

**Ministry of Higher Education and Scientific Research**  
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# **"WORD FORMATION PROCESS IN ENGLISH"**

**A Research**

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بِسْمِ اللَّهِ الرَّحْمَنِ الرَّحِيمِ



(الْمُتَرَّأْنَ اللَّهَانَزَ لِمَنَا سَمَاءَ مَاءٍ فَأَخْرَجْنَا بَهْتَمِرَ اتِمُّخْتَلَفًا لَوْ أَنَّهَُا وَمَنَا الْجِبَالِجُ  
 دَدْبِيضُو حَمْرٌ مُخْتَلَفًا لَوْ أَنَّهَُا غَرَّ ابْيَيْسُودُو مِنَّا نَاسِو الدَّوَابِّو الْأَنْعَامِ مُخْتَلَفًا  
 لَوْ أَنَّهُ كَذَلِكَ إِنَّمَا يَخْشَى اللَّهَ مِنْ عِبَادِهِ الْعُلَمَاءُ إِنَّا لَهُ عَزِيزٌ غَفُورٌ)

صَدَقَ اللَّهُ الْعَظِيمُ

سورة فاطر

آية ﴿27-28﴾

I certify that this research (**Word Formation ProcessEnglish**) was prepared under my supervision at the College of Education for Humanities, University of Diyala a partial requirement of undergraduate studies for the degree of B.A. in English.

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In view of the available recommendation, I forward this Research for debate by the Examining Committee.

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**ABSTRACT**

With the development of science and technology a lot of new words appear in the English language. The language vocabulary is changing all the time at an increasingly higher speed. The development of a language brings about advancements on its different levels, for example, in Lexicology.

One of the distinctive properties of human language is creativity, by which we mean the ability of native speakers of a language to produce and understand new forms in their language. Even though creativity is most apparent when it comes to sentence formation, it is also manifest in our lexical knowledge, where new words are added to our mental lexicon regularly.

In this research the most comprehensive expositions of word formation processes that speakers of a language use regularly (and unconsciously too) to create new words in their language are presented in two chapters.

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# CHAPTER ONE

## 1.1 Introduction

Nowadays, the terms ‘word formation’ does not have a clear cut, universally accepted usage. It is sometimes referred to all processes connected with changing the form of the word by, for example, affixation, which is a matter of morphology. In its wider sense word formation denotes the processes of creation of new lexical units. Although it seems that the difference between morphological change of a word and creation of a new term is quite easy to perceive, there is sometimes a dispute as to whether blending is still a morphological change or making a new word. There are, of course, numerous word formation processes that do not arouse any controversies and are very similar in the majority of languages.

## 1.2 Word-formation Processes

### 1.2.1 Acronyms

An acronym is a word formed from the initial letters of a name, such as USA (United States of America), NASA (National Aeronautics and Space Administration); NATO (North Atlantic Treaty Organization); UNESCO (United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization); radar (Radio Detection and Ranging), laser (light amplification by stimulated emission of radiation).

Acronyms and initialisms are usually pronounced in a way that is distinct from that of the full forms for which they stand: as the names of the individual letters (as in *IBM*), as a word (as in *NATO*), or as a combination (as in *IUPAC*). Another term, alphabetism, is sometimes used to describe abbreviations pronounced as the names of letters.

Examples :

1. Pronounced as a word, containing only initial letters:
  - FNMA: (Fannie Mae) Federal National Mortgage Association
  - laser: light amplification by the stimulated emission of radiation
  - scuba: self-contained underwater breathing apparatus



2. Pronounced as a word, containing non-initial letters:

- Amphetamine: Alpha-methyl-phenethylamine
- Gestapo: GeheimeStaatspolizei ("secret state police")
- Interpol: International Criminal Police Organization
- radar: radio detection and ranging

3. Pronounced only as the names of letters

- BBC: British Broadcasting Corporation
- DNA: deoxyribonucleic acid
- LED: light-emitting diode
- OB-GYN: obstetrics and gyn(a)ecology or obstetrician and gyn(a)ecologist
- IOU: "I owe you"

4. Shortcut incorporated into name:

- 3M: (*three em*) originally Minnesota Mining and Manufacturing Company

## 1.2.2 Abbreviations

An abbreviation is shortened form of a written word or phrase used in place of the whole word or phrase as in 'e.g. (for example); kg (kilogram); bldg.(building) and temp (temperature). Acronyms and abbreviations are very productive in English. On the contrary, Arabic has few acronyms and abbreviations .

