bad apple* (=someone who does bad things and influences other people to do them too); *ballistic missile*;
- when the determiner is a participial adjective, which ends either in -ing: *peeping Tom*, *blotting paper*, *boarding card*; or in -ed: *boiled sweet* (=a hard sweet, especially one that tastes of fruit); *bonded warehouse* (=a government building for storing goods that have been brought into a country before tax has been paid on them); *built environment* (=all the structures people have built when considered as separate from natural environment);

c. pronoun + noun: generally speaking, these compounds serve to mark the gender, when it is formed from the other gender (*she-wolf*, *he-hare*); they represent a borderline case between composition and affixation, since the pronoun may be said to function here like a prefix.

d. verb + noun: in this category three subclasses can be identified:

- the verb stem can be in the short infinitive, as in: *pickpocket*, *bindweed* (=a wild plant that grows among other plants and winds itself round them); *blowpipe* (=a weapon consisting of a small narrow tube through which someone can blow small arrows); *blow dryer*;
- the verb stem is in the -ing form, this time the stem being a gerundial noun: *bird-watching*, *body-building*, *bloodletting*;

- the verb stem is in the Imperative form, as in: *bring-and-buy sale*; *breakwater* (=a strong wall that protects a beach from the force of the waves); *makeweight* (=someone or something included to make a number or amount complete).

e. verb + verb: this category contains such nouns as: *make-believe*, *make-work* (=work given to someone so that they have something to do); *pick-and-mix*; *park and ride* (=a transport system through which drivers leave their cars in a place outside a town and travel by train or bus into the town); *hit-and-run*;

f. adverb + noun: all categories of adverbs can yield stems for the formation of such nouns, e.g. locatives: *inside job*, *inside track*, *through train*, *outer space*, *outpost*, *overstatement*, *background*; adverbials of time: *latecomer*, *early bird*, *last call* (=last orders in a bar), affirmative-negatives: *yes-man*, *no-man's-land*; adverbials of manner: *welfare*, *bad faith*, *stillbirth*;

g. verb + adverb: *drawback*, *pick-up*, *forget-me-not*, are compounds in which a verb-adverbial relation is instated and lexicalised as such. In *forget-me-not* even the obligatory direct object required by the verb appears. At times, the verb can be in the participle: *bygones*, *uppercut*, *upshot* (=result of a process or event).

It is rather risky to classify compounds according to the semantic relations established among their components, since the borderline between various classes and subclasses is extremely frail, as could be seen in the examples above. On the other hand, the genesis of compounds is, in most cases, idiomatic, which leads to the impossibility of including very many compounds into any semantic subclass, simply because the relationship between components and overall meaning has been completely obliterated.

This is not only the case of such compounds which cannot be recognised as such any longer (e.g. *mildew* < O.E. *mildeaw*, *meledeaw*, = O.H.G. *millitou*, f. Gmc **melith*=honey + **dawwaz*=dew), but also of items in which the idiomatic character is so strong that no trace of possible motivation can occur to justify their meaning: *balcock* (=a floating ball that opens and closes a valve); *blue-rinse* (=a particular type of older woman

who has traditional conservative values); *body shop* (=a place where cars are repaired, especially after an accident).

It should be mentioned here that very often idiomatic compounds are the result of a metaphorical process and, therefore, they are very hard to account for etymologically: *blueprint* (=detailed plan for doing something new); *bluegrass* (=type of music from the southern U.S. that is played on violins and banjos); *blunderbuss* (=old-fashioned gun with a long barrel which is very wide at the end).

Other compounds are the result of occasional coinage and were perfectly understandable at the time when they appeared, but are obscure to nowadays speakers: *a baker's dozen* (=13), *Hobson's choice* (=one choice only, no other being available); *Duchess of Fife* (=wife).

Yet other compounds are the result of slangy or informal usage, and, since slang is not only intimately specific to a language, but also extremely short-lived in time, the motivation of many compounds stays obscure: *cheese-and-kisses*, *plates-and-dishes* (both meaning: wife); *apple of one's eye* (=very dear person); etc.

V.2.2. Compound adjectives

Compound adjectives also fall into several structural-semantic subgroups.

1. The great majority of these compounds consist of an adjectival stem, generally of verbal origin (a participial adjective), modified either in an objective way or in an adverbial way. The adjoining stem may be in the position of:

- **direct object to a participial adjective**, as in: *freedom-loving*, *bloodcurdling*, *bird-watching*; *time-consuming*;
- **indirect object to participial adjective**: *board-certified*, *body-building*; *beta-blocking*;
- **adverbial of any kind to participial adjective**: *best selling*, *late coming*, *short-lived*, *widely read*, *far-fetched*, *born-again*.

2. By analogy to this last model (adjective + participle II-adjective), compound adjectives were formed in which the

second adjective stem is not deverbal, but denominal¹⁶: *tight-skirted, blue-eyed, fork-tongued, quick-witted*.

3. Another productive model of forming compound adjectives is the one in which two adjectives proper are juxtaposed, the first one modifying the second for degree: *light-blue, electric red, bright green, reddish brown*.

4. The linguistic model of the comparative of equality (as.....as) also underlies the stylistic mechanism of the simile. Some similes that became clichés were also turned into compound adjectives: *pitch-dark* (=as dark as pitch); *blood red* (=as red as blood); *snow-white* (=as white as snow).

5. The denominal stem *self-* also generates compound adjectives, generally in combination with a participial adjective: *self-loathing, self-governing, self-effacing, self-educated, self-employed, self-made, self-controlled*.

6. A very productive model of generating compound adjectives is **noun + adjective proper**, as in: *heartsick, noteworthy, threadbare*, etc.

7. Components can be joined by the coordinative conjunctions *and, or*, denoting equal amount of quality present in both: *sweet-and-sour, up-and-coming* (=likely to develop, become popular or successful soon), *all-or-nothing*.

8. The determiner of the adjective can also be a pre-positive de-adverbial stem: *all-round, all-over, back-formation, left-wing, evergreen*.

9. At times, entire idiomatic phrases are turned into adjectives by applying a double composition-and-conversion word-forming device: *go-to-sleep* (a *go-to-sleep book*=a boring book); *next-door, seat-of-the-pants* (=not planned or done according to rules).

V.2.3. Compound pronouns

This is a type of composition no longer productive in modern English. It pertains rather to morphology than to

¹⁶ Deverbal and denominal (de-adjectival, de-pronominal etc.) are terms that designate whatever can be obtained by any means of word-formation from a verb, noun, adjective, pronoun, etc.

lexicology, in that compound pronouns have remained the same in both number and form since they appeared in the language, in the Middle English period. There are several structural models according to which these were formed:

- **possessive adjective + the denominal stem -self** is the model according to which some of the self-pronouns have been coined: *myself, yourself, ourselves, yourselves*;
- **the accusative of the personal pronoun + the denominal stem -self**: *himself, herself, themselves*;
- **the pre-determiners some-, any-, no-, or the de-adjectival stem every- + the denominal stems -body, -thing**: *nothing, anybody, something, everybody, etc*;
- **the relative-interrogative stems: who-, what-, when-, which-, where- + the de-adverbial stem -ever**: *whenever, wherever, whoever, etc*. In a more archaic and emphatic form, the adverb *so-* was inserted between the components; *whatsoever, whosoever etc*;

V.2.4. Compound numerals

All cardinal numerals between round figures, starting with twenty-one, are compound; from one hundred upward, round figures are also denoted by compound numerals: *one hundred and twenty; five hundred and fifty, etc*.

Ordinals corresponding to these numerals are preceded by the definite article and suffixed with *-th* (with the exception of 1 – for which *first* is used - 2 – replaced by *second* – and 3 – whose ordinal is *third*).

Distributive numerals are obtained by reduplication along with the insertion of the prepositional stem *-by-*: *two-by-two, five-by-five, etc*.

Four-figure numerals are read either by composition: *5469=five-thousand-four-hundred-and-sixty-nine*, or, if they represent a year, they can be split into two two-figure numerals, which are read as the respective compounds: *1848=eighteen forty-eight*.

Fractions are also compounds: *2/3=two-thirds; 6/8=six eighths*. When the fraction is preceded by a full number, the compound is obtained by means of *and*: *3 1/5=three-and-one-*

fifth; if there is a decimal comma, the same numeral reads: *three-point-twenty*.

V.2.5. Compound verbs

The problem of what should be included into this category has been a matter of dispute among linguists, in that there is disagreement as to whether verbs idiomatically used with prepositions should be included into this class or not. I think that verbal expressions like *turn off*, *give in*, and the like do not meet one of the basic requirements a compound should abide by, that is, indivisibility. Syntagms like *to turn the light off*, *to give completely and unconditionally in*, are perfectly acceptable in the language. On the other hand, the status as stems of the component part of such verbal expressions is indisputable since, as soon as any of them is replaced or removed, the global meaning changes. Thus *to turn* (=a (se) *suci*, a (se) *învârti*) is completely different from *to turn out* (=a se *dovedi*), *to turn in* (=a *preda ceva sau pe cineva*), and the latter two are clearly different from a free combination like: *to turn fallow*, where the meaning of the verb is figurative and means *to become*.

Probably the best way to consider these verbal expressions would be to see them as a still extremely productive phenomenon, which is, structurally, midway between affixation and composition. Such a viewpoint would consider the fact that the post-positive prepositional (sic!) and adverbial stems that enter them might become, in time, affixes of a hybrid origin, functioning like prefixes but appended like suffixes. Productivity had to be mentioned here, in order to emphasize that this is a live phenomenon in the language, which, therefore, is rather hard to classify bluntly into one category or another, the most prudent viewpoint being to place it on a borderline. Since not only verbs enter this category, but also nouns converted from verbs or back-formed from them, the place of phrasal verbs is, I think, in the chapter devoted to set phrases and idiomatic expressions (which will be treated in detail in the second volume of this book), and not among compound verbs.

Still, the vacillation of scholars as to where to include these verbal expressions has another, more immediate grounding, in

the fact that composition proper in the English verb is very weakly represented.

An analysis performed on what are traditionally called compound verbs in English almost always reveals an interplay of composition with some other word-forming mechanism: in *to blackmail*, it is composition and conversion; in *to stage-manage*, it is composition and back-formation, as it is in *to baby-sit*, or *to honeymoon*.

Morphological classes could also be identified, according to the origin of their component parts, but these coincide rather to the morphological classes into which their original stem belonged, before conversion or back-formation. Thus, *to vacuum clean* is a denominal verb obtained by back-formation from the noun *vacuum-cleaner*, which, in its turn, is a compound obtained from two nominal stems, of which one is affixed with the suffix *-er*, which denotes "doer of action". Both the noun *cleaner* and the verb *to clean* are, in their turn, obtained from the adjective *clean*, by affixation, respectively by conversion. At the synchronical level, however, such morphological classes could be identified as:

- **noun + verb:** *to baby-sit*, *to waylay*, *to backbite*;
- **adverb + verb:** *to backcomb* (=to make one's hair look thicker by holding it up and pushing it towards one's head with a comb), *to back-pedal* (to show that one is no longer certain about a previous opinion, intention or promise), *to overreact*;
- **adjective + verb:** *to whitewash*, *to blackmail*, *to blueprint*;

These compounds all contain a verb, but in many cases this verb is obtained by conversion from a noun, as in: *to blacklist*, or by back-formation by eliminating an ending, as in *to blood count*.

V.2.6. Compound adverbs

Composition in adverbs is very diverse in English, responding to a necessity of reinforcing the idea of adverbiality. For instance *onto*, *into* have a double directional meaning; *throughout* enforces the idea of completeness of action, etc.

Structurally, compound adverbs are obtained by:

- a. **juxtaposition of adverbs:** *wherefrom, henceforth, hereabout(s);*
- b. **juxtaposition of adverbs and other parts of speech:** *beforehand, oftentimes, outdoors;*
- c. **correlation by co-coordinative conjunctions:** *to and fro, up and about;*
- d. **by reduplication either with or without conjunction:** *over and over, through and through, never-never, etc.*

Many adverbs used in legal English are compound and archaic: *hereinbefore, hereinafter, unto, etc.*

V.2.7. Compound prepositions

Since prepositions are highly functional in English, and have been so for a very long time, more than often their origin as compounds has been obliterated by various processes of assimilation and many of them cannot be recognised as such any longer. Such is the case of *among* (<O.E. *an + gemang*) or *beyond* (<O.E. *beg(e)ondan* f. Gmc. **jandana*, f. **jand-* = *yonder*).

In other cases, the semantic content of prepositions is discernible, to some extent, as is the case of *between* (<Gmc. **bi=by + *tweon*>O.E. *twa=two*); or *amidst* (<O.E. *on + mid*).

Finally, there are cases when the meaning of the preposition is completely transparent; probably these are more recent compound prepositions, such as: *ahead of, beside(s), alongside* etc.

There are several morphological patterns according to which compound prepositions have been obtained; generally they contain one or several prepositions grouped around:

1. **a nominal nucleus:** *in the middle of, in spite of, thanks to, on the other side of;*
2. **an adverbial nucleus:** *underneath, close to, ahead of;*
3. **an adjectival nucleus:** *prior to, next to, previous to, erelong;*
4. **a verbal nucleus,** where the verb is in some non-finite form: *owing to, due to, notwithstanding,* or a finite form: *as concerns;*
5. **a prepositional nucleus:** *but for, onto, as to, save for.*

V.2.8. Compound conjunctions

Semantically, the situation existing with prepositions is valid for conjunctions as well, in that there are different degrees of transparency in their meaning. Many prepositions also function as conjunctions, so that, at least structurally, the borderline between the two morphological classes is hard to discern; in context, nevertheless, things clearly stand otherwise.