## 1.2.3 Neologisms

A neologism refers to any newly coined word, identifying a new concept. In the 1980s, English neologisms included yuppie, pocket phone, and user-friendly; in the 1990s, Internet neologisms, such as spam and texting were

common; and in the 2000s, Internet neologisms related to blogging, such as videoblog and blogosphere became widespread (Cambridge Encyclopedia). Neologisms are very productive in English. In Arabic, They are very few and some of them are borrowed.

## 1.2.4 Blends

Blends are compounds created by clipping and blending elements of a complex term such as brunch (breakfast + lunch), smog (smoke + fog), motel (motor + hotel).

A blend is a word formed from parts of two other words. These parts are sometimes, but not always, morphemes. A blend is different from a portmanteau word in that a portmanteau refers strictly to a blending of two function words, similar to a contraction.

### 1.2.4.1. Formation of Blending's

Most blends are formed by one of the following methods:

1. The beginning of one word is added to the end of the other. For example, brunch is a blend of breakfast and lunch. This is the most common method of blending.
2. The beginnings of two words are combined. For example, cyborg is a blend of cybernetic and organism.
3. One complete word is combined with part of another word. For example, guesstimate is a blend of guess and estimate.
4. Two words are blended around a common sequence of sounds. For example, the word Californication, from a song by the Red Hot Chili Peppers, is a blend of California and fornication.

## 1.2.5 Back-formation

Back-formation refers to the process of creating a new lexeme (less precisely, a new "word") by removing actual or supposed affixes. The resulting neologism is called a *back-formation*. Back-formations are shortened words created from longer words, thus back-formations may be viewed as a sub-type of clipping.

For example, the noun *resurrection* was borrowed from Latin, and the verb *resurrect* was then backformed hundreds of years later from it by removing the *-ion* suffix. This segmentation of *resurrection* into *resurrect* + *ion* was possible because English had many examples of Latinate words that had verb and verb+*-ion* pairs — in these pairs the *-ion* suffix is added to verb forms in order to create nouns (such as, *insert/insertion*, *project/projection*, etc.).

Back formation may be similar to the reanalysis of folk etymologies when it rests on an erroneous understanding of the morphology of the longer word. For example, the singular noun *asset* is a back-formation from the plural *assets*. However, *assets* is originally not a plural; it is a loan-word from Anglo-Norman *asetz* (modern French *assetz*). The *-s* was reanalyzed as a plural suffix.

## 1.2.6 Clipping

Clipping is the word formation process which consists in the reduction of a word to one of its parts (Marchand: 1969). Clippings are, also, known as "shortenings". Clipping mainly consists of the following types:

1. Back clipping
2. Fore-clipping
3. Middle clipping
4. Complex clipping

## 1.2.7 Extension

In this process, new words are formed from already existing words, which appear to be analyzable as in the English examples: *general* > *generalize*, *generalization*, *generalizable*, *generalizability*.

New words may be formed from already existing words, which appear to be analyzable, i.e., composed of more than one morpheme.

- **For example in English:**

Television: *televise*;

General: *generalize*, *generalization*, *Generalizable*, *generalizability*;

Grammar: *grammatical*, *Grammaticality*, *grammaticalization*;

- **For example in Arabic:**

جمع: جمعية ، جامعة ، مجمع ، مصنع تجميع.  
حسي: كشف حساب ، حاسب ، آلة حاسبة ، محاسب ، محاسبة ، محاسبية ، محاسبي  
حسب: حاسوب ، حاسب الي.

## 1.2.8 Conversion

Conversion is a derivational process by which an item changes its wordclass without the addition of an affix. As in the following English examples:

- N > V: doubt, love, laugh, SMS, e-mail, fax.
- Adj > N: daily, comic, young
- Adj > V: calm, empty.

Unlike English, conversion is not common in Arabic.