Both among co-ordinators and subordinators, there are several compounds which fall in the same structural classes as prepositions; they can be grouped around nominal nuclei: *for the reason that, the instant when, in spite of, for fear that, etc.*, around adverbial nuclei: *as well as, along with, never again, etc.*, around adjectival nuclei: *long before, for all that*, verbal nuclei: *seeing that, supposing that, provided that*, or prepositional nuclei: *but for, after which, what with, etc.*

Compound relative pronouns can also play the part of conjunctions, when they introduce relative clauses; the correlatives *both...and, neither...nor, either...or* could be also ranged in the category of compound conjunctions, since they only function jointly.

Some conjunctions are very old compounds, whose components can only be revealed by etymological analysis: such are, for instance: *whether* (<O.E. *hwa- + egther*=approx. *which of the two*) or *where* (<O.E. *hwa + her*=*what here*).

V.2.9. Compound interjections

Since they reproduce sounds of nature or uncontrolled human sounds, and are, therefore, partially motivated, very many interjections in English are compounds, falling into several morphological groups:

1. **reduplicatives:** *bla-bla, pooh-pooh, puff-puff, hush-hush, etc.*
2. **ablaut combinations:** *ticktack, boo-hoo, bow-wow, etc.*
3. **onomatopoeia:** *cock-a-doodle-doo, gobbledygook, etc.*

As it results from the classification above, the two criteria, the morphological one and the one of the relations established among the components have been treated jointly, since it is, in fact, very hard to separate them. I also considered it a somewhat more logical approach to a problem which is extremely complex, and a very productive phenomenon in modern English. The tendency is, as mentioned before, that many free stems should gradually become semi-affixes and then affixes proper, a fact favoured by their predominantly monosyllabic character. Furthermore, very many recent stems which are not necessarily monosyllabic seem to start undergoing the process; such are, for instance: *rent-a-*, *-buster*, *-friendly*, *-impaired*, *-person*, *-ville*, *-gate*, *-crazy*, *part-*, *-mania*, etc. The proof lies in the fact that the 2002 edition of the Macmillan English Dictionary ranges these among affixes, in its section devoted to word-formation.

Still, it seems that the most productive means of enriching the vocabulary in English is conversion, which will be dealt with in what follows.

CHAPTER VI

CONVERSION

Conversion (zero derivation, root formation) is the major internal means of enriching the vocabulary through which a new word is created by changing the morpho-syntactic category and the distribution of an already existing word, without any formal change in it. In other words, the form of the original and the form of the converted word are homonymous, the two differing only in distribution. Since in English distribution is the signal of morphological status, it results that, by changing the distribution of an item, that item becomes another part of speech. Should we take as an example the adverb *back*, as in:

Let us go back to basics!,

by conversion it can become an adjective:

Use the back door for deliveries, please!,

a noun:

Rheumatism will often make one's back ache,

or a verb:

She backed her theory with solid arguments.

Although the stems from which the converted forms were obtained are homonymous, it results from the distribution of the newly obtained words that they are parts of speech different from their originals. Not only does the morpho-syntactic status change, but the semantic essence changes as well: thus, the adverb *back* has a "direction towards" connotation, whereas the adjective has a static content "*which is placed/which exists*", the noun denotes a part of the body, the verb uses the basic meaning of the noun in a figurative way, its meaning being "*to support, to demonstrate*". The respective polysemy of the four items is also impressive: the noun has nine meanings, listed by the dictionary, the adjective two, the verb five, the adverb five, to which a series of idiomatic collocations can be added. All these meanings have at their core the respective

semantic markers of the four items, which are, in their turn, dictated by their status as converted words. For instance, the noun *back* has the following meanings:

1. hinder surface of human body from shoulders to hips;
2. body as needing clothes or as weight-carrier;
3. surface of things corresponding to human back; ~ of one's hand, head, leg; ~ of book, knife, etc;
4. upper surface of animal's body, similar ridge-shaped surface (*back of hill*);
5. side or part normally more remote or away from spectator or direction of motion (*back of car, chair, door*);
6. part of dress covering the body from the shoulders to the waist; hence, ~less a. of dress;
7. the B~s, grounds on the Cam, at the back of some Cambridge colleges;
8. (position of) defensive player in football, etc;
9. ~ache, ~board, ~bone, ~stroke, etc.

In all of these meanings, not only the first meaning of the noun is present, but the meaning of the adverb it comes from has also left traces. Moreover, the latter has not disappeared or changed because it gave rise to a polysemantic noun.

This fact questions the term **conversion** itself, as to its appropriateness for the phenomenon under study; since nothing is converted into anything, the source-word remaining in the language, some scholars think with good reason that the term does not reflect the essence of the process. **Zero derivation**, on the other hand, is as misleading, since already affixed words can easily undergo conversion (for instance, the noun *alarmist* can become an adjective, keeping the suffix). The term might also be larger in sphere than needed, having in view that words can be obtained from one another by other means of enriching the vocabulary than derivation, means which, in their turn, have nothing to do with conversion (for instance, the verb *to feed* is obtained from the noun *food* without affixation and without being a case of conversion either). **Root formation** is clearly not suitable either, since conversion does not involve only words formed exclusively of roots. Maybe the most correct way of looking at things would be to differentiate, at first, between functional meaning and lexical

meaning, which has already been done in this book, and then say that **what is usually called conversion is, in fact, functional polysemy**. This would necessarily range it among predominantly semantic means of enriching the vocabulary, alongside with polysemy, which is a phenomenon affecting lexical meaning. In other words, the most appropriate way of considering this phenomenon would be to bring it close to polysemy and away from affixation and composition. Neither conversion nor polysemy affects the form of the word; the former brings about a shift in both lexical and functional meaning, the latter affects only the lexical meaning.

Still, since the term **conversion** seems to have gained ground in denominating the phenomenon, it will be used conventionally in what follows, although it is not relevant enough for what we are trying to describe.

Another problem is the status of polysemy in conversion: more precisely, if a word acquires another function, it must undergo a change of meaning as well. The question is whether this could be regarded as polysemy or not.

Traditionally, polysemy implies that the polysemantic variants of a word should remain in the same form class as their original: a noun can generate several other nouns, an adjective, several other adjectives, etc. Still, if polysemy is change of meaning which does not imply a change of form as well, then polysemy is also obtained by conversion. Perhaps it would be convenient to differentiate, here, between polysemies involving the different types of meaning that have been defined earlier. Thus, if polysemy brings about a change of lexical meaning, it could be termed as **lexical polysemy**; if, on the other hand, it implies a change of functional meaning, it might be seen as **functional polysemy** or "**conversion**".

The type of polysemy involved in conversion clearly proves to be a functional one, at a first analysis. Still, it necessarily brings about a lexical polysemy as well; the new meaning, although semantically related to the first, contains markers typical to the new part of speech that has been generated, which is not the case with lexical polysemy. Hence, the necessity of analysing the semantic ties obtained between the converted item and its original, in order to capture the essence of the phenomenon.

Conversion is favoured by the linguistic type of English (which is highly analytical, almost isolating), more than any other means of enriching the vocabulary. The tendency towards analytism was present in English even before the Norman Conquest and started being manifest in the fact that some case-forms in the various nominal paradigms were identical. It is clear that, if it hadn't been for this tendency, upon which the levelling of endings in Middle English was engrafted, the degree of analytism in Modern English could not have been attained.

An analytical language marks grammatical categories by means of prepositions and word-order; a means of enriching the vocabulary which allows new words to come into being by simply changing the distribution of already existing ones is very handy and fit for the linguistic type of English. This would mean that, at least theoretically, any part of speech could become any other part of speech, by simply filling in the respective "slot" in the sentence. This is valid only theoretically though, because such new coinages ought to be received, accepted by the speech community first. In other words, newly coined items are, at first, *nonce words*, perfectly understandable and acceptable to a native speaker, but in order to become legitimate members of the vocabulary, they should be accepted as the norm and be listed as separate entries in the lexicon of that language. Such a sentence as:

Don't thou the teacher!

is perfectly understandable by a native speaker, although no dictionary of modern English will list as a separate entry the use of the second-person personal pronoun as a verb. It might happen, nevertheless, that some day the need to express such a meaning (*to call someone by the first name*) in one word should determine this conversion.

If theoretically there is the possibility to change any part of speech into any other, practically, not all dictionary entries which are apparently converted words are actually so. Should one consider the levelling and loss of endings, which occurred massively in the Middle English and then in the Early Modern English period, it is clear that not all homonyms one can identify in a dictionary of the modern language have been obtained by conversion.

For instance, the noun *love* was not obtained by conversion from the verb *to love* or vice versa, as it might seem. The former comes from the O.E. *lufu*, whereas the latter, the verb, from the corresponding O.E. verb *lufian*; both have lost their endings, hence their modern homonymy. In other cases, the prefix *ge-* was dropped from verbs and the corresponding nouns became homonymous with them (it is the case of *gemynd=to mind>mynd>Mod. E. mind, n.*).

The same phenomenon of homonymy, which is not the result of conversion, can be noticed in pairs of borrowings from French, having the same root, and which underwent the same process of levelling and loss of endings that affected English words. Such are, for instance, the noun and verb *cry* – *to cry* (<Fr. *cri* – *crier*).

On the other hand, not all pairs of items obtained by conversion have the same age. Many of them date back to the Middle Ages and this is the case of most words in the basic word-stock which present converted homonyms. According to some theories, conversion is also favoured by the shortness of the majority of words in English. This statement has probably been caused by the fact that the highest frequency of conversion can be encountered in the basic word-stock; yet, it is my opinion that the length of the words in this compartment of the vocabulary has nothing to do with their convertibility, let alone its causes. On the other hand, the fact that in modern English this word-forming mechanism is still highly productive has brought about the conversion of very numerous polysyllabic words, either native or even borrowed, obtained by affixation or composition (which are word-forming mechanisms that multiply the number of syllables in a word).

The most frequent cases of conversion involve nouns, verbs, adjectives and adverbs. Since this is the most productive means of enriching the vocabulary, virtually any part of speech can become any other. This is, none-the-less, conditioned by the communicative needs of the speech community, in that form words are more rarely obtained by conversion than notional parts of speech, among which the frequency of conversion is the highest. Often even prepositions or conjunctions can generate nouns or verbs; the reverse process is very rare.

VI.1. NOUNS OBTAINED BY CONVERSION

Nominalization by conversion can affect any other part of speech; some patterned semantic relations between the original and the converted noun can be, nevertheless, identified. These will be treated in what follows.

VI.1.1. De-adjectival nouns

Since the variety of adjectives in English is very high, nouns obtained from them (de-adjectival nouns) are extremely numerous. They also present various types of semantic relations with their originals, a fact that makes the subclass highly diversified. Some categories of de-adjectival nouns are the following:

- **collective nouns obtained from adjectives, by addition of the definite article *the*:** *the cripple, the poor, the short-sighted*;
- **nouns denoting aesthetical categories, obtained by the same mechanism:** *the beautiful, the absurd, the grotesque*;
- **nouns denoting the concept expressed by the adjective in the generic sense, obtained with the addition of the definite article:** *the uneatable, the imagined, the forgotten*;
- **proper collective nouns denoting national extraction, presenting the same mechanism:** *the English, the Aboriginal, the Dutch*; still, other such nouns are obtained by adding the plural ending, as well, the article becoming optional: *(the) Romanians, (the) Americans, (the) Russians*;
- **personal nouns, denoting "presence of quality in":** *an academic, an alarmist, an agoraphobic*;
- **nouns denoting "presence of quality" in object:** *an acid, an adhesive, an adverbial, an absolute*; at times they can undergo specialisation of meaning: *greens, the blues* (in the first case the generic meaning is used, in the second a figurative shift has taken place);

The attempt at grouping various types of meanings should not ignore the possibility of nominalization of any other adjective by conversion: *a red reminding of Titian* (=kind, type of red); *in the dark* (=confused), or: *Don't go out after dark! a bitter of very good*

quality (=type of drink), *the small of one's back* (=area between the kidneys and the buttocks).

Even adjectives in various degrees of comparison can undergo conversion: *the least, the most, the best* and the like can also appear in nominal distribution:

The least you can do is to go on reading the next subchapter.
She did her utmost to be as clear as possible.

VI.1.2. Deverbal nouns

The great majority of converted nouns are deverbal, therefore the semantic relations which obtain between the original and the noun are extremely diversified. Thus, the deverbal noun can denote:

- **the result of the action denoted by the original verb:** *an abstract, a drive, an affront, a carry-on* (=consequence of action visible after the action has been completed);
- **the process denoted by the verb:** *an ache, an alert, an arrest*;
- **the agent of the action denoted by the verb:** *an advocate, a go-between, an ally, an affix*;
- **the name of the action denoted by the verb:** *a can-do, carryings-on, a hunt*; this category of meaning is best represented by the *-ing* noun, which always names the action denoted by the verb: *the coming, the falling, the carrying, etc.* This latter can coexist with the converted noun, which undergoes change of meaning (*the come*=collective noun or resultative noun; *the fall*=resultative noun);
- **the patient of the action denoted by the verb:** *a castaway, a cast-off* (=piece of clothing no longer wanted and given away), *a catch*;
- **the instrument of the action denoted by the verb:** *a lift, a ransom*;

VI.1.3. De-adverbial, de-prepositional and de-interjectional nouns

There are rather few nouns originating in adverbs; still, the basic directional adverbs have been nominalised: *front, back, left* (*the left* and *the right* have also undergone a process of

specialisation of meaning), *behind*, *aside* (=reply told by an actor to the audience or making sure that the other actors do not hear), etc. Adverbs can receive definite articles and be marked for plural, thus being nominally distributed, as in: *the ups and downs*, *the ins and outs*; still, the fact that these "nouns" are never used outside the respective set phrases, or in the singular, denotes that their conversion has not been completed yet. A case of de-adverbial noun, whose conversion can only be identified by etymological analysis, is that of the noun *inn*, coming from the Ancient Saxon *in/inn*, an adverb meaning *indoors*, *within*.

The adverbs relating to the frequency of musical tempo (at their origin simple adverbials of frequency in Italian, which became internationalisms with a specialised meaning) have also yielded corresponding converted nouns: *an andante*, *an allegro*, *an adagio*; other temporal adverbs like: *midnight*, *noon*, *morning*, have also been obtained by conversion, in the Middle English period.

Even the adverb *altogether* appears in nominal distribution, in the expression *to be in the altogether* (=to be completely without clothes); in this case, it is used figuratively.

Cases of prepositional stems used nominally are even more rare: *the pros and cons*, for instance, (where *cons* is the plural of the abbreviation from *counter*), or *an alias*, which comes from what initially was a Latin preposition are such instances. The case of *ex* used nominally, as in *my ex* for *my ex husband*, is a case of abbreviation, as is the case of *an ultra*, *ultras*, which initially stood for *ultra-royalist*, when it was borrowed from French, then it underwent abbreviation and extension of meaning, so that now it means: *person favouring extreme views or measures, especially in politics or religion*. A *pro*, on the other hand, when the noun originates in the Latin preposition, is *somebody favouring a certain idea, view, option*.¹⁸

All interjections can be nominalised, by addition of articles; their basic meaning is "name of the sound, noise, etc."

¹⁸ Still, a *pro* is rather used as an abbreviation from a *professional*; the two are only homonymous words in modern English, although they originate in the same Latin preposition.

A loud *bang* followed by a *screech* and *squeal* showed that Jenny had started feeding the pigs. I only reacted by a discreet *Hm Hm*.

It may, nevertheless, happen that interjections should undergo, via nominalization, other semantic processes as well; for instance, the onomatopoeia *gobbledygook*, initially denoting the sound made by the turkey, has come to mean, by specialisation of meaning, *legal English*, with an obvious pejorative connotation.

VI.2. ADJECTIVES OBTAINED BY CONVERSION

Since the proof of function lies in distribution, it could be said that anything that fulfils an attributive and/or a predicative function is an adjective in English. This situation is favoured by the fact that most adjectives in English lack specific endings in the positive degree.

Nouns, for instance, can function either as descriptive adjectives: *a boy friend*, *baby boom*, *trial-and-error judgement*, or as limitative – restrictive adjectives: *family duties*, *trial match*, *songbird*, etc. Converted nouns can also fulfill the predicative function of adjectives: *to become Prime Minister*, *to be elected chairman*, *to be an angel*, *to be a fruitcake*. This is certainly also valid for gerundial nouns obtained from verbal stems by *-ing* – suffixation.

Whenever in a compound the components are in a determiner-determinatum relationship, the determiner functions as an adjective, regardless of its morphological origin. In most cases, such distributional patterns have conversion at their core: *seaman*, *alderman*, *workman*, *businessman*, *yes-man*, etc.

Pronouns can also engender adjectives by conversion; all compounds with *he-* or *she-*, which generate the masculine from the feminine and vice-versa, can be considered to reflect this phenomenon. Most pronouns also function as adjectives without any change in form (demonstratives, relative-interrogatives, self-pronouns, etc.). Some predeterminers, such as numerals or indefinite pronouns also take up adjectival functions when they appear in adjectival distribution.

Still, the most common way in which adjectives are obtained by conversion is from adverbs. (This is, in fact, the only type of conversion productive in Romanian). Directionals, like *above*, *front*, *back*, *upstairs*, *indoors*, etc., function both as adverbials and as adjectives:

The train runs fast. It is a fast train.

Adverbs of time, such as: *yearly*, *daily*, *monthly*, and the like, can become adjectives, when used in an adjectival distribution.

In some cases even prepositions can function as adjectives: *overcoat*, *upstart*, etc.

Phrases and idiomatic expressions can undergo conversion as they are, and can function as adjectives: *a butter-wouldn't-melt-in-her-mouth attitude*; *a do-it-yourself dress*; *a click-and-type format*.

Verbs converted into adjectives are comparatively rare, since any verb can become an adjective in its participle I-form, by affixation with *-ing*. Still, in some cases, the imperative of some verbs can undergo adjectivisation by conversion: *a do-it request*, *make-believe composure*; more than often the infinitive form undergoes the same process: *a turn point*, *a daredevil*.

VI.3. VERBS OBTAINED BY CONVERSION

This compartment is, perhaps, one of the most productive, if not the most productive field in which conversion manifests itself. The frequency of the phenomenon is in accordance with its productivity. Very many verbs in Modern English have been obtained by conversion and are, in their great majority, denominal.

VI.3.1. Denominal verbs

Although the semantic relations established between the nouns and their converted verbal counterparts is, in very many cases, chaotic, there are some patterns of meaning which can be identified, such as:

– **action resulting in the situation denominated by the noun:** *to rain*, *to snow*, *to frost*;

– **action generating the notion denominated by the noun:** *to point*, *to spot*, *to stripe*, *to dot*;

– **instrumental:** in this category some verbs coming from the names of the parts of the body could be included: *to mouth* (=to speak pompously or very distinctly, rant, declaim); *to jaw* (=speak, esp. at tedious length); *to finger*, *to elbow*, *to shoulder*; or verbs coming from stems denoting tools, machines and weapons: *to hammer*, *to pivot*, *to machine-gun*, *to sandpaper*, *to saw*, etc.

– **agentive:** the noun names the agent doing the action denoted by the converted verb: *to mob*, *to flock*, *to swarm*, etc. A subcategory of the same group is represented by verbs denoting behaviour similar to that of some animals: *to wolf*, *to monkey*, *to ape*, *to cat*.

– converted verbs denoting "hunt of" some animal or "give birth to" some animal could be included into the **resultative** meaning group: *to fox*, *to bear*, respectively: *to foal*, *to rat*.

– **locative meaning** is expressed in denominal verbs like: *to pocket*, *to corner*, *to garage*, etc.

– **the verb denotes the specific activity of certain occupational groups:** *to doctor*, *to engineer*, *to expert*, etc.

– **the verb denotes the effect of certain objects:** *to puzzle*, *to panel*, *to paper*;

These are only a few of the possible meanings of denominal verbs; more than often though, the semantic relationship between noun – denominal verb is as profuse as to lead to antonymical doublets of the type *to dust*=*to remove dust from something*, *to dust*=*to put a dust of something* (snow, powder sugar, etc) *on an object*. At other times, the polysemy of the converted noun allows several subsequent denominal verbs to coexist in the language: *to stone*=*to lapidate*, *to kill by throwing stones at someone*, *to stone*=*to remove stone from a fruit*, *to stone*=*to pave with stones*, *to stone*=(coll.)*stupefy or stimulate with drink, drug*, etc.

VI.3.2. De-adjectival verbs

Almost all qualifying adjectives can yield de-adjectival verbs, whose basic meaning is : **bring about instatement of quality in object**. Thus: *to green*, *to yellow*, *to pink*, *to square*, *to round*, can be traced back to the respective adjectives, but also: *to alert*, *to*

articulate, to aggregate. Also, some adjectives bring about in the corresponding verbs the meaning: **make subject suffer instatement of quality:** *to wrong, to dry, to wet, to sour, to cheap, to clean, etc.*

VI.3.3. De-adverbial verbs

Almost any adverb can become a verb; for instance:

- **directionals:** *to up, to down, to in, to near, to out, to forward, etc.;*
- **adverbials of manner:** *to wrong, to nay, to yes, to nope, to encore, etc.;*

VI.3.4. Verbs obtained from other parts of speech

De-pronominal verbs are generally nonce-forms, understandable, but non-standardised: *to thou, to it somebody*, would thus mean "to call somebody *thou* or *it*". This paraphrase is preferred to the nonce-form in all standard utterances.

A de-prepositional verb proper, *to but*, appears in: *But me no buts!*; other such verbs are rather obtained out of Latin prepositions like: *to counter* (<Lat. *contra*), *to pro* (<Lat. *pro*).

Interjections and onomatopoeia seem to have yielded the most outstanding amount of verbs in this category. Every interjection can become a verb: *to hush, to shush, to hum, to ah*, and, respectively, *to bow-wow, to meow, to gobble-gobble, to chirp, to squeal, etc.*

VI.4. ADVERBS OBTAINED BY CONVERSION

Traditionally, adverbs are obtained from adjectives by suffixation with *-ly*, therefore cases of adverbs obtained by conversion from adjectives are rather rare; in some cases, substandard language admits a form homonymous to an adjective to appear in adverbial distribution, but it is rather doubtful whether these are cases of conversion or simply manifestations of the tendency to drop the ending in the adverb: *awful rare*, instead of *awfully rare* is such a case.

Still, using augmentatives like *mighty, pretty, jolly*, all of adjectival origin, in order to form the absolute superlative as

substitutes of *very*, could be more easily interpreted as cases of conversion.

Diachronically, things seem to plead for what has been noticed synchronically. Should we consider, for instance, *alike*, its Old English original, *gelic*= *like*, could be used in both adjectival and adverbial distribution, and had degrees of comparison: *gelicra, gelicost*. Probably the idea of adjectivity and that of adverbiality have the same source, historically.

* * *

As can be noticed, conversion affects with predilection notional parts of speech (noun, adjective, verb, adverb). There are no pronouns, articles, numerals, prepositions or conjunctions obtained by conversion. The fact that some pronouns function as connectives (relative pronouns, for instance) is only subsequent to the fulfilling of their syntactic function as pro-nouns in the subordinate clause. On the other hand, adverbs can function as prepositions in many cases, but the etymology is not clear as to which function is prior to the other: the adverbial or the prepositional. Should we consider, for instance, the adverb and preposition *on*, it comes from the Old English *on*; its cognate forms are: *Du. aan, Icel. a, Dan. an, Swed. a, Germ. an, Goth. ana, Gk. ana, Russ. na*. Its Indo-European reconstructed form is **ana*. No mention is made as to what the word is, as a part of speech, in Skeat's Etymological Dictionary. The Concise Oxford Dictionary lists the adverb and the preposition as two separate entries and signals their common etymology, with no mention of which function was subsequent to the other. If the two functions coexisted, perhaps these cases would be best considered as cases of homonymy, although other dictionaries list the two functions under the same headword.

CHAPTER VII

MINOR MORPHOLOGICAL MEANS OF ENRICHING THE VOCABULARY

As mentioned above, the grouping of predominantly morphological means of enriching the vocabulary into major and minor has been achieved on the basis of the double conditioning of frequency and productivity. If at different moments productivity can have different values for one and the same phenomenon, frequency is dictated primarily by the linguistic type of the language and instates the differentiation between the basic word-stock and the rest of the vocabulary. Normally, dictionaries do not give any clue as to the frequency in usage of various items. Still, the productivity of word-forming mechanisms can be judged on the basis of the number of items generated by means of them present in the dictionary. Hence the difference between major and minor word-forming mechanisms.

If it is clear that what we group under major mechanisms are those which account for the origin of the most numerous words in the dictionary, with minor mechanisms of word-formation things should be considered cautiously. If, for instance, folk-etymology, one of the phenomena which will be discussed below, has yielded comparatively few cases of new words and, prospectively, is unlikely to become highly productive in the future, a word-forming mechanism like root-vowel gradation (deflection or ablaut) is a phenomenon which used to be highly productive in Proto-Germanic, it generated the great bulk of verbs in all Germanic languages and is a sign of origin and cognate character, when we consider these languages. Synchronically speaking though, the phenomenon has long ceased to be productive. In Middle English, many verbs were regularised under the pattern of second-group weak verbs, a pattern into which all borrowings and new coinages fell as well. This model is still productive in Modern English,

representing what we know under the name of "regular verbs". Verbs formed by ablaut have remained very few in the contemporary language, as compared to the rest of verbs and represent part of what is known as "irregular verbs". Nevertheless, these are the oldest verbs in English and, in their time, outnumbered by far the other verbs. The mechanism by which they were generated (along with other "irregular" forms in other parts of speech) should be, nevertheless, described. Still, since the number of occurrences of such forms in a modern English dictionary is low, the mechanism is treated under "minor". This might be an argument why these mechanisms should be treated with caution.

VII.1. ABBREVIATION

By **abbreviation** several things are understood: a reduction of a word to several letters, of a group of words forming a notion to initials, as well as a rather new phenomenon, that of alphanumeric (combination between letters and ciphers which read as a word in the language).

VII.1.1. Abbreviation of a word to component letters

It is a phenomenon generated by the discrepancy between spelling and pronunciation in English, as well as by the unusual length of some words as against the majority of the other words, especially those in the basic word-stock. A type of abbreviation like *p.j.'s*, for *pyjamas*, is neither abbreviation to capitals, nor can it be considered among the three subvariants of contraction (see below). Such cases are rather frequent in Modern English, especially in its American variety, and tend to become very productive.

Other examples of this type: *blvd*<*boulevard*, *brolly*<*umbrella*, *hanky*<*handkerchief*, *nightie*<*nightgown*, etc.

Even cases when the word is treated as if it were a compound and abbreviated to would-be initials can be identified: *BBQ*<*barbecue*, or *HQ*<*headquarters*.

VII.1.2. Abbreviation to initials

This type of abbreviation is extremely productive in Modern English; it is included into word-forming mechanisms because, at times, users of abbreviations fail to recognise or do not even know what the abbreviation stands for. Some of them are transparent, like *UFO*, *NATO*, others are so highly technical that it takes a specialist to trace back the abbreviation to what it stands for: *HTML* (= *hypertext mark-up language*); *http* (= *hypertext transfer – or transport – protocol*).

There are several ways to read these abbreviations:

- as if they were a word: *INSET* (*in-service training*); *NATO* (*North-Atlantic Treaty Organisation*); *NASDAQ* (*the National Association of Securities Dealers Automated Quotations*);
- pronouncing their components in isolation: *HSC* (*Higher School Certificate*); *B&B* (*bed-and-breakfast*); *bpi* (*bits per inch*); *BYOB* (*bring your own bottle*);
- reading the word or group of words which was abbreviated: *dr.*; *Mr.*; *Mrs.*; *BTW* (*by the way*, in e-mail language);

At times, abbreviations to initials preserve the form-words they contain unabbreviated; a *B* and *S* party (*a bachelor-and-spinster party*); *G&T* (*gin-and-tonic*); at other times, only one component is initialised, the other remaining in full: *V-day* (*victory day*); *L-plate* (*license plate*); *e-mail* (*electronic mail*).