## 1.2.9 Borrowing

Borrowing is just taking a word from another language. The borrowed words are called loan words. A loanword (or *loan word*) is a word directly taken into one language from another with little or no translation. By contrast, a calque or loan translation is a related concept whereby it is the meaning or idiom that is borrowed rather than the lexical item itself. Loanwords can also be called "borrowings".

## 1.2.10 Onomatopoeia

It is a modified type of coining in which a word is formed as an imitation of some natural sound associated with the object or action involved. It involves a model that serves as the basis for the new word, but unlike those of other processes, the onomatopoeic model is extralinguistic - it lies outside of language itself. Words that represent animal noises were originally attempts to imitate natural sounds.

- For example in English  
tinkle, buzz, moo, bow-wow, mew, chickadee

- For example in Arabic  
مواء القط، خريير الماء، ازيز الطائرات، نباح الكلب، عواء الذئب، زئير الاسد، خوار البقر، خشخشة الحلي، دويالم  
دافعبربر، ثرثر، جرجر، خرخر، شرشر، صرصر، فرفر، كركر، قهقهه، دلدل، جلجلخل، زلزل ... الخ.

### 1.2.11 Periphrasis

In linguistics, periphrasis is the usage of multiple separate words to carry the meaning of prefixes, suffixes or verbs, among other things, where either would be possible. Technically, it is a device where grammatical meaning is expressed by one or more free morphemes (typically one or more function words accompanying a content word), instead of by inflectional affixes or derivation. Periphrastic forms are an example of analytic language, whereas the absence of periphrasis is a characteristic of synthetic language. While periphrasis concerns all categories of syntax, it is most visible with verb catenae. The verb catenae of English are highly periphrastic.

#### Example

- The distinction The distinction between inflected and periphrastic forms is usually illustrated across distinct languages. However, comparative and superlative forms of adjectives (and adverbs) in English provide a straightforward illustration of the phenomenon.

## CHAPTER TWO

## 2.1 Introduction

The smallest meaning unit is called Morpheme; it's divided into free or independent morphemes as well as bond dependent ones. The Free morphemes are of two types, either lexical or functional ones. However, bond morphemes, that cannot stand alone are of two branches also, either bond roots or affixes. Trask (1997) states that Word formation process is generally known as the phenomenon which is so close to human's life in the world. Word formation process is a way to construct new words from existing materials. Word formation process is how to produce the new words based on the some rules. This chapter is going to discuss types of words and word-formation process followed by conclusions and references.

## 2.2 Types of Words and Word-formation Process in English

### 2.2.1 The Morpheme

They could be defined as the smallest units of language that have a meaning or a grammatical function and form words or parts of words are called morphemes. In writing, single morphemes are usually showed by their graphic form, or spelling e.g., -es, -er, un-, re-; or by their graphic form between bracers, { }; e.g., {-es}, {-er}, {un-}, {re-}. The branch of linguistics in charge of studying the smallest meaningful units of language (i.e., morphemes), their different forms, the inner structure of words, and the processes and rules by which words are formed is called Morphology. ( Zapata, 2007:1). They cannot be divided into smaller parts with the same characteristics. Its detection begins . with the division of words in a language into morphs ; then morphs similar in content and form and are found in complementary or non-contrastive disruption which means (causing no difference in meaning ) are combined into a single morpheme , just like the Russian morpheme drug 'friend' has the morphs drug – druzh - druz (The Columbia Electronic Encyclopedia ). Speakers of a language can recognize that word forms may contain a number of units . For example , The English word forms like plays, player , played and playing that can be split into pieces , they are made up of one unit play and a number of other elements like (-s , -er , -ed , and -ing ) these elements are named morphemes. ( Lieber, 2009: 32)

### 2.3 Types of Morphemes

Every morpheme can be classified as either free or bound morpheme:

### **2.3.1 Free Morphemes and Independent Morphemes**

They can function independently as words (city , toll , cat , door, etc.) and it is a kind of free form just like (man , book , tea , sweet , cook , bet , very, aardvark , pain , walk) every word is considered as a minimal free morpheme capable of occurring in isolation or free (Elson & Pickett,1968 :6). Free morphemes are of two types:

#### **2.3.1.1 Lexical Morphemes**

They are nouns ( Baghdad , Sam ...etc.) , verbs (walk , drive , read, etc.) , adjectives (short, small, long, etc.) , prepositions (in , on , under, etc.) and adverbs (out, careful, etc.). They carry the semantic content of utterances. They are used for referring to individuals (the noun: John , mother ) , attributing properties (the adjectives : kind , clever ) , describing actions , processor states ( the verbs: hit , write, etc.) expressing relations (prepositions: in, on, under) describing circumstances like manner (kindly, fiercely quickly ) (Katamba & Stonham, 2006 : 42-43)

They form the open class of words (or content words) in a language,i.e., a class of words likely to grow due to the incorporation of new members into it. ( Zapata, 2007:1).

#### **2.3.1.2 Functional Morphemes**

They are free morphemes which have little or no meaning on their own, but which show grammatical relationships in and between sentences.( Zapata, 2007:1). They signal grammatical information or logical relations in a sentence. These function words include :

1. Articles : a , an , the .
2. Demonstratives : this , that , those , these.
3. Pronouns : I , you , we , they , them ;my , yours , his , hers , who , whom, ...etc.
4. Conjunctions : and , yet , if , but , however , or ...etc. (Katamba & Stonham , 2006 : 42-43)

### **2.3.2 Bound Morphemes**

They appear only as parts of words , always in attached with the roots or free morphemes and sometimes with other bond morphemes . as in; Un- occurs only attached by other morphemes to form a meaningful word (Kumar , 2014 : 2)

The bond morphemes are as:

1. -mit as in permit, remit , commit , admit.
2. -ceive as in perceive , receive , conceive , deceive.
3. Pred- as in predator , predation, predatory
4. Sed- as in sedate , sedent , sediment.

(Packer, 2014: 6)

They are of two types:

### **2.3.2.1 Bound Roots**

They are those bound morphemes which have lexical meaning when they are attached to other bound morphemes to form content words; e.g. – ceive as in receive, and – taln as in retain , etc. they can be prefixed or suffixed to other affixes.

### **2.3.2.2 Affixes**

They are bound morphemes which are usually marginally attached to words and which change the meaning of function of those words. For example, -ment as in development, and en- as in enlarge, and ‘s as in John’s, etc.

## **2.4. General Morphological Process Involved in the Formation of New Words**

### **2.4.1 Affixation**

It refers to adding derivational affixes (i.e., prefixes, infixes and suffixes) to roots and stems to form new words. For example, if the suffix -able is added to the word pass, the word passable is created.

Likewise, if to the word passable the prefix in- (or rather its allomorphim-) is added, another word is formed, namely impassable. Affixation is a very common and productive morphological process in synthetic languages. In English, derivation is the form of affixation that builds new words. ( Zapata, 2007: 4)



## 2.4.2 Compounding

A compound is a word composed of more than one free morpheme. The English language, like many others, uses compounds frequently. English compounds may be classified in several ways, such as the wordclasses or the semantic relationship of their components. (Adams, 1987:3).

For example, the word blackboard, heartfelt, brother-in-law are compound words; they are made up of the roots (at the same heart and felt, brother, and in law, words themselves) black and board respectively. (Zapata, 2007:4). Besides, the new words which are made by compounding process are :

- battleground, audio dub, aussieland, batch mate, hack boat, etc.
- The word 'battleground' is made from (battle + ground), audio dub (audio+dub), aussieland (Aussie +land), batch mate (batch +mate), hack boat (hack +boat).

From the explanation above, it can be seen that those new words are coming by combining two words become a word. (Ratih & Gusdian, 2018: 27).

## 2.4.3 Symbolism

Symbolism (or morpheme internal change) consists in altering the internal phonemic structure of a morpheme to indicate grammatical functions. For example, in order to form the plurals of goose \gu...s\ and tooth \tu...T\ in English, the phoneme \u...\ is replaced by the phoneme \i...\, thus yielding the plural forms geese \gi...s\ and teeth \\_...T\, respectively.

Other words that form their plurals in a similar way are:

- man /moen\ → ,/men /men
- woman \ "wUm´n\ → women \ "wIm´n\
- mouse \mAU s\ → mice \maIs\, louse \IAUs\ → lice laIs\, etc.