Abbreviations from Latin with international character are also to be found in English, either for very common notions, such as: *a.m.*, i.e. (*id est = that is*), e.g. (*exempli gratia = for instance*), or in specialised contexts, for instance in written scientific discourse: *ap.* (*apud = according to*); *sup.* (*supra = above*); *inf.* (*infra = below*), etc.

VII.1.3. Alphanumerics

This type of abbreviation is extremely productive, especially in e-mail language and SMS-language, where it meets the requirements of small space and expedient communication. The language of commercials and advertisement has also adopted it, probably because it is striking and informal at the same time. Alphanumerics are to be read uttering their component letters in isolation, because their basic mechanism is homophony (coincidence in pronunciation with another word existing in the

language). Some examples: *CUL8R* (*see you later*); *BU* (*be you*); and so 4th. At other times, there is a combination between alphanumerics and abbreviation to initials, as in: *B2B* (*business-to-business*); *B2C* (*business-to-consumer*).

VII.2. CONTRACTION

Contraction is the shortening of a word to a part of it, which can be performed in three ways:

- by **aphaeresis**, which is the elimination of the front part of the word, as in: *cello* (<lt. *violoncello*); *bus* (<Lat. *omnibus*); *varsity* (<University, colloq.);
- by **syncope**, which is the elimination of the middle part of the word, as in: *ma'am* (*madam*); *o'er* (*over*); *don't* (*do not*);
- by **apocope**, in which the final part of the word is eliminated, as in: *Lib Dem* (*Liberal Democrat*), *fab* (*fabulous*), *caff* (*café*), *bicarb* (*bicarbonate*).

VII.3. CHANGE OF MORPHOLOGICAL ACCENT

By this mechanism, pairs consisting of verb and noun, which are homographs, generally of Romance origin, are distinguished from one another by distinctive accent. Thus, the noun *accent* is stressed on the first syllable, while the verb *to accent* receives the stress on the second. Such pairs are rather numerous in English; more examples would be: *attribute* – *to attribute*, *essay* – *to essay*, *perfume* – *to perfume*, *torment* – *to torment*, etc.

In some cases, the members of the pair are also distinguished graphically: *advice* – *to advise*; in other cases, some sounds are pronounced in the reduced form in one member and in strong form in the other: *aggregate* – *to aggregate*; *associate* – *to associate*; *approximate* – *to approximate*.

VII.4. DEFLECTION (ABLAUT, UMLAUT, SOUND INTERCHANGE)

The phenomenon is much less productive in the modern language, but it used to be one of the major means of marking grammatical categories and forming new words in Old English. It affected words belonging to the basic word-stock and therefore these remained in the language.

There are two factors that gave rise to this sound mutation. It is necessary that they should be analysed diachronically, so as to grasp the essence of the phenomenon.

Ablaut or vowel gradation is an Indo-European feature, consisting of mutations in the root vowel of strong verbs, in order to denote grammatical categories. This mutation is due to differences in stress, and has been preserved in Modern English in such types of irregular verbs as: *sink* – *sank* – *sunk*; *sing* – *sang* – *sung*; *drink* – *drank* – *drunk*. The same vowel gradation-pattern has generated such derivatives as *abode* < *to abide*, *bit* < *to bite*, *road* < *to ride*.

The second phenomenon present in sound interchange is **umlaut or vowel mutation**, which is only characteristic of Germanic languages and consists of a partial assimilation to a succeeding sound (fronting or raising of a back vowel, for instance), which is due to *i*- or *j*-mutation, a very productive phenomenon in Germanic which has now disappeared. The *i* or *j* sounds which generated umlaut were lost or altered; still, the forms which they brought about in the language do exist nowadays. For instance, the pairs: *to fill* – *full*; *to tell* – *tale*; *long* – *length*; *broad* – *breadth*, etc.

VII.5. BACK-FORMATION

Back-formation is a phenomenon due to analogy between words that contain affixes and other words that have component parts homonymous to affixes. As a consequence, these parts are interpreted as would-be affixes and removed from the word, in order to restore (or back-form) their would-be originals. For instance, the noun *baby-sitter* did not appear in the language by

adding the suffix *-er* (*doer of action*) to the whole compound, but to one of its components; the compound was formed after the deverbal noun *sitter* was obtained. By back-formation, the would-be compound verb *to baby-sit* was coined, as if the compound noun *baby-sitter* had been formed from it by suffixation. Likewise, the verb *to peddle* was back-formed from the noun *pedlar*; the verb *to edit* was back-formed from *editor*, etc.

In other cases, the suffix was borrowed along with the noun containing it: *puppy* comes from the French *poupee*, still, its "original" presumed to have been obtained by suffixation with the diminutive suffix *-y* was back-formed from it: *pup*.

The mechanism seems to be productive in the field of compound verbs, a compartment rather weakly represented in Modern English; comparatively recent back-formed verbs have appeared, such as: *to force-land*, *to blood-transfuse*.

At times, the ending of a borrowed word was taken for a plural: the French word *cerise*, for instance, was taken into English as *cherry*, without the would-be plural; *pea* comes from the Latin *pisa*, and had the O.E. form *pise*, from which a now obsolete form was devised, *pease*. Since its last consonant was felt like a plural, the "singular" was back-formed from it and became the modern standard.

VII.6. FOLK ETYMOLOGY

The phenomenon is also due to analogy, this time an analogy in pronunciation (which can be partial or total), with a word or group of words already existing in the language, and it affects mostly borrowings or foreign words entering the language. For instance, the French word *ecrevisse* (=crab), was mispronounced as *crayfish*, although the word *cray* does not exist in English. Likewise, *asparagus*, a rather complicated word from Latin, was distorted into *sparrowgrass*, although the plant has nothing to do with the birds.

Foreign proper names, toponyms, etc. also underwent such distortions; a *piepowder court*, for instance, meaning a summary court of justice, formerly held at the court of a king, comes from the Latin *Curia pedis pulverasati*, "the court of the dusty foot", from the

dusty feet of the suitors. From the Old French *piéd pouldre*, the English expression was obtained by folk etymology. A *Morris dance* is in fact a Moorish dance <Sp. *Morisco*> *Mauresque*.

VII.7. CORRUPTION

Corruption is a phenomenon similar in essence to folk-etymology, only with corruption there is no analogy with an already existing word or group of words in the language; the unknown word, felt as alien, is simply distorted. *Malmsey*, for instance, a sort of sweet wine, comes from the French *malvoisie*, in its turn a corruption of the Italian *Malvasia* = Naples.

Likewise, *jeopardy* comes from the French *jeu parti*; *minion* <Fr. *mignon*, *moiety* <Fr. *moitié*; *moiré* <Fr. *mouaire* < Arabic *mukayyar* = choice, select. A *Mohock*, meaning one of a class of aristocratic ruffians infesting London streets at night in the 18th century, comes from *Mohawk*, the name of a tribe of North American Indians.

VII.8. WORDS DERIVED FROM PROPER NAMES

Many times, a notion is named by making the name of its inventor or its first user a common noun. Thus, a *sandwich* was first invented by the 4th Earl of Sandwich, who, being a card-addict, is said to have eaten only slices of bread and meat, while gambling for 24 hours. A *sanbenito*, the penitential yellow garment, shaped like a monk's scapular, with red St. Andrew's crosses before and behind, worn by heretics under the Spanish Inquisition at auto-da-fé's, owes its name to San Benito, Saint Benedict, who introduced the respective shape of scapular into the wear of monks. *Mackintosh* is a waterproof material of rubber and cloth for garments, invented by the man who gave it his name. *Macadam* is a certain structure in road making, implying successive layers of broken stone subjected to pressure before the next one is laid.

J.L. McAdam was a British surveyor who advocated this method of paving roads.

Adjectives can also be formed by this method: *Machiavellian* (= deceitful, perfidious); *Magellanic* (~ clouds=two galaxies, visible in the southern sky that are the nearest to the Galaxy); *magenta* (= brilliant crimson, fuchsia < It. *Magenta*).

Some verbs formed by the same mechanism are: *to lynch*, *to boycott*, *to bowdlerise*, etc.

VII.9. PORTMANTEAUX

Lewis Carroll, who used this kind of word-forming mechanism extensively, invented the term; it consists of a blending of two words, which have undergone apocope, respectively aphaeresis. *Smog* is a classical example of portmanteau: it comes from the blending of *smoke* + *fog*, where the former has undergone apocope, the latter aphaeresis. The mechanism seems to be fairly productive in Modern English as well, yielding such words as *camcorder* (*camera* + *recorder*), *edutainment* (*educational* + *entertainment*), *agitprop* (*agitation* + *propaganda*, i.e., art, literature and music holding a political message). *Bollywood* (from *Bombay* and *Hollywood*) is used for the Indian film industry, *botox* for *botulinum toxin*, *brunch* (*breakfast* + *lunch*) for a meal between the two first meals of the day, etc.

VII.10. NONCE WORDS

All newly formed words that have not yet been accepted in the legitimate vocabulary of the language, but have been used at least once, usually by an author, are called **nonce words**.

At times, these words enter the vocabulary of the language and come to be listed in dictionaries. Such were some words attributed to Shakespeare: *auspicious*, *to accost somebody*, *to dwindle*, *nayward*, *dauntless*.

All scientific terms start out by being nonce-words, created by various word forming mechanisms, either from English stems (*know-how*, *electioneering* = *things that politicians say or do to have people vote for them*, *empty nester* = *a parent whose children are adults and have left their parents' home*) or from foreign (usually Greek or Latin) stems: *encephalitis*, *emulator*, *empirical*, *empathetic*, etc.

At other times, nonce-words remain in the work of the artist who created them and continue bearing the stylistic charge with which they were endowed initially; they may become, at times, specific style markers for that author: *cleptopigia* (*the mania of stealing pigs* – O. Henry); *lordolatry* (Thackeray); *Mock Turtle* (Lewis Carroll), etc.

CHAPTER VIII

SEMANTIC MEANS OF ENRICHING THE VOCABULARY

VIII.1. FUNDAMENTAL MECHANISMS AND WAYS IN WHICH CHANGE OF MEANING OCCURS

The means of enriching the vocabulary that have been presented so far are predominantly morphological, in that they affect in some way or another the morphological status of the word. As it has been discussed, this can take place either along with or without any modifications in the form of the word. The latter case is that of conversion, which is, nevertheless, a predominantly morphological means of enriching the vocabulary, since the subsequent semantic status of the word is dictated by its new morphological class membership.

Predominantly semantic¹⁹ means of enriching the vocabulary are based on mutations in the meaning of the words, which do not affect their form, but can sometimes bring about the total disappearance of the original from the language.

Change of meaning is especially productive in English and is, to a certain extent, typologically conditioned, in that the impressive amount of polysemy in words belonging to the basic word-stock is favoured by the analytism of the language. Still, other factors also contribute to the productivity of this means of enriching the vocabulary, factors which are not primarily due to linguistic

¹⁹ The term semantic has been preferred to semasiological, which is less known and disputed, although we do not intend here to make use of formal semantics, but to the extent to which it is absolutely necessary. Demonstrations making use of formulae, although handier, would perhaps add an extra terminological strain, which is not intended here.

conditioning, but rather to social and historical causes, to mechanisms of reasoning, such as analogy, generalisation, deduction, induction, etc.

VIII.1.1. Mechanisms generating change of meaning

The fundamental cause which gives rise to change of meaning is the same which brings about the coining of new words by any other means of enriching the vocabulary, or the borrowing of words from other languages: the need to name new notions. The reverse process, that of discarding words which no longer denominate realities existing at a certain synchronical point in the evolution of the language-speaking group, is also important, at this point. Words no longer standing for stringent realities, either become the archaisms of a certain epoch in the evolution of the language, or undergo change of meaning, in that the same word can be "recycled" so as to name something else, either radically different, or connected to its former sphere or content as a notion. The conclusion ensuing from here is obvious: **change of meaning affects words existing in the language, and, more precisely, words in the basic word-stock, with predilection.**

Certainly, not only words in the basic word-stock are affected by change of meaning; it may happen that some word in the rest of the vocabulary should undergo the process as well; still, the phenomenon rather affects widely-known and widely-used items, exactly because they enjoy a wider circulation and are known by many members of the speech community. Words in the basic word-stock are less likely to give rise to ambiguity when a new meaning is added to them than words in the rest of the vocabulary; therefore, speakers more readily receive the new meaning.

Several processes underlie the change of meaning. These are:

- **generalisation (extension) of meaning**
- **specialisation (narrowing) of meaning**
- **degradation (pejoration) of meaning**
- **elevation of meaning**
- **transfer of meaning**

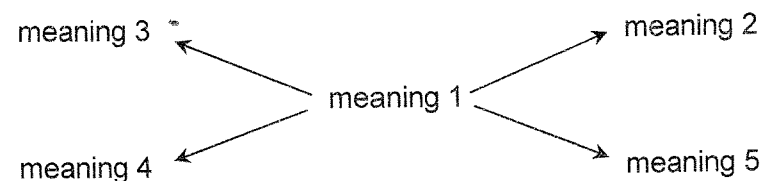
All these processes generate new meaning in already existing words; if the original meaning remains in the language,

polysemy has appeared. If the new meaning eliminates the old one, we can speak of **mutation of meaning**. The first four mechanisms only involve the proper meaning of the word in discussion; the last one involves the figurative meaning, since transfer of meaning implies metaphor, metonymy, synecdoche, etc.