Similarly, a few verbs indicate their past tense and past participle forms just by undergoing internal the following changes, as in Notice that some of these verbs, in addition, take the inflectional morpheme -en\ -´n\ to indicate the past participle, as in It is important to point out that the new words created by the process of symbolism are usually considered irregular forms and have come to .be as a result of historical changes in the development of the language (Zapata, 2007: 6).

#### 2.4.4 Reduplication

Reduplication consists in the repetition of all or of part of a root or stem to form new words. If the entire root or stem is repeated, the process is complete (or total) reduplication, and the new word is considered as a repetitive compound. Total reduplication is fairly frequent in Indonesian, Tojolabal (Mexico), Hausa (Sudan), and Hawaiian. For example, in Tojolabal [-otS] means 'to enter', [-otSotS] 'to enter little by little'. Similarly, in Indonesian, total reduplication is used to form the plural of nouns, as in [rumah] 'house', [rumahrumah] 'houses'; [ibu] 'mother' [ibuibu] 'mothers'; [lalat] 'fly', [lalatlalat] 'flies'.

In Hawaiian, holo means 'run', holoholo 'go for a walk or ride'; lau means 'leaf', laulau 'leaf food package'. If only a part of the root or stem is repeated, the process is called partial reduplication, and the repeated portion is called a reduplicative. Such reduplicatives may occur pre-posed, interposed, and postposed to the root or stem; however, reduplicatives are more common word-initially and word-medially. Partial reduplication is fairly common in Snohomish and Tagalog. In English, partial reduplication is a little bit more common than total reduplication. refer to the words formed by either type of reduplication as reduplicatives (also called 'jingles'). As an example of total reduplication, they give bye-bye, goody goody ('a self-consciously virtuous person'). As to partial reduplication, they say that the constituents of the reduplicatives may differ in the initial consonants, as in walkie-talkie, or in the medial vowels, e.g., crisscross. The same authors add that most reduplicatives are highly informal or familiar, and ('dinner) many belong to the sphere of child-parent talk, e.g., din-din (Zapata, 2007: 6)

The most common uses of reduplicatives are the following :

- To imitate sounds, e.g., rat-a-tat (knocking on door), \_ck-tack (of a clock), ha-ha (of laughter), bow-wow (of dog).
- To suggest alternating movements, e.g., see saw, flip-flop, ping-pong
- To disparage by suggesting instability, nonsense, insincerity, vacillation, etc., e.g., higgledy-piggledy, hocus-pocus, wishy-washy, .dilly-dally, shilly-shally, willy-nilly.
- To intensify, e.g., teeny-weeny, \_p-top (Zapata, 2007: 6)

#### 2.4.5 Suppletion

It consists in a complete change in the form of a root (i.e., a word) or in the replacement of root by another morphologically unrelated root with the same

component of meaning in different grammatical contents. For example, good and well change to better and best in the comparative and superlative. Similarly, bad and badly are, and is in, change to worse and worst. Likewise, be changes to am in the present; am/is change to was and are too were in the past. Another example is go which changes to went in the past. As can be seen, this process yields completely irregular forms. Suppletive forms help to fill gaps in grammatical paradigms of the language. (Zapata, 2007:7)

In morphology, suppletion is the use of two or more phonetically distinct roots for different forms of the same word, such as the adjective bad and its suppletive comparative form worse. Adjective:suppletive. the term "strong suppletion is used where the allomorphs are highly dissimilar and/or have different etymological origins," as in the adjective forms good and best. "We speak of weak suppletion if some similarity is discernible," as in the words five and fifth. (Nordquist, 2020: 3)

## 2.5 Conclusions

### **The researchers concluded the following:**

1. It is found that some of the acronyms in Arabic are borrowed from English and other global languages and are either used as they are or they are translated into Arabic and then abbreviated.
2. English compounds may be classified in several ways, such as the word classes or the semantic relationship of their components.
3. A blend is different from a portmanteau word in that a portmanteau refers strictly to a blending of two function words, similar to a contraction.
4. There are, of course, numerous word formation processes that do not arouse any controversies and are very similar in the majority of languages.
5. Word formation process is a way to construct new words from existing materials. Word formation process is how to produce the new words based on the some rules.

6. Acronyms and initialisms are usually pronounced in a way that is distinct from that of the full forms for which they stand

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