VIII.1.2. Manners in which change of meaning occurs

Regardless of which process is implied in the adding of new meanings to a word, there are two possible ways in which the relationship between the old meaning and the new one can be obtained: by **radiation** and by **concatenation**.

Radiation is the semantic process by which several new meanings are all obtained from a pre-existent meaning and are relatively independent from one another. Schematically, radiation might be represented as:



The adjective *heavy* could be such an example:

- heavy 1* = of great weight; of great density; weighty because abundant; laden with; of the larger kind;
- heavy 2* = having a greater than usual mass, (esp. of isotopes and their compounds);
- heavy 3* = severe, intense, extensive (heavy fighting, frost, losses); acting in this manner (heavy drinker, loser);
- heavy 4* = striking or falling with force (heavy blows, rain, sea, storm);
- heavy 5* (of ground) = clinging, difficult to travel over.

By **concatenation**, on the other hand, the new meanings are obtained from one another, being interdependent among themselves and dependent on the meaning the "chain" has started from:

meaning 1 → meaning 2 → meaning 3 → meaning 4 → meaning 5

An example of concatenation would be that of the adjective and adverb *direct*:

direct 1 = straight, not crooked(ly) or oblique(ly) or round about;

direct 2 = straightforward, frank(ly), going straight to the point, not ambiguous(ly);

direct 3 = diametrical (direct contradiction, contrary, opposite);

direct 4 (astron.) = proceeding from west to east, not retrograde.

At times, words present polysemies that are combinations between the two mechanisms: some meanings are obtained by radiation, which, in their turn, can generate series of concatenated meanings. For instance, the verb *to cross* has two basic radiated meanings:

cross 1 = place crosswise (cross one's legs, fingers, swords);

cross 2 = make sign of cross on or over (esp. oneself), as sign of awe, to invoke divine protection, etc.

From the first meaning, the following meanings have been concatenated:

cross 3 = draw line across; ~out or ~off, cancel; cross t's; cross fortune-teller's hand with = give her coin;

cross 4 = go across (river, road, sea, etc);

cross 5 = cause to interbreed, create hybrids, cross-fertilize (plants).

The second meaning has also generated a collateral meaning by concatenation, which can be found in the expression: *cross my heart and hope to die*.

The logical and semantic processes that generated these meanings are not affected by the mechanism of their genesis; whether the new meaning(s) have come about by radiation or by concatenation, they are underlain by restriction, specialisation, elevation, metaphorisation of meaning, etc. On the other hand, in all the cases above, the first meaning of the word has remained in the language, so that polysemy can be identified. There are cases in which the newly-obtained meaning eliminated the first, old meaning of the word; in these cases a meaning mutation has taken

place and ulterior polysemy started from the meaning(s) that eliminated the old one.

In what follows polysemy and meaning mutation will be discussed in detail.

VIII.2. POLYSEMY

Polysemy has been variously defined and identified; generally, scholars agree that **polysemy is the presence in one word of several (at least two) meanings obtained by radiation or concatenation**. Such a definition implies several remarks. First, it is clear that polysemy is a matter of etymological interrelation between the original and the new meaning(s), in that the new meaning is in some way cognate to the old one.

The basic mechanisms by which semantic change occurs (degradation, elevation, narrowing, etc.) preserve at least one, if not several semantic features contained in the original meaning.

In the case of radiation, each new meaning is obtained from a distinct feature or group of features of the original; for instance, *flash = break suddenly into flame, give out flame or sparks*, yields two sets of meanings: the features before the comma have brought about *flash 2 = burst suddenly into view or perception* (in which the suddenness is prior and the flame is collateral), and *flash 3 = send or reflect like a flash or in flashes (eyes flash fire, flash back defiance), cause to gleam or shine, signal to person by causing lights to shine*, in which the flame is prior and the suddenness is collateral.

In the case of concatenation, a set of relevant semantic features is carried over to all the members of the chain, the differences between them being relatively independent of one another. In the adjective *flat*, for instance, the first meaning is: *horizontal, level, spread out, lying at full length*; these features are carried over to meaning number 2: *even, smooth, unbroken, without projection*; hence, meaning 3: *unqualified, plain, downright*. It is clear that the pejorative connotation present in meaning 3 was not there in meaning 1, still, meaning 3 preserves features of meaning 1; *plain* (<Lat. *planus*) means, at its core *spread out, lying*

at full length; the idea of *flatness* undergoes a figurative meaning mutation in order to yield meaning 3.

If meanings in polysemy are genetically interrelated, it means that conversion also yields polysemy and not homonymy (which is the linguistic accident by which two words that do not originate in the same prototype happen to have the same form). Still, the difference between homonymy and polysemy is a more subtle matter. It has been repeatedly said in the previous chapters that stems can be homonymous to words existing in the language. The reason why the term polysemy was not used in these cases (although the common origin of free stems and corresponding words in the language is beyond discussion) is that stems are not words; they are only potentialities. As such, they may be formally similar to their prototypes, but in no way are they functionally so, since only words have function. It is the words generated starting from these stems that are genetically related with their prototypes, the notion of stem being a purely formal one.

Hence, a fundamental difference between polysemy and homonymy: the latter can be defined considering the formal factor exclusively, whereas the former also implies functional and semantic factors which are synchronically and diachronically conditioned by the common underlying prototype, besides the formal similarity.

This means that both polysemy and homonymy should be considered both diachronically and synchronically, on a case-by-case basis, if one should wish to discern between them correctly. On the other hand, such a view makes it clear that new meaning—addition to an already existing word cannot happen *ex nihilo* and that there always is a double conditioning between the two meanings: the features in the old meaning dictate that the new meaning should be added precisely to this item and not to another, while, on the other hand, the development of a new meaning always diversifies functionally the old meaning, adding to it extra potentialities of development.

VIII.2.1. Generalisation (extension) of meaning

Two phenomena enter this category, but since they occur in the same direction, they will be treated in the same subchapter.

Generalisation of meaning refers to the type of shift from the particular to the general, in that the meaning starts denoting the immediate superordinate term of its original referent. By superordinate term we mean the term denoting the more general notion underlying a series of co-hyponyms in a relation of inclusion. For instance, in the series: *crimson, purple, vermillion, cardinal, carmine, scarlet, ruby, cherry*, the superordinate term is *red*, because the members of the series all denote nuances or shades of red.²⁰ If one of the members of the series, for instance, *ruby*, came to replace the term *red*, denoting all the possible shades of red taken together, it would undergo generalisation of meaning. This phenomenon happened, for instance, with *bird*, which originally meant *the young of birds*, and was generalised to all the members of the order, regardless of their age. Meanwhile, the generic term *fowl* <Anglo-Saxon *fugol*, has come to either refer to *hens*, or to *wild birds when meant as game or meat*, which means it underwent a specialisation and subsequent narrowing of meaning. The noun *inch*, which originally meant *the twelfth part of a foot* (2.54 cm.), has been generalised to *any small amount of something* (*would not yield an inch; give him an inch and he'll take an ell*). Another example is that of the word *daughter*, which has been generalised to mean *developed from something else and very similar to it* (*daughter language, daughter community, daughter movement etc*).

Extension of meaning, on the other hand, means only that the new meaning of the item covers one more or several other referents, regardless of their reciprocal semantic relation. For instance, the noun *incisor*, whose original meaning was *cutting tooth, any front tooth between the canine teeth on any jaw*, developed a new meaning, for medicine, meaning *any kind of cutter*. The cognate adjective, *incisive*, also covers the meaning: *mentally sharp, acute, clear and effective*, besides its original meaning *cutting, penetrating*, induced by affixation. The word *idyll*

²⁰ Hyponymy or inclusion is a type of paradigmatic relation among lexical items, which will be discussed in details in the second volume of this book.

originally meant *pastoral poem*; nowadays it has extended to also mean a *love story*.

It is clear that more than one supplementary meaning can be obtained by extension; from the classical Latin *supportare* (<*sub* + *portare*), which originally meant *to carry to a place* and then in late Latin gained the meaning *to endure*, the contemporary English verb *to support* has developed the following meanings: 1. *approve and help*; 2. *hold/bear weight*; 3. *provide something necessary*; 4. *help to prove something*; 5. *like a sports team*; 6. *be extra performer in a concert, in addition to the main performer*; 7. *(in computing) to provide information and material to keep a computer system or programme working*; 8. *(very formal) to be able to endure, to tolerate*.

VIII.2.2. Specialisation (narrowing) of meaning

The reverse phenomena of what has been described above can be included in this subcategory. Whenever a generic term comes to denote only one member of the class it originally denoted, **specialisation of meaning** has taken place.

The word *kaolin*, denoting the sort of clay from which porcelain is made, means in Chinese *mountain* (<*kao* = *high*, *ling* = *hill*); a *guppy*, initially meaning a *small West-Indian fish, frequently kept in aquaria*, nowadays also means a *streamlined submarine with schnorkel*. The verb *to bear*, coming from the Old English *beran*, to carry, has yielded by specialisation of meaning the following words: *bairn* = *child*, *barm* = *lap*, *barrow* = *container on wheels meant for carrying wares*, *berth* = *secure position*, *bier* = *frame on which a corpse is borne*, *birth*, *burden* and *to forbear*, the last three meanings obtained from a derivative of the initial meaning in Latin.

Narrowing of meaning affects the basic meaning of the word, in that the latter does not survive unaltered alongside with the new one, but is replaced by this, the previous, larger meaning being detectable only by etymological analysis. For instance, the English noun *mayor* comes from the Latin comparative of superiority of *magnus* = *big*. *Cattle* used to mean initially *property*, its Latin original meaning *capital*. The noun *corpse*, originally meaning *body* in Latin, now means in English *dead body*. At times the original

meaning has been discarded for such a long time that it is completely obscure. *Handsome* meant in Middle English *which can easily be handled*; the noun *lanner* = *a species of South European falcon* comes from the Latin *lanarius* = *wool-merchant*, via the French *lanier* = *weaver*, which then came to mean, still in French, by degradation of meaning, *cowardly*.

VIII.2.3. Degradation (pejoration) of meaning

Degradation of meaning is the phenomenon by which a word that used to be neutral connotatively receives in the course of time a pejorative meaning, which either survives alongside with the old one or replaces it completely. In the first case polysemy is engendered, in the second case, meaning mutation.

The adjective *simple*, for instance, besides its first meaning, *uncomplicated*, has also developed a pejorative meaning: *foolish, ignorant, inexperienced*, whence yet another pejorative meaning has radiated: *of low rank, humble, insignificant*. The two pejorative meanings were added to the original meaning, thus combining the mechanism with one of extension of meaning. The word *jackal* denoting *a wild animal related to the dog*, also has a pejorative meaning, *person who does preparatory drudgery or who assists another's immoral behaviour*.

More than often the new meaning eliminates the old one, the word remaining pejorative: *idiot* originally meant *layman, private person*; *knave* originally meant *boy* and has only kept this meaning in the respective figure in court cards; *villain* comes from the Latin *villanus* = *person living in a countryside mansion*, etc. In these cases a complete meaning mutation has taken place.

VIII.2.4. Elevation of meaning

By **elevation of meaning** the reverse of degradation or pejoration is meant; a word initially marked pejoratively or neuter in point of connotation comes to denote something lofty, highly commendable, marked with positive or strongly positive overtones.

The adjective *holy*, for instance, comes from *halig*, which only meant initially *whole*; it is related to the meaning of *hale*, to the greeting *hail (may you be healthy!)* etc. The noun *skill* comes from the Swedish *skilja* = *to separate*, related to the Lithuanian *skelti* = *to*

cleave. A trace of its original meaning can be found in the expression *it skills not = it makes no difference*. *Lord* and respectively *lady* come from the Old English word *hlaf* = *bread* (the noun *loaf* comes from the same root); *lord* initially meant *bread-keeper*, while *lady* meant *bread-kneader*.

VIII.2.5. Transfer of meaning

Polysemy can be more than often achieved by stylistically marked processes, new meanings being added by putting to use the figurative mechanisms of language. There are as many means of multiplying the meanings of a word as figures of speech; each of the latter is potentially a generator of polysemy. At times such new meanings are received *via* poetic diction; in other cases slang becomes the interface between such coinages and the dictionary of the literary language. Calling a child *one's offspring*, for instance, is an initially metaphorical expression; on the other hand, calling him *kid* (=the young of the goat) was clearly a slangy, if not deprecatory, manner to do the same thing.

Since the aim of this book is not to go into useless details about stylistic devices, I will not insist upon these, unless it is necessary. Still, it should be mentioned, before any subclasses of stylistically based polysemy are tackled, that figures of speech, like words in their proper meaning, undergo a phase of "freshness", when they are felt as genuine and illustrative, then they become stale and subsequently undergo a phase in which they are linguistic clichés, after which, if they still remain in the language, their initial stylistic charge is lost, sometimes beyond recognition. The second stage of the process, that in which figures of speech become clichés, is the one when they can become idiomatic and can enter the vocabulary of the language as word-substitutes or set phrases. From this point on, they are the concern of lexicology (in the "genuine" phase they are the concern of stylistics). In the phase in which their stylistic charge is beyond recognition, figures of speech either stay in the vocabulary as simple, apparently non-motivated words, their origin being only detectable by etymological analysis, or, if they are part of slang and have become disused, they either become archaisms (reflecting archaic slang, obviously), or they disappear from the language altogether.

VIII.2.5.1. Metaphor

Metaphorical transfer is one of the most frequent mechanisms of polysemy based on figurative meaning; the contents of two notions with completely different spheres overlap, which allows the substitution of one word with the other in the process of metaphorisation. The process may be illustrated, for instance, by the conversion of the verbs *to incense* and *to lard* from the respective nouns, with a metaphorical meaning. *To incense* means, in its first converted meaning, *to fumigate (person, thing), with incense; to burn incense to deity*. Its second meaning (and a rather recent one, since the 1976 edition of the Oxford Concise Dictionary does not mention it, it only appearing in the 2002 Macmillan), is already figurative, *to praise someone very insistently*. Likewise, *to lard*, originally meaning *to put small pieces of fat or bacon on meat before cooking it*, has gained a metaphorical meaning in the expression *to be larded with something*, which means *to contain a lot of extra things which are not necessary*.

It goes without saying that metaphors appear in the polysemy of other parts of speech as well. Perhaps the equivalents of *love* might prove relevant in this respect: (for both sexes): *sweetheart, sweet, sweetie, Sl. sweet patootie; honey, hearthrob, helpmate, better half, turtledove, angel, apple of one's eye*; (for men): *swain, Sl. sheik, Sl. stud, Sl. nut; escort, cavalier, fan, Sl. bug, Sl. hound, Sl. freak; champion, Inf. booster*; (for women): *precious, jewel, pet, minion, toast, Inf. rib, squaw; one's better half, etc.*

Zoosemy (denominating human persons by names of animals) also has a metaphorical origin; thus, to call somebody a *fox, a cat, a lioness, a fish, an eel, a goose, etc.*, means to transfer upon that person some feature(s) of the respective animals. The sphere of vegetables can also yield such denominations: *a peach, a lemon, a cucumber, etc.*

Expressions like: *the eye of a needle, the foot of the hill, a bird's eye view, to make a beeline for, etc.* are based on the interplay between personal/non-personal attributes. Likewise, *to dawn on somebody, to throw light upon, to be in the darkness, to grasp an idea, to get the hang of, etc.* make metaphorical use of the respective overlaps in contents to add new metaphorical meanings to the proper ones.

Since based on figures of speech, all these cases of polysemy bring about incongruity between the spheres of the two notions which are substituted for one another; the more striking this incongruity, the more vivid the metaphoric use of the word, and the more likely its survival in the vocabulary will be.

VIII.2.5.2. Metonymy

Unlike metaphor, metonymy is always based on some ontological connection between the two notions brought together, which means that the polysemy it brings about is not one of contiguity, but one of continuity between the two spheres. With stylistic metonymy, there are several directions in which this continuity can take place: thus, the general can stand for the particular, and vice versa, the part for the whole, the agent for the instrument, the container for the object(s) contained, the function for the group of people having that function, etc.

Therefore, there are several directions in which metonymical transfer of meaning can take place, and these are as many as subtypes of metonymies. Some of these are:

- **the part standing for the whole in which it is part:** *hands* (=men in a crew of workers, on a ship, etc.); *head* (=number of cattle, animals, etc);

- **the feature standing for the group possessing that feature:** *the rich, the poor, the beautiful*, but also: *the British, the Dutch, etc.*

- **the container standing for the object contained:** *a glass* (=a drink); *the gallery* (=people standing in the gallery); *a classroom* (=pupils in that classroom);

- **a tool or a symbol for a group of people using or wearing it:** *the pens* (=writers); *the crown* (=monarchy); *the caps and gowns* (=students);

- **the agent or place for the group using or working in them:** *the pulpit* (=the clergy); *the bar* (=lawyers); *the swords* (=people handling swords in somebody's service);

- **parts of the body for their function, used for people:** *the eyes and ears* (=someone's spies); *the brains* (=people who do the thinking for other people); etc.

These are, certainly, only a few of the ways in which metonymy and the transfer of meaning it engenders can function. The result of this transfer of meaning is, like with metaphor, either the complete disappearance of the first meaning of the word from the language, in which case a mutation of meaning has appeared, or the preservation of both proper and figurative meaning in the language. These cases are by far the largest in number, and represent as many instances of polysemy.

Cases when the second meaning replaces the first are hard to detect, unless etymological analysis is applied. These exist, nevertheless, although synchronically they might seem obscure; for instance, the word *pen* is the result of a metonymical process in which its first meaning in Latin, that of *feather*, was eliminated in English. *London Bridge* is not a bridge at all; like in Romanian (*Podul Mogosoaiei, Podul Mosilor, etc*), by metonymy, the wooden "bridges" on the edge of the streets in the Middle Ages denoted the entire street. The first meaning of "sidewalk" disappeared.

VIII.2.5.3. Other figures of speech generating transfer of meaning

Although the great majority of such cases can be found in the categories above, other figures of speech can also induce polysemy in words used in them. Some of these are:

a. Simile

By simile, such verbal clichés are normally obtained, which are not individual words, but set phrases. The usual structure of the simile (as... as) is observed in them. They abound in the English language, at times even generating metaphors by the elimination of the "as...as" structure: *as red as a rose; as slippery as an eel, as deaf as a lamppost, as dark as pitch, as drunk as a sailor, etc.* By eliminating the comparative mid-term of the simile, the metaphorical equivalents of some such expressions have come to be used for persons: *a fox* (<as sly as a fox); *two peas* (<as like as two peas); *pitch-dark* (<as dark as pitch).

b. Euphemism

The term denotes the replacement of some rough, impolite or taboo-istic word by some other word or expression standing for it in common practise.

Euphemisms are especially numerous in the field of death and death-related customs: thus, *to die* can be toned down by using such verbs as: *to expire, to de cease, to cease, to end, to vanish, to disappear, etc.*, or such verbal expressions as: *to lose one's life, to lay down one's life, to kick the bucket, to give up the ghost, to breathe no more, to pass on, to go the way of all flesh, to go to one's reward, to push up the daisies, etc.* An adjective like *stupid*, which clearly has offensive connotations, can be euphemistically made milder by using: *dull-witted, unintelligent, dull, slow, dim-witted, slow-witted, half-witted, fat-witted, deficient, thick, dense, obtuse, Boeotian, lumpish, oafish, addlebrained, addlebrained, muddled, noodle-headed, etc.*

Euphemisms clearly put to use figurative meanings and connotative overtones, but also create polysemy in the items used instead of the blunt, direct terms. The problem is, as many scholars of the phenomenon have noticed, that the words used euphemistically tend to become, in time, bearers of negative connotation themselves, so that they have to be replaced, in their turn, by other euphemistic words and expressions. Hence, the high number of such substitutes for one and the same notion, and, subsequently, the productivity of the phenomenon.

c. Hyperbole

By hyperbole an exaggeration of a notion in size or impact is meant, which normally puts to use a figurative, even metaphorical mechanism, at times. The impact of hyperbole is generally emphasis, but the reverse phenomenon, minimisation (litotes) could also be ranged under the same heading. The figure of speech can rely on several mechanisms: on antonymy, as in: *to make mountains out of molehills*, on superlatives: *utmost regret, deepest gratitude, etc.*; on pluralisation of nouns which have no plural: *the sands of the desert, the waters of the sea, etc.*, on violations of collocational rules: *as fit as a sow for a saddle, etc.* Litotes can also be built upon similar mechanisms: *a drop of, a tad of, a crumb of* can be used for the meaning *very little*. *No, rather, fairly* are used as augmentatives: *no fool, no coward, fairly good, rather tall, etc.*

d. Irony

By ironical usage, words can acquire meanings that are antonymous to their initial meaning. To call somebody ironically *an angel*, as in: *You're such an angel for having ruined the new tablecloth!* implies the very contrary of the content normally assigned to the notion. Although context will be the ultimate proof that a word or expression is used ironically, such expressions as: *a nice mess, it cost a pretty penny, pretty difficult* have entered the vocabulary of the language as verbal clichés.

* * *

Most figures of speech that imply transfer of meaning, thus creating polysemy in the words that enter them, do not eliminate the first meaning of the word. When meaning mutation appears, i.e. the old meaning is discarded by the new, figurative one, it can only be identified etymologically. Still, there are comparatively few cases of this kind, because, in order to keep up the impact of the figurative use, the first meaning ought to exist as well, so as to contrast with the new one and preserve the stylistic value of the latter. The chances of these meanings to become the norm are proportional to the speed with which the expressions in which they appear become clichés and are listed in the dictionaries as such.

CHAPTER IX

EXTERNAL MEANS OF ENRICHING THE VOCABULARY

As it has been argued so far, the language can put to use its internal resources in order to create virtually any new word denoting any new notion.

The problem is fairly more complicated, though, if one takes into account the rather long time it takes for a new item to be coined, to enter circulation, first as a nonce-word, then to be accepted by the speech community, at times *via* slang or authorial work, so as to finally become a legitimate member of the vocabulary.

Many times, the speed with which the new notion imposes itself to the speech community is much higher than it takes the inner mechanisms of word-formation productive in the language at that point to shape up and consecrate a new word for it. At such times, a word or word-substitute is borrowed from another language to stand for the new notion.

There are several cases in which a borrowing is preferred to coining the new word by internal means of word-formation:

- a. when the language is not formed completely yet – in this case it is not borrowing proper, but rather the constitutive elements of the language in question we are discussing;
- b. when the language is in a position of substratum or superstratum for another language; if the number of borrowings is massive enough, and if the basic word-stock is affected, it is, again, a case of constitutive elements of a new language or of a considerably different one that we have under discussion;
- c. if practice imposes a comparatively even and recognizable set of terms in a field of human activity, internationalisms are coined and borrowed in a relatively invariable form into all the

languages spoken by groups having to do with that field of activity;

- d. if words reflect a notion specific to one or several groups only, which is irrelevant or unknown to other groups, the original word designating that notion in its source language is borrowed into the other languages;
- e. a situation bound to the previous, in which the respective notion becomes relevant to other groups as well; if the notion or the situation is referred to by an expression, it will be partially translated into the receiving languages, becoming a translation loan;
- f. for the sake of emphasizing social position, education, other subjective factors, foreign words that have synonyms in the receiving language will be borrowed, not for denotational reasons, but for connotational ones.

In most cases, borrowings come into a language so as to meet a need; still, preferring them to native words can bring about disadvantages as well. In many cases it is borrowed words that undergo processes of folk etymology or corruption; on the other hand, if misused, except for the failure in communication they may thus bring about, they also convey extralinguistic pejorative information about their users. This fact might make it necessary to discuss the frequency of borrowings as against that of native words in normal communication. Still, since this problem is organically tied to the type of borrowing under discussion, it will be discussed in parallel with the classification of the latter.

IX.1. CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENTS OF THE LANGUAGE, AS AGAINST BORROWINGS

Many linguists still treat under "borrowings" everything that has entered the English language in the course of time and is not of Anglo-Saxon origin. Without entering the history of the language more than it is necessary, it should be said, nevertheless, that this is a completely erroneous point of view; the English language would definitely not be what it is now without the organically

assimilated input of several other languages of which, perhaps, the most radical as to effect was Norman French. It is true that the language stayed Germanic, regardless of the number and type of borrowings it took over; still, to consider quite a large percentage of the basic word-stock and the great majority of lexical affixes in English to be of the same importance as, say, the few words come into the language from Chinese or Russian would be a gross mistake.

Therefore, a distinction should be made among non-Anglo-Saxon elements which came into the language in the course of time, in that those which have had an impact on the further evolution of the language should be treated as **constitutive elements of English**, whereas foreign elements borrowed into the vocabulary which came after the Early Modern English period should be considered **borrowings** proper.

Such a point of view would not only distinguish temporally between pre-modern foreign elements, likely to have had some impact upon the ulterior structure of English, and modern and contemporary foreign elements borrowed after the language was formed. Since the vocabulary is the compartment of language which is most open to change and in which foreign elements penetrate the most easily, it is clear that what we call constitutive elements of the language have had, in a way or another, some impact on other compartments of the language as well, that is, that they somehow crossed the borderlines of vocabulary into, for instance, morphology (by inducing the extension of borrowed affixes to native words), syntax (by increasing the speed at which endings were dropped, and thus influencing the regime of word-order), etc. None of these phenomena are present in the case of borrowings proper.

IX.2. THE NATIVE (ANGLO-SAXON) ELEMENT

The soil upon which all these foreign influences were engrafted is one of Germanic origin, more precisely, an Indo-European, West-Germanic motley of dialects spoken by the Anglo-Saxon tribes which conquered England starting with 449 A.D. The

language (or languages) played the part of superstratum to the Celtic language of the original inhabitants of Britain, whose traces are still detectable in the modern language, but which gave in to Anglo-Saxon somewhere around the 6th century A.D.

The very name of the language and of the people (*Englisc* < *Engla-cynn*) comes from one of the three tribes that conquered Britain: the Angles. The other two tribes, the Saxons and the Jutes, had, in the beginning, their own dialects, later on the initial three giving rise to four other varieties (Mercian, Northumbrian, Kentish, West-Saxon). What we call today Old English is, in fact, the West-Saxon dialect, which was taken over as a literary standard and which imposed itself upon the other dialects as such, although there are written documents in some of the other dialects as well.

Old English was a far more synthetic language than modern English, with a highly developed tense-system and nominal paradigm, using a greatly diversified system of endings in order to express grammatical categories. There existed four basic types of verbs, each of these with classes and subclasses, out of which strong verbs are the oldest Germanic heritage in the system.

The vocabulary of Old English contained, on the one hand words of common Indo-European stock (starting with the verb *to be*, in which the presence of suppletivism is, again, a sign of Indo-European origin), alongside with words of common Germanic stock.

Since Indo-European elements can only be detected by historical-comparative means, the elements present in other cognate languages are likely to have been inherited from the mother language. This is the oldest layer in the word-stock and consists of words exclusively belonging to the basic word-stock and denoting notions fundamental to human existence, such as:

- **fundamental terms of kinship:** *father, mother, brother, son, daughter;*
- **basic natural notions and phenomena:** *sun, moon, water, wood, hill, tree, stone;*
- **names of animals and birds:** *bull, cat, crow, goose;*
- **names of the parts of the body:** *ear, eye, foot, arm;*
- **some of the commonest verbs:** *bear, sit, stand, come;*

- **adjectives denoting physical properties:** *hard, quick, white, red;*

- **most cardinal numerals:** *two, ten, three.*

It is clear that these words can be also found in the word-stock that can be traced back to Germanic origins, since Germanic is a branch of Indo-European. Still, there exist in English words that do not have cognate forms in Romance languages or Slavic languages, but such forms appear in the other Germanic languages (Scandinavian languages, Dutch, German, Flemish, etc.). These words are of common Germanic stock and are by far more numerous than common Indo-European words. They also denote fundamental notions relating to human life and activity and appear in the basic word-stock, but also in the mass of the vocabulary, sometimes being archaic. Their frequency and polysemy is the highest in the word stock, which gives, among other factors, the Germanic character of the language. Some of these are:

- **names of seasons and natural phenomena:** *winter, summer, storm, rain, ice, ground;*

- **names of materials:** *coal, lead, iron, cloth;*

- **nouns reflecting fundamental space orientation:** *room, ground, bridge, floor;*

- **names of basic garments:** *shirt, hat, shoe;*

- **some abstract nouns:** *care, evil, hope, life, need, rest;*

- **verbs related to basic activities:** *ride, bake, burn, hear, answer;*

- **adjectives:** *dead, broad, deep, deaf;*

- **most adverbs, all pronouns, articles and most prepositions.**

A statistics of frequency in the English vocabulary has revealed that these words represent 80% of the most frequent words used in the language.

Most native words are mono- or disyllabic; when disyllabic, their stress falls on the first syllable; they are highly polysemantic and have a high combinatory valence, both for affixation (with affixes of any origin) and for composition; also a high percentage of words obtained by conversion lies in the native stock. Their high

combinatory valence is the reason why these words can develop the most numerous word-families in English.

Still, perhaps the most important feature of native words we are interested in here is the fact that, relatively few as they are, they dictate the way in which all foreign words are assimilated into English. The basic word-stock not only creates pronunciation analogies, stress patterns, constraints upon length or distribution of newly-borrowed items, but also, which is more important, dictates the meaning with which new words enter the vocabulary and imposes change of meaning in them.

Normally, words that already have equivalents in the basic word-stock are only borrowed to carry other connotational values than their native synonyms, once the language is formed. Also, since no two perfect synonyms can coexist in the language for a long time, even when such synonyms entered the language "by force", during the Norman conquest, they shortly underwent degradation, elevation, specialisation or some other semantic process of differentiation, so as to coexist with their native synonyms. In other cases, the borrowing from Norman eliminated the native word altogether, or became an archaism itself.

The case of the impact of Norman French upon English is, nevertheless, a special one, perhaps an atypical one, judging by the massive consequences it had upon the language. In all the other cases of foreign influence upon the English vocabulary, the words that entered it answered a strong necessity, or else they either disappeared or underwent semantic change, the preference always being for the native word.

Chronologically and functionally, foreign words that entered the language could be grouped according to whether they entered English before or after the Early Modern English period; elements prior to the formation of Modern English can be considered to have contributed to its formation, while those ulterior to this point are simply borrowings with no great impact upon the language.

Among the former, i.e. the constitutive elements of the English language, one is of substratum, Celtic, the rest being represented by superstratum: Latin, Scandinavian, and Norman French.

IX.3. CONSTITUTIVE ELEMENTS OF THE ENGLISH VOCABULARY

IX.3.1. The Celtic element

Two types of influence can be spoken about here: the substratum language found by the Anglo-Saxon conquerors and ulterior borrowings into English from the various neo-Celtic languages and dialects.

There were two branches of Celtic: Cymric (which gave rise to Welsh and Cornish) and Goidelic (which gave rise to Irish, Scotch Gaelic and Manx). Because of historical conditions, some of these sub-branches have become extinct; on the other hand, during the Roman conquest of Britain, few inhabitants belonging to the upper classes were bilingual. Latin was spoken in Britain for four centuries, mostly by the conquerors, while Celtic was spoken by the unconquered populations, which had migrated into the steep regions beneath Hadrian's Wall and into the mountains. Neither became the conquering language, as it had happened in Gaul, for instance, because the two languages had not actually been in contact. The first Anglo-Saxon raiders coming to settle in Britain found the plain region already laid waste, after the Roman withdrawal, so that they did not really come into contact with the Celtic populations either, who either remained in their own territories or were assimilated by the conquerors.

There are a few traces left from Celtic in English, especially in Western toponyms (*Kent, Devonshire, Cornwall, Cumberland, York, Thames*). The first syllable in: *Winchester, Exeter, Gloucester, Lichfield* is Celtic; so are all the waters (14 in number) called *Avon* (=river, water). The particles *aber* (=mouth of a river), *cumb* (=deep valley), *dun, dum* (=small hill), *llan* (=church), *ceann* (=cape), *coil* (=forest), *inis* (=island), *inbhair* (=mountain), *bail* (=house) are of Celtic origin, in such toponyms as: *Aberdeen, Duncombe, Dumfries, Dunedin, Llandaff, Kilbride, Kenadre, Kilbrook, Innisfree, Inverness, Ballantrae*.

Apart from toponyms, the words: *bin(n)* = *chest*, *crag*=*crag*, and *dun*=*small hill* have remained in Modern English from this epoch of the history.

Still, in ulterior periods regional variants and dialects of English were pervaded with neo-Celtic words (Northern or Scots, for instance). In the Romantic period (during the "Celtic Revival" movement), words from neo-Celtic languages were used in poetry and were re-introduced into English: *loch* (=lake), *lass* (=young girl), *bairn* (=male baby, youngster), *banshee* (=fairy), *leprechaun* (=elf), *bannock* (=flat bread roll), *ben* (=mountain), etc.

IX.3.2. The Latin element

Not only the Celts in Britain, but also the Anglo-Saxons on the continent, before they started raiding England, were in contact with the Romans. There exist several hundred Latin words which can be found in the various Germanic languages at an early date, and about fifty of these still exist in Modern English.

These words could be called **the first wave of Latin elements in English**. They existed in the language of the conquerors who came to Britain and refer to such fields as:

- **military life:** *camp, mile, pit, street, wall*;
- **trade:** *-monger, cheap, pound, inch*;
- **domestic life, food, clothes:** *kettle, meal, pillow, cheese, pepper, poppy, wine, kitchen, cup, dish*;
- **building:** *chalk, copper, tile*;
- **miscellaneous:** *mule, dragon, pipe* (=musical instrument), *Caesar* (=emperor, it also exists as a common noun in Gothic).

Not only did some of these words exist in Celtic as well (*strata-via*, for instance, which gave *Stratton, Stratford*), but other words had been borrowed into Celtic and transmitted into Anglo-Saxon after the conquest as well: the ending *-chester, -caster, -port, -wic* probably come from Latin.

A **second wave of Latin elements** began along with the Christianisation of Britain, which began around 597. This was the most important wave of Latin elements that entered the language, extending over a period of influence of over five hundred years, which brought, at various times, elements which entered both the basic word-stock and the rest of the vocabulary, coming both from literary Latin and the Latin of the Vulgata, referring both to church and to other fields of activity.

These words could be subdivided, accordingly, into a group of general interest, containing more popular words, which entered the basic word-stock, such as:

- **words referring to church:** *alms, anthem, abbot, nun, bishop, candle, devil, creed, pope, monk, etc;*

- **words referring to domestic life:** *cook, pear, lentil, cap, sock, chest, pine, lily, plant, etc;*

- **words referring to education:** *school, master, verse, metre, to punish, etc;*

Another category of more learned words, containing ecclesiastical terms, medical terms, learned names of animals and plants, entered the mass of the vocabulary: *balsam, comet, circle, plaster, etc.*

About 450 Latin words were introduced into Old English in the two waves of influence discussed so far. Since they represented notions which reflected everyday life, most of them had a high circulation, entered the basic word-stock and were assimilated almost organically by the English language; more than often they can be discerned to be of foreign origin only by etymological analysis. Still, the Latin influence upon Anglo-Saxon was not as massive as to induce a shift in the character of the language, as it happened in so many cases on the Continent; English remained Germanic in its essence.

Borrowings from Latin also came in two waves, one that started in the 14th and 15th century and another, which is still going on.

The Renaissance brought about a new influx of Latin words, mostly learned, which penetrated into the language *via* religious literature, especially through the works of Wycliffe. These words have a smaller degree of assimilation and are still to some extent felt as alien or neological by most native speakers: *abject, adjacent, homicide, infancy, malefactor, project, to remit, scripture, tract, ulcer* are only some of the more than 1000 words borrowed at this time. More important is the fact that along with these words, most of the affixes they were carrying also entered English, reinforcing the same affixes existing in already borrowed French words, and became productive, being added to native stems. Such are: *-able, -ible, -ent, -al, -ous, ab-, con-, dis-, re-, sub-, etc.*

Yet another wave of borrowings is that of internationalisms, which are not borrowings proper, being coined in order to serve terminological purposes in all languages. This is a phenomenon which still goes on in our days; to the extent to which new terms are needed, free forms, combining forms and affixes from both Latin and Greek are put to work in order to generate new terms. The predictable tendency is that more and more forms from English should start fulfilling this terminological function, since English has become, if not the *lingua franca* of the modern epoch, at least the *lingua franca* of computers.

IX.3.3. The Scandinavian element

The first raids of the Vikings started in 787 and went on for about one hundred years, when half of England fell under Danish rule. Even so, the Danes continued raiding Saxon England, until, in 1016, England and Norway became one kingdom under Canute. Since many settlers of Danish origin mostly, but also belonging to the other three Norse nations settled in England, a huge number of toponyms are today Scandinavian. These are all the place-names ending today in *-by* (*Derby, Rugby, Whitby, etc.*), in *-thorp, -thorpe* (*Althorp, Bishopsthorpe, Northorpe, etc.*), in *-thwaite* (*Applethwaite, Langthwaite, etc.*), in *-toft* (*Eastoft, Brimtoft, Langtoft*), in *-dale* (*Avonsdale, Scarsdale*), in *-fell* (*Whinfell, Wilberfell, etc.*), the particles meaning in Norse, respectively: *town, village, clearing, piece of ground, dale, hill*. Other Scandinavian place-names end in *-kirk* (meaning "church": *Selkirk, Kirkby*) or in *-wick, -wich* (=creek, bay: *Ipswich, Greenwich, Sandwich*).

The Scandinavian influence was extremely easy to assimilate into the vocabulary, since the two languages were cognate, on the one hand, and because bilingualism during the Danelaw and after was extremely frequent. Moreover, the two languages were not so wide apart as today; the Northmen and the English were able to understand one another without any interpreter. A great many words were almost identical in form and in meaning and they are part of the common word-stock inherited from proto-Germanic. Such are: *father, folk, house, thing, man, think, smile, ride, stand, set, spin, full, well, bring, wise, etc.*

Beside these identical items, many words had identical roots in the two languages, but different endings. It is almost impossible to tell whether the modern word stands for the Old English word, for the Scandinavian borrowing or for both, since endings were lost non-discriminately of origin in the Middle English period. Such words are: *burn*, *drag*, *fast*, *gang*, *thick*. When there were great differences in form, the English word survived, nevertheless, the Scandinavian word leaving traces in dialectal usages: *benk* (=bench), *kirk* (=church), *kist* (=chest). In other cases, English words were replaced by Scandinavian ones: *to take* (instead of *neman*), or both survived in the language and underwent change of meaning: *craft* – *skill*; *from* – *fro*; *sick* – *ill*; *shirt* – *skirt*; *heaven* – *sky*, etc.

There are several criteria by which Scandinavian words can be recognized in English: they have preserved the initial consonantal cluster *sk-*, where English has palatalised it to *sh-*; *sky*, *skin*, *skirt*, *scrub*, *bask* are all of Scandinavian origin.

In English words, the Germanic diphthong *ai* became *o*, *ou* in Modern English, but *ei*, *e* in Old Norse; *aye*, *nay*, *reindeer*, *swain* are of Scandinavian origin.

Regarding the sphere of activity they refer to, there are many words which refer to law and warfare (*fellow*, *law*, *outlaw*, *to crave*, *thrall*, *wrong*), but most words come from Scandinavian relate to the sphere of everyday life and entered the basic word-stock (*anger*, *bank*, *calf*, *crop*, *crook*, *gate*, *guess*, *keel*, *haven*, *flat*, *ill*, *loose*, *meek*, *low*, *to happen*, *sly*, *tight*, *ugly*, *to take*, *to thrust*, *to crawl*, etc).

IX.3.4. The Norman French element

The Norman Conquest had incalculable effects upon what was to become the English language. If this event had not happened, English would have been, perhaps, a less analytical language, the tendencies already present in Old English might not have come to be the norm so quickly and, maybe, English would not have become the *lingua franca* of the world, nowadays. The Norman Conquest is, perhaps, the only case of history directly influencing the evolution of a language and making its pace of

evolution increase in a way completely atypical for the history of any language.

The morphological and phonetical changes brought about by this event in the language are still a matter of dispute (linguists argue that these changes would have occurred anyway, having in view the tendencies existing in the language). Yet, the vocabulary, which is always the most open to influence in any language, seems to have been the battlefield where the two languages, the Anglo-Saxon substratum and the Norman French superstratum collided with the most visible effects. Whenever two languages are in contact, reciprocal influences are absorbed through the vocabulary: phonetic change comes *via* words, so do new affixes and collocations that dictate the distribution and, ultimately the syntax.

Before the conquest, the two languages had been virtually alien to one another, but for the common Indo-European stock and the common Latin stock (which, in French, is genetically conditioned).²¹ The climax of French influence in the vocabulary took place between 1251 and 1400, when nearly half of the total sum of French words came into the language. The period roughly corresponds to the years after the loss of Normandy by the conquerors and the reestablishment of English as the prevailing language in Britain.

By 1400, Norman French had greatly enriched the English vocabulary (about 10.000 words had entered the language, of which 7500 are still in use) still, the language was Germanic in essence and structure. Many times the new French word had a synonym in Anglo-Saxon. From the contact between the two words, the following situations could come forth:

- the new French word eliminated the native word (it is the case of *here*, *aethere*, *ieldu*, which were replaced respectively by: *army*, *noble*, *age*);
- the two words underwent change of meaning, remaining both in the language (such are the pairs: *work* – *labour*, *wedding* – *marriage*, *to shun* – *to avoid*, etc.);

²¹ According to Otto Jespersen, only two words had entered English from French before 1050, and other two between 1051 and 1100.

- the native word remained in the language and the French word was eliminated (*amity*, *moiety* were finally eliminated by *friendship* and *half*).

Word-building elements came into English from French, or from Latin *via* French, which is a sign of the very close contact between the two languages; let us only mention here a few (the detailed description can be found in the chapter on Affixation): the suffixes *-ment*, *-ess*, *-ence* (and its variants), *-age*, *-ard*, *-ee*, *-able*, *-ible*, etc., as well as the prefixes: *dis-*, *des-*, alongside with a series of Latin prepositions which had become pre-positive combining forms in French.

These words and word-building elements were, in most cases, subject to organic assimilation into the English vocabulary and, as such, their frequency of use was very high and still is, down to our day. It has been argued that one-third of the words most frequently used in Modern English are of French origin. The major part of these words were assimilated into the basic word-stock, a fact bearing testimony that they denoted not only notions related to feudal administration, justice and way of life, but also notions fundamental to everyday life, either reflected already by English words or not.

Several spheres of activity to which these words refer are:

1. **feudal administration:** *to govern, state, realm, royal, crown, castle, baron, servant, subjection, marshal, parliament, mayor, county, etc;*
2. **justice and law:** *crime, fraud, to prove, judge, evidence, property, defence, to acquit, etc;*
3. **military life:** *arms, army, battle, siege, defence, regiment, lieutenant, sergeant, war, peace, etc;*
4. **religion:** *sermon, service, confession, prayer, clergy, virtue, pity, friar, sacrifice, etc;*
5. **commerce and trades:** *draper, painter, tailor, jeweller, carpenter, furniture, market, etc;*
6. **arts and sciences:** *art, painting, literature, beauty, column, prologue, poet, prose, romance, medicine, pain, contagion, stomach, remedy, balm, poison, etc;*
7. **cooking and leisure:** *veal, beef, pork, mutton, oyster, sardine, dinner, supper, feast, repast, appetite, soup, gown,*

robe, collar, kerchief, cape, attire, pearl, ruby, diamond, music, juggler, sport, dice, conversation, etc.

The great majority of these words were readily assimilated in English, because they represented fields of activity rather unfamiliar to the Anglo-Saxons; still, when basic aspects of their lives were meant, the English words prevailed; for instance, trades named by French words related to court life and luxury, but the basic trades are still denominated by native words: *baker, butcher, fisherman, weaver, saddler, shepherd, etc.*

Some morphological pieces of evidence also plead for the high degree of assimilation of French words into the vocabulary. French words underwent a change of stress, according to native stress patterns, which then made them ready for the loss of endings which they underwent alongside with native words: *miracle, country, ancestor, horrible* were originally accentuated on the second syllable. Verbs ending in *-er* in French lost their ending: *address, desire, dispute, appeal, assault, etc.*

Many French words underwent affixation with native affixes or composition with a native stem: *faithfulness, bakery, husbandry, gentlewoman, fish-market, etc.* It goes without saying that all French words received the Anglo-Saxon endings for different grammatical categories: number, aspect, tense, case, etc.

Under the pressure of the French affixes, many native ones lost their productivity; on the other hand, composition, which used to be a very productive means of enriching the vocabulary in Old English, started losing ground to conversion. Meanwhile, the language became much richer by the appearance of synonymical series containing native, French and Latin words which, by acquiring ulterior connotational overtones, allowed a more accurate way of expressing things in the language.

By 1400, English had won supremacy over French in administration, law and everyday life; the language was clearly a different one, though, and all the tendencies which were to make English become what it is today were at work. Moreover, the literary standard had appeared, the London dialect, whose most familiar illustration lies in the works of Chaucer.

In point of vocabulary, the age of "grounding" was coming to an end; whatever entered the vocabulary from this point on can be

labelled as borrowings, since the epoch of major influences upon English had already come to an end.

IX.4. BORROWINGS

As mentioned before, **borrowings are foreign words, which have entered at various times the vocabulary of English, without influencing its ulterior evolution as a language.**

This definition points at a few features of borrowings as against other elements in the vocabulary.

First, **borrowings are relatively disparate elements**, in that they do not represent a systematic influence upon the language; one can in no case speak of "waves" of influence or of "epochs" of higher or lower frequency in their appearance, as it is the case with the constitutive elements of the language. There exist languages from which only a few words were borrowed into English throughout its history as a language.

It has been argued that the status of borrowings as against constitutive elements of the language should be judged according to their degree of assimilation into the language and to their frequency. Generally speaking, the degree of assimilation can be dictated not only by the compartment of the vocabulary into which the item in discussion is borrowed, but also by its adaptation to the phonetical rules of the receiving language and by its liability to extend its distribution in the latter. The older a borrowing is in the language, the greater its chances are to meet both these last requirements. It can even be integrated into the basic word-stock and be unrecognisable as borrowing by the native speakers, staying a borrowing at the same time. It is the case of *church* (<Gk. *kuriakon*); no native speaker of English will feel it as alien, it is part of the basic word-stock, it is perfectly adapted to the English pronunciation patterns, and yet, to assert from this example that Greek is one of the constitutive elements of the English vocabulary would be a mistake.

A backward glimpse into the history of the language is relevant to set apart simple borrowings from influences upon the language; but prospectively things are not that easy to discern any

longer; English is a live language and it is as open to future influence as any other language is to English. The rules governing interlinguistic contact function both ways.

Probably the best way to ascertain that a group of words taken over from a language represents borrowings or tends to exert a structural influence upon a language is to probe into the history of the groups speaking the two languages: the "donor" and the "receiver". If with Greek things are fairly clear, in that, since the English have never been in direct contact with the Greeks, neither conquered them nor were conquered by them, words borrowed from Greek do not run any chance of ever having influenced the structure of English, words coming from Indian dialects, for instance, which are fairly numerous in the last edition of the Macmillan, might set a problem in the future.

As it is now, nevertheless, English presents us with larger or smaller groups of words borrowed at various moments in its history from various languages, which will be presented in what follows.

IX.4.1. Borrowings from Greek

A few words from Greek entered English during the Middle Ages, such as: *academy*, *atom*, *diphthong*, *harmony*, *ecstasy*, *theatre*, *tragedy*, *comedy*, *tyrant*, but they came through Latin and French.

The great bulk of Greek words were borrowed during the Renaissance, alongside with a new wave of borrowings from Latin, out of which some dropped out of the language, being too learned and altogether unnecessary. Some examples of such words: *to obfuscate*, *to deruncinate* (=to weed), *ludibundness* (=love of sport), *adminiculation* (=aid). Still, some other Greek words borrowed at this time, although still felt as alien by native speakers, are quite familiar and used in everyday communication: *atmosphere*, *autograph*, *crisis*, *critic*, *drama*, *genius*, *parenthesis*, *pathetic*, *pneumonia*, *scheme*, *skeleton*, etc. In many cases Greek words were borrowed twice, once *via* French in Middle English and then *via* Latin in the 17th century. Such an example is the word *diskos*, which was first borrowed through the Latin *discus* into French, and came into Middle English as *dish*, then it was re-borrowed in the 17th century from Latin as *disk* or *discus*.

Such cases of re-borrowing from Greek are quite frequent in English; some more examples could be: *diamond* – *adamant* (<*adamanta*); *balm* – *balsam* (<*balsamon*); *phantom* – *phantasm* (<*phantasma*); *palsy* – *paralysis* (<*paralysisia*), etc.

More relevant to Modern English are the internationalisms with terminological value, which have been coined out of Greek roots, stems, affixes and combining forms, which will be described in a further subchapter.

IX.4.2. Borrowings from other Germanic languages

A large number of words were borrowed from **Flemish**, **Dutch** and **Low German** during the Middle Ages, due to commercial intercourse between England and the Low Countries. These words reflect the common sphere of interest of the communities and some examples would be: *to botch* (=to patch, to mend), *to clack* (=to cleanse), *to lash* (=to seam), *spool*, *pack*, *stripe*, *guilder* (=Dutch silver coin), *peg*, *prop*, *deck*, *dock*, *freight*, *skipper*, etc.

The number of these borrowings increased in the pre-modern and modern period, due also to the naval wars between the two countries. Most of them reflect the domain of ships and sailing: *bulwark*, *cruise*, *boom* (=pole by which a sail is stretched), *to swab* (=to sweep the deck). Some other borrowings from Dutch are: *aloof*, *boor*, *brandy*, *loiter*, *sketch*, *landscape*, *smuggle*, *snuff*, *toy*, *wagon*, *trick*, *easel*, etc.

A few **German** borrowings also date back to this epoch: *carouse*, *to plunder*, *sauerkraut*, *Liverwurst*, etc. Modern borrowings from German relate to the World Wars: *Blitzkrieg*, *Luftwaffe*, etc.

IX.4.3. Borrowings from Romance languages

In the modern epoch, **French** became again a source of new words for English, but this time the words were borrowed and are felt as foreignisms; they are either relatively restricted as to application, or technical, they preserve the original French stress and pronunciation and are invariable in form: *ballet*, *beau*, *billet doux*, *chagrin*, *intrigue*, *serenade*, *suite*, etc.

Words borrowed from **Spanish and Portuguese** are either due to neighbourhood and economic relations or, which is

somewhat more interesting, serve as conveyors of words from Amerindian dialects into English. In the first category, such items could be included as: *armada*, *anchovy*, *bastinado*, *brocade*, *cargo*, *corral*, *molasses*, *desperado*, *embargo*, *guano*, *marmalade*, *mosquito*, *sombrero*, *toreador*, etc. Notions unknown to Europeans have been brought, at first, from the New World through the medium of Spanish and Portuguese: *cocoa*, *cannibal*, *alligator*, *cayman*, *canoe*, *tobacco*, *tomato*, *potato*, *chocolate*, etc. A suffix of Spanish origin, *-ado*, seems to be to some extent used in English, without having lost its foreign overtone: *aficionado*, *desperado*, etc.

Borrowings from **Italian** only started in the Renaissance and have to do with the domain of arts: *terza rima*, *sonnet*, *blank verse*, *fresco*, *soprano*, *piano(forte)*, *grotto*, *capriccio*, etc.

IX.4.4. Borrowings from other languages

In a more or less random way, some words from other languages have entered English at various stages after the Renaissance; they denote realities specific to the respective speech communities or names of exotic dishes, plants and animals.

Among these, perhaps the most important in number are the words from the various **neo-Indian** languages, which either entered English during the occupation of India, in the Victorian age, or, more recently, from the vernaculars of the ever larger communities of immigrants who live in Britain. Such words as: *baba* (=old man, father), *babu* (used after a proper name for respect), *bhai* (=brother), *bandanna*, *badmash*, *wallah*, but also *curry*, *pariah*, etc., have entered the English vocabulary to denote specific realities of the respective communities.

Another relatively large group of borrowings comes from **Spanish** via the American variety of English, from the vernacular of the *chicanos* (=speakers of Spanish residing in the United States): *burrito* (=dish); *tortilla*, *barrio*, *banjo*, *barracuda*, *bonanza*, *bongos*, *bronco*, etc. some words denoting notions specific to Amerindian populations also came into English through the American variety: *hominny*, *moccasin*, *tepee*, *wigwam*, *tomahawk*, *squaw*, *pemmican*, *mustang*, etc.

Borrowings from **Persian, Turkish and Arabic** are: *alcohol*, *alchemy*, *alkali*, *almanac*, *baksheesh*, *caftan*, *calabash* (=pumpkin),

fellah, emir, sheik, harem, aga, bey, bulgur, and, much more recently, *taliban*.

Some borrowings from **Hebrew** are rather old in the language and have to do with Biblical notions: *seraph, cherub, Satan*, but more recently some other words have entered the language, such as: *bagel, bar mitzvah, Mossad*, etc.

From the languages of **Australian** aborigines, English has borrowed: *boomerang, dingo, kangaroo*; from the **New Zealand** variety: *pakeha* (=white person), from **South African** *baas* (=white employer), *bakkie* (=pickup truck), *apartheid*, etc.

Several words were borrowed from **Russian**: *astrakhan, apparatchik, balaclava, balalaika, blini, Bolshevik, gulag*, etc. There also are some archaisms from Russian that ought to be mentioned here: *kolkhoz, sovkhoz, Trotzkyite, Leninist*, etc.

Some words from **Chinese**: *tycoon, bok choy* (=a vegetable), *tea, nankeen*, and from **Japanese**: *samurai, ninja, bonsai, pagoda*, etc., have also entered English.

IX.5. INTERNATIONALISMS

It should be mentioned from the outset that nowadays English tends to become rather a source of internationalisms than a language that assimilates them, since computer language, the language of management and marketing and even technical language are pervaded by English words. Still, scientific terminology is coined in all languages from Greek and Latin stems, affixes and combining forms, in order to meet the requirement of intelligibility.

The mechanism by which these terms are created is a rather simple one: some roots or stems are taken from Greek and made into compounds or affixed with prefixes or suffixes of the same origin, of which the most widely used are: *techne, logos, arch-, philo-, phobia, anthropo-, -itos, -iteia, bio- hyper-, hypo-, trans-, etc.* some words were taken over in full from the respective languages, with terminological purposes, and have preserved their plural forms from the original languages: *formula, addendum, bacteria, radius*,

automaton, etc. Even link words have been taken over and are specific to academic discourse: *apriori, a fortiori, id est, via*, etc.

All "barbaric" loanwords, which circulate in all the languages and denote realities specific to a speech community or to a certain geographical area have the status of internationalisms. Languages adapt them more or less to the specific phonatory basis of their speakers, but they are not modified beyond recognition; their status as internationalisms makes them understandable by all speakers around the world.

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